Selective Modernity of a Global Enclave:
Unity, Duality, and the American Old Believers

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Abstract

This dissertation explores variant versions of Old Rite Russian Orthodox continuity from pre-Petrine Russia to the four, non-co-religious, congregations with whom I conducted fieldwork in Erie, Pennsylvania (2012-3) and Nikolaevsk, Alaska (2007, 2013) (U.S.) and their struggles to faithfully maintain an exclusive faith and enclave of people living dualistic lives '*in* the world but not *of* the world' in a pluralistic, modern, global society. The American Old Believers' (named for their rejection of an array of mid-seventeenth century ritual and textual changes) debates and decision-making processes undertaken during their independent microschisms (in 1983) reveal usually unvoiced intersections and complexities of practice, dogma, and group identity. Schisms are conscientious moments of rupture that codify dogma, expose the most essential components of a group's religiosity, and redefine group belonging to create new, more harmonious unions with greater consensus in philosophical orientation and theological convictions. The microschisms in Erie and Nikolaevsk over the same, centuries-old theological (ecclesiological, eschatological, soteriological) issues despite their dissimilarities in every other aspect (e.g., denomination, Americanization, language) demonstrate the necessity of the anthropology of Christianity to look beyond socio-environmental factors in our analyses of religious change. American Old Believers' narratives of historical identity and co-religiosity are bound to dogmatic issues of grace, continuity, and the categorical dualism (e.g., us/them, modern/traditional, ritual/dogma, orthodoxy/heresy) that informs their relationships with God and society. The four congregations sit alongside one another in time as divergent trajectories of selective modernity. Each is, at once, old and new, on their individual paths of Old Rite conservation.

Cette thèse explore des versions alternatives de la continuité de l'Église orthodoxe vieille-ritualiste russe, de la Russie pré-Petrine aux quatre congrégations non coreligieuses qui ont constituées mon terrain à Erie, Pennsylvanie (2012-13) et à Nikolaevsk, Alaska, États-Unis (2007, 2013), ainsi que leurs luttes pour maintenir fidèlement une foi exclusive et une enclave de personnes vivant des vies dualistes « dans le monde, mais non du monde » dans une société pluraliste, moderne et globale. Les débats et processus décisionnels des Vieux-croyants américains (appelés ainsi pour leur rejet d'une série de changements rituels et textuels de la mi-dix-septième) entrepris durant leurs microschismes indépendants (de 1983) révèlent des croisements habituellement non exprimés et des complexités en termes de pratiques, dogmes et identité collective. Les schismes sont des moments consciencieux de rupture qui codifient les dogmes, exposent les composantes essentielles de la religiosité d'un groupe et redéfinissent l'appartenance collective pour créer des unions nouvelles et plus harmonieuses, et plus consensuelles au niveau des orientations philosophiques et des convictions théologiques. Les microschismes à Erie et Nikolaevsk concernant les mêmes questions théologiques (ecclésiologiques, eschatolotiques, sotériologiques) depuis des siècles malgré les dissemblances dans tous les autres aspects (par exemple, la dénomination, l'américanisation, la langue) démontrent la nécessité pour l'anthropologie de la Chrétienté de regarder au-delà des facteurs socio-environnementaux dans les analyses du changement religieux. Les récits d'identité historique des Vieux-croyants américains sont lis à des questions dogmatiques de grâce, de continuité et de dualisme catégorique (par exemple, nous/eux, moderne/traditionnel, rituel/dogmatique, orthodoxie/hérésie) qui informent les relations avec Dieu et la société. Les quatre congrégations se côtoient dans le temps, représentant des trajectoires divergentes de modernité sélective. Chacune est à la fois vieille et nouvelle, sur son propre chemin vers la conservation de l'ancien rite.

Table of Contents

Abstract i

Table of Contents ii

List of Illustrations v

List of Abbreviations vii

Acknowledgements viii

Preface 1

Chapter 1 Introduction 11
- 1.1. Old Believers or Old Ritualists? And Other Dualism Questions 18
  - 1.1.1. Background 20
  - 1.1.2. Unanimous Duality 27
- 1.2. East of the Anthropology of Christianity 33
- 1.3. Multi-sited, Non-participant Observation 41
  - 1.3.1. Erie, Pennsylvania 46
  - 1.3.2. Nikolaevsk, Alaska 48
- 1.4. Overview of Chapters 51

Chapter 2 Old Belief Comes to the New World: Settlement of the Erie and Nikolaevsk ORRO Enclave 56
- 2.1. Variations of Old Belief 58
  - 2.1.1. The Priesthood Spectrum 59
  - 2.1.2. Married Ascetics 64
  - 2.1.3. How in the World? 68
- 2.2. The First American Old Believers: Background and Development of Erie's Enclave 71
  - 2.2.1. Becoming Pomortsy in the Baltic, Suwałki-Sejny, and Masuria Regions 72
  - 2.2.2. Scattering and Collecting, Immigration and Settlement 77
  - 2.2.3. The Urban Enclave Under Fr. Pancerev (1923-1946): Growth and Early Years 87
- 2.3. Alaskan Old Believers: Multiple Migrations to Group-making 94
  - 2.3.1. Chasovennye in Siberia and China 95
  - 2.3.2. Alaska: "The Last Frontier" 102
  - 2.3.3. The Turchane: Sometimes Selves and Others 106

Chapter 3 A Separate Union: Managing Continuity 116
- 3.1. Qualifications: The Dark and Sinful World of Material Flesh 118
- 3.2. 'Closed' Concepts in Anthropology and Orthodoxy 122
  - 3.2.1. An Orthodox Union (Sobornost') 124
  - 3.2.2. Purity and Segregation 132

3.3. Temptation, Apathy, and the Messy Ex/Internal 142
3.3.1. Education 144
3.3.2. Marriage 151
3.3.3. Death 158

Chapter 4 Group-making and the Presumption of Grace 170
4.1. Questioning the Limits of God's Grace 174
4.1.1. Heretical Contamination and Social Duality 183
4.1.2. Heretical Hierarchies? The Fall of Constantinople 188
4.2. "Orthodox and Saving": The Shifting Boundaries of Union 192
4.2.1. The "One Faith Church" (Edinoverie) 193
4.2.2. Forgiving Anathemas 197
4.3. Re- Rhetoric: Restoration or Rewriting History? 202
4.3.1. The Tale of Two Hierarchies: Belaya Krinitsa and ROCOR 207
4.3.2. Polluting the Past: Retroactive Heretical Contamination 212

Chapter 5 "Schism breeds Schism": Case-studies of Religious Division 217
5.1. Erie's Microschism 220
5.1.1. An English Russian Old Rite? 221
5.1.2. Early Warnings: Consensus and Leadership Struggles 225
5.1.3. Timing: Communications and Breakdown 230
5.1.4. Public and Private Contestations 236
5.1.5. Debate and Democracy: Competing Models of Unity 244
5.2. Nikolaevsk's Microschism 251
5.2.1. Lost and/or Found? The Belaya Krinitsa 252
5.2.2. "It wasn't that civilized" 256
5.3. Schism Spaces: Rebuilding Churches and Regrouping Congregations 259
5.3.1. Ex-co-religionists Make Unharmonious Neighbors 265

Chapter 6 History: A Debate 268
6.1. The Question-answerers: Texts, Authorities, and Interpretations 273
6.1.1. "...according to the Scriptures" 275
6.1.2. Church Fathers, Canon, and Councils 278
6.1.3. Forefathers and Pamiats 282
6.1.4. Spiritual Fathers...and Mothers 284
6.2. Pravoslavnye and Heresy 290
6.2.1. "Double-crossers" in Minnesota and Alberta 295
6.3. Church Death and the Devil: Historicizing the Priesthood Question 299
6.4. Is it the End? Eschatological Timelines 304
6.5. Becoming Old (and aging gracefully) 309

Chapter 7 Conclusion: The Transcendental Growing Pains of Church Change and Choice 311
7.1. Choices: Modernity, Time, and the Pre-eternal God 314
7.1.1. Selective Modernity 317
7.1.2. There's Only One Saturday Night a Week 322
7.1.3. Converts and the "Many Mansions" 327
7.2. Mutatis mutandis? The Utmost Necessary and Necessary Evils 332

7.2.1. Dead Languages and Living Christians: The unchangeable and untranslatable (and unfortunately unknown) Church Slavonic 334
7.2.2. Traditionalist Catholics and Old Calendarists 341
7.2.3. Dying Off: Selections of Survival 344
7.3. Schisms and Sobory: The Simultaneity of Unification and Division 351
7.3.1. Summary of Chapters: Reifying Selves and Others through Conciliarity and Exclusion 354
7.3.2. Becoming Bezpopovtsy: Radicalization and Polarization Feedback Loops 358
7.3.3. The Once and Future Universal Church 363

Appendix 1 Interview Guides 372

Appendix 2 Fr. Smolakov's "Sunday School Weeklies" (*SSW*) 377

Appendix 3 Table of U.S. Pomortsy Conference Question Issues 381

Appendix 4 Common Prayers 385

Appendix 5 Questions Addressed During the Restoration Study Group 388

Glossary 390

References 394

Illustrations

FIGURES

1. The Priesthood Spectrum 60
2. Erie Church of the Nativity Baptisms by Nastavnik 1923-1927 89
3. Church of Nativity Marriages 153
4. "Area C" Burials by Nastavnik (CN) 163
5. Summary of Possessor and Non-possessor Debate 176
6. Percentage of *SSW* with Discussions of Eternal Salvation and/or Punishment 178
7. Congregational Decisions to Prevent Fr. Simon's Resignation 229
8. Topics Discussed at RSG Minutes 234
9. Church of the Nativity Congregational Votes 247
10. Basic Timeline of Nikolaevsk and Erie Microschisms 256
11. Key Questions and ORRO Co-religiosity 272
12. Fr. Smolakov's References 274
13. For and Against Unification with ROCOR 293
14. Popovtsy and Bezpopovtsy Constructions of 'Church' 303
15. Overlapping Ecclesiology and Eschatology 306

IMAGES

1. Church of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, New Church Construction in Background (Nikolaevsk, popovtsy) 41
2. and 3. Nikolaevsk General Store 49
4. Nikolaevsk Enclave from Above 138
5. Erie Church of the Nativity (popovtsy) 138
6. Krootki (singing notations) in *Easter Songs* (Fr. Smolakov 1955) 147
7. Translations in *Prayer Book and Songs* (Fr. Smolakov n.d.) 148
8. Eaoaun Bohoslov Cemetery (Erie) "Area C" on right 160
9. Eaoaun Bohoslov Cemetery (Erie) "Area C" on left 161
10. Eaoaun Bohoslov Cemetery (Erie) Post-microschism Bezpopovtsy Section (taken from near main section) 164
11. Eaoaun Bohoslov Cemetery (Erie) Post-microschism Bezpopovtsy Section 165
12. A Cemetery with a View (Nikolaevsk) 167
13. Church of the Holy Trinity (Estb. 1984) 241
14. NOTICE!!! 243
15. Church of the Nativity Centennial Monument 250

MAPS

1. Proximity of Erie's Old Rite Churches 8
2. Proximity of Nikolaevsk's Old Rite Churches 9

3. Old Believer Populations in North America 45
4. Poland, Baltic, and Northeast Russia 73
5. Erie's Old Believer Urban Enclave 88
6. Southeast Russia and Northern China 99
7. Southern Russia, Romania, and Turkey 109

Abbreviations

AOB: Association of Old Believers (Erie, bezpopovtsy)

AS: Apostolic Succession

BK: Belaya Krinitsa

CBD: Co-religiosity deal-breaker

CHT: Church of the Holy Nativity (Erie, bezpopovtsy)

CN: Church of the Nativity (Erie, popovtsy)

CSN: Church of St. Nicholas (Nikolaevsk, popovtsy)

CS: Church Slavonic

CYS: Community of Young Staroobriadcy, an Erie Old Believer club chartered in 1927.

KJV: King James Version of the Bible

MP: Moscow Patriarchy

NT: New Testament

NRSV: New Revised Standard Version of Bible

OT: Old Testament

ORRO: Old Rite Russian Orthodox[y]

ROC: Russian Orthodox Church

ROCA: Russian Orthodox Church Abroad

ROCOR: Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

SDB: Salvation deal-breaker

RSG: Restoration Study Group

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Preface

"So, you baptized yet?" asked one of the men untangling nets and drinking beer in the side yard of one of my few willing Alaskan interviewees.
I answered with nervous laughter, then said that I was never baptized.
"Once a Muslim always Muslim?" suggested another who knew my husband's background.
"Oh, I'm not Muslim."
"What are you?" asked another fisher of men.
"I'm nothing." More nervous laughter.
"Just spiritual?" he returned.
"Okay, okay, lay off her," a young man interjected as he shooed the other two back to the nets and guided me inside. As an aside he told me, "Just take some acid and you'll get it."
"But then I'd think a different thing each time," I joked, perhaps admitting too much.
"No," he disagreed without further explanation, perhaps also admitting too much.
We're all sinners here.
(Fieldwork notes, Nikolaevsk, Alaska, August 22, 2013)

An anthropologist of Christianity will inevitably be asked, in both the field and in academia, 'are you now, or have you ever been, a member of a Christian community?' It is a question I therefore feel obliged to address from the outset of this dissertation on Old Believer Christian communities, with no small amount of reluctance. In the field, I had qualms about how to answer this oft-put question: "What are you?" My informants and hosts had a reciprocal right to know; after all, I was asking about *their* faith. My freckled, pale face or their knowledge of my northeast U.S. hometown might have clued them in to my WASP-y heritage. But when I could not truthfully name the Lutheran or Methodist denominations of my grandparents, the answers perhaps expected from me, the follow-up guess was often, "Just spiritual?" I did not want to admit I was, well, nothing. Perhaps I did not want to be nothing.

After a Sunday liturgy in Erie, Pennsylvania, the Old Rite Russian Orthodox (ORRO, Old Believer) priest Fr. Simon decried the "culture of nones," or the increasing lack of religious

affiliation and/or belief in the U. S. today.[1] "Not belonging to a church, believing nothing—this is *new*. And it is this societal problem that led to the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre."[2]

Then he broke down Webster's four-part definition of 'culture,' and for a second it was possible to mistake his homily for the first day of Anthropology 101. Fr. Simon stated that the Old Believers fit into the definition of culture as a mindset developed through education and training. But he then suggested that the last definition, the dreaded culture-noun, may be the most relevant to their lives, and worth guarding:

> Let us not be a culture of greed, anger, hatred, and rage. Planes existed decades before someone thought of hijacking one. Such a culture had to be created before such atrocities could be imagined as options at all. Perhaps people think I'm always going on about 'our culture,' and 'our history.' But it is simply inconceivable that this poor, afflicted young man had a church community in his life or that he belonged or believed in something bigger. This mass murderer of small children must have been a 'none.' Talk to your children and grandchildren who are 'nones' and remind them of church. (Erie, Pennsylvania, Dec. 16, 2012, condensed)

A month into fieldwork and a line was drawn between today's nothingness and yesterday's "something bigger."

There is a common dancing around this question of personal faith that accompanies inquiries (by both informants and colleagues) about how I became an anthropologist of Christianity.[3] My first Sunday in Erie, Fr. Simon asked me to introduce myself during the Adult Sunday School that follows services. Everyone wanted to know: "How did I learn about them?"; "Why was I interested in the Old Rite?"; "But, you're not Russian?!" I replied as more of a question than a statement: "Um...I guess I read too much Dostoevsky in High School." Everyone

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[1] Fr. Simon, after a disclaimer that he was not a fan per se, happened to stumble upon Mike Huckabee (former Governor of Arkansas, 1996-2007), discussing the recent Sandy Hook massacre in relation to the "culture of nones" (presumably following the *Rise of the Nones: Understanding and Reaching the Religiously Unaffiliated* (2014) by James Emery White, www.churchandculture.org).

[2] Two days earlier, on Dec. 14, 2012, a 20-year-old man shot and killed his mother and then drove to Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut where he murdered 20 children ages six and seven, and six staff members before his death by suicide. An interview with his father makes no mention of church belonging or attendance (Solomon, March 17, 2014). https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/03/17/the-reckoning?utm_source=onsite-share&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=onsite-share&utm_brand=the-new-yorker

[3] See Harding (1991), Robbins (2003, 193), and Cannell (2005, 338-339) on how researchers' suspected positionality negatively impacted the development of the anthropology of Christianity.

laughed—Fr. Simon's a fan. He even used "The Grand Inquisitor" in the next class to illustrate free will.[4]

But "What am I?" (Did you notice I never answered the question?)

Several Old Believers I interviewed learned that my parents joined a fundamentalist, Pentecostal church when I was fifteen, and that I was an unwilling bystander. Some knew I experienced a steep learning curve, since I did not attend my first church service until I was twelve. A couple knew I was never baptized. No one knew I had backed out of a baptism in the Episcopalian church that my family attended in between the nondenominational and Pentecostal ones. Or that my refusal was so last minute that the cake declaring "Congratulations Amber" had already been ordered and was still served during the post-service coffee hour. Awkward, but honest—not unlike fieldwork. But whether I was a "none" or a Protestant, it was clear I did not belong. But not belonging to any of the four congregations with whom I conducted fieldwork allowed me to move freely between them and investigate the personally sensitive and theologically essential determinants of belonging.

This dissertation is a comparative ethnographic study of two Old Believer Christian communities located in Erie, Pennsylvania and Nikolaevsk, Alaska, physically distanced by the east-west expanse of North America (6800 kilometers apart) and "socially distanced" by denomination, puritanical inclination, Americanization, language, and history. Their ancestors had been separated by the east-west expanse of a larger empire. I first visited the small village (pop. 350) of Nikolaevsk for my M.A. fieldwork in 2007, which focused on theories of diaspora, ethnohistorical narratives, and religious segregation. Before I returned to Alaska in the Summer of 2013, I learned about the Old Believer churches in Erie (pop. 100k) and began my fieldwork there in the Fall of 2012. As comparatively little has been written about the Old Believers in Northeast U.S., I arrived with more avenues of inquiry than hypotheses. I planned on building on my previous research exploring the connections and distinctions within the Old Believer diaspora. I had hoped to research endogamy practices; this immediately proved to be an approach 50 years too late. I left Erie for Nikolaevsk focused on the striking commonality between the two communities—schism.

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[4] A short story within *The Karamazov Brothers* (Dostoevsky, [1880] 1994, 309-332).

In part, anthropological methodology is predicated on supposition of Otherness. The researcher goes to the field, clear-eyed [ha!], and sees anew; they question the assumed; they unveil the ignored. Anthropology is a work of translation, or of constructing bridges of understanding between perspectives. We generally worry that proximity will obscure objectivity, and anthropology has been late to "repatriate itself" to the West (Marcus 1999, 416), and even later, as I discuss in Chapter One, to turn to the subject of Christianity. In social anthropology, the instrument to study subjects is another subject. I am no microscope.

Fieldwork with Christian groups complicates the researcher's emotional and cultural nearness to those being studied. Given the predominance of Christianity in the societies from which most contemporary anthropologists still tend to originate, conducting research in white European Christian groups negates the field's traditional conceit of neutrality (Harding 1991; Robbins 2003, 192-3; Cannell 2005, 338-9;; Howell 2007; Keane 2007, 28-34; Bialecki, Haynes, and Robbins 2008, 1153) Like Ammerman (1990, xi-xiii) or Hostetler ([1974] 1997, xv-xvi), our parents may even belong to the group we intend to study objectively. Non-religious ("culture of none") and non-Christian researchers from Western-Europe and North America grew up with Christmas and Easter school vacations or performing Christmas concerts with their classmates. There is no escaping Santa Claus.

Exemplified by Jean and John Comaroffs' (1992) influential work, Christianity is most often an object of study in anthropology only in its engagement, conflict, and syncretization with, and adaptation to (Mosse 2017), the traditional Other in missionary and post-colonial settings (Cannell 2006). While the anthropology of Christianity has certainly looked beyond such settings, especially with the global rise of evangelicalism in the turn of the millennium (Robbins 2003, 197), researchers' personal relationship with their material remains a pervading question, a matter that needs to be addressed.

Old Believers, however, are precisely the type of white European Christians that anthropologists consider worth studying as Others. They are different *enough* (Hann and Goltz 2010). They are "other-worldly" ascetics who conform to anthropology's sacred/profane dualistic understanding of religious life (Cannell 2005, 338-340). They practice self-Othering for the more conservative among them purposely separate themselves from the world: they eat off different plates, live in enclaves, and energetically exclude non-believers. What is more, many ORRO groups are visual minorities because of their style of dress, hair, and material culture (see Images 2

and 3). Anthropologists of Old Belief have focused primary on the separation struggles of these more isolated 'traditionalist' groups (Smithson 1977, Colfer 1985, Morris 1990, Scheffel 1991, Graber 2002). Comparatively, little attention has been paid to the Americanized and urban Erie community. I hope that this dissertation's comparative work examining these two very different Old Believer communities in Pennsylvania and Alaska helps to build a bridge between the broad shores of 'modernity' and 'traditionalism'.

While it is correct to be wary of the usefulness of such overused and under-precise concepts, temporal (change/continuity; modern/tradition) and existential (form/matter, ideal/practical, transcendental/mundane, sacred/profane) dichotomies remain fundamental aspects of the shared vernacular and imaginary of "what is a Christian?" (Robbins 2003, 196). For example, Old Believers from Erie and Nikolaevsk respectively labeled one another (their internal Other) as existing on opposite ends of this imagined spectrum of modern change and traditional continuity. Such dichotomies' easy generalizability and overuse is precisely what makes them useful as anthropologists observe the broad array of lived Christianities and inquiries concerning "*How* is one a Christian?" This polarization is not unique to ORRO, more generally, the challenge of "lived Christianity" presents the same transcendental moral struggles and generalized tension of adapting (transcendent, Absolute, unchangeable) religious ideals and precepts to (mundane, profane, ever-changing) everyday life.

In this work, I use the term *selective modernity* to complicate these simple dichotomies and account for the nuances silenced by conservative/progressive or continuity/change paradigms of religious conflict. Schism is a common result when Churches and congregations find themselves divided on which elements of their faith are unchangeable and which may be adapted to contemporary circumstances or revised theological perspectives. For example, the Greek Orthodox Church split over which calendar to use (the Gregorian "New Style" is over 400 years old) and the United Methodist Church (U.S.) recently split over same sex marriage—both split over whether or not an innovation was an acceptable deviation from previous practices.

* * *

Another Sunday, another church. This time in Alaska. Bells attached to the priest's censor jingled as he walked down the nave, wafting the incense first forward and backward, then horizontally to make the form of the cross, and then around in a circle. After eight months in the Erie churches (November 2012-June 2013) this sound put me on trained alert for the more up-

and-close awkwardness of what I have come to think of as my 'non-participant observation'. Usually, I tried to avoid eye-contact and back away from the faithful so as not to obtain an accidental blessing. In Erie, it was clear that I was not expecting or asking for the censor to swing my way as the Pomortsy Old Believers, priested and priestless alike, raise their hands palms vertically outward to accept it. But in this instance in Alaska, when the priest and deacon censed both congregants and the icons that lined the walls in the methodological and Old Rite-specific clockwise rotation, I too received a blessing.

I must have looked shocked at the inclusion when they at last reached the vestibule reserved for non-Old Believers, members "not in good standing," menstruating women, and others barred from sanctuary-entrance, for Father Nikola kindly said by way of explanation, "We are all icons of God." The young deacon afterwards noted jokingly, "You bowed!" after censing me. I had indeed immediately bowed my head as if by instinct, although in retrospect I can reason that it was a response conditioned after many hours of such services. I sheepishly shrugged and said something like, "Well, what was I supposed to do?" He answered me by placing his hand on his heart and bowing his head, "For we are all made in the image of God." Perhaps on the eve of the holy day for the Dormition of the Most Holy Godbearer they were feeling a bit merciful.[5]

I choked up, even though I told myself that it was not 'personal.' I was blessed as an icon; God's creation was being honored. 'Inclusive' may not be a word used to describe Old Believer spirituality, but it certainly is a foundational concept of Christianity.[6] *I had been welcomed, fed, patiently accepted as a nervous interviewer, and kindly spoken with as a fellow parent and lover of the Old Rite. Throughout my time with the Old Believers, although I was barred from ritual*

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[5] Mary is, after all, the "refuge of sinners." In Orthodox theology, Mary did not die, but fell asleep and was transported to Heaven; this holy day is also called the "Assumption of Mary," and marks the end of one of four Lenten periods in the Orthodox calendar (Dormition Lent).

[6] Annually, on the 17th Sunday after Pentecost, the parable of the Syrophoenician [Canaanite] woman is read. The lesson signals Jesus' desire to deliver his message to Gentiles. In the story, a mother pleads to Jesus to heal her daughter, he rebuffed her saying he was sent only for the lost sheep of Israel. She persisted; Jesus granted her prayer because of her demonstrative great faith (Mt 15:21-28; *Gospel Commentary* 415-425; hereafter cited in text as *GC*). The *GC* is a compilation of homilies attributed to St. John Chrysostom, translated from Greek into Slavonic in 1343, and was printed in 1652, translated from Slavonic into English by Hieromonk German Ciuba.

participation, Old Believers' homes, church services, documents, and memories were generously shared. But I did not belong; I was not one of; I remained outside.[7]

During my fieldwork, there were numerous disadvantages to my positionality as categorically outside and Other. I was usually physically outside the nave and often had an obstructed view of services. More generally, it accentuated and reinforced my Hegelian tendency to polarize conceptual opposites (an endemic problem to the anthropology of religion; Moore 2000, 3; Cannell 2005, 339-342; Cannell 2006, 15-6). After all, I had a personal understanding of Old Believer Othering processes. I believe these social aspects affected me theoretically and practically—my writing dissects the dualistic dynamics of socio-religious boundaries, and my research was limited by my discomfort with being 'too pushy' against such boundaries. I say this not as a disclaimer, but a dismissal of the image of the closed-off Russian (it might have been me).

My one advantage outweighed any difficulty. I had the view of many churches' vestibules for I was also outside the priesthood conflicts that tore apart the Alaskan and Pennsylvanian Old Believer enclaves in the early 1980s. A member of the newly *priested* congregations in Erie or Nikolaevsk would be much less welcome in the *priestless* Erie or Nikolaevsk churches than a complete outsider. The convoluted layers of othering and belonging and these two independent, but very much related, microschisms (intra-congregational schisms) became my focus. As I was personally outside the dispute, I could discuss and inquire about it more impartially.

Multiplicity, rather than exclusion, was the greatest challenge of my fieldwork.[8] After my time in Nikolaevsk in 2007 for my masters' field research, I fully expected the outsider status. It was like a weekly microschism of my focus and sympathies to study two congregations at once. Since there is only one Sunday morning a week, I was forced to pick a side. Given my short time in Alaska, I went to as many services as I could find childcare for, and the bezpopovtsy's (priestless) pre-dawn *molebins*[9] allowed me to catch the popovtsy's (priested) later liturgies. The salvage anthropologist in me did prioritize Erie's bezpopovtsy when, for example, I could only go

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[7] Adapted from conference paper (2014). Theological conversations about icons are yet another tenuous duality of matter and spirit beyond the subject of this dissertation.

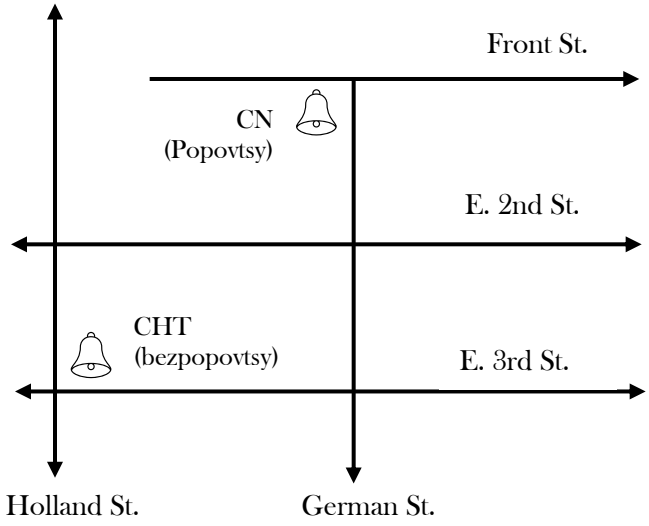
[8] Scratch that, "mom guilt" is a powerful thing. Leaving my child with caregivers I hardly knew, enrolling him in his first daycare so I could scan censuses and go to church, and taking him away from his father were the hardest parts.

[9] Service to give thanks, does not require a priest, adapted into bezpopovtsy service in lieu of full liturgy.

to one Easter vigil, and so I missed the popovtsy's beautiful candlelit procession of icons. The role of choice in affiliation was evident, and challenging.

While I also attended many services at Erie's popovtsy Church of the Nativity, I got into the habit of going to the bezpopovtsy's Sunday service, which was shorter and began slightly earlier. Then I would hop in my car and drive three blocks to catch the end of the popovtsy liturgy, paranoid that the members of the bezpopovtsy congregation would note my direction. On the top of one page of my little field notebook is written, "Feb. 10 Bez." the following page, "Feb. 10 Pop.," underneath which I wrote, "Shake it off." I usually took a quick minute after re-parking for a verbal dump of notable points from my post bezpopovtsy service conversation with Fr. Larry on my tape recorder, after which I would quite literally try to shake it off and mentally reset before entering the popovtsy church.

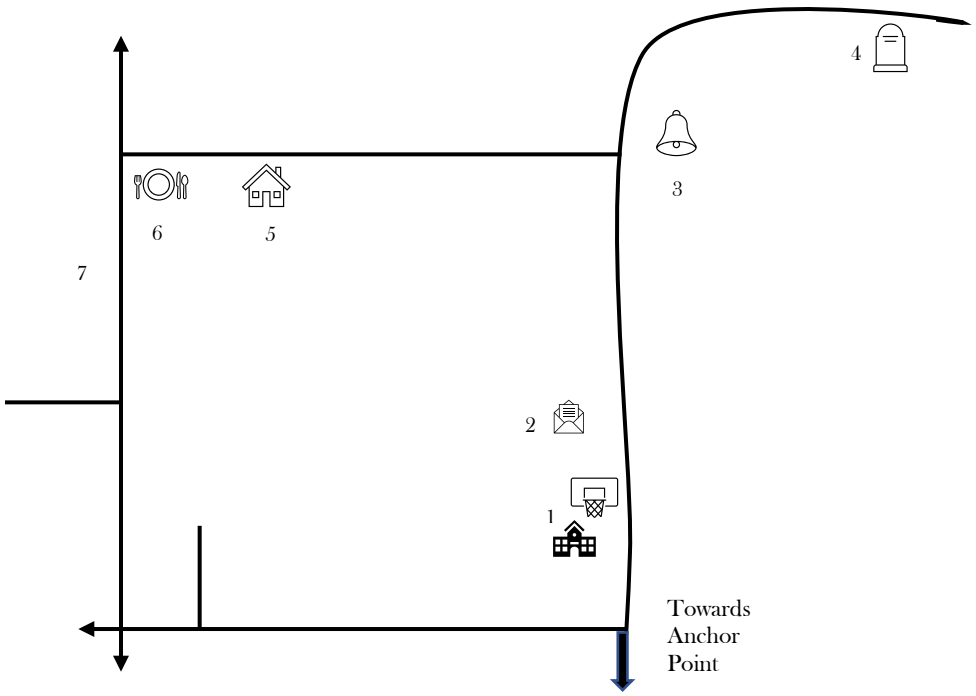
Map 1: Proximity of Erie Old Rite churches (500 m)



I felt adulterous. That I always thought of it in those terms perhaps speaks to the enduring, ever-present, and palpable tension between congregations. Talking to "the others" felt like cheating, or some serious moral transgression. Site-switching between contentious factions felt like a profound social betrayal and gave me a sense of fractured consciousness. At Erie's bezpopovtsy services I would hear the popovtsy's bells ringing; the spatial proximity between congregations did nothing to help my divided sensibilities. I answered honestly when I was often asked if I also saw *the others* and I mentioned the fact to my interviewees. It still felt like I was sneaking around, as if I was breaking some understanding in trying to understand dual (and dueling) perspectives.

In tiny and tight Nikolaevsk, however, sneaking around was not a possibility; here the short walk between the congregations is lined with houses spaced much closer together than I would expect of Alaskan isolationists. Old Believers moved to Alaska to establish space between themselves and non-Old Believers, not one another. Who I spoke with and which services I attended was easily observable to everyone.

Map 2: Map of Nikolaevsk, Alaska



Key: 1] Nikolaevsk School; 2] Nikolaevsk General Store/Post Office; 3] Church of St. Nicholas (popovtsy); 4] Cemetery; 5] Annitta's house, my host; 6] Samovar Café; and 7] Bezpopovtsy molenna, 200-800m left or right past intersection at café

With these fieldwork tensions, I certainly did not expect unity to be such a central focus of my dissertation. My time was divided—between feuding congregations. My emotions were divided—between old women mourning their community and the popovtsy family they had disowned (and vice versa). My aims were divided—between my desire for an unbiased impartiality in midst of a high stakes quarrel (eternal salvation is heavy stuff) and my desire for an immersive depth with both sides of two embattled communities. My own sympathies for Christ remained divided as

ever—between attraction and resistance.[10] My Old Believer interlocutors were divided—between non-co-religious Belaya Krinitsa popovtsy, MP/ROCOR popovtsy, Pomortsy bezpopovtsy, and Chasovennye bezpopovtsy. But all the divisions, the dual-ness, performed a service to congregational unification. Each intrareligious rupture expels inharmonious elements, reifies group-definitions, codifies beliefs and practices, and reinforces the ever-tenuous boundaries of co-religiosity leaving two more unanimous wholes divided from their Other.

As much as I did not want to write yet another piece contributing to anthropology's dualistic poles of change/continuity, a quick glance at my table of contents shows how far I managed to stray from the pendulum's swing (Hegel 1807). It would be disingenuous if I ignored what is so theoretically relevant in the literature and emotively prominent in my interviews. So here it is, another Old Believer dissertation about change and continuity. But as a slight twist, I hope to show how change ensures continuity. The decision to officially divide *is* a radical change, often made to either accommodate or reject other "changes," for example the numerous fractures that occurred after the Greek Orthodox Church converted to the Gregorian calendar in 1923. In the aftermath of schism there remain two (or more, as in above case), more harmonious and united Churches on a common path of shared, agreed upon beliefs and practices (Durkheim [1912] 2001, 46) excised of dissent. Counter-intuitively, schism unites.

My work traces Erie and Nikolaevsk Old Believers' process of deciding which path of ORRO continuity to follow. In Chapter One, I contextualize these two moments of fissure within each community's historical background and sociological setting, and within the broader discourse of schism studies and the anthropology of Christianity. I will show how schism reveals the intertwined historical and theological (I refer to these as *theo-histories* or *theo-historical narratives*) logic wherein the most "essential," unchangeable practices and beliefs are conscientiously debated and selected for preservation. Schisms also reveal those 'modern' changes selected for the sake of continuity. In the aftermath of intrareligious rupture, four new congregations emerged and rebuilt around individuals' shared selections of the most authentic, unalterably Absolute, interpretations of Old Belief, illustrating the complex intersections of belief and belonging.

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[10] A struggle I have in common with self-professed Christian believers (c.f. the Apostle Thomas and *Ethnographies of Doubt* (Pelkmans 2013).

Chapter 1
Introduction

> *I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all the ages; Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father, by Whom all things were made; Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary, and became man; He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried, and arose on the third day, according to the [S]scriptures; And ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father; And He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead,[;] of Whose Kingdom there is no end. (Of the Second Council) And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord[,] true and life-giving, Who proceedeth from the Father,[;] Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; Who spake by the prophets. And in One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the remission of sins. I wait for the resurrection of the dead, And the life of the age[s] to come. Amen.*
> —Orthodox Confession of Faith[11]

Christ is God. Jesus was human. 2000 years have passed since this prophet, this messiah, this "Son of God, born of a Virgin," lived, was crucified, and rose to live again. At least this much, as laid out in the Creed above, is widely agreed upon by Christians around the world. The days between 33 CE and today are a succession of little lives and little deaths, and an accumulation of little changes, alterations, accommodations, and daily decisions.[12] Christianity, as the faith of this dualistic deity (who is one part of a Trinity to further confound matters), has experienced so many schisms it is like the Balkans of monotheism. But is Christianity theologically determined to be a multifarious unity? This dissertation asks how and why certain decisions and changes come to tear apart religious groups and how schisms reveal essential components of concepts as socially entangled (Geertz 1973, 87-125) and inherently subjective and ineffable as 'belief' (Pouillon 1979) and 'belonging.'

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[11] "The Confession of the Orthodox Faith in the Divine Liturgy," (*Old Orthodox Prayer Book* 2001, 110; hereafter cited in text as *OOBP*). Differences in the Alaskan, popovtsy translation by Dennis Fefelov are marked in brackets. Frequently called the 'Nicene Creed' for the majority was composed at the First Ecumenical Council, in Nicaea in 325. Also known as the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed, as latter part was added during the Second Ecumenical Council (The First Council at Constantinople, 381). Fefelov's version does not note "of the Second Council."

[12] Arundhati, Roy *The God of Small Things* (1997). See Kottak (1980) for an evolutionary discussion of accumulated changes and cultural continuity.

This thesis is rooted in the anthropology of Christianity, but my general argument that anthropologists should pay close attention to schisms is broadly applicable to other religions, and indeed other social groupings (Evans-Pritchard 1940, Turner 1957). Ideologically, irresolvable intrareligious ruptures reveal what religious practitioners believe to be the most essential to their faith—the 'deal-breakers' that are the border lines of group identity. Socially, schisms entail a break in *co-religiosity*, the mutually recognized belonging of individuals to one faith based on group-defined criteria of correct practices and dogma.[13] These ruptures warrant close attention because such formal separations are conscientious moments of group definition and dogma encoding[14] when two paths of continuity diverge amid unrelenting change and everyday accommodation of ideals to a less than perfect world. Why do some changes break churches? Because certain elements (at certain times and by certain peoples) are considered essential, unalterable, and definitional to a religious group's identity and belief structure. The analysis of schisms brings the researcher of Christianity closer to these fundamentals.

Evans-Pritchard explored the recurrent "complementary tendencies" of fission and fusion in lineage and political systems in his classical ethnography, *The Nuer* ([1940] 1969, 137-8, 263). He found that issues of resource distribution (cattle, pastures, water sources) to be the common causal factor in the making and breaking of social groupings (tribes, tribal sections, and clans) (16, 33-4). The combined social and material benefits and harmony produced by the processes of fission and fusion outlined by Evans-Pritchard were illustrated by Hostetler's analysis of "branching out" and "cell division" in *Hutterite Society* ([1974] 1997). Hutterite colonies routinely use fission as a key means of maintaining the equitable distribution of resources necessary for their communitarian, agrarian economic system and high fertility rate as well as bolstering an individuals' commitment to shared moral principles of the Hutterite religious system (105-6, 185-190, appendix 16). For the Hutterites, the new enclave is not an outcasted offshoot, but a "daughter

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[13] For comparison, see Kraybill's description of the Amish internal differentiation and the phrase "not 'in-fellowship'" (1994d, 54-9). "Not in communion with one another" is another common phrase for such Christian Othering, but technically inappropriate for priestless ORRO congregations, which do not practice communion (the Eucharist) because the sacrament must be delivered by a priest.

[14] "The terms 'break away' and 'splinter group' suggest a radical division between mainstream and local religious ideology but this is seldom the case. What crucially takes place in these splinter groups is not so much a reformulation of orthodox dogma but a re-codification of it" (Whitehouse: 2000, 129).

colony" created and financially established by the "parent colony." Subdivision, Hostetler argued, "mitigated disruptive tendencies" between siblings, occupational competitors, and preachers and "channels competition into productive enterprise" (Hostetler [1974] 1997, 188-9), thereby creating greater fusion of individuals within and between the daughter and parent colonies through the fission process.

In *Schism and Continuity* (1957), Victor Turner also addressed the role of intra-group segmentation over "norms" as a process whereby social unity is maintained and consensus on orthodoxy is built by excluding deviations. There are numerous examples of this process within ecumenical history, for instance, when widespread Christian communities in the fourth century united under the Creed (epigraph above; shared 'norms' of dogmatic definitions) after the exclusion of Arius' deviant Christology.[15] Local church communities, including relatively isolated Alaskan Old Believer enclaves, assemble globally (literally during ecumenical councils and figuratively in theological concepts of the universal Church) to form their identity as members of a distinct group based on shared rituals, norms, and values. These global enclaves are not merely "imagined communities" (Anderson 1983), as I describe in Chapter Three, there are numerous social and ritual facets of life affected by whether one does (is co-religious) or does not (non-co-religious) belong. I see schism as an integral part of the process which reconstructs and redefines the complex combination of group belonging, belief, and practice that has been an essential component of the anthropology of religion since the foundational work of Emile Durkheim ([1912] 2001, 46).

This work, like Evans-Pritchard's and Turner's, also looks at the relationship between values (resources and norms) and group belonging. In my own study, I look to questions of dogma (precepts of faith, creed, what believe), ideals (generalized worldview, perceptions, social ethics, and categorical outlook influenced by faith), and practices (how beliefs are enacted in church rituals and day-to-day social habits) of lived Christianity to better understand ORRO determinations of co-religiosity. Intrareligious divides attribute, rather than redistribute, values. In the case of the Erie and Nikolaevsk microschisms, the factions who desired a priesthood

[15] The first Universal Ecumenical Council (Nicaea, 325) condemned Arianism, the nontrinitarian belief that Christ is a (non-consubstantial) secondary creation of God the Father.

(popovtsy) attributed the values of 'legitimacy', *apostolic succession*,[16] and orthodoxy to the ROCOR and Belaya Krinitsa (BK) hierarchies respectively. Conversely, the bezpopovtsy stressed the value of continuity with their forebearers' theo-historical (specifically, ecclesiological) narrative that held that the priesthood was forever lost to heretical contamination. Schisms unite even as they divide: "For a man sees himself as a member of a group only in opposition to other groups and he sees a member of another group as a member of a social unity however much it may be split into opposed segments" (Evans-Pritchard [1940] 1978, 137; people simultaneously imagine an "exterior unity" of the Other 'them', de Certeau [1975] 1988, 135). In the aftermath of congregational rupture four, more harmonious, congregations reassembled.

Old Believers are called so due to their rejection of an array of mid-seventeenth century Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) liturgical and ritual changes, including, for example, the way one's fingers are positioned when making the sign of the cross. They have repeatedly divided over choices compelled by their struggle to live dualistic lives as people in the world, but not *of* the world[17]: as conservators of Old Rites called Old Belief;[18] and as seekers of salvation in the realm of the Antichrist brought on by the fall of the ROC to heresy. The following chapters of this dissertation explore variant versions of Old Rite continuity past and present, from pre-Petrine[19] Russia to the four congregations with whom I conducted fieldwork in Pennsylvania and Alaska (U.S.). All are struggling to maintain an exclusive faith in a pluralistic, individualistic, modern society. All are selectively modern, accepting and rejecting various elements of change and worldly accommodation, causing intrareligious fissures in the process.

Old Believers are but one of many groups who identify as *Khristianiki,* yet their unique manifestations of Christianity's metaphysical dualism, their stress on social and ritual purity, apostolic-continuity, and rightness (*ortho*) are especially suitable for such a study of intrareligious divides. Their social bodies are perforated and quick to tear precisely because they are the self-

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[16] This is the evangelical mandate which Jesus gave to the Apostle Peter and was passed through the Sacrament of Ordination to subsequent priests.

[17] Dumont (1985) labels this distinction 'outworldly' and 'inworldly', respectively.

[18] In this dissertation I use the term "Old Belief," synonymously with Old Rite Russian Orthodox(y) (ORRO), for simplification, as a general name for the branch of Christianity that comprises many non-co-religious groups who practice the rites of the pre-Nikonian Russian Orthodox Church.

[19] Before the reign of Peter I (*i.e.* "the Great"), Emperor of Russia between 1682 and 1725.

proclaimed, adamant defenders of the most (or *only*) authentic, true, *pravoslavnye* (Orthodox) version of Christianity. In other words, the One, True, Apostolic Church.

Researchers of the dynamics of schism in Christian communities have often focused on underlying 'social' as opposed to 'religious' causes (Niebuhr [1929] 1954; Doherty 1967; Hadden 1969; Vrga and Fahey 1970; Liebman, Sutton, and Wuthnow 1988; Ammerman 1990, 126-167;) or suggested divisive proclivities (Wilson 1971, 3; Liebman, Sutton, Wuthnow 1988; Shin and Park 1988; Sani 2005). It is often argued that "rational" (Wilson 1971, 4) or "concrete" (Kniss 1996) reasons are more often to blame than fine points of dogma or symbolic interpretations. Sometimes individual scenes of rupture are interpreted as dioramas of greater societal variation and change (Ammerman 1990; Yoder 1991; Bolzendahl and Brooks 2005; Levitt 2007) Or, like Evans-Pritchard suggested of Nuer political fissures (1940, 16), a question of economics and resources (Rochford 1989, 174). And befitting a broader trend in the field of anthropology, authority and 'power' issues from conflicts between pastors and church councils and/or congregations (Kraybill 1994c, 43, 50; Rogers 2009, 93-101) to the dispute between the Moscow and Constantinople patriarchs over the latter's acceptance of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church's autocephaly (Patriarchate of Kyiv, rather than Moscow)[20] are frequently cited as factors in religious schisms (Hadden 1969; Shin and Park 1988; Leatham 2003).[21]

While issues of authority or broader socioenvironmental factors are certainly play some role in intrareligious conflicts, I suggest that anthropologists should instead investigate what the embattled actually argue about. Their debates center around the issues they perceive to be most

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[20] https://sputniknews.com/20181203/usa-russia-ukraine-orthodox-church-1070357783.html https://meduza.io/en/news/2018/10/19/now-the-russian-orthodox-church-outside-russia-has-also-cut-ties-to-the-constantinople-patriarchate This issue is undoubtedly political, or rather, an issue of "theopolitics," wherein a complex interplay of communion and co-religiosity, "canonical territory," theo-historical perspectives (Third Rome prophesy) about the leading role of Moscow in the Orthodox world, newly independent post-Soviet States, and recent geopolitical Russian/Ukrainian conflicts is revealed by schism (Kormina and Naumescu 2020).

[21] For more general schism theories, I found Wilson (1971 and 1992) and Kniss and Chaves (1995) particularly informative. For a notable exception to the search for social causes of religious schisms, see Zuckerman's *Strife in the Sanctuary* (1999).

crucial to their religious identity and belief system. What is important? The "utmost necessary"[22]— the crucial, unalterable, pre-eternal,[23] un-compromise-able *salvation deal-breakers* (SDB) are revealed by breaks in co-religiosity. Peoples' own justifications, deliberations, and explanations of their disputes tells the researcher what *they consider* to be significant. They are telling us what matters in times of schism.

In the present work, I seek the underlying problematics of Christian ideology and life as the root of schism and focus on the doctrinal issues ostensibly under contestation. Social factors such as immigration, suburbanization, or secularization (often conflated with the grand enemy of traditionalism, modernity; Berger 1954) certainly can and have intensified intrareligious conflicts (Levitt 2007). But such factors did not cause the transcendental tension (Katz 1998) that is a common, foundational aspect of religion (Burridge 1969; Eisenstadt 1982, 1986, 2011; Keane 2006; Cannell 2006, 44; Bialecki 2014, 180). How much more personally essential the dualistic conflict, how much more necessary is the individual imperative of making the *right* choice, when God's grace, or eternal salvation, can be lost by "an inch or so from thumb to index"?[24]

This dissertation longitudinally maps centuries of Old Rite Russian Orthodox (ORRO) schisms to illustrate Old Believers' transcendental struggle of dualistic living. ORRO groups are not split between traditionalists and revisionists, rather, variant paths of ORRO continuity are selectively modern, living dually between poles of conservation and adaptation, curating choice rejections and accommodations as individuals seek a similar goal (salvation). Conscientious group-making through recurrent divisions and unifications exposes the inevitable conflict, a problem common to virtually all religions, between ideals and practices. The two 1983 microschisms I

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[22] Fr. Smolakov described the three (of seven) sacraments (or mysteries as they are more commonly by Eastern Orthodox practitioners and theologians), the bezpopovtsy still practice as the "'Utmost Necessary', for without them no Christian life was possible" From the *Review of the Twelve Annual Conferences of the Old Orthodox Parishes in the U.S.A.* (Smolakov, 1953-1966), hereafter cited in text as *PC* (Pomortsy Conference) (*PC* 4, 1956, Q8). The three are baptism, confession, and marriage.

[23] I was struck by this word, repeated in several songs and prayers, during services for the Nativity at Erie's Church of the Nativity (January 6-7, 2013). God pre-dates time.

[24] Nabokov, *Ada, or Ardor,* "...holding the shaft [of lily] with an identical bunching of the fingers, not unlike the reformed 'sign of the cross' for protesting against which (a ridiculous little schism measuring an inch or so from thumb to index) so many Russians had been burnt by other Russians only two centuries earlier..." ([1969] 1990, 259).

analyze in this work are the result of the different answers to the question of how to best live proper Christian lives. A schism entails deliberate change for the sake of continuity of the 'utmost necessary' and 'essential' components of their faith—that which must not change. These matters vary, anthropologists of Christianity should inquire how so and why. Whatever the socio-historical context, the schism process (re)defines and clarifies group composition (who belongs) and dogma (what belong-ers believe). Schism marks boundaries of 'us' and 'them' when selective choices on how to 'keep the faith' are made and where key points of contention that broke no compromise, the deal-breakers, are defined.

God may be pre-eternal and immutable, but His creation is not. Things change. In this dissertation, I trace how this happened for two American Old Believer communities. The Old Believers are an excellent case-study for such a task because they are constantly actively fighting change, and in fact define their group by their dogged determination to *not* change despite centuries of persecution and oppositional social settings (in Russia and diaspora alike). But this is a basic problem of lived religion, as the sacred is resistant to change (Doherty 1967, 7); the generic transcendental tension stems from the fact that religious practitioners throughout time always have new practical challenges to adjust to an unchanging ideal or Absolute. Anthropologists attempt to grasp the everyday workings of belief; in this work, I examine intrareligious conflict in order to flesh out the daily, ritual expression (Chapter Three), soteriological expectations (Chapter Four), social ramifications (Chapter Five and Seven), and theo-historical worldview (Chapter Six) of those beliefs laid bare by conscientious debate.

This introductory chapter is comprised of four sections. The first provides the reader with a rudimentary history of ORRO and the constitutive role the concepts unity and duality play in Christian thought. The second section frames my work within the subfield of the anthropology of Christianity, which suffers from a heavily Protestant slant that requires realignment with a broader, holistic understanding of the faith. The third section describes my methodology and my fieldwork with the four Old Rite congregations of Erie, Pennsylvania and Nikolaevsk, Alaska. The final section contains a synopsis of this dissertation's chapters.

1.1. 'Old Believers' or 'Old Ritualists'? And Other Dualism Questions

What to call the group of people who rejected the ritualistic and transliteration changes championed by the short-termed (1652-8)[25] Patriarch Nikon of Moscow has always been a problem. It is still a problem. The first term widely used in Russia, *Raskol'niki* (schismatics), was and is considered offensive to the reform rejectors and their descendants.[26] Their objection to the moniker is that it is simply inaccurate. They argue, "We didn't break away from the Church, it broke away from us." In English, 'Old Believers' (*Starovery*) is the most commonly used name by insiders[27] and outsiders alike and for consistency I also use this name in this dissertation. 'Old Ritualists' (*Staroobriad'tsi*), or even 'Old Rite Russian Orthodox Christians,' is often argued to be a more accurate term according to an enduring, influential argument that Nikon's reforms were more ritualistic than dogmatic (Conybeare [1921] 1981; Zernov 1945; Zenkovsky 1957; Cherniavsky 1966; Crummey 1970; P. Meyendorff 1991; Michels 1999; Shakhnazarov 2007).

This dissertation explores Nikolaevsk and Erie Old Believers' historical and theological debates and decision-making processes undertaken during their independent microschisms to discover usually unvoiced incongruities and complexities of practice and dogma, which are particularly inseparable categories for a group known both as Old *Ritualist* and Old *Believer*. This tenuous analytical separation between what people believe and how people practice their beliefs was yet again questioned by American Old Believers in their affiliation disputes that took place three centuries later and an ocean away from the original ROC schism. One on level, this dissertation is an ethnohistory of two congregations' intense exposition of their own history and

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[25] Nikon's term as Patriarch is usually given as 1652-1667, when he was officially replaced by the same council that anathematized the Old Believers, however, he abandoned his See in 1658 in an ultimately failed power struggle with Tsar Alexis (P. Meyendorff 1991, 64-70, 92-3; Zernov [1945] 1978, 99-101.)

[26] Old Believers honor the last tsar for his Edict of Toleration (1905) that granted them the right to practice and publish and abolished further use of the term. The entire family was canonized as "New Martyrs" by ROCOR in 1981 and as "Passion-Bearers" by the ROC in 2000. The latter is not synonymous with martyrdom, because they did not die primarily for their faith. Instead, they are honored for their Christ-like submission to their deaths. See Agadjanian and Rousselet on "Worshipping the Royal Family" (2010, 315-8).

[27] For example, in the Nikolaevsk School publication, *Folk Medicine of the Old Believers* and *Folk songs of Old Believers* (1993-4) and by the resolute Erie bezpopovtsy during the split ("Association of Old Believers"). Russian sources more often use 'staroobriad'tsi'.

theology that resulted in rupture. Old Believers in Erie and Nikolaevsk asked themselves whether Nikon's reforms were indeed heretical and warranted their withdrawal from the Church and society at large; whether their congregations could be restored to a full sacramental life; and whether the historical narrative of Old Belief itself should be rewritten. Their divergent answers to these questions constructed opposing constructions of ORRO legitimacy that broke both congregations.

On another level, the Erie and Nikolaevsk Old Believers' very case-specific questions (such as, 'Did the ROC commit blasphemy when the word 'true' was removed from the Nikonian texts' description of the Holy Spirit in the Creed?') expose the intersections of given, generic, Christian dichotomies of heresy/orthodoxy, dogma/ritual, ideal/practical, and us/them. The ways in which heresy has been expunged through the dogmatic definition undertaken at times of councils and schisms, which simultaneously creates social and institutional us/them divisions between Christian Churches, warrants further exploration by the anthropology of Christianity. The categorical overlap and complexity of these conceptual pairs can be observed on several levels of ORRO social and religious life, but basic transcendental challenge wherein every day is a vital fight against the forces of temptation and immorality, and to the victors goes eternal bliss, is broadly applicable to other soteriological religions.

To narrow the field a bit, within Eastern Orthodoxy in particular this struggle encompasses an emphasis on continuity with the apostolic age of the early Church, its ritualism, and the resurrected Christ's instructions to his disciples for the preservation and spread of His doctrine and its *practices* (Hann and Goltz 2010; Humphrey 2014, 216; Carroll 2017). In the New Testament, first comes Jesus' doctrine in the Gospels, then comes *The Acts of the Apostles.* One shows the light, the other shows the way; both faith and works are essential to one's salvation. Heresy is the ultimate co-religiosity deal-breaker (CDB); in the ORRO history, deviation is often considered a threat to orthodoxy (and potential salvation). Disputes about practice and affiliation within a religious community can rupture the delicate, teeter-totter balance of polarized categorizations resting on an unstable axis of theo-historical (re)interpretation.

The re-drawn boundaries of the us/them poles of co-religiosity at times of schism can also unite distinct threads of Christian continuities and reaffirm individuals' allegiances to the group's identity, narrative (historical, eschatological, contemporaneous), and creed—creating two harmonious groups where there was once one in turmoil. At least, until the next debate happens,

and the process begins anew. In this way, continuity is maintained, although multiplied. In the basic background history of the Old Believers presented below, their trials of living dualism (practical, or lived, theology), which have caused so many congregational and denominational ruptures, illustrates the reconstructive and unifying role of the schism process.

1.1.1. Background

Short introductions to the seventeenth century ROC schism, scholarly and popular, invariably paint a scene of Old Believers' unyielding adherence to ritual authenticity in the face of persecution. They are illustrated as martyrs for continuity. Here is an example from a premier (English language) Old Believer historian, Robert Crummey:

> The disparate groups which made up the Old Believer movement emerged in the second half of the seventeenth century in reaction against the liturgical reforms of Patriarch Nikon (1652-1667) and other changes in the church, state and society...they regarded themselves as the only true bearers of authentic Christian belief and practice and the Russian national tradition in faith and culture. Long persecuted by the imperial government and the official church, the Old Believers stubbornly defended their convictions and practices, and when given the opportunity, provided remarkably adept at surviving, coping and prospering in a sinful world. (Crummey 1993, 701)

Beside the front door of popovtsy Dennis Fefelov's home in Nikolaevsk hangs his grandfather's photograph. Next to it hangs a page from a 1972 *National Geographic* article that introduced the village enclave to Americans in this manner:

> Their quest for religious freedom began in the 1920s, after Communism came to Russia, but in a broader sense it had begun more than 300 years ago, when their ancestors refused to accept the reform of the rites of the Russian Orthodox Church and were excommunicated. These dissenters became known as the Old Believers—sometimes the Old Ritualists—and many of them paid for their beliefs with their lives. (Reardon 1972, 401)

Their struggle to maintain historical continuity—equated with orthodox authenticity—against tsars, communists, devilish temptations, and societal evils is written into the group definition of Old Believers as religious Others.

The wound to the Russian Orthodox Church caused by Nikon's reforms was cauterized at the Council of Moscow of 1666-7, which gave unequivocal support to the reforms and

anathematized (cursed and excommunicated) incalcitrant Old Rite practitioners.[28] The Council confirmed the standardization of the 'New Rite' texts and the ritual forms described therein. Patriarch Nikon's *Psalter* (1653)[29] promoted the not new, but rather *Greek*, method of making the sign of the cross on one's body with three rather than two fingers. This can be thought of as the schism's "precipitating factor" (Wilson 1971, 4), or the first definitive move towards an irresolvable break between New Rite and Old Rite proponents. Two years later, Nikon's edition of the *Sluzhebnik* (1655)[30] contained many transliteration changes, the most inflammatory of which was the change in the spelling of 'Jesus' (from *Isus* to *Iisus*). The wording of the Creed itself was altered. Numerous liturgical details were adjusted. For example, the number of prosphora (loaves of bread from which the Eucharistic host is selected) and an additional "alleluia" was added to the end of key prayers, so that their total was four instead of the holy three (P. Meyendorff 1991).

A pamphlet from the newly priested Erie Church of the Nativity (CN) summarized the "more substantial features unique to the Old Rite" in addition to the two-fingered sign of the cross by which they are known by mainstream Orthodox Churches as Others (CN n.d.). Its examples dealt largely with when (during specific prayers, on entering and exiting church) and how (to the waist or to the floor) prostrations are made. Paul Meyendorff's (1991) detailed and authoritative index of Nikon's many linguistic and liturgical reforms may seem to support the 'ritualistic' categorization of the ROC's great schism. But the far more significant New Rite adaptation, the pamphlet argued, went beyond the ritual forms to negatively affect a congregation's unison in prayer, the stillness of their worship, and their humble approach to the divine.

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[28] Also known as "Great Moscow Sobor (or Synod)" attended by Russian bishops and two Eastern Patriarchs (Paisios of Alexandria and Makarios of Antioch) whose participation lent the council the aura of greater ecumenism. See Palmer (1873) for a translation of the council's proceedings and P. Meyendorff (1991, 66-71) for summary decisions. 'Anathema' signifies a break in a communal body, a declaration of another's heresy, and a curse, for as St. Cyprian of Carthage (3rd c.) said, *extra Ecclesiam nulla salus* (outside the Church there can be no salvation; see also Florvosky [1934], 37-8).

[29] Book which contains the Psalms, devotional songs, and prayers specific to saints' and holy days read according to the liturgical calendar.

[30] A Euchology, the text that details the ritual procedure of the liturgy services which contains the sacrament of the Eucharist.

By the 1690s, as the priests ordained in the Old Rite died off without replacements, the initial dissidents of Patriarch Nikon's new liturgical books and ritual modifications were faced with the disastrous consequences of the anathema. They now belonged to a broken Church without a hierarchy and without the sacraments; they were now without churches to worship in or hallowed grounds to be buried in. These issues split the Old Rite adherents into two broad, extant branches: the *bezpopovtsy* (priestless) and *popovtsy* (priested) (Michels 1999, 4).

The bezpopovtsy believe that the *Church,* the universal social organization of believers which is Christ's heir on earth, his bride (Eph 5:22-33) and body (1Cor 12; Eph 5:30-1), and itself a complex Christian *mystery* (Eph 5:32),[31] and the Church's holy authority through apostolic succession were permanently broken by the ROC's fall into heresy. The ROC's ruthless adherence to false reforms doomed Christians to an unfulfilled spiritual life, persecution, and in theo-historical perspective of the more apocalyptically minded dissidents, initiated of the realm of the Antichrist (Chapter Six). Conversely, the popovtsy place their hope in this world in ecumenism. Originally, they spiritually subsisted on fugitive or converted New Rite priests (and were therefore called the *beglopopovtsy,* fugitive priested) while they searched for a way to recover an episcopacy.

This thesis examines how the possibility of priesthood and a resurrected Church caused two recent (1983) microschisms in the priestless Old Rite congregations in Erie, Pennsylvania and Nikolaevsk, Alaska to understand how contemporary American Old Believers view their place in the world today within intertangled historical, ecclesiological, and eschatological (theo-historical) narratives. In the ensuing debates, the most salient aspects of Old Believers' definitions of 'Orthodoxy' or authentic Christian practice, their ethnohistorical narrative and group identity, their careful selections and decisions made in dialogue with a contentious (read temptatious) modernity, and the everyday challenges of lived Christianity were laid bare.

The qualification of the seventeenth century schism as "non-dogmatic" is comparable to the search for "social" rather than "religious" causes of intra-denominational conflicts (e.g., Niebuhr 1929 and Wilson 1971). In such studies, it is problematic that ideology is discounted.

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[31] Naumescu (2013) highlights that the Christian term 'mystery' refers to those messy bits of transcendental-material overlay that people may never fully understand and require faith. Examples such as transubstantiation, the mystery of the cross, Christ's dualistic nature, and the virgin birth exemplify "...the interplay of belief and disbelief that marks processes of religious transmission," (86) as well as the relationship between belief, or meaning, and ritual action. The mysteries are *essential.*

That schisms sometimes occur in historical contexts of great social change or crisis does not negate the *spiritual* conundrums underlying these conflicts. The ROC schism is a prime example: yes, it did occur during a period of modern transition, emergence of the printing age, and heralded a transition to the increased state centralization, urbanization, and de-orientalization of the Great Westernizer, Peter I. But such tumultuous periods raise religious questions, such as: "How do we maintain our authenticity to the precepts of our faith?" and "How do we preserve our relationship to the divine amidst destabilizing changes?"

It is the very process of change that is untenable, yet sadly unavoidable. *Not* changing is a defining characteristic of Old Belief, and indeed of Orthodox Christianity's doctrine of how the one, true and Apostolic Church maintains its Holy mandate. Continuity with the past, with the teachings of Christ and his disciples in Scripture, with the early Fathers' writings, with the Universal Councils and Canons, with the practices of their forefathers and Saints, links contemporary Orthodox Christians' lives to the authentic (Hann 2012; Humphrey 2014; Carroll 2017), and the "Orthodox and saving."[32] According to this line of thought, any alteration of services, let alone reunification with the ROC which persecuted them, can be seen to invalidate three centuries of martyrs to the true faith.

Of course, many things change in the course of life's constant compromise. Choices may be forced by circumstances, nevertheless, the decisions which break apart congregations the represent non-negotiables. These uncompromisable Absolutes, or *salvation deal-breakers* (SDB), that are revealed by schisms are claims of authenticity (in respect to sources, to the Church, to God, to the past, to 'ortho'), the borderlines between 'Us' and 'Them,' and the judgments that eternally divide the saved and the damned. Christian schisms illustrate the dual sociality of salvation religions.

Today, hundreds of years later, anthropological studies of Old Believers in North America are steeped in concerns with acculturation and the threat of rapid change on continuity and traditionalism. In part, this focus may stem from the discipline's own old habits of othering and exoticizing its ethnographic subject. This pattern persisted even when anthropologist "[came] home

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[32] Phrase used to define the Old Rite in the anathema-reversing councils of 1971 and 1974, also "Orthodox and salutary" (Metropolitan Philaret, ROCA, 1974). Among Old Believers, the feeling is only reciprocated towards the New Rite by the Erie popovtsy and perhaps the Russian Edinoverie (one Faith Church).

from the Tropics," but kept to the margins, like traditionalist enclaves, of their own societies where old dichotomies (between nature/society and premodern Them/modern Us) still had sway (Latour 1993, 97-103; c.f. Keane on subject/object distinction 2006, 308-9). But these ethnographic accounts also reflect Old Believer informants' grave fears that their religious way of life is dying. These fears in part motivated the Erie popovtsy's desire to incorporate with ROCOR (for Church support, seminaries), as Fr. Simon argued to the Restoration Study Group (RSG) during the microschism, "We are in great peril. We continually talk like we have a great healthy situation but it is one where our future is very, very questionable that we can even survive" (*RSG* 5, 6). Rapid social change inherent to the Old Believers' immigration experience is undeniably relevant to the ideological disputes that resulted in the two 1983 microschisms I explore in this dissertation.

In 1983, a popovtsy/priested faction emerged from each of the formerly bezpopovtsy/priestless Erie and Nikolaevsk congregations. Currently, Erie, Pennsylvania (pop. 100,000) and Nikolaevsk, Alaska (pop. 350) have both one popovtsy and one bezpopovtsy congregation each; none of the four are co-religious. Contemporary and historical social differences abound (Chapters Two and Three). The priestless Old Believer immigrants to Erie and Nikolaevsk originated from opposite ends of the Russian Empire from non-co-religious Old Rite concords (*soglasiye*).[33] And they immigrated to the U.S. in different eras. My dual field sites presented a keen opportunity to cast doubt on the social causes of religious schism and demonstrate the theological common denominators at the root of internal ORRO boundaries of co-religiosity throughout three and half centuries. Namely, the *priesthood question* concerning the state of the Church and AS in wake of the upheaval of the ROC schism, has been a repeated source of ORRO intrareligious rupture.

Erie and Nikolaevsk Old Believers experienced the same internal dispute, from poles apart: one American and one Russian, one urban and one backwoods enclave, one settled and one immigrant, one integrated and one segregated, one shaved and one bearded, one Pomortsy and one Chasovennye, one's origins Polish and Baltic and the other's Siberian and Turkish, one primarily Anglophone and one diminishingly Russophone. In other words, socio-historical

[33] Loosely centralized (or multiple centers) collectives of congregations in co-religious unison; a bezpopovtsy denomination for lack of better term.

contextualization does not explain why the priesthood question broke apart the Nikolaevsk and Erie congregations.

The newly priested factions in Alaska and Erie with whom I did my research did not join the same hierarchies. The Erie priested church joined the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR).[34] In 2007, ROCOR reincorporated with the Moscow Patriarchy (MP), thereby becoming a part of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) proper. The Councils of Bishops of ROC (in 1971) and ROCOR (in 1974) officially reversed the seventeenth century anathemas placed on Old Believers by the ROC, which opened the way for reconciliation. Erie's Fr. Simon saw this as a necessary step for his church's reincorporation with official Orthodoxy.

The anathema reversal (AR) had less of a direct effect on the Alaskan community as possibility of unification with either the ROC or ROCOR (which many believe to be without Grace and apostolic authority; FS, pers. comm., December 27, 2012; January 2, 2013) was not seriously considered (FN, pers. comm., August 18, 2013). Instead, the Alaskan priested group joined the Belaya Krinitsa (BK), a separate, independent, exclusively Old Rite hierarchy that resurrected itself from the literal ashes[35] of the fallen priesthood in 1846 when an Orthodox bishop (a bishop is necessary to ordain priests) was converted from the New Rite to the Old. With one conversion, a hierarchy was born.

It is usually the other way around, but local congregations or conversions can have global impacts. I use the concept of a *global enclave* to highlight the basic paradox of various forms of puritanical, segregationist, community construction taking place in the same ideological space as universalistic Christian rhetoric and in our unavoidably interconnected world. An individual church or congregation, no matter how secluded it may intentionally be, or entirely lacking known

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[34] This is a collective of bishops abroad which became a distinct organization and hierarchy in the wake of the Bolshevik Revolution (http://www.russianorthodoxchurch.ws/synod/indexeng.htm). This collective was often referred to as ROCA (Russian Orthodox Church Abroad) prior to its unification with the MP. Those who rejected this unification still use this name, as described by this ROCA diocese of Australia and New Zealand here https://auroca.org/who-we-are/.

[35] Last Old Rite defending Bishop, Paul of Kolomna, was burned at the stake in 1656.

co-religious Selves in other parts of the world,[36] remains a part of the catholic (universal) Christian Church, dogmatically and scripturally defined as the social body left by Christ to fulfill His moral mission. And the Church was instructed to be one in Spirit (for brevity, I refer to this as 'oneness').[37] Even physically segregated enclaves like Nikolaevsk are a part of global processes—economic, environmental, political, religious, social—that affect their day-to-day decisions and shape their interactions with the world even as (perhaps, especially as) they seek to avoid it. Similarly, no matter how 'traditional' an enclave, it is nevertheless 'modern' in several senses of the word. First of all, despite fanciful descriptions of Nikolaevsk, they do not in fact live in pre-Petrine Russia; they embrace technological advances that aid their occupations (e.g., sonar in boats) and communication with family in other enclaves (phones, internet); they educate their children past state minimums; and allow for individual, personal choice as regards marriage and higher education.

Expanding on this concept of a global enclave, I ask here how religious unity is made from divisive forces. Processes of separation and schism define a co-religious community of believers and determine who may pray together, who belongs, and who is Othered (and perhaps, consequently hell-bound, more in Chapter Four). Socially, a microschism is a process through which kin, former friends, and congregants fall out of co-religiosity with one another. But new co-religious mergers may also be made. Ironically, the primary divisive force in the Erie and Nikolaevsk bezpopovtsy congregations was the possibility of ecumenical unity. This possibility challenged the very nature of their Old Believer collective memory and identity constructs—as Other, as separate and pure, and as persecuted martyrs living the Christian drama of sacrifice and redemption.

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[36] For example, the Chasovennye enclaves in Manchuria and Xinjiang were unaware of one another's presence until they met in Hong Kong in 1958-9 when fleeing China. Their co-religiosity was determined after 3 years of being uncertain Selves in Brazil and Oregon, where they originally distinguished between groups (living apart, not intermarrying) (Smithson 1976; Morris 1981).

[37] "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of you all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph 4:2-6). Quoted within a discussion of early schisms in the history of Christianity in *SSW*#257, November 19, 1961.

Schism is also a process through which authenticity is made, claimed, reiterated, altered, and reified. Each side comes to proclaim what is 'ortho' or right, while simultaneously distinguishing its composition of right from all those who are, consequently, wrong. Schism is therefore also a process whereby Selves and Others are categorically created and reinforced over tension-filled dualistic categories of faith and practice. On the metaphysical plane, schisms divide the sacred and saved from the profane and damned. I now turn to examine these sweepingly essentialized dualisms that remain the shared common paradigm of analyses of Old Belief and Old Believers' descriptions of themselves.

1.1.2. Unanimous duality

Unanimous duality refers to two things. First, anthropologists must be mindful of our field's foundation in dualistic constructs of comprehending the great variety of human experience. To name a few, influential social theorists have variously polarized left/right (Hertz 1909), nature/culture (Bateson 1979), raw/cooked (Lévi-Strauss' 1964)[38], pure/impure (Douglas 1966), and structure/anti-Structure (V. Turner 1969). Our methodology is also dualistically predicated on distinctions between emic/etic and selves/others. I am skeptical of Hertz's ([1909] 1960) universalistic characterization of our species as "*homo duplex,"* whose perception of the natural environment, "spirituli[zation of] the body," and religious dualism "issue from the depths of our collective consciousness" that "all have one and the same origin, the opposition of the sacred and the profane" (111-2). But if I may be so broad, anthropologists and Christians are unanimous in having dualistic constructions.[39]

Second, the term combines the essential duality underlying Christian theology with the unifying Orthodox concept of *sobornost'* (conciliarity). The more general practice of Christian churches holding *sobory* (councils) of hierarchs (at the ecumenical level) and/or elders and

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[38] Of all Levi-Strauss' analytical oppositions, this text is especially relevant for its exposition of mythological structures of parallel and polar categorizations relate to ritual, linguistic, and other components of a group's life and thought (1964, 323-342).

[39] In addition to what Cannell termed "The Christianity of Anthropology" (2005), my thought here is broadly influenced by Hegel (1807), Durkheim (1912) and Peirce ([1893] 1992, 352-371; [1906] 1998, 371-397). Even Latour's attempts to bring us past all the dichotomies and dualism supports the pervasiveness of the conceptualizations (1993, 2013, 146).

members "in good standing" (at the congregational level) is how the Holy Spirit authenticates the true, Apostolic and Catholic Church's decisions through the *unanimity* of those gathered. Ecumenical councils authorize and control the forces of change (Fedotov 1966, 286; Seidler and Meyers 1989, 12-16) as selective decision-making events that create Others by identifying heretical "false teachings" outside the oneness of the Church. The co-religious body (ideally) seeks unanimity and consensus of practice, dogma, and perspectives concerning the social duality that defines the group against a non-co-religious Other (an apophatic ecclesiology if you will, for example, Old Believers defined as 'not Nikonian'), and how the stuff of life fits into broader, religious dualistic categories (e.g., flesh/Spirt, pravoslavnye/heresy). In this dissertation I continually return to unity and duality as key anthropological and theological concepts and tools for understanding Old Belief and its social groupings, schisms, sobory, and the determinants of co-religiosity within these global enclaves.

I use 'dualism' as a paradigm of the polarization that occurs when groups must reify their group-definition and codify their beliefs and practices in the process of dividing. It is a particularly fitting concept given the nature of the faith in question. I am not saying that the bezpopovtsy are 'old' and the popovtsy 'new' (Russian Orthodoxy had priests before the seventeenth century schism, after all). Nor do I intend to reinforce ideological differentiation along traditionalist or progressive lines (another sociological categorical dualism, e.g., Wuthnow 1988). Instead, I intend to show how the processes of differentiation, or the re-delineation of co-religiosity, during schisms' and sobory's debates and decisions call upon pre-existing dualistic or polarized concepts of old and new, good and evil, practice and belief, us and them, and this and that world. The two congregations in Erie or Nikolaevsk do not represent two poles. Rather they have selectively managed change and continuity in distinct ways.

Old Believers perform dualism through processes of separation and negotiation which remake us/them and pure/profane social categories. Schism reifies these boundaries and encodes the reorganized groups' narratives of Old Belief, re-identifying and separating saved Selves from (potentially) damned Others. For post-schism communities in faiths that practice ritual exclusion of the un-like or unclean, Othering taboos are extended to include neighbors, family (if they have maintained contact), and friends (if they have remained friends) whose paths of ORRO continuity lie elsewhere. Intrareligious ruptures force individuals to socially and theologically align themselves in contrast to non-co-religious Others, and in doing so show how dogma (including those hiding

behind ritual 'details') and broader moral ideals have practical effects. For example, after the Nikolaevsk microschism, intermarriages between bezpopovtsy and popovtsy congregations required the conversion of one spouse, and often resulted in their alienation from their natal family.

Ideally, there cannot be dissension within the body of Christ (the Church; Meyendorff 1978, 36) or division within the oneness of the Spirit which unites Christians (1 Cor 12). Practically, this unanimous duality is achieved by the excommunication or un-fellowing of the minority, which occurs at times of schism and during sobory. In these deliberations, salvation deal-breakers (SDB) and uncompromisables emerge as the pivotal points between 'Us' and 'Them', in other words, as co-religiosity deal-breakers (CBD) These alter with time and between Old Believer communities. For example, the original priestless Erie congregation kept a separate section of the cemetery for those who died "not in good standing," where rest the bodies of men who shaved, the un-confessed, and the stillborn. Now, in Erie, men shaving and women cutting their hair are no longer considered incontrovertible deal-breakers, as they still are in Nikolaevsk. Such shifting determinants of damnation divide the co-religious. Tracing the fluctuating decrees of acceptable accommodation to today's 'modern' world (that I term selective modernity decisions) between urban Erie and more recently immigrated Nikolaevsk Old Believers and within each community over time demonstrates the internal regulation of forces of change and continuity.

The "modern" and "the world" are two overlapping frameworks juxtaposing authentic Christianity as described by Old Believers. The two terms as well as "secular" are sometimes used as synonyms, for example, "the secular world has a hard time celebrating Easter. It seems now that it is turning into a mini Xmas! You know, eggs hanging on a tree, Easter Bunny..." (CHT Newsletter, March and April 2012). I wish to get beyond descriptions of social change and worldly (societal) temptations in the present (Chapter Three) by turning to the 'religious' factors that polarize choice actions in the first place.

By contextualizing the 1983 microschisms within a longer history of the priesthood question, I mean to draw attention away from the (yes, relevant) socio-historical factors of Russian (i.e., 'Old World') versus American ('New' World') settings. I demonstrate how broader dualistic and transcendental tensions are shared by distinct ORRO groups across time and space (Chapter Two). The common denominators which unite non-co-religious ORRO groups speak to the key elements of Old Belief. American Old Believers are united in their desire for religious continuity,

they simply disagree as to *how* to achieve ORRO preservation in an increasingly pluralistic and secular world. Eisenstadt argues that pluralistic tensions between universalistic and exclusivist tendencies to be a defining aspect of modernity, and a frequently destructive one at that: "The continual tensions and confrontations between pluralistic and totalistic tendencies constitute not only a basic fact in the constitution of modern institutional orders—but also a central component of the ideological dimension of these orders, and those confrontations have been of central importance in shaping the development of modern societies" (2005a, 31; also Eisenstadt 2005b, 2011). As I discuss in Chapter Seven, the Church (early and modern alike) as both an institution and idea has certainly been shaped by tension between universalism and exclusion.

American Old Believers experienced conflict over culturally specific selective modernity questions (e.g., can we shave if required for occupation? Can we translate services into English?), but the greater tension between mundane and eternal worlds is a widely shared in some form by Christians of all stripes and spaces (Robbins 2003, 196). The conceptual division between sacred and profane as a conceptual framework for the dual worlds of religious practitioners has been fundamental to the broader field of the anthropology of religion. For theorists who follow Jaspers ([1953] 2021) and Eisenstadt (1982), this bifurcation of transcendental/mundane worlds was similarly revolutionary to the philosophy of history since the "axial age" 300-800 years before Christ's birth (also called the "age of transcendence," although like the modernity, a definitive starting point of the era is debated, Arnason 2005, 80; Ben-Rafael and Sternberg 2005; Eisenstadt 2011). The tension is clearly exclusive to neither Christianity nor modernity.

The 1653 ROC schism and the 1983 microschisms in Erie and Nikolaevsk were both the result of Old Believers' selective modernity, wherein formerly united groups were riven in the process of determining acceptable change. The world is modern, and the modern signifies an embracing of the world. Both concepts are aligned with evil, materialism, the Antichrist, and secularity by traditionalists like the Old Believers (Scheffel 1991, Humphrey 2014, 221). The notion that modernity is a "moving target" (Goody 2004) is precisely the point. The modern target is moving in the wrong direction. For Old Believers, it signifies a move away from 'community', 'family values', 'a prayer-based and godly life', and God's will. The bezpopovtsy and popovtsy agree on this point. They disagree about what God's will for the Church looks like in practice and how much accommodation to the world is acceptable. The secluded enclaves in Nikolaevsk or Alberta and the more urban congregations in Erie and Oregon (or at least considered to urban

adjacent by those who moved north) are all practicing selective modernity, where every choice, every action, and every decision interacts, crosses, and draws lines of separations between this world and the next.

There are dualisms within Orthodox theology beyond the scope of this study, such as the discussion of the transcendent (God beyond human comprehension) and immanent (God experienced), and apophatic (way of negation)/kataphatic (way of affirmation) knowledge of the divine (Carroll 2017, 10-11, 16). There are also dualistic frameworks employed by anthropologists to understand Orthodox Christianity that I must set aside for the present work, for example, Naumescu's argument that Eastern Orthodoxy uniquely balances the "dynamic tension" between the imagistic and doctrinal modes of religiosity that Whitehouse (2000) argued was present in all religions (2007, 2010, 156). For this work, I focus on the American Old Believers' co-religiosity choices as they relate to their dogmatic and theo-historical convictions and the dichotomous categories that variously informed their determinations of how to best and most authentically safeguard ORRO continuity.

The concept of "free will" is a common Christian moral theme that illustrates the dualistic tension between individuals' decision-making in the mundane now and their considerations of the transcendental always. Or, phrased differently, the tension between the human desire and divine will as it affects moral action. The saved triumph over today's temptations and renounce mortal flesh to "walk in the Spirit."[40] This moral duality mirrors a social duality of un/worldliness, reflected in Old Believers' categorization of *mirskie* (the worldly—Others) and *nimirskie* (those not of the world--righteous living ORRO Christians; Rogers 2009, 45-50). This tension is also reflected in Orthodoxy's temporal and existential duality (Humphrey 2014, 216, 224; Carroll 2017, 16). This

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[40] I have found this phrase particularity inspiring and illustrative of the transcendental challenge of lived Christian dualism. "This I [Apostle Paul] say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would...Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." (Gal 5:16-17...19-25, KJV)

conflict is a broader theme in the anthropology of Christianity, for example, in Lester's (2003) discussion of Roman Catholic novice's struggle with releasing the illusion of 'their time' for the eternal divine's, or Kraybill's (1994c) discussion of the Amish's temporal "hybrids" that allow them to negotiation economic progress with their traditional identity (47).[41] The Orthodox liturgical cycle keeps practitioners in the drama of Christ's life and passion—a tragedy annually performed and personally relevant and practiced through fasts, confessions, and prayers. Whether or not one believes that the Apocalyptic End is imminent or only a distant possibility, death is an ever-present risk. Salvation religions tally one's lifetime deeds,[42] making each act a moral stance against a litany of damnable transgressions.

This thesis addresses the fundamental dualisms that cause the schisms that divide Christian groupings. Mortality imbues each day's challenge to live and walk in the Spirit, to keep unanimity or oneness with the will of God for humanity and the Church against its constant adversary. This is the cross of living dualism. In Ammerman's wonderful volume, *Everyday Religion* (2007), on how religion informs perspectives and social relationships and is otherwise "lived," experienced, and practiced *outside* of the sacred space and times of prayer and services, it is clear that the negotiation of religious precepts to practical life is not a challenge reserved for ultra-conservative groups like the Old Believers. More generally, "Religion, then, is the archetypal spatial and temporal boundary crosser" (Levitt 2007, 111, same volume). In between these black and white poles of right and wrong, mundane and eternal, there is a wide gray sea of ambiguity; the believer is tasked with determining how to sail to the right shore (salvation). To better understand this navigation, I suggest focusing on those moments of time, the schisms and sobory, when an action (e.g., forming exogamous unions) or concept (e.g., apostolic succession) erupts as a conscientious choice that redefines group belonging based on a consensus of theological convictions. Why did this change, accommodation, canon law, practice become a deal-breaker? And why now? Therein lies the choice—and the question of this research.

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[41] Cannell (2005) critiques that perhaps the subfield has focused too much on the asceticism and temporal (and other) dualisms, which are not relevant for groups like the Mormons (335).

[42] The Book of Life is read on Judgment Day (Rev 20:11-5).

1.2. East of the Anthropology of Christianity

This dissertation is framed within the anthropology of Christianity, to which I hope to contribute. Like orthopraxy/orthodoxy, profane/pure, traditional/modern and Us/Them—Eastern and Western Christianity is, like all conceptual dichotomies, prone to faulty and unexamined easy generalizations. Christianity's conventional bifurcation into two branches separated by a millennium of continuity along unique paths after the Great Schism (1054) is reflected in the subfield. One of the greatest gaps in the anthropology of Christianity's literature is caused by its overwhelming focus on Protestant groups (as noted by Hann 2007, 391-2, 2012; Bialecki, Haynes and Robbins 2008, 1152; Hann and Goltz 2010). It is not merely a question of missing data on Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox groups.[43] The problem is also that the domination of Protestant Christianity has shaped the theoretical focus and inquiries explored by the incomplete subfield (Bialecki, Haynes, and Robbins 2008). I will address this problem below as it concerns the topics of modernity, the Church, and continuity.

The anthropology of Christianity had trouble getting off the ground in the 2000s in part because it denies its own dualistic foundations and the emic/etic perspectives that challenge the researcher to go beyond their own cultural milieu and to challenge their own tacit understandings of the world in order to understand Others. Only in the past few decades have Western anthropologists really begun in earnest to branch into their own countries, the urban, and the secular, and social zones of sameness that might even resemble the researchers' own socio-environmental background (Marcus 1999). Anthropology is no longer (exclusively) the study of exotic others.

Like Christianity, anthropology is suffused with broad dichotomies for the handy sorting of certain social characteristics (e.g., spiritual/secular, male/female, public/private, urban/rural). Secular, modern anthropology, which posits itself as distinct from premodern mysticism, is similarly engaged in acts of purification (one of which has been a regrettable "marginalization" of theology from our conversations, Lemons 2018b, 7), in an (always incomplete) separation of polar opposites (Latour 1993, 10-11, 95-103; Keane 2007, 23-24). Until recently, the field has

[43] Although it is unfortunate that edited volumes on the anthropology of Christianity, like those of Engelke and Tomlinson (2006) and Cannell (2006), do not contain a single essay concerning Eastern Orthodoxy.

overlooked what Fenella Cannell calls the "Christianity of Anthropology" (2005) and its [Protestant] theoretical heritage that defined our understanding of modernity, religiosity, and capitalism with Weberian connotations and secularization teleology (*Spirit of Capitalism,* 1946, 302-322; Furani 2018) shaped by [again, Protestant] Christianity's asceticism, transcendence, and temporal rupture (see also Hann 2012).[44] Carroll (2017) raised several points of "rupture" in Orthodoxy (sacred spaces and liturgy) where Eastern and Western Christianities may find theoretical meeting places and allow the subfield to begin a shared conversation that better accounts for the great diversity of contemporary Christianities.

Latour (1993, 2013) and Bateson (1979) have complicated and challenged our understanding of the nature/culture divide that influences the study by the modern We of traditional, pre-modern Them. But the continued presence of such analytical dichotomies in our language and field are undeniable. Moving forward, the first dichotomy the anthropology of Christianity must address is the gulf between its Eastern and Western branches. Following Hann (2012, 2014) and others (Rogers 2009, 101, 2010; Hann and Goltz 2010), I argue that Eastern Orthodoxy studies, in dialogue with the subfield's existing Weberian legacy and topical concentrations, will help confound problematic binaries like ritual/belief, mystical/rational, collective/individual, and traditional/modern that I address below.

Talal Asad's *Genealogies of Religion* (1993) revealed the Christian underpinnings of the anthropology of religion, and of anthropology more generally (see also, Sahlins 1996). The overwhelming focus in Religious Studies on 'belief,' as a key index of religiosity, for example, often overshadows other elements. The concept of belief may be untranslatable (Pouillon 1979) or lead researchers to overreach their comprehension of others' interior states (Ruel 2002, Lanman 2007). This concentration on belief is perhaps more apt in studies of Christianity, where "whosoever believeth in me,"[45] is a prerequisite of salvation. But understanding a faith cannot occur by ignoring the importance of its rituals and material, practical aspects, which aside from the work of cognitive theorists of religion and considerations of the ritual's role in the development of human history (Rappaport 1979, 1992, 1999; Whitehouse 2000, 2004; Whitehouse and Laidlaw 2004, 2007;

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[44] For more on the theoretical relationship between anthropology and theology see Davies (2002), Furani (2018), and several essays in Lemons' volume on theologically engaged anthropology (2018a).

[45] John 3:16; John 5:24; John 6:47; Mark 16:16 (believe *and* is baptized)

Toren 2006; Naumescu 2007, 2010, 2011, 2013), have been unduly divorced from belief (McGuire 2007).

This problematic and the overemphasis on the sacred/profane binary has long been argued as a central "definitional problem" of anthropology's conceptualization of religion (Goody 1961). I argue that Eastern Orthodoxy studies can fill this gap in the literature by dismantling the false dichotomy of ritual and belief encapsulated by the nuanced Russian word for Orthodoxy, *Pravoslavnye*, which means right-belief as well as right-glory or right-worship. The anthropologist cannot hope to understand or accurately portray the lives of Orthodox Christians with inaccurate terms and categorizations that fail to account for the theological perspectives of their interlocutors.

Confounding the historical arguments concerning the ritualistic or dogmatic characterization of the seventeenth century ROC schism is the basic fact that there is no neat divide between these mutually reinforcing aspects of religiosity. This is especially true for the Old Believers/Ritualists. "The Orthodox regard their Church as the Church which teaches the true belief about God and, equally important, which glorifies Him with the right worship, that is, as nothing less than the Church of Christ on earth" (Sidorov 2001, 43). Pravoslavnye is how true Christians rightly believe *and* rightly worship God.[46] As the Bible teaches, so too salvation is the reward of faith *and* deeds (James 2, Luke 23:41, 1 John 3, Romans 2:5-10, John 3). This is not unique to Christianity, of course, as all religions are both metaphysical and *ethical* systems. They instruct on the practical aspects of life as well as the meaning of it all.

The modern/traditional dichotomy is found throughout anthropological, religion, and schism studies. The elusive, ill-defined, imprecision of 'modernity' definitions are useful precisely because of, not in spite of, the multiplicity of the term's meaning in theory and observation (Ben-Rafael and Sternberg 2005; Robbins 2005). There are also many forms and understandings of what constitutes traditionalism and continuity with the past, and Orthodox Christianity with its keen focus on historical authenticity is an open arena for the exploration of these variations (Rogers 2010, 357-9). To better understand both modernity and Christianity, scholars need to explore more links outside the post-colonial missionary setting where Christ becomes the harbinger of global connections, individuality, economic advancement, and ruptures from

[46] A claim of pravoslavnye is also a claim for belonging in the Church of Russia, but it is sometimes used as a synonym for cultural and national self-identity for Russians today (Agadjanian 2011, 21).

community and traditionalism (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991; Keane 1996, 1997, 2007; Coleman 2000; Robbins 2003, 196, 2004, 9-10; Howell 2003; Cannell 2005, 340-1, 350-3, 2006, 1-3, 12; Barker 2014). Furthermore, as Hann (2012, 2014) argues, we must also abandon and thoughtfully critique the field's classical dichotomies of the Western Christian institutions as modern, rational, individualist as compared to the premodern, mystical and collectivist East that has colored our perceptions of the latter (or disincentive to explore altogether) as 'a riddle wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma' (Churchill on Russia in 1939).

Hann and Goltz (2010; also, Hann 2012) found the conversional (individual and social) "ruptures" highlighted by Robbins (2003, 2007) to be incongruent with continuity-focused Eastern Orthodoxy. Carroll (2017) argued that this disjuncture was an excellent topic for further dialogue between scholars of Eastern and Western Christianity, which would aid the anthropological goal to more holistically understand "What is a Christian?" (Robbins 2003). I will show how congregational ruptures form new unions more harmoniously united in their theological considerations of ORRO continuity with their social perspectives. Baley (2004) summarized Whitehouse's conceptualization of "'splintering' as a recurrent energizing of otherwise routinized forms of religious life" (111). I would not characterize the pre-1983 Erie and Nikolaevsk congregations as suffering from "boredom" and in need of reinvigoration (Whitehouse 2000, 44; Naumescu 2010, 156, 172), although apathy and reduced participation was a concern of religious leaders in both Nikolaevsk and Erie (See Appendix 2, 3.3.). For one, Fr. Simon lamented the growing disinterest of Erie's Church of the Nativity members and hoped that unification with ROCOR and a full sacramental life could invigorate the congregants' relationship with God (Chapter Five). Ruptures can reinvigorate, as congregants are forced to conscientiously address and choose the faction that most aligns with their own convictions (of dogma or social ethics). They can also cause people to fall away from the church altogether (pers. comm.).

Anti-modernity sentiments that frame an ancient faith battle against the threat of a wholesale transition away from a purer past and towards the post-Christian secular age are also found in places where Christianity has a long history.[47] As in this dissertation, Christian challenges to modernity in Western settings often deal with ultra-conservative groups (see also Hostetler 1974,

[47] Kurtz 1986; Seidler and Meyers 1989, 12-22; Burns 1992; Orsi 2005, 9-12; Roudometof, Agadjanian, Pankurst 2005; Bialecki et al 2008, 1150-3; Roudometof and Markides 2010; Shaw 2013, 119-172; Nelson and Gorski 2014.

Smithson 1977, Yoder 1991, Kraybill and Olshan 1994). The American Old Believers have certainly expressed concerns about 'the secular' as an aspect of the 'modern' and 'world' spaces against which they must struggle (See Appendix 2), yet in their case, their opposition to this supposedly teleological trend long predates the present and has its foundations in the seventeenth century.

I agree with Cannell's argument (2006, 38-9) that the anthropology of Christianity must explore the ways in which Christians also embrace the modern—hence this dissertation's main title: "Selective Modernity [i.e., not the Anti-Modernity] of Old Believers." In another work, Cannell (2010) also shows how, just as "we have never been modern" (Latour 1993), we arguably have never been secular (85-6; nor has religion ever been removed to the private sphere 92-7). That being said, the Old Believers' engagement with modernity has had an oppositional nature since the time of the Great Modernizer, Peter the Great, whose reign began fifteen years after the ROC schism. Subsequently, modernity and the secular exclusion of religiosity from public social life was posited as the antithesis of spiritual life. Old Believers past and present were compelled to thwart this ever-evolving target moving away from a Christ-filled life. As Erie's Father Simon explained:

> Peter the Great and the Westernization stopped life revolving around Christ. The renaissance brought its secular humanism, so life didn't revolve around Christ. Okay, I understand you're not going to live your life every day in the manner people did before. But still, the fasting in the Church, and the holidays in the Church, and the services, and then couple that with the idea of helping the poor, serving the needy, forgiving people, being nice to people. That's what we're really all about. (FS, pers. comm., January 31, 2013)

Yes, the times have changed, but Christians must not forget what it is "really all about." Disagreements about what it is "really all about," and therefore unalterable, are what cause schisms.

As Hann (2012; following Mauss [1938] 1985) argues, the Protestant foundations (*sola scriptura*) of anthropological discussions of modernity led to an overwhelming emphasis on individualism, self-reflection, and interior states (for example, sincerity of prayer, states of grace, repentance; Keane 2006, 316-321, 2007; McGuire 2007; Bialecki et al 2008, 1146-1147). Modernity's individualism also effected the anthropology of Christianity's focus on belief and conversion. In this paradigm, the Orthodox East (i.e., ambiguous geographically, including Greece, Antioch, and most post-Soviet states), is classically Othered as "caesaropapist" (enclosing nationalistic Church-State hybrids, again, in contrast to the supposed secular division of church and state in 'modern' states), traditionalistic, ritualistic, materialistic (icons), and anti-individualistic. The

few anthropologists now venturing into contemporary Orthodoxy[48] thus "face a double trap, since the long-term otherness of Eastern Christianity has been compounded by the overlay of the uniquely modern alterity created by the Iron Curtain" (Hann 2012, 6). I wish to embrace this alterity, for it is clearly embraced by the Old Believers' own polarization of the West, "the Latins" (Roman Catholics), and their belief that the individualistic Protestantism misconstrues the Holy Church and Christianity as a whole.

The anthropology of Christianity is in need of some critical assessment "from the other side." Rogers' work with Old Believers in the Urals reminds us to take stock of this common East collectivist/West individualist binary in order to recognize the different ways modernity is lived and reflected on (2009, 51, 101. 2010). I contend that we should exploit the ambiguity of alterity, the messiness that separates one 'type' or branch of Christianity from another. Researchers of Christianity will arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of the variety of Christian thought and practice by exploring breaking points and variations of its denominations. This is precisely why schisms—the redrawing of church frontiers through an encodement of religious principles—are useful to the study of religion. Simply, contentious elements matter the most and therefore we must study them. The Great Schism (1054) may be contextualized with political competitiveness between Rome and Constantinople, but the Filioque remans essential and should not be dismissed.

Another effect of the anthropology of Christianity's focus on the spiritual life of the individual is that the role of the Church, congregational communities, or "groupness" is ignored or deemphasized (Handman 2014a). When the institution of the Church *is* considered, it is often not regarded as a central aspect of the religion and studied for its own sake. More often the ecumenical bodies (be they Presbyterian, Ukrainian Orthodox, or Roman Catholic) are viewed "as more or less secular expressions of a historically contingent 'civilizing mission'" (Barker 2014, 180), as simply the organizations formed and adapted to particular places, politics, and peoples. As I discuss at length in Chapter Six, ecclesiology is its own branch of Christian thought and crucial to its theology. More generally, anthropology must further engage with theology as a critical component of the social worlds constructed by contemporary Christians (Seeman 2018).

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[48] See the edited volumes of Roudometof, Agadjanian and Pankurst (2005), Steinberg and Wanner 2008, Hann and Goltz (2010), Roudometof and Markides (2010), and Zigon (2011).

While some recent works argue for an increased focus on group dynamics and the role of Christian social bodies or polities as *a part of,* rather than in spite of, Christian theology (e.g., Handman 2014a; Barker 2014; Bialecki 2014; Napolitano 2017), the Church as both a formal institution and as a vital concept of the faith and the returned Christ's directions to his disciples to spread the Good News (i.e., Evangelism) has been woefully neglected by anthropology. Beyond the binary that classifies Eastern Orthodoxy as more communally focused, ecclesiology takes center stage in the doctrine and social life of both Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches.[49] In this dissertation, my dissection of two congregations' dogmatic and historical debates about Church unity will help resolve the misconception of the institution as something outside Christianity, a necessary evil of a global faith.

Existing anthropological literature about Christianity and continuity more generally could greatly benefit from a greater look at Eastern Orthodoxy. For the Russian Orthodox (and especially the Old Believers, as their moniker illustrates), continuity is a requisite of Holy and Apostolic authority and claims of authenticity of practice. Furthermore, it is a point of pride and a linchpin of Orthodox groups' (and their corresponding national) identities (Zernov 1963; Kormina 2010; Ładykowska 2011; Hann 2012; Humphrey 2014). Robbins (2007a, 2014) is correct to draw our attention to the importance of ruptures and discontinuity in Christianity (e.g., as in conversions and colonial missions; also, Bialecki *et al* 2008, 1143-1146). This work is valuable to the broader subfield of the anthropology of religion which conventionally focused on themes emphasizing traditionalism and continuity. Yet, as Barker (2014) reminds us, people recently introduced to Christianity in missionary settings have not always interpreted conversion as a discontinuous rupture from their traditional past, but as "repurposings" and "accommodations', or syncretizations (Stewart and Shaw 1994; Mayblin, Norget, Napolitano 2017). Eastern Orthodox studies can serve as a bridge between discontinuity and continuity, for believers are struggling to reclaim historical authenticity from the catastrophic rupture of the Russian Revolution and the Soviet period (Steinberg and Wanner 2008, Rogers 2010, 357-9; Kormina 2010; Zigon 2011; Carroll 2017).

Research on schism certainly must have a place in this conversation of continuity. It is noteworthy that 'schism' cannot be found in the index of *The Anthropology of Christianity*

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[49] See Mayblin, Norget, and Napolitano (2017) for a comprehensive discussion and literature review of the institution of the Church within Roman Catholicism (12-16).

(Cannell 2006). Bialecki (2014) compares how anthropology and sociology have both incompletely dealt with schism and denominationalism. While anthropology has ethnographic accounts of intrareligious conflicts, these are generally presented as in situ expressions of social conflict, power struggles, and competing moral modalities.[50] Meanwhile, sociology (comparatively)[51] abounds with works that seek to predict, model, or statistically analyze schism experiences nation- or denomination-wide to determine when, why, and how schisms occur. Weber's dialectical polarization of priested/charismatic and church/sect power struggles (1946, 245-252), and Niebuhr's influential and universally cited classic *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (1929) continue to influence the study of Christian groupings and their schisms (Handman 2014a, 206). In my comparison of two ethnographic accounts of schism, I merge aspects of anthropological and sociological approaches by combining localized descriptions and personal accounts with macro "social sources" and the universalist theology of Christianity's socially defined[52] religion.

Like the theoretical separation of Eastern and Western Christianity, traditional/modern, Church(community)/individual, and continuity/change are common dichotomous paradigms that, if not used conscientiously and carefully, can obscure a great deal of variation. I mean to counter this possibility by focusing on how such oceanic and even vague concepts like 'authentic' motivate "real world" actions (e.g., Kormina 2010). Schisms are without a doubt major ruptures. But they are not necessarily theological departures from traditionalist beliefs and practices. I argue that such splits occur precisely over the quest to *maintain* authentic continuity. Below, I will describe the four congregations with whom I conducted fieldwork in 2007 and 2012-2013 who all, in their various and disputed ways, are living life in keeping with correct Christian dogma (orthodoxy) and the will of Jesus for his followers' "walk in the Spirit."

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[50] For a particularly vivid example see Richard Werbner's *Holy Hustlers, Schism, and Prophecy: Apostolic Reformation in Botswana* (2011) and accompanying ethnographic film.

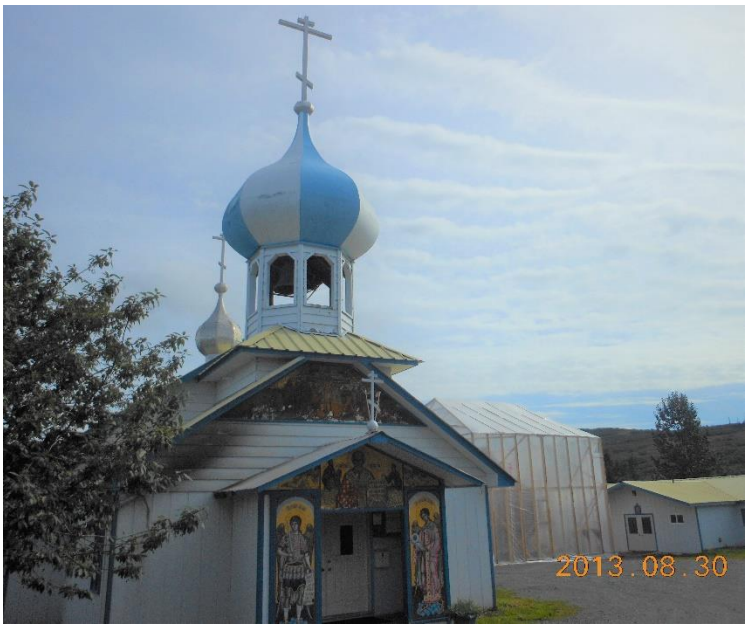
[51] Zuckerman considered the sociological study of religious schism to be lacking, exemplified by the fact that a recent *Encyclopedia of Religion and Society* (William H. Swatos, Jr. 1998) neglected to include an entry on "schism" (1999, 91).

[52] "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (MT18:20) and Troeltsch [1911] 1960.

1.3. Multi-sited, Non-participant Observation

It is easy for the mind to wander in a dim room thick with incense and echoing with melodic Church Slavonic (CS). During my fieldwork research, I spent a good deal of time thinking of the toddler I had left with sitters. If my vocal and active son were there (and I would only take him to the larger Erie church which had a sound-proofed vestibule for mothers[53] with small children, and only then when no other option was available), I would leave frustrated, embarrassed, and touched with gratitude by others' kind understanding. I would focus on my favorite icon. Other times my concentration was almost entirely occupied with the effort to stand still and not fidget. I readily agreed with Marcel Mauss that these people's bodies had simply learned techniques, engrained beliefs, and became selves that I had not ([1938] 1985; Cannell 2006, 18; Naumescu 2013, 86-7), and I began to watch the enskilment processes of children. I wondered how they learned submission and humility as they bowed (Bourdieu 1977; Ingold 2000). I wondered what I was not learning by not physically participating.

Image 1: Church of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, New Church Construction in Background (Nikolaevsk, popovtsy)



[53] I did not observe a father spending a whole service with his child/ren in this vestibule. One or two elderly ladies were usually there as well.

Other than following liturgically timed dietary considerations[54] of the Old Believers' exacting faith, I did not participate in prayers. I did not bow when they bowed; cross myself when they crossed themselves; or plea 'Lord have mercy' when they pled, as I was instructed not to. Church attendance does not equate with involvement, or immersion.[55] Lenten periods give practitioners a greater conscientiousness of not only the annual cycle in the life and times of Jesus, for "going without" is an everyday remembrance of Christ's sacrifice. The daily prayers I left unsaid (specifically the recitation of the Creed) would have reinforced this theme. For example, today is Friday, the day of Christ's crucifixion, and therefore I cannot have pizza for dinner. While this is hardly a sacrifice comparable to martyrdom, the Orthodox diet daily reinforces faith through repetitive choices and constitutes an Old Believer's active commitment to, and assertion of, their faith. After one service at Erie's bezpopovtsy service during I shared my fledgling understanding with Barbara, an elder in the church who I first contacted for permission to visit. She nodded, quick and direct as always, and I felt I grasped something important. I practiced and I recalled.

Eventually, I tasked myself with recording the minutiae of ritualistic detail in a service: how the cantors censed (counter clockwise versus clockwise circles[56] around the altar, the swinging motions of the censors, who and what received blessings and in what order), when and how they bowed (half or full), when they crossed themselves, when "Lord have mercy" was repeated once, thrice, a dozen, or 40 times, when the priests changed vestments, when congregants individually venerated icons or lit candles, what they wore, and a multitude of other points I could later compare between congregations. A rich study of the dialectical and pronunciation effects of time

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[54] Church calendars (or websites, https://www.holytrinityorthodox.com/htc/orthodox-calendar/) instruct congregants how to follow the approximately 200 days a year with some form of dietary restriction (for example, when oil or dairy and meat are prohibited). Morris (1991) constructed a table of the fast days for 1980 (other years would be similar, but not exact in number, given existence of moveable feasts which would, for example, negate a regular fast or allow fish on a day that would normally be a strict fast due to Lent or regular Wednesday fasting): 87 days strict fast (no meat, oil, fish, dairy), 75 days with wine and oil allowed (but no meat, fish, dairy), 30 days with wine, oil and fish (no meat or dairy) for a total of 192 fasting days (Morris 1991, 88).

[55] Theorists (e.g., Hadden 1969) have attempted to quantify religiosity using attendance and participation as indicators, a task I consider to be wrongheaded and ineffective.

[56] This was a sticking point for the first Old Believers during Nikon's reforms.

and place on an unchangeable (Church Slavonic) language seemed possible here. My question came into focus, "What makes the co-religious, the united and Othered Church?"

In the end, this dissertation is not about the fine points. The fact that ritualistic differences matter less to me somewhat hypocritically speaks against my thesis. Am I continuing the historical interpretation of Old Believers "getting stuck on the little things" and what Western Christianity views as the Eastern branch's mistaken, conflation of orthodoxy and orthopraxis? To counteract this claim I feel compelled to explain how the little things or ritual minutiae matter and are grounded doctrinally. To do so without the argument about why the combination of praxis and doxy is fundamental to Orthodoxy would be to reinforce the dichotomies I wish to challenge.

The weighted complexity of "the little things" led me to look more broadly at the regulation of congregational spiritual unanimity in faith and deed. The shifting boundaries of the un-compromisable, or what 'details' are unalterable, and divergent accommodation decisions are made in response not only to "the changing times," but the daily effort to live Christian lives—against materiality, modernity, worldly temptation, secularization separating the spiritual world further from the social and state, and all the dualistic problems common to transcendental faiths.[57] The details become salvation deal-breakers because they are inextricably linked to dogma, and the group's identity[58] as stalwart keepers of their faith.

I am only half-joking when I refer to my ethnographic methodology as non-participant observation, for I did take part in much of Old Believer devotional life. During my research in Pennsylvania and Alaska attended liturgies, vespers (*Vechnia*), matins, canon readings (*Kanoni*),

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[57] See Arnason (2005, 71-81) on former sacred polities of the faiths (Christianity included) of the axial age and Ben-Rafael (2005) on the modern movement to secularize Jewish nationalism (rather, to replace religious Zionism with nationalism.

[58] Sani (2005) also points to elements of group identity being crucial to the emergence of schisms.

and bezpopovtsy *molebin* services,[59] but I was instructed personally or with posted notices specifically *not* to participate. A sign on the door entitled, "For Non-Russian Guests," of the priested church in Nikolaevsk informs visitors of the dress code and requests that such visitors, "Do not perform external acts of worship." The priestless Nikolaevsk chapel has no such sign as it expects no visitors. The same non-performance proscription would similarly apply if a member of one congregation in my study were to have gone to any of the other three. This is social duality and non-co-religiosity in practice.

I lived a total of five months in Nikolaevsk, Alaska (June-August 2007 and July-August, 2013), and eight months in Erie, Pennsylvania (November, 2012-June, 2013) in order to create this account of their histories, microschisms, and religious life. My son, T.J., just over a year old at the start of my fieldwork in Erie accompanied me. My field methodology was necessarily tailored to the distinctions between urban Erie and secluded Nikolaevsk, each setting with its own distinct advantages and disadvantages.

Nikolaevsk's condensed hamlet setting provided a greater vantage point of daily life and greater opportunities to meet individuals, including those who did not attend services regularly. I walked the three streets in hopes of meeting anyone interested in speaking with yet another young anthropologist.[60] This was not a very successful method, but T.J.'s ingratiating sociality did eventually force some personal acknowledgement of my presence that might otherwise have been completely ignored (and sometimes still was).[61] Although I would not go so far as to recommend

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[59] In the Erie bezpopovtsy church I witnessed one Saturday evening vespers, 15 Sunday morning services, four holy days services (Easter Vigil, Ascension of Jesus, Great Thursday Canon, and Good Friday). In Erie's popovtsy church I observed: 12 Adult Sunday School courses, one Matins, two Saturday vespers, 11 homilies after arriving late following the bezpopovtsy service, five full Sunday morning liturgies, and 10 other holidays (Christmas Eve Vespers, Ascension Vigil, Presentation of Lord, Palm Sunday (Saturday Vigil and Sunday Liturgy), a Friday pre-sanctified liturgy and tureen during Great Lent, Last Supper's vespers and matins, the Royal Hours on Good Friday morning, Bright Monday, and Vigil for St. Thomas). In my 2013 fieldwork in Alaska, I attended five liturgies at the popovtsy Church of St. Nicholas and three molebins and one vespers at the bezpopovtsy chapel.

[60] Smithson (1977), Graber (2002), and Bass (2015) all came to Nikolaevsk in the course of graduate research.

[61] When adults were out, they were further back in their yards or ignoring me, sometimes even in spite of my child's ignorance of private property. Children were out more, and generally friendlier, but outside the scope of my ethical permissions. Adults often drove, even within the village, rather than walk.

bringing a toddler to the field, if I compare my pre- and post-child experiences in Nikolaevsk I believe the latter helped normalize my position to gendered expectations.

In Erie, my observation opportunities were limited to church services as peoples' daytime jobs and scattered suburban homes prevented me from witnessing daily community life in the same way possible in Nikolaevsk. But the Erie community is older, and its archival data set is rich. Members of the Erie congregations kept, and more importantly, *shared*, detailed written records including metrical books (baptisms, marriages, deaths), correspondence, meeting minutes, calendars, "Sunday School Weeklies" (*SSW*s, 1955-1973), translated songs and prayers, and other pedagogic materials that were created to ensure the next generation's sustainable, impassioned, and educated participation.

Map 3: Old Believer Populations in North America[i]

[i] https://freevectormaps.com/world-maps/north-america/WRLD-NA-01-0005?ref=atr

Like the modern, globalized life it was designed to study, multi-sited research is no longer novel (Ferguson 2011, 194-5).[62] When researching a diaspora as fragmented as Old Rite Russian Orthodoxy, two or more field sites is crucial. And when studying broken unity, division, and recent congregational schisms, multi-sited research is essential. Novelty in methodology, like novelty in life entering through the sweeping forces of modernity or globalization or colonialization, or novelty in forms of worship (Masses and Orthodox liturgies in English), has added to rather than replaced pre-existing modalities:

> A little reflection...suggests that, in fact, novelty only rarely enters the world in the mode of replacement. Much more commonly, it does so by addition and layering. The new sits alongside the old, rearranging existing ways of doing things, but rarely simply erasing them. New ways are adopted where there are pressing reasons or compelling advantages, while existing practices maintain their own vitality in the domains where they, very often, continue to serve as well as ever. (Ferguson 2011, 196)

These four congregations sit alongside one another in time as divergent trajectories of selective modernity. Each is, at once, old and new, on their individual paths of Old Rite conservation.

1.3.1. Erie, Pennsylvania

The mid-sized city of Erie is located in the northwest corner of Pennsylvania, less than two hours by car from Buffalo, New York, and a three-hour drive to Toronto, Ontario. Its population is about 100,000, and declining.[63] We lived a short drive from the two churches which sit two streets away from one another in downtown Erie (Figure 1 and 4) near its eponymous lake.

During my fieldwork, I spent my days primarily in the Erie Public Library's Heritage Room on the southeast shore of Lake Erie, directly below the popovtsy's Church of the Nativity, where I studied and scanned census data[64] for Erie's First Ward where their urban enclave

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[62] For more on the emergence and practice of multi-sited methodology see Marcus 1995, 2011, Falzon 2009, and Coleman and von Hellerman's edited volume on the subject (2011).

[63] Weiss, Erie Times News, May 21, 2015, https://www.goerie.com/story/news/local/2015/05/21/erie-s-population-sinks-to/24843750007/

[64] 1890 U.S. Census records were almost entirely destroyed by a fire https://www.census.gov/history/www/genealogy/decennial_census_records/availability_of_1890_census.html (accessed May 24, 2018). I reviewed the 1900, 1910, 1920, and 1930 Censuses. 1940 census is digitized and available at https://1940census.archives.gov/.

"Russian town"[65] was located. I say "was" because very few Old Believer congregants remain in the neighborhood. Erie's annual "City Directory," which lists who resides at each address provided comparative data on the make-up of the early community. The Heritage Room also provides computers with memberships to www.ancestry.com, Ellis Island ship manifests, microfiches of local newspapers, and two compilations of Erie residence's "Intention to Naturalize," and other documents that I used to reconstruct the immigration histories and lives of the first generation of American Old Believers and their children. Mercyhurst University and the Erie County Historical Society's archives and archivist, Annita Andrick, were also greatly helpful in getting beyond congregants' living memories.

This wealth of documentary data was not available in Nikolaevsk. For example, the most recent U.S. census data released (1940), which provides demographic information such as age, family size, individuals' and their parent's place of birth, finances, spoken languages, and address, predates the arrival of Chasovennye in the U.S. Other Erie informants' records included family genealogies and valuable compilations of Fr. Smolakov's (nastavnik, 1952-1973) essays and Church Slavonic (CS) prayer and singing manuals.

I am grateful for the records loaned to me by Fr. Simon at the popovtsy Church of the Nativity (CN). These included digitized[66] metrical books of demographic, marital, and burial data. To complement the latter, I also conducted research in the cemetery to look at the spatial exclusion of members "not in good standing," and the post-microschism segregation of those who remained bezpopovtsy. The minutes of the "Restoration Study Group," (RSG) which met to consider becoming priested, and Fr. Simon's correspondence with ROCOR and the congregation, were invaluable to my construction of a historical ethnography of the split. Lola, a sweet and welcoming member of the bezpopovtsy Church of the Holy Trinity (CHT), shared her immense archive of Fr. Smolakov's works and correspondence from the priestless side of the microschism. Because of the generous loan of these documents, I was able to access and assess a difficult time of division and strife that some did not wish to discuss.

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[65] Informants mentioned that the enclave used to be called such; an early newspaper article referred to the neighborhood as a "small Russian colony" (Bankson, *Erie Dispatch,* 1920).

[66] By Dr. Holdeman's, whose detailed historical research on the Erie enclave (2002) has been tremendously useful.

Fr. Smolakov composed over 750 Sunday School Weeklies (*SSW*), which are primarily sermons with a postscript of social news, Lenten information, and service and confession schedules. The liturgical calendar's Epistle and Gospel readings determined each *SSW*'s subject, as Fr. Smolakov retold parables and lessons from that week's readings to augment the community's declining CS comprehension (*SSW*#763, June 24, 1973). I used a random integer generator[67] to select five issues for each year (total of 95), and coded common themes, including time (anti-modern, anti-change, End time), salvation/judgment, dualism (good/evil, clean/dirty, worldly/eternal), ritual questions, and perceived external and internal threats to their religious community (See Appendix 2).

In Chapters Five and Six of this dissertation, I investigate the historical and theological debates of the microschism through a textual analysis of the sources used in the *SSW*s, Restoration Study Group, and 12 U. S. Pomortsy Conferences between the years 1953 and 1966. I coded these primary documents for biblical, canonical, and patristic references as well as songs and oral histories to show who and what has authority to determine orthodoxy, practice, and acceptable accommodation. The Erie community's selective modernity debates were well documented.

I also conducted semi-structured interviews (See Appendix 1) with members of Erie's bezpopovtsy and popovtsy congregations. On the bezpopovtsy side, Fr. Larry almost always made himself available to me for post-service chats. Three women also spoke to me at greater length in their homes; all knowledgeable elders, as there were no young or even middle-aged regular members in attendance at the CHT. On the popovtsy side, I sat down for three long discussions with Fr. Simon, and six individuals gave me interviews. Their life histories and accounts of religious life in the Erie enclave helped personalize the paper trail of Old Believer immigration and microschism.

1.3.2. Nikolaevsk, Alaska

Sterling Highway stretches some 220 miles/350km down the Kenai Peninsula from Anchorage in the north to down to Homer, a major tourist destination as the self-proclaimed "Halibut Fishing Capital of the World."[68] The byway boasts stunning views of the Gulf of Alaska,

[67] https://www.random.org/integers/

[68] http://www.homeralaska.org/

Cook Inlet, a receding glacier, mountains, and icy volcanoes. The way is slow in the summer due to a frustrating caravan of slow-moving RVs, and slower—and deadlier—in the snow. But if you turn down the dangerously meandering North Fork Road in Anchor Point, a tiny town about a half an hour drive from Homer, you will find Nikolaevsk settled 10 miles (16km) into the evergreen forest. A green road sign and an arrow announce " Nikolaevsk Village" to the very few tourists who find their way there. After a mile and a half of murderous turns and hills the road straightens out to reveal a tight enclave. On the left is the Nikolaevsk School (K-12) and its playground, field, and basketball court alongside the Nikolaevsk's hybrid Post Office/General Store that stocks more sewing supplies, dresses, and scarfs than foodstuffs.

Image 2 and 3: Nikolaevsk General Store

The main road, perhaps a half mile long, ends with the blue and white domed, now-popovtsy, church that shares the village's namesake, St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, patron saint of Russia. Behind that looms its larger (then) unfinished replacement. The road then narrows and turns from asphalt to dirt as it curves up a hill leading to the small cemetery, waterworks, a few more isolated houses, and a tremendous view of the whole of Nikolaevsk and the two "back-villages," cut out of a sea of evergreens (Image 4).

Perpendicular to the church, Nikolaevsk Rd. continues unpaved a short distance towards a horizon marked by the distant volcanoes across Cook Inlet where the road ends, and another, narrower one splits in either direction leading to the bezpopovtsy "back villages." Among these few, scattered, occupied homes, interspersed with dilapidated, empty houses sporting "No Trespassing" signs, is the bezpopovtsy's place of worship. In the summers of 2007 and 2013, I

lived with a non-Old Believer long-time (20 years) Nikolaevsk resident, Annitta Roberts, in her home nestled between bezpopovtsy and popovtsy neighbors.

On both visits, I made it south down the Kenai Peninsula from the nearest international airport in Anchorage on the "Homer Stage Coach" to Anchor Point where Annitta waited to bring me into the village. The coach is a large van, loaded with heavy packages that Billy DeLion, the driver, would drop at canneries and small businesses along the way. Billy's simultaneous personal testimony of the recession of nearby glaciers and professed disbelief in global warming theories, as well as his confessed desire to hide away in the mountains, still strike me as quintessentially Alaskan: at once politically conservative and radically exclusive. On my second visit, I noted that since I had been there last, Nikolaevsk, as a place of polarities, had collected a few more of Billy's off-the-grid types seeking social withdrawal.

My view of the village is admittedly limited by the fact that both of my visits took place in the summer—a short, busy, lukewarm season that encompasses two Lenten periods (Apostles' and Dormition) and state-controlled (time and weight limits), commercial fishing endeavors. The men were often gone fishing, but the village was unusually quiet, given that its population of 350 can be found mostly in a small area of closely spaced houses along four short, connected roads which, to an overflying eagle, would resemble an '#' cut into the forest. The tense quiet lends an eerie quality to the village's picturesque volcano views. 'Where are all the people?' 'When is it going to blow?' But I already knew *this* neighbor did not speak to *that* neighbor, and that every contact was an observed choice that potentially drew me away from others. I was both set up for awkwardness as well as feeling awkward myself.

Annitta and I attended the weekly Farmer's Market in Homer where I helped sell bake goods (Annitta made pies, T.J. and I made banana bread and brownies). This provided a chance to meet Old Believers who lived in the villages off Homer's Kachemak Bay. When T.J. was with me, I would just chase him, try to teach elementary notions of property ("Not our booth!"), prevent him from disrupting the local musicians ("Not your drum!"), and hang out at the "kiddie corner," where children could participate in arts and crafts and learn to garden. So we met many people who frequented and sold goods at the market (which included a couple of Old Believers), but had relatively short and limited conversations.

As in Erie, in Nikolaevsk I attended services in both congregations and conducted a similar, although contextually specific, interviews. Several people were willing to informally discuss

the community and Old Rite religiosity, but only five (one bezpopovtsy and four popovtsy) agreed to longer interviews. My interviews were in English, the sole language spoken by most Old Believers in Erie and the secondary, if not primary, language of all but the eldest inhabitants of Nikolaevsk. Nikolaevsk parents speak candidly of their children's preference for English and disinterest in Russian. Some have made admittedly futile attempts to enforce Russian-at-home rules as they experience the death-throws of their mother tongue (GH, pers. comm., July 8, 2013) a battle already lost by Pennsylvanian Old Believers (Holdeman 2002).

In contrast to Erie, my primary documents in Nikolaevsk are few, including an English translation of daily prayers and the bilingual oral histories and cultural information published by Nikolaevsk School as heritage projects (Silva 2009). But also, in contrast to the very limited scholarly work on the Erie community, numerous anthropologists and linguists have produced monographs on the American Old Believers in Alaska and Oregon. In both places, local libraries contained files of newspaper articles concerning Old Believer settlement in the area as well as microfiche (Erie) and physical (Homer) archives of newspapers that I searched for additional information. This combination of primary and secondary local sources and data, ritual observations, and interviews informed my construction of the following chapters.

1.4. Overview of Chapters

It is my contention that schisms are a window into the essence of a religion. What does a group believe? How do they practice these beliefs? How do they define their group, and conversely define others as non-believers or apostates, based on these beliefs? These are a few of the murky questions asked by anthropologists of religion, even where the term 'belief' is inappropriate or inadequate, a group is characterized by the principles and perspectives it holds, Pouillon 1979; E. Turner et al. 1992; Ruel 2002). Longitudinal studies of the recurrent divisive issues experienced by a branch of a religion, here ORRO as a whole, elucidates commonly held tenets and essential components that are otherwise ephemeral or unspoken. These contentious doctrines and theological queries (the content, or matter of dispute) must be as central as social contextualization to the anthropological study of religious conflicts. Moments of intrareligious division when Us/Them, believer/non-believer boundaries are conscientiously debated and drawn tells us what really matters, the 'belief system's' unalterable Truths and closely held identity-constructs and convictions. Who are the Old Believers?

My dissertation highlights the practical and theological concerns held in common by American Old Believers in the course of examining how these same issues have repeatedly divided ORRO congregations and concords over four centuries. Beyond time and place, issues like the priesthood question have repeatedly divided Old Believer groupings because it is a critical component of ORRO Christians' identity, faith, and perspectives of their place in the world. To reflect the similarities in the experiences of Old Believers in Erie and Nikolaevsk, I have organized my chapters thematically rather than bifurcating the dissertation by fieldsite. While giving due attention to the contextual importance of time and place, I use Old Believers' religious debates and discourse to get beyond the here and now logistical details and social context of their conflicts. Schism is a magnifying lens of a group's faith that clarifies the key, fundamental elements (salvation deal-breakers) people use to redraw the social boundaries of co-religiosity. The following chapters explore these defining moments.

Chapter Two gives the reader the basic background history of ORRO and the subgroups who immigrated to the U.S. My primary goal in this chapter is to show how the priesthood question that first divided the first Old Believers in the late seventeenth century is intertwined with theological concerns (especially ecclesiological and eschatological ones) over worldly accommodation. These are the same issues which split the Erie and Nikolaevsk priestless congregations in 1983. Cyclical conflicts such as these are caused by elemental matters because it is what matters most (i.e., how to maintain ORRO under ever-changing challenges) that has the greatest potential to split co-religionists into divergent threads of continuity and selective modernity. My secondary goal in this chapter is to demonstrate the many, many ways in which the sectarian and socio-environmental histories of the Erie and Nikolaevsk communities differ. I argue that the similarity in the two congregations' conflicts in light of their dissimilarities in every other aspect demonstrates the religious sources of the microschism.

Perhaps contrary to expectations for a religious group so internally divided, one of the aspects that Old Believers past and present, priestless and priested, hold in common is an overwhelming concern with maintaining their group's oneness and unity (or sobornost'). The caveat that has so often broken ORRO co-religiosity is that everyone must be 'one' in their state of grace and pravoslavnye (can there be more than one 'right faith' and 'right practice'?). In other words, unanimity is created in part by an exclusion of those out of grace and heretics. Chapter Three is a discussion of generally held Orthodox conceptions of co-religious oneness as it relates

to (similarly dualistic) anthropological discussions of purity. Old Believers' social duality (non-co-religious/co-religious; doomed/saved; unclean/clean) determinations and practices seek to protect pravoslavnye, which is predicated on continuity with the Church Fathers,[69] canon law, scripture, and pamiats (traditions and memories passed down, RSG 3, September 22, 1982; Billington [1966] 1970, 62; Humphrey 2014, 218). On the institutional scale, the seventeenth century ROC schism and attendant claims of heresy and broken continuity exemplifies this process of union-making through separation. On the local scale, the actions or moral failings which cause an individual to lose oneness and necessitate their removal from common worship and/or social participation similarly highlight a group's understanding of 'rightness'. Here, I review the social means from segregation to endogamy American Old Believers have used to maintain their oneness and continuity with authentic Christianity (orthodoxy) and oneness of congregants' spiritual states (purity and state of grace).

One intervention of my work to the anthropology of Christianity (besides contributing to the relative dearth of works on Eastern Orthodoxy) is to argue for greater inclusion of theology in our analyses (an increasingly common trend of late Carroll 2017, Lemons 2018, Robbins 2020). I do no not deny the effects of immigration on Old Believers' lives but contend that social context should not be our sole focus in determining the source of schism (Niebuhr 1929, Wilson 1971). Chapter Four presents my attempt to account for the divine actor (and judge) in play in Old Believers' determinations of co-religiosity and their motivation to protect their relationship with God and reception of his grace. Grace, like anthropological considerations of purity, is one half of a sweeping dichotomy of moral qualification (the opposite being impure and cursed, the latter Pitt-Rivers labeled a "negative grace" ([1992] 2011, 426), that practically sorts individuals into those who may or may not worship and/or socialize with one another. Old Believers' presumptions of Others' states of grace, from their community members excluded for transgressions to their rejection of the ROC for its heretical contamination, is a common borderline of belonging.

I look at how rupture may serve as a form of continuity. To Old Believers, as their name appropriately implies, continuity *is* authenticity. Their divergent understandings of the correct manner of worshipping and applying moral principles found in scripture daily life (e.g., to imitate

[69] I capitalize this collective source that stands for renowned Christian writers (now saints, for example, St. Basil) of the first half millennium of Christian history because my primary sources do.

Christ's actions and spirit 1 Cor 4:16, 1 Cor 11:1) are collectively decided during schisms; two separate paths of continuity emerge in the aftermath. In Chapter Five, I provide an ethnohistorical account of the timeline, process, events, and aftermath of the microschisms in Erie and Nikolaevsk to demonstrate that despite the interpersonal conflicts and extenuating 'outside' socio-environmental pressures (of Americanization, suburbanization, language loss), their congregational ruptures were 'religious' in nature. Both communities debated specific points of canon law, scripture, ritual practice, and their own broader theo-historical narratives and perspectives about the Church, apostolic succession, and their relationship to the ROC and mainstream Orthodoxy. Ultimately, American Old Believers, like so many ORRO communities before them, were divided over how to best keep continuity with the unchangeable, essential elements of their faith while selectively adapting to the practical challenges of the modern world.

From the detailed ethnohistorical accounts of the Erie and Nikolaevsk microschisms I move onto the large, fundamental questions of ORRO theo-history and subgroup identity in Chapter Six. Schism exposes, dissects, and reaffirms contentious uncertainties of an ORRO group's orthodox definitions (determinations of right practice and right dogma) as well as Church members' and congregants' more generalized theological perspectives (for example, about apostolic succession or the Antichrist). Intrareligious debate also demonstrates how authenticity is determined—who says what is Orthodox and saving? Who is authorized to determine 'rightness'? Generally speaking, schisms ask people who they are and what they believe, and define co-religiosity in the process. I take a closer look at the specific questions that Old Believers have recurrently asked themselves in times of rupture. Different answers construct different paths of ORRO continuity. As factions answer old questions anew and interpret the same authoritative scriptures, canon, and Church Fathers contrarily, delineations of belonging are redrawn. This is especially the case with the queries most closely related to a group's distinct identity, for example the heretical nature of Nikon's reforms. Intrareligious conflicts may be spurred by sociohistorical changes such as immigration, persecution, and war, but the matters in under contention are theological as groups determine which elements of the faith may be adapted to current circumstances and which are absolute and unchangeable.

Chapter Seven concludes the dissertation with an analysis of several examples of selective modernity and the choices other Christian Churches and congregations have debated in their mission to live and worship according to their theological convictions. Schism is one of these

choices, and a vital one when a Church or congregation is riven by opposing ecclesiologies (as is the case between bezpopovtsy and popovtsy) or soteriologies (as is the case in presumptions of the limits of God's grace, forgiveness, and acceptance of orthopraxic variation). In the course of intrareligious disputes and selective modernity decisions, including those that do not end in schism, the essential and unalterable (because divine, or absolute, or pravoslavnye, or atranscendental truth) is revealed. Beyond asking why and how change and schism happens within American Old Believer groups along well-worn continuity/change, tradition/modernity, or conservative/progressive dichotomies, I will demonstrate how some changes are made for the sake of continuity. The congregations which emerge from intrareligious rupture arise with greater unity of perspective, dogma, practices, and dualistic orientations.

Chapter 2
Old Belief Comes to the New World: Settlement of the Erie and Nikolaevsk ORRO Enclaves

> *This is of course not the end of my aunt's story; it is still going on in Nikolaevsk. And there are other stories as well, as many stories as there are people who came here with plans and dreams and the desire to live and bring up their children according to their beliefs. Not many of the stories will be written down, and be retold in the same words; but the stories coexist and will continue as long as there is one person with a memory and another with a desire to listen and learn about the past.*
>
> —Olympiada Basargin, *A Story of Nikolaevsk*

Contemporary Old Believers in the eastern U.S. (New York, New Jersey, Michigan, and Pennsylvania) have been largely ignored by scholars. How is this fully Americanized ethno-religious group unique from the rest of the country's hyphenated ethno-American identities? How are they different from my own Silva family reunion where the last living patriarch is only one-fourth Portuguese? They no longer speak Russian, and few can read Church Slavonic (CS). Most men shave. Women no longer wear *sarafan* dresses and *sashmuras* (head scarves) outside of church. Many are married to outsiders. Even the elders no longer practice strict measures of puritanical segregation from non-Old Believers. They have jobs that do not allow them to attend services on all of the many, many Holy days of the Russian liturgical calendar. What makes an Old Believer anyway? In this research I have sought the answer to a slightly different question—what makes one Old Believer non-co-religious with another? What theological matters structure the typology of Old Belief? This chapter maps the Erie and Nikolaevsk Old Believers' divergent sectarian and migratory histories, and past and present selective modernities, to highlight the SHARED theological questions which drive their co-religiosity choices (unions and schisms). I contend that socio-historical details of distinct Old Believer enclaves provide the context, but not the content, of ORRO variation. Rather, both communities ruptured in the early 1980s over long-standing theological disputes embedded in their fundamental religious and social categorical dualism.

Across the country live Old Believers of a different stamp. Settling in Oregon, Alaska, and Alberta eighty years after the first U.S. Old Believers came to Pennsylvania, they have kept the cultural artifacts and enclave attributes with which anthropologists (myself included) are so fascinated. Such ethno-religious minorities captivate the curiosity of Americans in general—as evidenced by the many reality shows about the Amish, Hutterites, and polygamist Mormons.

Nikolaevsk, Alaska had its own failed, controversial pilot.[70] These Old Believers have received far more attention from popular and academic authors alike[71] as they confront the acculturation problems the Erie community faced decades ago. This threat is double faceted, although I do not focus much on the 'ethno' aspect of their identity (see Colfer 1985 for complexity of ethno-religious identity as regards endogamy). American Old Believer immigrants identified as Russian, spoke Russian, no matter which country (e.g., Poland or Lithuania; U.S. Censuses of 1920 and 1930 marks place of birth and native language) they resided before the U.S., and their faith is nationalistically distinct from other Eastern Orthodox Churches (i.e., distinguished from Serbian Orthodox and others despite similar dogma and rites).

Old Believers worldwide are facing the key challenge of being, "in the world, but not *of* the world." It is the same problem that divided the Pomortsy from the Filippovtsy in the eighteenth century (Paert 2003, 37; Crummey 2011, 101) and the Chasovennye from bezpopovtsy in the nineteenth century (Robson 1995). Selective modernity, whereby choices are made about the adaptation of traditional, socially prescribed, religiously rooted behaviors to changing sociological contexts, has been a constant, divisive, decision-making process throughout the Old Believers' long history. The transcendental struggle of selective modernity is a challenge common to other fundamentalist and traditionalist religious groups; anthropologists should look to intrareligious conflicts concerning this adaptation process to uncover the essential, uncompromisable elements of a group's faith and identity.

This chapter provides the socio-historical background of the Erie and Alaskan groups. Old Believers' use of generalized dichotomies of spiritual/worldly and pravoslavnye/heresy reflect their broader theological and existential perspectives of their place in the world (i.e., as living *In the Shadow of Antichrist*, Scheffel 1991) as well as the social duality which frames their relationships

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[70] "Red Alaska," aired on National Geographic Channel in 2013 as a TV movie. Temptation, culture-clash, and crises of fait appear to be the common theme in such programing. For example, "American Colony: Meet the Hutterites" (National Geographic Channel, 2012) summarizes its profiled community as "a small religious colony in rural Montana who holds desperately to their sacred traditions while fighting the modern temptations of the outside world" (International Movie Database, n.d.; see also "Breaking Amish," TLC, 2012-4).

[71] Dissertations on Oregon Old Believers: Sabey (1969), Hall (1969a), Smithson (1977), Untiedt (1977), Morris (1981), Colfer (1985), Biggins (1985), Jaffe (1990). Holdeman's dissertation on language death (2002) is the only one that focuses on the Erie community.

with Others (the non-co-religious). Despite the many differences between the Erie and Nikolaevsk enclaves, the historical microschisms described in this chapter demonstrate that both communities' 1983 microschisms were the result of long-standing, dualistic, transcendental tensions and questions surrounding Old Believer identity, religious perspectives and practices. I will show how different conceptions of "Old Belief," (or rather, in their terms, true, orthodox, soul-saving Christianity) are reaffirmed and maintained through intrareligious conflict. Emic group-definitions are recurrently debated by Old Believers who utilize historical, canonical, biblical texts, and oral histories and traditions to affirm pravoslavnye authenticity. I ultimately assert that disagreements in group-definition and theo-historical interpretations of Christianity should be lived (i.e., transcendental struggle of practical theology) leads to congregational factioning.

Rapid acculturation and the confrontation of radical change in the U.S. exacerbated pre-existing theological divergences within Old Belief. As I discuss in the section immediately below, Old Rite Orthodoxy has experienced many schisms over questions of priesthood, sacraments, and degrees of worldly accommodation. In sections two and three, for Erie and Nikolaevsk respectively, I provide the background history of each community's European origins, immigration, and settlement in North America. Old Believers' long history of intrareligious conflict demonstrates that regardless of sociological and temporal particularities, their schisms are the product of negotiating acceptable change and theological interpretation.

2.1. Variations of Old Belief

Erie and Nikolaevsk enclaves split for the same issue—the priesthood question—that divided the first Nikonian dissenters. One level the question is a matter of debate over canon and scripture, on another level, a group's perspective on the state of Church has wider implications as to their eschatological and metaphysical outlooks. When the Erie's Restoration Study Group (RSG) reviewed the history of Old Belief to explore becoming popovtsy, they discussed the range of ORRO variation, from the large division between the popovtsy and bezpopovtsy branches to some of the reasons for the splits between the latter discussed in this section (e.g., prayer for the tsar, how to conduct priestless marriages). And importantly, Fr. Simon dispelled the very idea of a unified Old Belief, "There are a number of splinter groups among the bezpopovtsy. To think that when you talk about an old believer, you're talking about one idea, that would be incorrect, and when you say priestless, you have uniformity of mind, you don't. These divisions continue until the

present time" (RSG 5, October 6, 1982, 5). The Erie and Nikolaevsk groups were non-co-religious before the microschisms.

As background to more recent microschisms, this section highlights Old Believers' long record of internal struggles and divisions concerning the (often related) issues of authority structures and Old Believers' relationship to 'this world.' The first subsection below demonstrates that the 1983 Erie and Nikolaevsk microschisms were a part of a three centuries-old priesthood debate that goes far beyond power struggles in its eschatological enmeshment (more on this in Chapter Six). I then discuss divides over the question of marriage to illustrate how the practical difficulties Old Believers faced maintaining the sacraments after their anathematization from the ROC had greater ideological implications. Finally, I outline a couple historical cases of European Old Believer microschisms to show that resistance to change and the "modern world" is neither novel nor attributable to their perceived threats of acculturation in North America.

The common theme of these distinct histories is the vital role common religious questions play in Old Believers' determinations of co-religiosity in spite of, not due to, contextual, socio-historical particularities. Redefinition of group boundaries through selective modernity, or selective worldliness, and through schism is part of an ancient and on-going process of ORRO continuity (and arguably, a broader trend in Christian group-making).

2.1.1. The Priesthood Spectrum

All fissures of Old Believer groups throughout history can be characterized as disputes over the most pure and authentic means of preserving Old Rite Russian Orthodoxy. The determination of religious authenticity touches on issues of authority and power, which many researchers have labeled as a frequent primary cause of schisms (Turner 1957; Wilson 1971, 16-7; Shin and Park 1988; Ammerman 1990, 168-211). The question of who has the authority to determine the best way of staying pravoslavnye (Orthodox) in a fallen world became a chaotic uncertainty in the aftermath of the 1666-7 anathema that divorced Old Rite practitioners from the decision-making and sacrament-giving Church hierarchy. During the 1983 priesthood microschisms, priested factions in Erie and Nikolaevsk broke from their priestless congregations to join pre-existing Russian Orthodox hierarchies. As background to these recent conflicts, I describe below the vast range of Old Rite social structures of authority, from the global, institutional hierarchies of the priested to the isolated, congregational units of the most fringe, 'radical' priestless.

Until the mid-nineteenth century institutionalization of two Old Rite hierarchies all popovtsy were *beglopopovtsy*—those who converted "fugitive priests" from the ROC. The *Edinoverie* (One Faith) Church was a branch of the ROC created in 1800 to lure Old Believers back into the fold. There, the intertwined Russian Church and State kept watch over those it considered to be dangerous dissenters by allowing Old Rite services under its aegis.[72] It managed to convert (or coerce) some beglopopovtsy, but very few bezpopovtsy (Conybeare [1921] 1981, 127-8; Robson 1995, 17, 29-30). The second Old Rite hierarchy, the Belaya Krinitsa (BK), was established in Bukovina (then in Austria) with the conversion of a deposed[73] Bosnian Bishop Ambrosi in 1846 to the Russian Old Rite.

I describe variations in Old Believers' ecumenical or congregational organizations as a spectrum to highlight the unfixed nature of their authority structures. On the spectrum's far left are the Belaya Krinitsa (BK) and Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR) that the Nikolaevsk and Erie priested factions, respectively, joined. On the far right lie the more radical and isolated sects, which have largely died out either at their own hands with the self-immolation practices of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, or due to strict celibacy. This latter category includes the *Beguny* (runners, those without residences) also known as the *Stranniki* (wanderers, fugitives) who advocated hermitage, asceticism, and flight from society as the only way of maintaining a truly Christian life in a fallen world (Conybeare [1921] 1981, 156-164, 178; Fletcher 1971, 6; Crummey 2011, 116, 184).

Figure 1: The Priesthood Spectrum[ii]

Priested, institutional **Priestless, congregational**

Popovtsy:------Beglopopovtsy------Poluraskolniki------Priestless concords:------Isolated bezpopovtsy------Radical sects
Edinoverie Chasovennye (crypto OBs) Pomortsy congregationalists Stranniki
Belaya Krinitsa Fedoseevtsy Filippovtsy Beguny
ROCOR

[72] More in Chapter Four. See Conybeare's discussion of the Edinoverie clergy's struggles for autonomy over hierarchical decisions ([1921] 1981, 128-130).

[73] Piepkorn writes that he was "deposed by the Turks" (1977, 109), but does not offer additional information.

[ii] Robson (1995:25) represents a similar figure to depict the spectrum of acceptability between "toward Russian Orthodox Church" on the left and "toward sectarianism" on the right.

In the messy in-between there were crypto-Old Believers (*poluraskolniki*), who to avoid taxation or detection, were baptized and married by ROC priests. ROC priests could sometimes be bribed to perform marriages and baptisms using the old books, or at least officially register the individuals' statuses (Conybeare [1921] 1981, 228; Paert 2003, 31; Paert 2004, 559; Rogers 2009, 68, 95-6; Humphrey 2014, 220). Yet another reason why most governmental, regional counts of Old Rite practitioners are bound to be underestimates: persecuted peoples are reluctant to out themselves as religious outlaws (Crummey 2011, 7, 51; Paert 2004, 559n18).[74] This "...blurs the clear-cut categories of 'dissent' and officialdom, demonstrating that neither of these 'camps' was unified and homogenous" (Paert 2004, 557). The blurry categories of the priesthood spectrum are a historical conundrum of Old Believers' identity and positionality in relation to the official Russian Church and State, and their eschatological and ecclesiological perspectives. The 1983 microschisms are a part of this complex narrative of belonging.

Also in the messy in-between are the *de facto priestless* groups who believe that there may be a priesthood *somewhere,* but do not accept the validity of existing hierarchies. Conversely, the 'true' priestless believe that there is no recovering or instituting a new hierarchy because apostolic succession was lost. For example, the Chasovennye were originally beglopopovtsy until the mid-nineteenth century when Tsar Nicholas I's (1825-1855)[75] illegalization of Old Believer recruitment and proselytization cut off their access to clergymen. The scattered and isolated Chasovennye communities became effectively priestless and increasingly suspicious of the credentials, incentives, and (Western-tainted) training of priests willing to convert (Robson 1995, 30, 32-3; Crummey 2011, 102, 108, 158-164).

Persecution left the beglopopovtsy priestless in practice, if they did not entirely hold a similarly apocryphal, 'the Church is dead,' point of view. When the BK hierarchy was founded (1846), the Chasovennye were at their most vulnerable, and most in need of priests. But they were

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[74] And rightly so, for the government's "discovery" of the Beguny spurred a "statistical expedition," which found the number of Old Believers far higher than expected, which "shocked the government into action," (Marsden 2015, 83; see his chapter, 83-117 on the "Beguny Commission") (i.e., persecution).

[75] For more on Old Believer persecution during Nicholas I's reign (1825-1855), see Conybeare [1921] 1981, 123-131, Edwards 1978, Paert 2004, and Marsden 2015. For further context, Pera (1990) describes how the "almost accidental reversal" of Catherine II's (Empress of Russia between 1762 and 1796) more tolerant policies came about at the end of Alexander I's reign (1801 and 1825) (222).

also extremely suspicious of institutions of power, and highly protective against potential heresy. Those more optimistic about the possibility of reinstituting the Church had already joined the State's Edinoverie Church. Many of those who rejected these hierarchies came to believe the "surest way to preserve true Russian Orthodoxy was to live without priests" (Crummey 2011, 102). In more recent times, Alaska's de facto priestless also hold 'bezpopovtsy' eschatological attitudes and puritanical practices (101-2), whereas Alaska's (and Oregon's) priested essentially came to authenticate a hierarchy once dismissed by their ancestors.

Unlike the Chasovennye's indeterminable locus of authority over questions of rites and proper Christian living, the priestless, Pomortsy and Fedoseevtsy concords in the north and northwest of the Russian Empire had some degree of ecumenical centralization. They held periodic *sobory* (councils) of clergy from various regions to make decisions and had key centers for education, writing, and organization.[76] Conversely, the beglopopovtsy groups were scattered across the enormous Volgan, Trans-Baikalian, Ural, and Siberian regions as well as Turkey (Robson 1995, 33; Paert 2003, 31; Crummey 2011:201-2; Humphrey 2014, 220). Isolated congregations (right side of spectrum), or even families (Peskov 1994), had few to no known co-religious communities. This was the situation of the Alaskan Old Believers' immediate forefathers and mothers who fled Siberia into China after the Bolshevik Revolution (Basargin Langlois 1989; Smithson 1977).

This distinction between the Chasovennye's (congregational) and Pomortsy's (concord, inter-congregational councils) decision-making continued in the U.S. In isolated Nikolaevsk, questions of religious and social practices, or degrees of worldly accommodation (e.g., whether to extend school hours and grade levels offered; B. Moore, pers. comm., August 8, 2007), were made locally, irrespective of their co-religious brethren in Oregon or elsewhere. Conversely, before the Erie microschism, the four Pomortsy U.S. congregations held annual sobory to determine correct practices and face new challenges together.

Another distinction between Erie's Pomortsy and Nikolaevsk's Chasovennye branches of Old Belief is in how the power of local authorities are conferred. Whereas a concord, priestless nastavnik, like those in Erie, would be invested with leadership through presbyterial succession (chosen, trained, and blessed by another nastavnik) (Iwaniec 1981,12; Fr. Simon, pers. comm.), a

[76] The Pomortsy in Vyg, Riga, and Vilnius, and the Fedoseevtsy in Preobrazhenskoe Cemetery in Moscow.

congregationalist would gain his authority through simple acceptance by his congregation members (B., pers. comm., August 26, 2013).[77] The loci of authority (global, regional, or local) is linked to a group's attitudes towards the state of the Church and grace in a fallen world. The wanderers and hermits on the far right of the priesthood spectrum are the most obvious examples of this connection.

Robson makes a clear link between the relative level of withdrawal from society and the priesthood question. Although nearly all late imperial period Old Believers might have shared the ideology of traditional prohibitions (like those against tobacco or tea), priested and priestless differed greatly in their degrees of social duality and worldly orientation ('inworldly' or 'outworldly' ascetics, Dumont 1985). The Pomortsy found technological changes acceptable but thought that the faithful should maintain a ritual separation from the world. Conversely, the priested BK aimed for a more activist social role (Robson 1995, 114-5). A notable exception to this neat overlay of worldliness and institutionalization is the role of Moscow's ascetic, priestless communities on Russia's early industrialization.[78] In Chapter Six, I explore further the connection between schism and eschatological expectations, accommodation to the world, and the priesthood spectrum.

Perhaps the greatest divisive effect on Old Rite practice throughout the course of its long history has been the lack of priests. Priests are a canonical necessity for the sacraments that define Orthodox Christian practice.[79] The bezpopovtsy rely on procedures and canonical loopholes put in place for "emergency situations." For example, a lay person is permitted to administer baptism to or hear confession of an individual unlikely to survive long enough to see a priest. This was not a rare scenario in the unpopulous eastern expanse of the Russian Empire where priests were few and far between. The follow section explores disputes concerning the sacrament of marriage to highlight the ideological (specifically, eschatological, asceticism, and broader perspectives on the state of the world) implications behind the practical challenges of priestless ORRO.

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[77] The "Is restoration possible" outline for Erie's Restoration Study Group (RSG), explains how grace was passed on for the bezpopovtsy leaders through a laying on of hands, citing Lev 8:1-13; Num 8:9-11, Acts 6.

[78] This is described as Russia's example of Weber's Protestant Ethic hypothesis. See Blackwell 1965; Beliajeff 1979; Pospielovsky 1984, 69; Duncan 2000, 15; Hudson 2002; Marsden 2015, 56-82, 190-212; Raskov and Kufenko 2017.

[79] Baptism, Chrismation, Eucharist (Communion), Anointing the sick (Unction), Extreme Unction ("Last Rites"), Matrimony, Confession, and Holy Orders (Ordination).

2.1.2. Married Ascetics

Early priested and priestless Old Rite defenders alike struggled to maintain a sacramental life without the Church hierarchy. As it is a particularly complex issue, I have chosen to discuss the sacrament of marriage for several reasons. How to sanctify marriages, a rite which must be performed by a priest, was one of the most challenging and divisive questions to early bezpopovtsy. The marriage issue (whether to, how to) is essential to the discussion of the interrelationship between structures of authority, eschatological worldview, and co-religiosity in the history of Old Belief. Firstly, marriage is both a religious *and* state officiation. Secondly, intrareligious divides were (and are, Chapter Three) a major challenge to endogamous ideals. Thirdly, marriage is an earthly endeavor, God's sanctification of "carnal relations," and therefore vital to discussions of Old Believers' teleological perspectives on the state of the world, emphasis on purity, and the practical application of God's will for his people. Does he want them to remain celibate while awaiting the End?

Marriage officiation is just one of the many ways the ROC and the tsarist state were interconnected and worked in concert to persecute Old Rite communities. In pre-schism times, the betrothal (*sgovor*) form of traditional, popular marriage was a communal rather than institutional church affair; it was a social contract rather than a sacrament. Prior to the eighteenth century, the tradition "...had as much validity in the eyes of the law as a church wedding" (Paert 2004, 558; also, Rogers 2009, 67-8). It became a venue for dissidents like the Old Believers to obtain marriage 'sanctification' outside the Church. The ROC's incorporation of this common law system, and the State's later illegalization of non-ROC sanctioned weddings effectively cut off Old Believers' (and members of other religions) from marriage legitimacy.[80]

Celibacy (*bezbrachie*) was a common tenet of first generation bezpopovtsy expecting a very immediate Apocalypse (Pera 1990, 222; Paert 2003, 33, 39, 46; Rogers 2009, 60-61). This position

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[80] The ROC Synod officially incorporated the more popular, communal betrothal (*svogor*) celebration into the church's wedding (*venchanie*) in 1702. In 1744, Elizabeth I canceled this legislation, but the ritual contract of betrothal lost its legal validity in 1955. In 1775, the Synod reincorporated the betrothal to the church wedding. The Code Laws of 1832 again confirmed the illegality of the betrothal and the work of Nicholas I further criminalized weddings that were not officiated by the ROC (Paert 2004, 558n11; Rogers 2009, 67). In 1839, the Secret Committee on Old Belief specifically outlawed Old Believer civil marriages (Rogers 2009, 64). See also Marsden 2015.

was reconfirmed by the Vyg Pomortsy a hundred years after the schism (Crummey 2011, 141). Stricker (1990) argued that the absence of the sacrament of the marriage had the "most significant" effect on priestless Old Belief because it caused division (32). Indeed, the issue of the sanctification and legitimacy of family life without the sacrament of marriage was the major cause of contention between the Pomortsy and Fedoseevtsy concords. On the surface, the details which divided the two concords' sanctification of marriage appear to be 'ritualistic' or a matter of 'practical' concern. However, the bezpopovtsy debates and polemics about marriage reveal their divergent eschatological and socio-ethical worldviews.

Take for instance the distinction between how the *starozheny* (old married; i.e., married before 1666 or married before their conversion to the Old Rite) and *novozheny* (new married) were expected to live. On one level, the differentiation between old and new married refers to the presence of an Old Rite ordained priest and the validity of the texts used in a couple's marriage ceremony. On a second level, there is a subtle discrepancy between what one may do (without fear of damnation, that is) and what one *should* do. What one may do relies on a combination of scriptural injunctions, canon law, and perspectives concerning God's mercy and forgiveness (Chapter Four). What one should do is a more nebulous conglomerate of 'ideals' of living good Christian lives in accordance with God's will and teleological considerations of the current state of the Church and world on the eschatological timeline.

The Pomortsy originally practiced the separation of sexes, including the starozheny, as promulgated by Andrei Borisov's (the prolific Old Rite polemicist and leader of the Vyg community between 1780 and 1791) "In Praise of Chastity" (Crummey 2011, 137, 151). Conversely, the Fedoseevtsy accepted the sanctity of starozheny marriages and co-habitation but expected spouses to "live as brother and sister" (Paert 2003, 46). The Fedoseevtsy "reject marriage on principle, but this necessitates them begetting their children 'in sin''; in practice, they gradually lessened the traditional penances for unwed co-habitation and procreation (Stricker 1990, 32). The main leaders of the Pomortsy (Andrei Denisov, 1674-1730) and Fedoseevtsy (Feodosii Vasil'ev,

1661-1711) met in 1701 and 1703 to attempt to ecumenically unify their efforts to conserve the Old Rite, but they remained divided over the issue.[81]

Later, in the mid-eighteenth century, the acceptability of novozheny became the principal divisive issue between the two concords as the pressure to permit new marriages was intensified by the natural struggle to survive without procreation and the increased governmental crackdowns on Old Rite proselytization (Pera 1990, 222-3; Paert 2003, 46-7). Gradually, the Pomortsy and the Fedoseevtsy found separate paths to Old Rite marriage legitimacy. Over time, the Pomortsy "invented a ritual" that combined elements of the folk common law betrothal (sgovor) and church wedding ceremonies (*venchanie*) (Paert 2003; 2004, 558-560; Rogers 2009, 61-2). Finally, the Varkovsky Sobor of 1832 formally agreed on priestless marriage practices and dismantled the main barrier inhibiting the two bezpopovtsy branches' co-religiosity with one another (Holdeman 2002, 48). This crucial step opened the door not only to marriage, but intermarriage between members of the two groups.

The bezpopovtsy, however, remained fragmented over the marriage issue. This agreement may not have been universally accepted by the two groups, because into the late imperial period the Fedoseevtsy began calling themselves "Old Pomortsy" (*Staro-pomortsy*) and the Pomortsy, in turn, used the appellation "legal marriage" (*zakonobrachnyi*) Pomortsy (Robson 1995, 38). Also, *Bezbrachniki* (without marriage) groups, like the Filippovtsy and Stranniki, condemned the gradual diminishment of celibacy and asceticism over time (Paert 2003, 48, 146-183). But celibacy, for obvious reasons, is not conducive to group longevity (Stricker 1990, 33). The Filippovtsy gradually died out, or "reintegrated themselves to Pomortsy life" (Robson 1995, 37). To those at the most ascetic and puritanical end of the Old Believer priesthood spectrum (Figure 1), marriage is perhaps the only superfluous sacrament.

In Chapter Six, I discuss how ORRO eschatology and ecclesiology overlap because if the Church and priesthood is irredeemably lost to this world then the "End Times" have already begun. The Old Believer groups with this apocalyptic worldview were more concentrated on the purification and preparation of their souls for judgement, not on the creation of more souls to

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[81] The two groups enjoyed a brief (1727-1739) period of agreement, but their tenuous communion finally broke when the Pomortsy accepted prayer for the sovereign (Paert 2003, 37). This issue was a leading cause of the schism which created the Filippovtsy branch discussed below.

suffer Tribulation. Perhaps priestless marriage *may* be forgivable in these times, in the same way that confession to a layperson is accepted when a priest is not available. But the Filippovtsy contended that they *should not* be concerned with marriage and propagation as part of their general ascetic mindset that rejected "the world" and things of "the flesh."

Even for the beglopopovtsy, converted priests were not always available to perform the sacraments. After the increased persecution and ban on fugitive priests in the mid-nineteenth century, they also began to use the Pomortsy's ritual for marriage (Paert 2004, 559-560). Today, the *svad'ba* ceremony is the largest celebration and occasion for inter-congregational gathering and a common time for the commencement of new courtships for the Old Believers in Oregon, Alberta, and Alaska (Smithson 1977; Hixon 1981; Colfer 1985; Scheffel 1991, 156-8; Silva 2009, 76-81).

While neither of the communities I researched preached celibacy (except before marriage, of course), one of Erie's Pomortsy-descendants told me he remembered a heated debate with a Fedoseevtsy-descendent over the procedure, or lack thereof, required for officiating priestless weddings. By the time the Old Believers came to Pennsylvania the two branches had widely merged into one another in the Suwalki region after the resolution of 'the marriage question'. It is possible that the issue complicated the initial fusion of the immigrants from diverse backgrounds into unified congregations in the U.S., but this is not apparent in the record of the Pomortsy Conferences (1953-1966). One of the goals of these annual sobory was to resolve such differences in practice caused by fact that their congregations were founded by members from distinct regions and concords. The sobory addressed questions about marriage (and divorce), but whether they *may* marry or even *should* marry, was an unquestioned given (See Appendix 3). The third and fourth generation American Old Believers were much more concerned with the issue of interfaith "mixed marriages" (for example, "How to prevent mixed marriages?" *PC* 4, 1956, Q6).

Early bezpopovtsy rejected marriage not only because they lacked the priests to officiate the rite, but because of their convictions about how to best live as righteous Christians in a fallen world (i.e., the social and practical application of their theological dualism). Muscovite extension and exaggeration of Byzantine puritanism was further enhanced by Old Believers in the post-schism era when they were cut off from ROC's ecclesiastical hierarchy. As ORRO Christian perceived the ROC's evolution towards worldly accommodation and ritual abbreviation, they leaned more upon the Church's ancient ascetic principles (Scheffel 1991, 12-54). Below, I expand more generally on

these transcendental tensions that create so much personal and group conflict for Old Rite traditionalists.

2.1.3. How in the World?

Old Believer boundaries of co-religiosity are intimately tied to the practical issues of lived Christianity, in other words, the adaptation of the specificity of dogma, canon law, and scripture as well as the generality of religious perspectives and moral ideals to contemporary and mundane challenges. How much worldly accommodation is acceptable? This question shapes not only ORRO co-religiosity determinations, but what Robbins (2020) has termed their "lived eschatology." Eschatology has been one few theological themes that anthropology has engaged with since the field's infancy (Mooney 1896, most often in colonial settings and concerning confrontations of modernity), but often in favor of the trajectory of millennial movements rather than how apocalyptic expectations may inform Christians' everyday conversations, interpretation of events as signs, ritual engagement, or focus on their personal states of grace (105-127).

Generally speaking, Christian "groupness" (Handman 2014a) is predicated on a similar understanding of how the group properly worships, comprehends the tenets of their dogma, *and* ethically embodies Christian ideals. The adaptation of these ideals (e.g., charity, humility, generosity) to daily life reflects Old Believers' divergent theological perspectives (of Apocalypse, of ecclesiology) and causes intrareligious (and personal) struggles and at times, schisms. This is especially true for Old Believers, with their focus on not only strict ritual orthopraxy, but often on the material and social separation of the pure from the *poganyi* (unclean) in daily life (for example, having a separate set of dishes for non-co-religious guests).

As we continuously see in the history of Old Belief, in the most exclusionary formulations of Christian groupness co-religiosity is redefined and fortified through processes of division— segregation from the world of Others and schisms from those former Selves' whose dangerously ambiguous likeness threatens the unity of spirit (sobornost') necessary for proper communion with the divine. However we characterize schisms' divisive catalysts (i.e.,. ritualistic or idealistic; substantial or petty and personal; political or dogmatic), the coordinated forces of unification and division are selections over degrees of worldliness and decisive statements about dogma and the practical ethics of lived Christianity.

Many key concerns of early Old Believers about marriage, prayer for the tsar, priesthood, and civic participation (e.g., censuses, conscriptions, other government enumeration) were disputes

over degrees of worldliness. One example is a Fedoseevtsy microschism in the 1830s over compliance with governmental registration. This debate spurred the more conservative members of Głęboki Rów and Pogorzelec (both in present-day Poland) congregations' move into the Masuria region (then in East Prussia, now Poland), demonstrating the consequential combination of small-scale congregational divisions and external threats (Iwaniec 1981; Scheffel 1990; See Image 5).

The Filippovtsy's emergence as a distinct subgroup in the 1740s is another example of how the complex confluence of internal conflicts and external threats can result in physical migrations and intrareligious separations. They strenuously opposed the Pomortsy's (coerced) retention of a prayer for the Tsar that is traditionally a part of Russian Orthodox services. Their rejection of this perceived act of worldly accommodation was intimately tied to their eschatological expectations. The Filippovtsy's leader, Fotii (also called Elder Filipp) Vasil'ev (1674-1742), along with seventy followers burned themselves alive in 1742 while under attack from tsarist troops. Those who had fled were among the most conservative bezpopovtsy who preached celibacy and strict social (and ideally, physical) separation from the worldly (Paert 2003, 42; Crummey 2011, 141, 161, 179).

On face value in the search for schism causes, the Pomortsy concord ruptured over the use of the term "*blagovernyi*," (right, or true, believing) in the prayer for the tsar (Crummey 2011, 141). Could such a term describe the tsar who persecuted them? Should they even pray for him? On this single word hinged a critical statement about the tsardom and world at large. Like the marriage question, bezpopovtsy groups' practices reflect their "lived eschatology," in other words how their apocalyptic expectations affect their everyday social relationships, actions, and interactions (Robbins 2020, 105-127). As Robson (1995) describes, what divided the Filippovtsy from the Pomortsy was more than 'blagovernyi', but the "adamant belief that the state was the handmaiden of Antichrist" and what divided the Fedoseevtsy from the Pomortsy was this same belief that the Antichrist ruled the world, necessitating their "psychological and physical separation from the world" and rejection of military service, unclean products, and eating with the *poganyi* (37).[82]

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[82] Today, the Church of the Nativity's (Erie, ROCOR popovtsy) Great Litany at the beginning of the Divine Liturgy contains an adapted version of this prayer [within editorial brackets], asks the Lord for mercy and salvation "For this country, its civil authorities and its armed forces, for the suffering Russian land and its Orthodox people both in the homeland and in the diaspora..." (*OOBP* 2001, 97). I do not possess the CS competency to state whether or not the Nikolaevsk congregations recite any form of this prayer.

A person's spiritual orientation qualifies whether they are 'of the world' or 'in the world.' Of course, this is not an extraterrestrial ethnography: all Old Believers past and present were and are 'in the world', or physically on the earth. To be not 'of the world' means one's actions, intentions, and concentration are focused on the spiritual world, on keeping God's commandments, on living ascetic or pure lives, and on shaping one's behavior, deeds, and heart to be Christ-like. These selective modernity, or selective worldliness, microschisms created new groups with greater likeness in philosophical orientation, not just in the fine points of word choices and gesticulations.

This too, is a qualification of degrees. The Old Believers with the very highest degree of 'not of this world-ness,' chose to leave it. In the early years of Nikonian[83] dissent, waves of self-immolation spread in the fervor of impending Apocalyptic doom. Between 1688 and 1694 as many as 20,000 Old Rite defenders chose to light their church on fire with themselves inside in "eschatologically rationalized mass suicides," rather than submit to the persecutions of the evil Church-State-Antichrist conglomerate (T. Robbins 2000, 205-6, 213; also see Crummey 1970 and T. Robbins 1986). The practice largely died out by 1700 and was disavowed by influential Old Rite polemicists like Abbot Dosifei and Evfrosin and condemned during a 1691 meeting of Old Believer leaders (T. Robbins 2000, 214). There was a "renewal of mass suicides" (including Elder Filipp's) as well as passive resistance to governmental censuses and drafts during the heightened persecution of the reign of Elizabeth I (1741-63) (Paert 2003, 42). A case of self-immolation occurred as late as 1897 (Bourdeaux 1966, 30).

The groups furthest to the right on the priesthood spectrum like the Beguny/Stranniki and *Spasovtsy* (Savior's people) are distinguished from other Old Rite groups because of their desire to be as little 'of this world' as possible. Such groups physically removed themselves to isolated locations, shunned society, lived hermetic and/or strictly ascetic existences and preached a break with the *obmirshcheniye* ('making worldly', often translated as 'secularization', the 'secular' and 'modern' world of the Antichrist (Conybeare [1921] 1981, 178; Fletcher 1971, 6; Paert 2003, 419; Paert 2005, 46-7; Crummey 2011, 116, 184; Naumescu 2016, 318). Although the Stranniki and

[83] Name Old Believers use for New Rite adherents. If I were allowed to take pictures inside Nikolaevsk's church, I would have shared the piece of paper hanging in its vestibule with an outline of the two-fingered signing method above an outline of the three-fingered sign labelled "NIKONIAN" and x-ed out in red ink.

others did not stand the test of centuries, many elements of their resistance to outside society and the quest for a pure spiritual life are held by the more conservative contemporary American Old Believers (Chapter Three).

Roger's (2009) research in the Urals describes a generational approach of "deferred ritual practice" to worldly accommodation, where only the eldest (and the nastavnik), called the *nimirskie* ("those not of this world"), keep a strict separation from profane things, people, and acts. The nimirskie are celibate and expected to keep stringent purity laws limiting their contact with the *mirskie* (worldly) (Rogers 2009, 45-50, 56, 94, 154-158). Naumescu (2016) noted a similar pattern in post-Soviet Romania of Old Believers' return to the church in later life as a means of separating the life of prayer from the life of (secular) work and fulfilling their ethical "obligation to continuity" (315). Forgoing self-immolation and solitary hermitage, while existing physically 'in the world', Old Believers' attempts "...to design and live by a set of precepts that would facilitate transcendence of a tainted world were [and are] nevertheless entangled in underdetermined flows of worldly material practice" (Rogers 2009, 61). This is the transcendental challenge of religious life that forces daily accommodations and choices which, as recurrently happens in Old Rite history, divide the co-religious. As I detail in the remainder of the chapter, these challenges were exacerbated in the course the Pomortsy and Chasovennye's settlement in a new continent.

2.2. The First American Old Believers: Background and Development of Erie's Enclave

The members of Erie's Church of the Nativity and Holy Trinity churches are the descendants of the first Old Believers in North America. This section outlines the history of their families' European backgrounds, immigration, and settlement in Pennsylvania. While much of the narrative about Old Believer group-making centers around sectarian divisions, the history of ORRO co-religiosity is also one of unification. At times, tense negotiations about selective modernity result in the merger of previously distinct subgroups. Old Believers in Pennsylvania and their Pomortsy and Fedoseevtsy grandparents in eastern Europe all experienced such fusions. The settlement stories of Old Believers in both Pennsylvania and Alaska demonstrate how selective modernity decisions also result in group unifications. The development and rapid growth of Erie's urban enclave was the result of great collaborative effort and shared dedication on the part of its first congregants.

2.2.1. Becoming Pomortsy in the Baltic, Suwałki-Sejny, and Masuria regions

The Old Believers in Pennsylvania, Michigan, New York, and New Jersey identify with as Pomortsy[84] bezpopovtsy (Holdeman 2002, 34). I spoke with only one individual who identified her family as Fedoseevtsy, although it is likely that several families now living in the eastern U.S. were from originally Fedoseevtsy congregations that existed in the same European regions (Iwaniec 1981; Scheffel 1990). Over time, differentiation between the two concords dissolved. Group formations fluctuate, sometimes uniting and sometimes dividing, along with individuals' decisions about how to best live Christian ideals in a hostile world. A hallmark of the Old Rite diaspora's historiography and an integral aspect of contemporary Old Believer historical consciousness is the desire to separate from antagonistic society. Below, I will briefly illustrate how the combination of internal factioning and external pressures impelled the bezpopovtsy's dispersal throughout the Russian Empire and its periphery.

The Solovetsky Monastery in the White Sea is an important symbolic reminder for all Old Believers of the determination of an inspiring group of first-generation Old Rite defenders who endured an eight-year siege before falling to tsarist forces in 1676 (Crummey 1970; Stricker 1990, 33). The survivors joined others dispersed throughout the Baltic and northern Russian lands and by the 1690s coalesced into the Pomortsy and Fedoseevtsy branches of priestless ORRO.[85] They are the only two of twenty-five bezpopovtsy sects present in Russia in the mid-nineteenth century which remain (Stricker 1990, 32).

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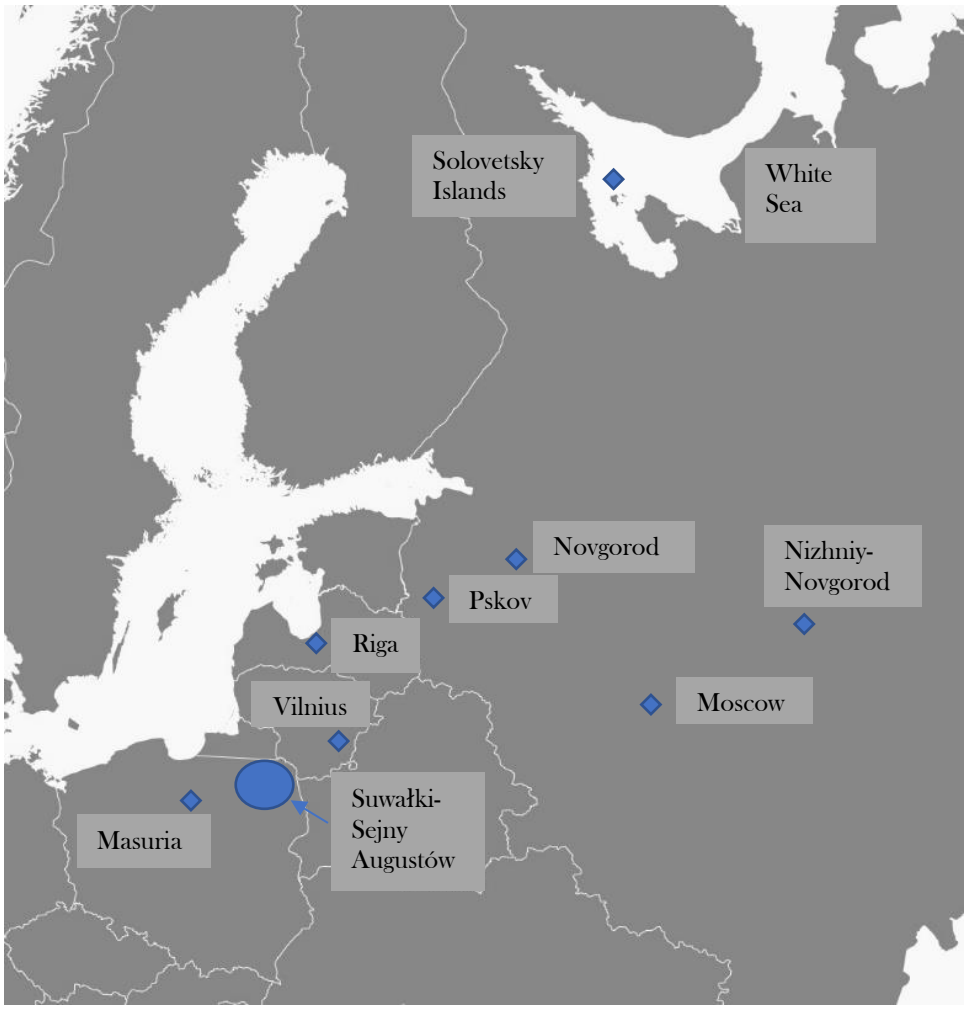
[84] Meaning "from the sea," so named for their early base near the White Sea.

[85] The Pomortsy are also known as the Pomorians. There are numerous alternative transliterations of 'Fedoseevtsy', including, Theodosians, Fedoseev, Fedoseyevsty, and Fiedoseev.

Map 4: Poland, Baltic, and Northwest Russia[iii]



Zenkovsky (1957, 53), Lupinin (1984, 182), Stricker (1990), and Paert (2003) all credit the northern Russian Volga and White Sea regions' strong local self-governance and parochial organization with the strength of Old Rite preservation in these regions. The Pomortsy still worship in present-day Latvia and Lithuania, where the Riga and Vilnius churches have retained active congregations. Hinterland Fedoseevtsy, first centered in the Novgorod-Pskov region, received

[iii] https://freevectormaps.com/world-maps/europe/WRLD-EU-01-0002?ref=atr

support from the influential, and well-funded Preobrazhenskoe community in Moscow (Paert 2003, 61-69; Crummey 2011, 108-9, 116).[86]

Intra-group ideological disputes were almost always accompanied by external pressures, whether from the spiritual impingement of an unclean, temptatious society, governmental restrictions and demands, or outright violent persecutions. The combination of these external and internal pressures often led to further migrations. For example, when the Fedoseevtsy's namesake, Feodosii Vasil'ev, was arrested, tortured, and passed away in a Novgorod jail in 1711 his followers moved into the Kurland and Livonia regions (where others began settling at end of seventeenth century)[87] and in 1721-4, they were granted asylum and allowed to settle in fallow lands in present-day Poland (Holdeman 2002, 42; Paert 2003, 36).[88]

Archival, genealogical, and oral historical and interview data indicates that most of the Erie Old Believers' families came from the Suwałki-Sejny region initially settled by this first wave of *brakobory* ("marriage opponents") Fedoseevtsy (Holdeman 2002, 40-2). Iwaniec (1981) estimates that the first Old Believers to this region came as seasonal laborers in the first half of the eighteenth century and that more settled after the First Partition of Poland in 1772 by way of the Baltic Kurland and Livonia provinces (10). In 1779, the Polish authorities officially granted Old Believers the right of religious practice (Holdeman 2002, 42n39-40). By the first census of independent Poland in 1921, there were 3,505 Old Believers in Suwałki-Sejny[89] (Iwaniec 1981, 10, 15).

Despite this dissertation's focus on rupture, I wish to stress the gradual, merging effects of the passage of time and extensive travels. The Fedoseevtsy who formerly rejected marriage, any governmental registration (draft or census), and prayer for the tsar gradually saw these prohibitions

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[86] Fr. Larry lent me a couple of church calendar books (with requisite readings and service information for each day according to liturgical cycle, holy days, etc.), the one for 1987 was published in Riga and the one from 2010 was published in Preobrazhenskoe.

[87] Courland/Kurlandija was located in present-day Latvia and the Livonia region of present-day south Estonia and northeast Latvia (Iwaniec 1981, 10).

[88] The ever shifting and volatile borders of historical 'Poland' and the Baltic countries complicate these origin stories. Suwalki and Sejny area was a part of the Polish-Lithuania Commonwealth (Rzeczpospolita or Rech Pospolitnaia, 1569-1772) when Old Believers arrived (Paert 2003, 34). The region was then a part of "Russian Poland" within the Russian Empire until 1917. Suwalki became a distinct province in 1867 (Holdeman 2002, 43n42, 44n46).

[89] There were 475 enumerated in the region in 1795.

disappear throughout the nineteenth century. By the turn of the century the majority of Fedoseevtsy recognized the tenets of the Pomortsy Concord (Iwaniec 1981, 10-11; Scheffel 1990, 6; Holdeman 2002, 48).

Lithuanian scholar, Potašenko, described the "Fedoseev to Pomorsky transition period" (1823 and 1906) as a gradual 'liberalization' process that occurred "both through internal decision (such as with marriage) and external force (through subordination to decrees by the Russian and Prussian governments)" (Holdeman 2002, 48-51). Beliajeff's (1977) survey of Old Belief in the U.S. also references this process whereby Fedoseevtsy 'became' Pomortsy in New and Old Worlds alike (77-8). As Filippovtsy communities diminished, members also found their way into Pomortsy congregations (Robson 1995, 37).

Two large sobory in Vilna in 1901 and 1906 formalized the agreement between many distinct bezpopovtsy congregations in northwestern Russia (including all parishes in Suwałki-Sejny) on the questions of marriage and spiritual authority (Iwaniec 1981, 15). Sobory are often the vehicles of selective modernity, a time and place where salvation deal-breakers are reassessed. They are also moments of simultaneous division and unification when outliers (whether too progressive or too conservative) are excised from the majority and formerly distinct groups find consensus.

The settlement of Old Believers in their furthest western European settlement in Masuria is a clear example of the explosive combination of external and internal pressures. Iwaniec (1981) and Scheffel (1990) argue that resistance to census-taking and compulsory military service was the main cause of this migration,[90] but this narrative is equally a tale of persecution and schism. There are always living, breathing individuals behind every religious conflict over how to best adapt lofty ideals to life.

The congregation of Pogorzelec was formed in late eighteenth century when the son (Ivan Stepanovich) of Głęboki Rów's recently deceased nastavnik clashed with his father's successor (Fiodor Timofieev) over the marriage question. Accommodation debates and mutual denunciations (anathemas) continued between Ivan and Fiodor's successors, Vasil Maksimov and Yefim Borisov (Iwaniec 1981, 11-12). This two generational microschism, with all its complicated

[90] Conversely, Stricker interprets this move as a response to Russia's annexation of the Suwalki-Sejny area (Stricker 1990, 28).

combination of personal, ideological, and persecutory aspects presents clear examples of salvation and co-religiosity deal-breakers.

To begin with, Ivan founded the Pogorzelec congregation because he chose to allow the ritual participation of married (*i.e.* not celibate) individuals (Iwaniec 1981, 11). Pogorzelec further showed amenability to worldly compromise, in the Głęboki Rów congregants' point of view, when they complied with conscription. To the more segregationalist Old Believers, military service which necessitated shaving, and eating with non-believers, was a definite deal-breaker (Iwaniec 1981, 12-13). When Old Believers were ordered to register their births, marriages, and deaths in 1820, Pogorzelec's Maksimov again conceded to governmental pressures while the Głęboki Rów's Borisov refused. In retaliation, Borisov was imprisoned and later exiled (1826) and his *molenna* was (place of worship) shut down for refusing to comply with this "sign of the Apocalypse" (Iwaniec 1981, 13).

In 1824, in the face of another military recruitment round-up the most conservative of both congregations appealed to Prussian Frederic Wilhelm III and were granted asylum the following year.[91] In 1827, nearly a thousand people formed eleven settlements in Masuria, chief of which was Wojnowo (Iwaniec 1981, 16-18; also, Holdeman 2002, 45-6).[92] But their peace was short-lived. By the early 1840s the Prussian government revoked the Old Believers' exemption from conscription, public education, and vaccination. Again, the combination of external pressures and internal selective modernity microschisms led the more conservative Old Believers to flee, this time to Bukovina region (then Austro-Hungarian Empire, currently split between Romania and Ukraine; Scheffel 1990, 2-4; See Map 7).

The microschism in Masuria occurred only two generations before people began emigrating overseas from this region, compounding the first American Old Believers' challenges forming a 'community'. While the salvation deal-breakers described above did not play a role in

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[91] Their plea was granted on December 5, 1825, although their land purchases were conditional on their renunciation of their Kingdom of Poland citizenship. Prussian authorities were desirous to repopulate the region that lost 14% of its people during the Napoleonic wars (Iwaniec 1981, 16).

[92] Here, in 1848, a monastery and later a convent were founded by more ascetically minded Fedoseevtsy from Moscow. There is some evidence that Fr. Pancerev visited the famous Wojnowo Monastery to get church books. Father Larry at Erie's bezpopovtsy Holy Trinity mentioned possessing a holy book from there (Holdeman 2002, 40n36; pers. comm.).

Erie's microschism, migration and factioning remain the mainstays of the faith's survival toolkit. The habit of factioning ("schism breeds schism," wherein the Church, once broken, is quick to rupture again along pre-existing points of contention) and the conflict between traditional conservativism and worldly accommodation are continuous themes in Old Believer history. A hundred years in a new country and social setting *without* a congregational microschism would have been more surprising than the priesthood debate that rocked Erie's Pomortsy in the early 1980s.

Mirroring later settlement issues in the U.S., the first Old Believers in present-day Poland came from different congregations each with their own distinct, localized evolution of socio-religious practices adapted to different degrees of real and perceived societal antagonism. In other words, congregations in new settlements are formed with fault lines. But the above history also demonstrates a gradual re-incorporation and homogenizing of sectarian differences over time. The Fedoseevtsy merged with the Pomortsy and "liberalized" in both Poland and the U.S. over the course of the nineteenth century (Holdeman 2002, 48).

ORRO group-making is a continuous, dual process of unification and fragmentation. Old Belief, despite its name, is always in transition. The U.S. settlement story below illustrates the ability of Old Believers from different denominational backgrounds and regions to find co-religiosity in new social environments.

2.2.2. Scattering and Collecting, Immigration and Settlement

What led the first Old Believer immigrants from Russian Poland and the Baltic region to the small mine-towns of southwestern Pennsylvania is unknown. Likely, people heard from Suwalki Poles who returned with news of work and stories that streets were paved with ~~gold~~ coal. The "emigrant letter phenomenon," whereby news and offers of employment spread through those already settled in the New World and welcoming board houses for newly arrived co-religionists helped create Erie's Old Believer enclave (Sokoloff [1914] 1974, 88; Robson 1985, 35, 69-70; Robson 1998, 2; Holdeman 2002, 68n81). Anna Federoff, whom Robson cites as the oldest Erie Old Believer in 1985 told him that living conditions and available work in the U.S. was common knowledge (1985, 32-5).

The first Old Believers in North America came primarily for economic, rather than religious, reasons. Epidemics, famines, raising population density, social unrest over land use and

distribution policies,[93] and poverty created a situation where the risks of travel and a new environment were far outweighed by the chance for "a better life" (Robson 1985, 37; *CN* 1987; Alexandrov 1997, 217; Holdeman 2002, 52; Fr. Simon, pers. comm., January 31, 2013). While Old Believers in Russia experienced a respite from persecution with The Edict of Toleration (1905), freedom of religious practice motivated some Old Believers' transatlantic voyage. For example, Anna's husband left Europe in 1911 to avoid the draft in opposition to governmental documentation and/or a forced social integration with fellow soldiers (Robson 1985, 35-7). Others mentioned increased government regulations, such as mandatory schooling for girls in Masuria (from 1847), and forced birth and death registrations as factors (Iwaniec 1981, 18; Holdeman 2002, 46-7).

Early Old Believer immigration often followed the common pattern of "New Immigration" from Eastern Europe in the late nineteenth century whereby men, either single or without their wives and children, came first and then funded subsequent emigrations. Several men made many trips between Poland and Pennsylvania to guide new immigrants (Robson 1985, 40). The presence of families back home might have meant that men never planned on settling permanently. Indeed, some interviewees indicated that their fathers and grandfathers viewed coalmining as temporary, long-distance migrant labor (Holdeman 2002, 52-3). Anna Federoff said she never learned English because she always thought she would return to Poland (Robson 1985, 40).

Other times, wives and children were brought on the initial journey. And other families were simply too large and poor to afford everyone's journey at once but were quickly able to pay for their family's voyage (Holdeman 2002, 52-53, 60). Lola (bezpopovtsy elder) told a heart-wrenching story about her aunt who was left behind in Suwalki when her grandparents and infant father sailed for Pennsylvania. They were about to send for the young girl when WWI broke out and she was "lost," the family suspected to starvation (pers. comm. February 7, 2013). Anita was still visibly emotionally affected by the story of her eldest sister, who had been sent money for the voyage, but who had used it to get married instead. Much later in life, she visited, and asked forgiveness and wept over her parents' graves (pers. comm., May 23, 2013).

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[93] For example, the tradition of splitting land between sons divided land in strips rather than contiguous plots. Furthermore, many farmers were only paid at harvest and Suwalki was under-developed and its standard of living and wages were an estimated two to three times lower than the rest of Europe in 1914 (Robson 1985, 38-9).

An early local newspaper article about Erie's new "Russian Colony," ends with the statement that, "many of the Russians are planning to return to their country as soon as order is established" (Bankson, *Erie Dispatch,* June 20, 1920). But the Soviet order established created a situation where a change of homeland was preferable to the change wrought to their homeland. And so, the Russians became Americans and established their own order.

The First World War tore through Poland and eastern Russia. Then came the Revolution. Those who were planning on returning found they had no villages, family, or 'home' to which to return. The Great War effectively ceased all emigration from the Suwalki and Baltic regions, and the destruction and/or evacuation[94] of many of the area's Old Believer villages destroyed the link between homeland and diasporic settlement. It was never re-forged[95] (Holdeman 2002, 60-1). The Soviet's annexation of Lithuania during WWII further cut them off from the Pomortsy's "headquarters" in Vilnius and their source of books, church calendars, and nastavniki (Scheffel 1990, 6-7). Holdeman (2002) credits war and discontinued immigration with the death of Russian language in Erie, despite the early insularity of the enclave.

Several hundred up to 2,000 Old Believer immigrants arrived in Pennsylvania from the late 1880s to 1914.[96] Given the worldwide complications of quantifying Old Believer presence, these are only estimations from incomplete census and naturalization records[97] (Holdeman 2002, 54-7).

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[94] The ecumenical relationship between Pomortsy in Suwalki-Sejny and Vilna sealed at the Vilna Synod (January 25-7, 1906) was vital as authorities in the latter helped organize Old Believers' refuge from the eastern front of the Great War (1914-9) that killed more Russians than any other nationality (Iwaniec 1981, 15).

[95] Robson and others tell of visits abroad and attempts to find relatives, but no enduring international network was ever established (AR, pers. comm., May 23, 2013). The language barrier now effectively separates families whose ties were not already severed by wars, decades, and an ocean.

[96] Sokoloff claims, "in my opinion," 3,000 of the 10,000 Russians in the state of Pennsylvania were Old Believers, 1,000 of whom were living in the vicinity of Allegheny County, which includes Pittsburgh ([1914] 1974, 93). He likewise estimated that half of the 400-500 Russian miners in Cokeburgh were Old Believers (84), but these numbers are agreed to be greatly inflated; it is unclear and unverifiable how he came to these estimations; and this piece was likely originally written c. 1906, before the biggest period of immigration between 1910 and 1914 (Holdeman 2002, 56-57, 56n62).

[97] Difficulties included: historical resistance to government registry of any kind; loss of the majority of the 1890 U.S. Census to fire; name changes and misspellings inhibit multisource verification; record silence on women; and frequent moves of people dependent on mine openings and closings.

The story of Erie's settlement is pieced together from disparate details and hazy memories of Erie's oldest congregants. Frank Peganoff's[98] story was told in the first detailed, academic article published about the Erie Old Believers (Hood 1978, 14; also, Robson 1985, 63-4). According to Peganoff, the first two Erie Old Believers, Osip [Joseph] Orloff and Stephan Peganoff, disembarked in NYC in 1892. They were on their way to Michigan to cut wood, a common part-time occupation back in Suwalki (Iwaniec 1981), when they heard that dock work unloading and loading ships with ore, flour, and pulp was readily available in Erie (Hood 1978, 25).

When I was conducting fieldwork (2012-3), even the eldest of my interviewees (86, 88, 98) had been born in Pennsylvania and knew little of their parents' or grandparents lives and livelihoods in Europe. But they were generally knowledgeable and willing to share about their lives growing up; it was a much more pleasant topic than the schism. Fr. Simon pointed out some problems with Hood's article such as its over-reliance on Peganoff's account and interviews with nonparticipant Old Believers. He also noted that, 'every said my uncle or so-and-so was one of the founders. If you asked my aunt [a Patasky], she would tell you the same' (pers. comm., December 27, 2012). In this case, his aunt has evidence to back up her claim, as the earliest recorded Erie Old Believer according to the 1900 U.S. Census was one Joseph Potaski, who is listed as arriving in 1885 (Holdeman 2002, 59). Additionally, the earliest known Erie-born Old Believer was born to a Patasky in 1894.[99]

Elders' ethnohistorical narratives and records tell similarly convoluted stories. Whether or not Orloff and Peganoff were the first Old Believers in Erie, their histories exemplify the

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[98] Robson's 1985 bibliography lists Frank Peganoff's piece under primary documents, presumably never published. I was unable to locate, entitled "The Day the Bells Rang all Day and All Night."

[99] Holdeman (2002, 59n67) points out that it is impossible to know if he was indeed an Old Believer, although variations of his rare surname (Patasky, Pataskin, Pataski) are found in CN church records and cemetery. This Potaski lived at 313 E Front Street, very close to the later location of the Church of the Nativity (251 E Front Street) (U.S. Census 1900, Erie, Pennsylvania, 1st Ward, District 71, Sheet 6A). Patasky family were reportedly the first to have a child born in Erie in 1894 to Rose Patasky who lived at 112 German, although this birth (and other early births) are missing from the Church of Nativity Metrical Books (CNMB) that Fr. Pancerev began in the early 1920s (Robson 1998, 2; Holdeman 2002, 53). The child, Mary Patasky Zuravlef, later gave birth to Anna Zuravelef-Goluboff in 1914 at 102 Parade, who led the Detroit congregation (LM May 28, 2013; CNMB 1, 441; Holdeman 2002, 89). A Ha—ie and Cora Patasky had their first child in 1913 (CNMB 1, 343) and Harry and Fannie Potaski had their first in 1936 (CNMB 1, 339).

difficulties that beset an archival researcher attempting to collaborate relatives' memories with documentary evidence. Variations in dates of arrival and other information between censuses, naturalization petitions, and other records are common. Sometimes the difference in years signals a second arrival from a return trip home (Holdeman 2002, 59n66). Joseph Orloff, for example, is variously listed as arriving in 1885 in the U.S. Census of 1920 and 1888 in a 1916 *Petition for Naturalization* (Morosky, *ETN,* April 20, 2002 [Orloff's grandson, who notes that he was one of the first three to Erie]; Robson 1985, 64; 1998, 2), and in 1892 by Hood (1978).

Stephan Peganoff may have been the first Erie Old Believer to become a citizen (Hood 1978, 25), although Robson was unable to locate this record (1985, 64). Russian names are notorious for their variant transliterations and clerical errors. There is indeed a 1903 citizenship records for one 'Stiwin Peganoff', who immigrated in 1890 or 1891 (*Petition for Naturalization*, 13 July 1897; ESGR, Certification 8126). In yet another spelling, there was a Stephen Peganiff boarding at 309 E. Second Street in the 1897-8 Erie Directory, in the heart of the enclave and just a few houses away from Stiwin's citizenship record address. Re-naming, for example the founder Spyridon Semenoff became 'Michael Evans,' further complicates the archival records of early Russian-speaking immigrants (pers. comm.).

Despite the messiness of dates, spellings, and addresses, it is clear that Orloff and Peganoff had leadership roles in the entrenchment of the Old Believer urban enclave on Erie's First Ward that overlooks its eponymous lake. Before the first U.S. Pomortsy churches were built in Marianna (1910) and Erie (1919), a few of the earliest settlers were also de facto religious officiates. Stephan was one of these men who, while not nastavniki, provided the books, icons, space, and knowledge necessary for prayer (Hood 1978, 17). Peganoff (Trustee) and Orloff (Treasurer) were also two of the seven original Church of the Nativity Directors' Board cited on the church's November 23, 1916 Charter (Court of Common Pleas of Erie County, No 128, 296). Both were also on Fr. Smolakov's list (*SSW*#49, October 21, 1956) of "courageous and devout men" who built the church with their own hands and limited funds.[100]

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[100] Fr. Smolakov's list corresponds with the "subscribers" list on the Church of the Nativity's Charter (Court of Common Pleas Erie County, PA, No. 128, 295-7). In addition to Peganoff and Orloff, also listed are Feopent Sergieff, Jacob Simon, Sam Pancerev [Panceroff on Charter], Trifon Anisimoff, Jacob Klemushin [Klimushin on Charter], Sylvestor Beletniakoff, and Spiridon [Sperydon on Charter] Semenoff (aka, Mike Evans). Their names are now inscribed on the new (1919) CN centennial monument (backside of Image 15)

Much less is known of the pattern of women's immigration outside of censuses and the rare ship manifest. Until 1922, wives were automatically granted "derivative citizenship" along with their spouse (Smith 1998), so female immigrants have a very limited governmental paper trail. Barbara and Eugenia remembered hearing that money was sent from the U.S. to Europe specifically to fund single young women's voyages to create a pool of potential wives for the single coal miners and dockworkers (pers. comm., June 6, 2013). Others' family histories included marriages arranged through international contacts (Dolan 1991, 41). But while documents are relatively silent on women, their hard work and love filled the stories of their children's childhood memories, and could still bring tears to their eyes 70 to 80 years later.

In early years, the Pennsylvanian Old Believer communities were very poor and the home economies of women were crucial to their households' survival. They supplemented their husband's income with baking, cooking, and sewing for the family. Pearl, a popovtsy elder (then 86), remembered how clever her mother was, although she had never attended school. Her mother made all the family's clothing, rugs, and was a fantastic baker (pers. comm., May 26, 2013). Another way that women financially contributed was by taking in (mostly other Old Believer) boarders, greatly multiplying their housework. This also helped foster diasporic relations and aid single young men who immigrated alone (Sokoloff [1914] 1974; Robson 1985, 69-10; Dolan 1991, 46; Holdeman 2002, 68n81). Although the CN Charter and the recent centennial monument only list the male founders (see previous note), some of their wives' names and their material contribution to the foundation of the community can be found in the church records: Frances Biletnikoff had 13 children between 1907-1929 (CNMB 1, 45-6); Mary Evans had 7 between 1902-1914; Xenia Klemushin had 5 between 1894-1912 (CNMB 1, 223); and Anna Peganoff had 12 between 1900-1923 (CNMB1, 332-3).[101] I could well believe it when Lola declared that, "My mother worked like a dog," (pers. comm., February 7, 2013).

Many Erie stories start a three- to four-hour drive south from Erie in Vicksburg, Marianna, and places with names like "H Row" after the line of poor houses hastily constructed by mining

[101] Other founders may have had their children prior to the start of the church's records, but their surnames are well represented in the earliest records, for example, there are 7 couples with the family name Orloff and 10 named Simon (two of whom were early to community, John and Anna had 12 children between 1903-1924 and Sam and Xenia had 9, also beginning in 1903 (CNMB 1).

companies or "Vesta 5"[102] named after a mine itself. Some men worked on Erie's docks in the summer and returned to the mines in the winter, while others found alternate employment chopping up frozen Lake Erie for ice companies (Hood 1978, 26; Dolan 1991, 50-1; Holdeman 2002, 60). Coal mining was terrible, dangerous, dark, and unhealthy labor. And it was unsteady; mines eventually 'dried up' or worse, collapsed (Dolan 1991, 45-6, 50-1; Holdeman 2002, 63). In fact, the yellow brick which built the first Old Believer church (Marianna, 1910) in the U.S. was donated by the Pittsburgh-Buffalo Coal Company after an explosion in 1908 killed 154 miners, including the church's would-be parishioners (Holdeman 2002, 56).[103]

In the late 1930s or early 1940s, after Lola's father was hurt in a mine, her mother convinced him to move to Erie and work at General Electric (GE), where his brother was already employed (pers. comm. February 7, 2013). Pearl's father moved to Erie, where she was born the late 1920s, from "down Pittsburgh way" after his friend died in a mine (pers. comm. May 26, 2013). The decreasing demand for coal after WWI and the opening of GE in 1910, which created dependable year-round employment in Erie, continued to draw people away from the mines and into the city. By 1937 the Erie congregation was larger than Marianna's (Holdeman 2002, 63-64, 99).

When I asked Erie Old Believer elders about their childhood, I often heard the phrase, "we were poor, but happy." The first two generations of Old Believers were certainly the former. Lola's description of life in a desolate row of coal miners' houses included the verse, *"You load 16 tons and what do you get? Another day older and deeper in debt"* (Merle Travis, "16 Tons," 1946). Indeed, much of the average $1.50/day a man received at the mine went back to the company for rent and to the company store (Dolan 1991, 46). But she also used the words "great" and "wonderful" to describe her childhood, and insisted, "I *really* never knew we were poor. But we really were very poor" (pers. comm. February 7, 2013).

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[102] August, whose family moved to several different mine towns, remembered a church school there briefly (pers. comm. May 30, 2013).

[103] http://www.coalcampusa.com/westpa/klondike/marianna/marianna.htm, accessed March 9, 2018, has pictures of the church, and other buildings made from the company's distinctive yellow brick.

The earliest article (written c. 1906)[104] about the Pennsylvanian Old Believers was written by a New Rite Russian Orthodox man, Alexis Sokoloff, based on his visits to a handful of coal-towns. He stressed how difficult the lives were of those who came, ironically, for economic opportunity. Nevertheless, these first Old Believer immigrants, scattered between Erie and tiny coal towns, overworked and struggling, in the absence of hierarchical or financial support from abroad, managed to build the first Old Believer churches in the U.S.

The first known nastavnik in the U.S. was Fr. Trifon Makidonski of Marianna (LM, pers. comm., May 28, 2013). He presumably received a nastavnik's blessing back in Europe, which qualitatively distinguished him from other CS literate men educated on the rituals of the church who hosted prayer services in their homes prior to the construction of permanent houses of worship. According to the Church of the Nativity records, Fr. Makidonski performed many baptisms in Erie between 1895[105] and 1928[106] (Figure 2). His name also appears as the first officiant in Erie's death records, which begin after the community purchased land for a cemetery in 1918 (CNMB 2).

Several factors hinder research on Fr. Makidonski. Details of his life are difficult to confirm, for in addition to multiple variations in spelling of Makidonski (e.g., 'Mikadonski' in Dolan 1991), his surname was later changed to McDonsky (Holdeman 2002, 76) or McDonson (Robson 1998, 1; Pearl said this was the maiden name of his granddaughter, pers. comm. May 26, 2013). He served as an itinerant priest of sorts, traveling to the scattered Old Believer communities to perform the sacraments. He enjoyed a wide-ranging status of respect, for he performed baptisms in Erie even after the church had a full-time nastavnik.

Sokoloff ([1914] 1974) gave several details about the American Old Believer's first "Priest." Unfortunately, a name is not one of those details. Sokoloff learned from his short visits to Essen (No. 1 and No. 2), Russellton, and Cokeburgh coal mine villages of a priest who was born a Prussian citizen, served in the Prussian guards, and was at the Battle of Sedan (1870, Franco-

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[104] Sokoloff ([1914] 1974) notes that his piece was written prior to its publication, but does not cite a year. The mention of the "recent war" (Russo-Japanese war ended September 1905) and Nicholai I's Declaration of Religious Tolerance (1905) suggest a probable composition date of 1906. Holdeman also estimates 1906 as year written (2002, 56n62).

[105] Robson (1985, 65-7) gave the names of two of the earliest Erie Old Believer babies born in 1896 (Jennie, to John and Mary Evans (CNMB 1, 111) and Charles, to Shengay and Katie Sokoloff, (CNMB 1, 386).

[106] CNMB 1, 436

Prussian War) as a non-commissioned officer. Later he "became a Russian"[107] and worked as a small boss on government railroads. Sokoloff described him as being 6'3" tall at 67 years old (born c. 1837) ([1914] 1974, 82, 93), which corresponds to oral remembrances of Makidonski as a tall man (Dolan 1990, 44).

The most important thing to note of Sokoloff's account is that this "*primus inter pares,*" was not generally accepted as such. Sokoloff suggests this explains the fact that "many marriages await blessing in the old country" (Sokoloff [1914] 1974, 93).[108] This speaks to a recurrent pattern in Old Believer congregations lacking consensus, at least at first, in nastavnik choices. Also, as described above, registration for the draft (let alone actual military service), had been a sticking point between bezpopovtsy groups. The nastavnik's Prussian background also differed from that of the majority of early Old Believers, who came from Russian-Poland, thereby increasing the potentiality for incompatible ritualistic differences. Priestless congregations chose their nastavnik, or teacher,[109] from those deemed morally qualified. Such important decisions are never unanimous.

In the vast Russian empire, itinerant priests played an important role for parish-less regions. These liminal and unrooted authority positions became especially significant after the schism left many communities in need of leadership (Michels 1999, 179-187). Unrooted spaces of worship were similarly important when a more formal place of worship, and their form of worship, was effectively illegal. Sava Legenzoff (Sam Lee) in Russellton (100km from Marianna) was one of the early 'religious leaders' for the coal-town Old Believers who helped Fr. Makidonski serve the Old Believers in southwest Pennsylvania before his move to Erie in 1918. While perhaps not an

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[107] Perhaps meaning that he had to later apply for a Russian passport to emigrate, being of Russian descent and given the ever-shifting borders of the region and Old Believers' often tenuous statuses in countries outside the Russian Empire.

[108] This can also point to differences between the Fedoseevtsy and Pomortsy methods of officiating marriages. The former prioritized parental consent for those under 25 years old and did not formally accept the Pomortsy's sacrament of marriage until the forementioned Vilna Synod (1906).

[109] 'Teacher'- "наставлени/е, я- nt. 1. Exhortation, admonition. 2. Directions, instructions; (*mil.*) manual."; three definitions of the verb nastav, the second one is "to edify; to exhort, admonish; н. на путь истинный to set on the right path." "наставник, a *m.* 1. Mentor; классный н. Form-master. 2. Instructor (*of apprentices*)" (ORD 1998, 205-6).

official nastavnik (blessed through presbyterial succession), he led regular religious services at his farmhouse (purchased outside of Erie in 1924) where he led prayers and performed baptisms, marriages, and funerals[110] (Dolan 1991, 47-50; Holdeman 2002, 76). Sokoloff mentioned a prayer house in Essen (55km from Marianna; [1914] 1974, 85),[111] but no other source or data upholds this statement (Holdeman 2002, 56n61). Perhaps it was simply a prayer space in someone's home, like those used in Erie before the Church of the Nativity was built (1919).

St. Nicholas Old Believer Church, founded in Marianna in 1910, is the first specifically dedicated Russian Old Rite prayer house in the U.S., and the only sacred space to arise for the coalmining Old Believers. Much like in Suwalki, for important services people would walk, and later car-pool, many miles to the Marianna church. It was the social as well as religious center for Old Believers in southwestern Pennsylvania (Holdeman 2002, 56-8).

Before I turn to the establishment of Church of the Nativity and its tight urban enclave, I wish to stress the importance of these founders' honored legacy to contemporary Erie Old Believers. They are held up as exemplars. In 1956, Fr. Smolakov instructed his flock to:

> Bend down your heads before these men, you sons and daughters, and grand-children of them! Honor the living, pray for the souls of deceased! They deserved respect and honor. Your religious spirit cannot be compared to their spirit; your will to work for Church and to give for Church is far behind their will, and, probably, they would be ashamed of you in this regard.
>
> Therefore change your indifference to the Church, and work for It, for only through Church you may be saved from trouble in the life to come. (SSW#49, October 21, 1956)

The stories of the first Old Believers in the U.S. support the narrative of long-suffering perseverance and profound dedication that is so integral to the historical consciousness and group identity of contemporary ORRO Christians. Reverence for their forefathers and mothers certainly weighed on the side of conservation for the stalwart bezpopovtsy during the microschism. "We were baptized Pomortsi and we will die Pomortsi as our forefathers did before us" (From all true Russian Orthodox Old Believers of the Pomortsi Faith, Fall 1982). It could not all be in vain.

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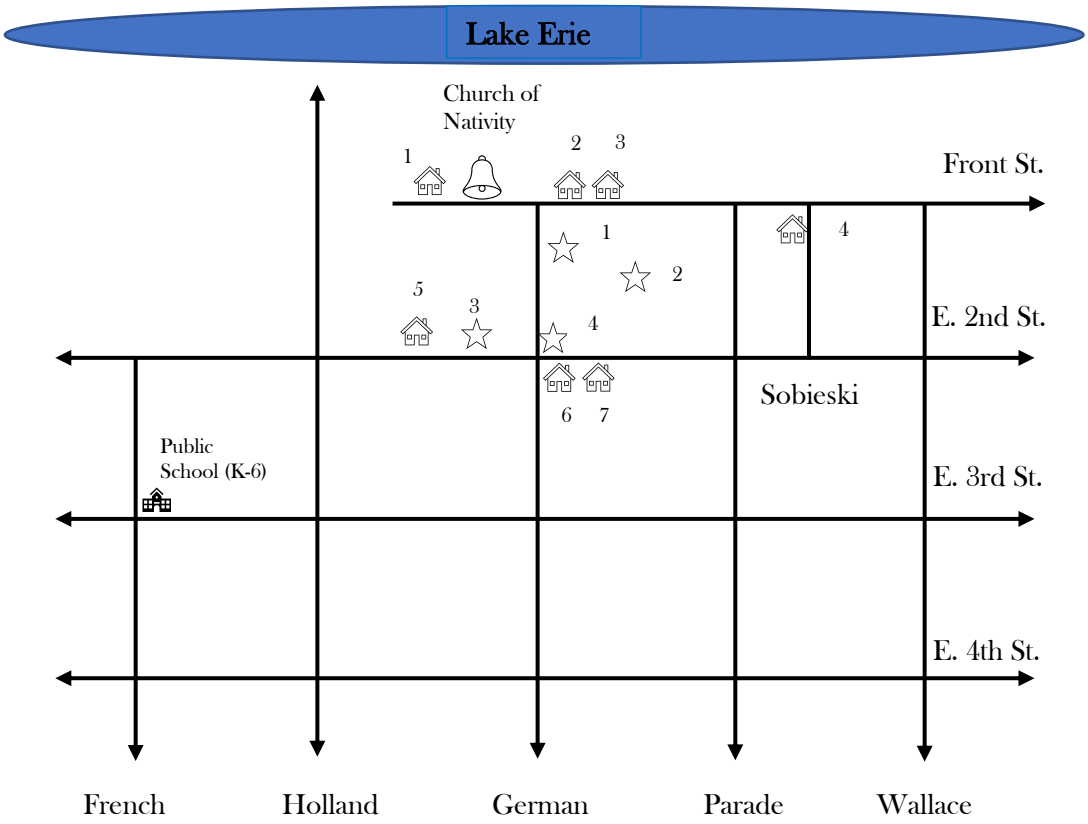
[110] He presided over one of the first Old Believer funerals in a plot purchased within Springdale Cemetery (110km from Marianna, 12km from Russellton), before the community raised $260 for 1.5 acres for their own cemetery along Crest Street in Russellton in 1917. In 1931, with all the deed's signatories now Erie residents, the cemetery's deed was transferred to (Marianna) St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Brotherhood Lodge (Dolan 1991, 50).

[111] Again, the gap between writing (c. 1906) and publishing (1914) of the article is apparent in a footnote that states that there is a church "now nearer at hand, in Marianna," which was built in 1910 (Sokoloff [1914] 1974, 85).

2.2.3. The Urban Enclave Under Fr. Pancerev (1923-1946): Growth and the Early Years

Elders today remember the urban enclave with fondness. Many described to me the social and physical closeness of the community as the most pleasant aspect of their childhood. "You'd step outside, and you'd know everyone." It was a "warm place," that was "nice and safe" and where "no one locked their doors" (Pearl, pers. comm., May 26, 2013). None of the elders complained about the large percentage of their childhood spent standing in church and attending Church Slavonic lessons after public school each day. Most of their friends were also Old Believers or else from local Polish and Italian Catholic families who were also required to spend Saturday evenings in church (vespers) (Lola, pers. comm., February 7, 2013; Pearl, pers. comm., May 26, 2013). "It wasn't hard, we just accepted it. We lived in the conclave of the Russian family. We walked to school with friends from church, from school to Russian School with friends, and walked home again in the evening with friends. Everyone lived in the neighborhood. I had a really great childhood!" (Lola, February 7, 2013).

Map *5*: Erie's Old Believer Urban Enclave 1920s-1930s



Key: Founder's homes: 1] Sylvestor and Frances Biletnikoff, 213 E Front (ED 1925, 385; ED 1930, 962); 2] Joseph and Anna Orloff (Morosky, *ETN,* April 20, 2002); 3] Stephan and Annie Peganoff, 333 E Front (ED 1925, 803); 4] Michael Evans [Spiridon Semenoff; Mary/Fitcinea passed February 25, 1917, u.p. genealogy], 118 Sobieski (ED 1925, 513; ED 1930, 1029); 5] Fr. Pancerev and Martha, 243 E 2nd St. (ED 1925, 1926, 1927 gives his name as Samuel, but the latter specifies "pastor Russian Orthodox Ch"); 6] Jacob and Xenia Klemushin, 316 E 2nd (ED 1925, 386); 7] Feopent Sergieff (and Frederick Klemushin), 331 E 2nd (ED 1920, 310);
Social Location: 1] Neighborhood House, later CN Bookstore; 2] Kapusta Yard; 3] First CYS, above Sam Pancerev's Economic Grocery Store, 264 E 2nd; 4] Pixie Grill

The happy memories of those who could remember the heyday of the urban enclave were shadowed by the present; even the families who remained in Erie are scattered, friends and family were lost to schism, and there is an all-too-apparent decline in church participation. Here, I must confront a sampling caveat, as I primarily interviewed people who still attended one of the two Old Rite Erie churches. Those who strive to preserve their parents' faith (albeit in different forms) unsurprisingly look back fondly on the strength of their formerly united congregation and look forward with trepidation for their community's preservation. While these accounts are surely

coated with a fine gloss of several decades' worth of nostalgia, Erie elders' fond recounting of the past is indicative of their present concerns for ORRO's continued vitality in the U.S.

Before the Church of the Nativity held its first service in 1919, worshippers gathered in the homes of religiously trained men who had a free space to offer and furnish with candles, scripture, and icons. An individual would host services for about two years and then the duties would be passed to another. According to Frank Peganoff, Stephan Peganoff was one of the first to have a dedicated prayer space to share, until he needed the room for his children (he and Anna had 12, CNMB 1, 332-3). The "Larenoff/Petroff house was then purchased and gutted in order to use it as a place of worship," with leadership duties shared (Hood 1978, 17; Holdeman 2002, 62).

The Lawrence home only four blocks from the current church kept a separate upstairs room with icons and holy books reserved for services until the mid-1980. Significantly, services were performed there until 1948 (Robson 1985, 67) despite the existence of a full-time nastavnik. Fr. Makidonski also kept coming to Erie to baptize its infants well after Fr. Pancerev's investiture. This increases the likelihood of missing documentation and makes it difficult to assess the enclave's growth (Robson 1985, 66).

Figure 2: Erie Church of the Nativity Baptisms by Nastavnik (1923-1927)

Year	Makidonski in Erie	Makidonski[iv] Elsewhere/ unknown	Pancerev in Erie	Pancerev Elsewhere/unknown
1923	15	6	0	0
1924	8	7	6	4
1925	4	5	13	2
1926	0	2 or 3	14	3 or 4
1927	1	2	20	5

[iv] Robson also charted this data, and accredited Makidonski with a total of 236 baptisms in Erie in between the years 1896 and 1928 (1985, 99).

Parents' baptismal choices could signify a number of different things: physical distance from the church, disagreements over the congregation's choice of nastavnik (a common issue during leadership transition periods, Robson 1985, 186n4), disputes with leadership (pers. comm.), or a wish to have children blessed by the same nastavnik as their older siblings.[112] Services performed outside the dedicated sacred space hint to the flexibility of bezpopovtsy Old Rite church allegiances where non-hierarchical religious system exert an elastic power.

The Church of the Nativity of Christ on 251 E. Front Street, held its first service on the Feast for the Dormition of the Mother of God, August 28, 1919.[113] It was the second ORRO church in the U.S., and is today the largest Old Rite congregation in the eastern U.S. But it has not weathered the past 100 years unscathed. After suffering two fires (1976 and 1986), the current church building retains only its original foundation. A congregation member who passed away in 1920 or even 1960 would not recognize the sanctuary or the services held there now.

Fundraising efforts for the construction of a church began as early as 1913 (Holdeman 2002, 62). A pamphlet made by the Church of the Nativity in 1987 refers to the "small donation" demanded of each family, but $100 was a lot of money to the poor inhabitants of the First Ward (CN 1987, 2). Their dedication to the project is proven by such a large expenditure. Men from Erie visited Old Believers in mine towns for donations. But these communities were even more destitute, and so solicitations there met with little success. A second collection from future parishioners was necessitated (Robson 1985, 68).

The church's foundation was completed in November 1918 and nine months (and 3000 dollars) later the interior was finished. In the joy of dedication described in "The Bells Rang all Day and Night," Frank Peganoff reported rumors that even women took some turns ringing the bells, traditionally a men-only honor, and that all able-bodied men pulled three knolls (Robson 1985, 69). People brought icons to the church and began services before the official dedication,

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[112] For example, according to the Evanoff's Genealogy, Anita was baptized at home (u.p., courtesy of Anita Robson). According to CN records, her 1927 baptism was one of Makidonski's last in Erie. He had performed all of her U.S.-born, elder siblings' baptisms (two eldest born in Vilnius) both in Erie and Pittsburgh (CNMB 1, 106).

[113] According to Orthodox tradition, Jesus' mother Mary did not die, but rather fell into a long sleep, commemorated by the Dormition Lent. The Feast of Dormition, a fixed holiday on August 28th (NS), celebrates Mary's whole-bodily assumption into heaven. There is a slight discrepancy in the record whether the church was dedicated on the previous night's vigil (Holdeman 1991, 63) or the Feast itself (Dolan 1991, 53 and CN 1987, 2).

which was delayed until the "right" bells could be procured (Holdeman 2002, 63). Some of these icons were claimed back to grace the bezpopovtsy Church of the Holy Trinity sixty-five years later.

In 1923, Fr. Nicon Pancerev became the Erie's first full time nastavnik.[114] Beforehand, lay congregants conducted the services (Dolan 1991, 53-4). His very presence in the community signaled its growth in size and prosperity as the congregation was able to subsidize the nastavnik's household expenses, who chose to leave an "enviable job" as a skilled laborer to take the position (Robson 1985, 72, 1998, 2).[115] Like many Erie Old Believers, Fr. Pancerev (b. 1880) immigrated from Suwalki (via Bremen, Germany and NYC, in 1899). As a single, newly-landed immigrant he lived with his sister on Erie's Front Street (Holdeman 2002, 73). By the time he was chosen as nastavnik he lived in the home he purchased at 243 E. Second St. in the heart of the urban enclave with his wife Martha, also from Suwalki, where he lived the remainder of his life.[116]

By all accounts Erie's first nastavnik, Fr. Nicon Pancerev, was a very strict leader intent on keeping the boundaries of their urban enclave impenetrable. My elder interlocutors were born towards the end of his long term as nastavnik, but the stories of those publicly shamed for sinning or Americanizing (terms sometimes used interchangeably, Hood 1978, 19; Holdeman 2002, 74) remain as testaments of change and vivid reminders of the Old Belief of their parents. Everyone made sure I noticed the photos of Fr. Nicon standing with hundreds of Sunday school children that hang in the Church of the Nativity's basement. They are striking visual markers of the enclave's glory days that contrast sharply with the dozen children who now assemble for similar classes. These numbers were in decline long before the microschism due to a lower birthrate, suburbanization and further moves, and yes, Weber, secularization.

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[114] (Robson 1985, 72; CN, 1987, 2). Holdeman (2002) notes some disagreement about the year, (for example, an ETN story on April 23, 1978, gave a 1920 date, and an erroneous conflation of the dedication of the CN with the year its first nastavnik was elected (63n74).

[115] Most were unskilled laborers when they immigrated, as were many of the 2nd Generation. 1920 Census gives his first name as 'Samuel', and lists his occupation as a machine operator at General Electric Co. He was successful enough to own his home mortgage free (U.S. Census 1920, Erie, Pennsylvania, 1st Ward, District 72, Sheet 6B). The 1930 Census states that the home was worth $3000 (U.S. Census 1930, Erie, Pennsylvania, 1st Ward, District 25-17, Sheet 2A).

[116] Which ended on Dec. 11, 1946, at 69 years old (*EDT*, December 13, 1946)

One of the first newspaper articles dedicated to the Old Believer community described the church's distinct octagonal yellow brick tower and three barred Russian cross: "The village is gathered around it, and extends from the lakefront to Third Street and from Holland to Parade Street. Most of the parishioners work on the docks, and there is something appropriate in the location that lets the church look down over the waterfront, its grimy and untidy parish" (Bankson, *Erie Dispatch,* June 20, 1920). For the first generation, parishioners' work, church, school,[117] and home were all within a five-block radius (Map 5).

The Neighborhood House across the street from the Church of the Nativity was built by the Women's Presbyterial Society (WPS) in 1922 to provide area youths a place for social events, English lessons,[118] home economics classes, and sports[119] (for males that is), music, and crafts.[120] It is described as the social heart of the First Ward and a second home for poor, depression-era youths that "...offered less troublesome ways to nudge Old Believers into society's mainstream" (Robson 1985, 5). The Church bought the building from the WPS in 1956; the lot now holds its Community Center and bookstore[121] (rebuilt in 1978; Holdeman 2002, 69-70).

Men (less is said of women, who were presumably busy at home) also had their neighborhood gathering places. In the 1930s some 20 to 40 men would gather in the Kapusta ["cabbage," play on '*pusto*' meaning empty] Yard behind the Neighborhood House to shoot dice on payday. The outdoor space was also an area for the children to play softball and use the swings the city installed there. Fishing was a dual source of pleasure and nourishment. Sundays (after service of course) were spent visiting other families. And many socialized at the Russian-owned Pixie Grill bar, or perhaps at the short-lived Russian Socialist Club that was across the street (at 125

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[117] Third and French, K-6; Hood 1978, 33; Barbara and Eugenia, pers. comm., June 6, 2013

[118] There were also many Irish, Polish, and German families in the area.

[119] Basketball was especially popular; there was also softball, gymnastics, wrestling, boxing, scouting, and ping pong.

[120] The previously mentioned Joseph Orloff taught woodworking classes (Holdeman 2002, 70).

[121] https://shop.churchofthenativity.net/

German) from the Church according to its first appearance in the Erie Directory of 1919 (Holdeman 2002, 70-71).[122]

In 1928 the Community of Young Staroobriadcy (CYS), an Old Believer-only club, was opened at 264 E. Second Street[123] where it hosted dances, dinners, parties, and bowling. Some women attended events there, others remember not being allowed to. As I discuss in Chapter Seven, 10 years later the CYS was at the center of a major congregational conflict and excommunications over what Fr. Pancerev viewed as the encroachment of social events on people's religious observance (Dolan 1991, 54; Robson 1998, 5; Holdeman 2002, 70-2).

Fr. Pancerev's superior moral rectitude caused conflicts during his tenure as the spiritual head of a rapidly growing and changing parish. And the young man (too young, by tradition that holds a nastavnik must be at least 33 years old), Albert Yokoff, and the church faced a difficult transition in the post-War years (Holdeman 2002, 74n83). Barbara and Eugenia noted that they only time they really ran into trouble in the congregation was with a nastavnik who was too young (pers. comm., June 6, 2013). Some welcomed the change, trickling back into the church after years of home-worship after their 'excommunication' for breaking rules such as hair-cutting or skipping services to socialize at CYS (Dolan 1991, 64-5). But a personal struggle and failure to meet the moral standards required of an Old Rite shepherd resulted in Fr. Yokoff's loss of what is usually a life-long position after only 6 years. Fr. Larry's nastavnik-ship of Church of the Nativity was similarly cut short (1973-6).[124]

A strong leader emerged in between the short nastavnik-ships of Fr. Yokoff and Fr. Evanoff. From 1952-1973, Fr. Smolakov led services, children's Sunday Schools, Church Slavonic classes, reviews of the Pomortsy Conferences, produced bilingual prayer books for study, compiled

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[122] Larry Morosky, who had a file catalog of early Old Believer's addresses and family information interpreted this as a social club, rather than socialist in the political economic sense (pers. comm., May 28, 2013). The Erie Directories listed other ethnic "socialist" clubs from 1915 onwards, if it was a socialist or labor club, then its disappearance from this location by 1920 (replaced by a "Co-operative Store") is understandable (*Erie Directory,* 1920, 230; Holdeman 2002, 71-2).

[123] In the late 1940's CYS moved to a new building nearby at 145 or 155 E. Second Street. In the mid-1980s it relocated to suburban E 38th St. due to the expansion of the Hospital (Dolan 1991, 65 gave 145 E. and WO, pers. comm., June 10, 2013 gave 155 E.).

[124] Nobody wants to air these issues.

calendars for parishioners to navigate their fast days, and wrote over seven hundred Sunday School Weeklies (*SSW*) and essays. In short, Fr. Smolakov's works have been the most wide-ranging and complete archive of information about Pomortsy Old Belief in the U.S. and immensely valuable to this research (see Appendices 1 and 3). He was well-regarded by all with whom I spoke, bezpopovtsy and popovtsy alike, for his commitment to the preservation of Old Rite religious practice and knowledge in Erie.

Below, I review the Nikolaevsk community's European background, immigration, and settlement history before turning to the challenges and obstacles Old Rite immigrants to the U.S. like Fathers Makidonski, Pancerev, and Smolakov faced in their conservation efforts.

2.3. Alaskan Old Believers: Multiple Migrations to Group-Making

An examination of the backgrounds of the Erie Pomortsy and the Nikolaevsk Chasovennye side by side makes it clear that their many differences predate their intercontinental migrations and are not reducible to their supposed degrees of Americanization and accommodation. Any such scale of assimilation would be unbalanced from the start by the eighty years that separates their immigration. In that time, American society and politics concerning [white] ethnic others have dramatically changed. When Old Believers first came to Pennsylvania, they faced pressure to Americanize immediately (FS, pers. comm., December 27, 2012), whereas the first settlers of Nikolaevsk were introduced to neighboring Alaskans as sympathetic "...evacuees of Communism" (*HN*, January 2, 1969, 2, 6; Silva 2009, 5).

In view of the full extent of the difference between their pre-immigration histories and settlement experiences, the similarity and simultaneity of the Erie and Nikolaevsk microschisms is all the more striking. While the changes wrought by their new social context might seem the most obvious causal factor in Old Believers' recent religious conflicts, this is clearly not the case here. The priesthood question tore apart foreign-born and fourth generation American Old Believers alike.

To understand each community's reassessment of the priesthood question it is necessary to appreciate the distinct evolution of their group's orientation towards official Orthodoxy, the government, and society within Russia. Below, I will explore the Chasovennye's European background and post-Revolutionary flight into China. Then, I detail the Nikolaevsk settlers' series of temporary refuges that took them from China into Alaska via South America and Oregon, U.S.

Their experiences of persecution and purposeful social isolation from the world shaped their orientation to both internal and external Others. And these experiences, being so very dissimilar from those of the Pomortsy whose U.S. immigration motivations were largely economical (pers. comm., Robson 1985, Holdeman 2002), go far in explaining the differences in the two new popovtsy factions' unique paths to priesthood detailed in Chapter Five.

In this chapter's final subsubsection, I recount the migration history of the Old Believers who settled in Turkey (the *Turchane*) long before the Russian Revolution chased the Chasovennye out of Siberia. Their tale is most illustrative of a social fact that all North and South American Old Believers share. Congregations and communities were formed in the Western Hemisphere by individuals from different regions and concords. It is the circumstances of their settlement that *made them* a united, co-religious group. Their grandparents might not have "broken bread" together, but now they worship as one. The Turchane's first unsuccessful attempt at co-religiosity with the Pomortsy in New Jersey and their later merger with Chasovennye in Oregon, some of whom they joined in founding the Alaskan enclaves, shows how vital elements of ritual practice and worldly accommodation are to group-making.

2.3.1 Chasovennye in Siberia and China

The simple structure where Nikolaevsk's bezpopovtsy now pray is easily mistaken for a house, save for the small metal cross above its tiny porch. It is purposefully discreet; more than one individual instructed me not to photograph it. There is no sign indicating it as a place of worship; it sits nestled in the evergreens unaffiliated and unnamed. No allegiance to the "ПОМОРСКАГО СОГЛАСЇА" (Pomortsy *soglasiye*) or other concord is proclaimed like on the 1919 cornerstone of the Erie Church of the Nativity, or the 1984 Church of the Holy Trinity, in Erie. I never heard an Alaskan Old Believer identify themselves as Chasovennye or any other bezpopovtsy group, although I would not go so far as to claim the elders ignorant of the labels

historians and anthropologists have placed on their version of Orthodoxy.[125] They are simply *Khristianiki* (Christians; Scheffel 1989b, 7).

Nevertheless, their version of Christianity distinguishes them. What is more, their specific version of Old Ritualism with all its fluctuation on the priesthood spectrum (Figure 1) keenly demonstrates Old Believer group-making as a joint process of combination and separation. The Chasovennye branch, as neither practicing popovtsy nor historically bezpopovtsy, exemplifies this ecumenical dialectic between hierarchical and presbyterial organization. This section outlines the Chasovennye strain of Old Belief in Russia to distinguish Alaskan and Erie Old Ritualism and again highlight the flexibility and complexity of priested and priestless categories.

The key to understanding the 1983 priesthood schisms may be located in the swinging door of Chasovennye's place between the bezpopovtsy and popovtsy. Old Believers' recurrent questions of practice, decision-making, and ecumenical/Church composition that first flooded Nikon's dissenters in the wake of their anathematization (in 1666) resurface in times of microschism. As Old Believers' access to the hierarchy's authentication of action and dogma was impeded, uncertainty is a constant. For the bezpopovtsy, this uncertainty resulted in schisms over questions of how to practice without priested authority and how much worldly accommodation is acceptable—not whether priested authority was (re)obtainable. Chasovennye's history best illustrates the contentious complexity of Old Rite authority and unity because this is the issue that recurrently divided them.

The Chasovennye first emerged as an offshoot of the beglopopovtsy Kerzhenets communities near Nizhniy-Novgorod (400km east of Moscow; Crummey 2011, 102-3; See Map 4). The beglopopovtsy used *ispravlennye,* or "corrected" priests, often re-educated in the Irgiz monasteries in Saratov Province (600k south of Nizhniy-Novgorod; Paert 2004, 559n17). The Chasovennye exemplify the variation and fluctuations of Old Rite church polity. While lacking a hierarchy, they originally used priests, and only became de facto priestless after a renewal of

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[125] Colfer (1985) transliterates their name as 'chasovinij.' They are also called the 'Chasovenniki,' as in Robson (1995) who capitalizes the term, and Beliajeff (1977), who does not. Scheffel (1989b, see others) does not capitalize his use of 'chasovennye'. I have chosen to capitalize for consistency with other concords and subgroupings. Piepkorn (1977, 114) states that the new immigrants to Oregon refer to themselves as *Chasovennoye soglasiye*, which he translated as "Chapel Union" and Lyubimova (2009) as "Chapel Consent." Beliajeff also notes Old Believers in Oregon did not use any of the sectarian terms above (1977, 79).

persecutions in the mid-1850s. This period of upheaval led the Chasovennye in two polar directions—either into the newly created Edinoverie and Belaya Krinitsa (BK) hierarchies or further east and further into the theological tendencies of the apocalyptic, 'the Church-is-dead,' bezpopovtsy.

Tsar Nicholas II's Edict of Toleration (1905) allowed two large Chasovennye sobory (1908, 1912) to convene, where they were courted by and debated unification with the popovtsy Belaya Krinitsa and Edinoverie, as well as the bezpopovtsy Pomortsy. The search for a legitimate church hierarchy remained their priority (Robson 1995, 30-1, 147n88).

> Perhaps the Chasovenniki exemplified the situation of most Old Believers during this [1905-1917] period. Many Chasovennik adherents, including the editors of *Ural'skii staroobradets,* felt drawn toward the liberal opinions epitomized by the Belokrinitsy. Others—especially the multitude of Chasovenniki who lived in isolated parts of Siberia—turned toward the more traditional elements of the Old Belief and tried to use the wilderness as a haven from Antichristian habits. For them, Old Believer traditions could best be maintained, it seemed, by prohibiting all change. (Robson 1995, 114-5)

It was those who sought the havens of the eastern wilderness whose ancestors eventually created the Alaskan enclaves. And it was a faction of their American Old Believer descendants who accepted the BK hierarchy they had rejected 130 years prior.

Old Believers have even been described as 'spearheading' the conquest of Siberia (Duncan 2000, 15), fleeing east from Moscow and Kyiv regions to places like Primorsk, Khabarovsk, Sakhalin Island, and even northern Japan during the repressive reign of Nicholas I (1825-1855). There they farmed or made cloth; some even owned flour mills or larger tracks of land (Smithson 1977, 141). The vast and sparsely populated region had high concentrations of Old Believers and other Russian sects, such as the Molokans, Skoptsy, and Phylysty, whose practices were illegalized for their rejection of the State's ROC (Pospielovsky 1984, 68-9; Duncan 2000, 15). They moved east and into the Empire's less-policed hinterlands to not only flee persecutions, but because the "moral climate in urbanized Russia pushed the Old Believers to the outside"[126] (Sidorov 2001, 61-2). The practices of social segregation and enclave isolationism of the Alaskan Old Believers

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[126] For an example of extreme isolation, see the popular history "Lost in the Taiga" by Vasily Peskov 1992 about the famous family 'discovered' by geologists in 1978. Agafia's (last surviving family member) story is periodically updated in popular press. https://siberiantimes.com/other/others/news/worlds-most-famous-hermit-agafya-lykova-moves-into-new-house-in-the-remote-area-of-western-sayan-mountains/ (March 11, 2021).

predates their immigration, unlike the Pomortsy who were more socially integrated with non-Old Believers in Europe and the U.S. alike.

It was some of these Siberian Chasovennye who crossed the border into China in the late 1920s and early '30s and organized into small, scattered enclave communities. Their children, once in Oregon, came to be internally subdivided based on where their families had lived in China. The *Harbintsy*[127] were from the hinterlands of the Manchurian city of Harbin in eastern China, populated by those from the furthest eastern Russian lands as well as by earlier popovtsy and New Rite, tsarist-supporting ("white Russians" or those in "White Army"[128]) émigrés who settled along the Russian-built Chinese Eastern Railway (CER).[129]

The *Sinziantsy*[130] are named for the northwestern Chinese province, Xinjiang, which borders present-day Kazakhstan and Mongolia. (Smithson 1977, 141). Many of their families originally hailed from the far western extent of the Russian Empire and moved east during the mid-nineteenth century persecutions, where they settled in Semipalatinsk (Semey, present-day Kazakhstan) and Tashkent (present-day Uzbekistan). The Sinziantsy settled in the river valleys near Kulja (where other Russian expats settled after the Revolution), close to present Kazakhstan-Chinese border, after crossing the Altai Mountains on foot (144).

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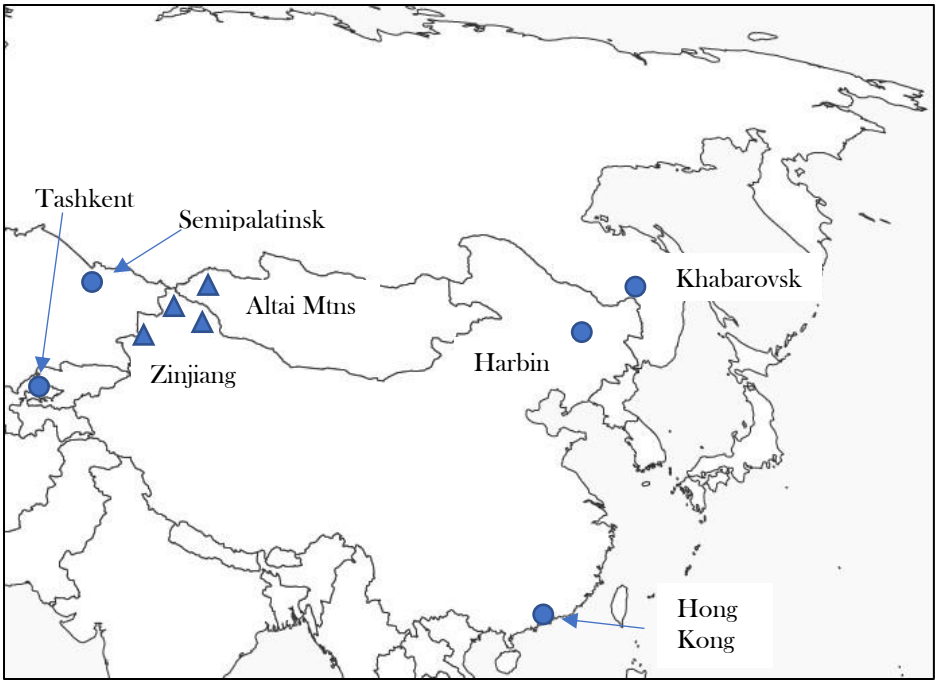
[127] Other transliterations include: Harbinskij (Colfer, 1985), Harbintsky (Jaffe 1990), and Kharbintsy (Dolitsky and Muth 1998).

[128] Bob Moore, Nikolaevsk School's first teacher who began his long career in the village in September 1970 in a 8' by 28' trailer, recounted the day when "Grandfather Gregory" came by their trailer and shared his experiences in the White Army with the children (Moore 1993, 1-2, 14).

[129] Scheffel 1989b, 2-4; Russian population along the CER rose from a couple thousand in 1900 to some 200,000 in the 1920s (Bakich 1985, 2).

[130] Other transliterations include: Sinzyanskij (Colfer 1985), Sinzyanski (Jaffe 1990), and Sintsantsy (Dolitsky and Muth 1998).

Map 6: Southeast Russia and Northern China[v]



The tale of a Harbintsy elder woman, "*How we escaped Russia*," recorded by her young relative and published through the Nikolaevsk School Bilingual Program (NSBP) said that they were impelled to leave because the Soviets "began to persecute." She remembered that most of her family's problems were caused by the affluence of her parents, who owned a mill. Their greatest fear was that her father would be forcibly conscripted into the militia. Her family's[131] flight into China included many militia scares, hiding, river drownings, and several helpful Chinese individuals along the way (Basargin 1989). Scheffel argued that in addition to the Soviets' antagonistic views of religion, the new State's collectivization programs and other regulations encroached on the Old Believers' treasured autonomy and freedom (*vol'nost'*) so crucial to their efforts to live purely in a profane world (1989a 114-5, 117; Scheffel 1989b, 7).

In China they survived largely by subsistence farming, interacting minimally with larger towns where they sold surplus yields and the skins "and other parts" of the animals they hunted. Legends of the Harbintsy men's experiences hunting tigers for their skins and Chinese medicinal products were also saved for posterity by the NSBP (Yakunin 1980; Smithson 1977, 144-6). They

[v] https://freevectormaps.com/world-maps/WRLD-EPS-01-0013?ref=atr

[131] Her uncle's family fled at the same time as her nuclear family.

also captured them alive for zoos, in one of the stories, Mr. Yakunin described a method I would not care to try, "When you grab a tiger by its ears, it cannot get away. Here you wrestle for your life, with all your strength" (Yakunin 1980, 12).

By the 1950s, the loss of vol'nost' again threatened to make Old Believers' life in Manchuria unbearable. They had already withstood the Japanese invasions and rule (after 1932), Manchurian warlords, and guerillas, but they could not accept the loss of their ability to hunt or even build fires in the formerly "anarchic northern frontier" (Scheffel 1989a, 115). Students at Nikolaevsk school recorded the oral history of another Harbintsy relative in "*Guerillas*," which recounts several horrific tales of shootings, raids, and hiding in fear from bandit gangs (who were originally groups of village peasants formed against the abusive gentry, but who began to loot more extensively). But while lamenting terrible events about the "the guerillas got everything from everybody..." (4) and describing raids and the torture and death of her grandfather, she does not cite their fear of them as a reason for leaving China (Basargin 1990; Smithson 1977, 146). There are no similar recorded oral histories of Sinziantsy. Given the names recorded in the NSBP works and the genealogical plaques of founders within the Nikolaevsk School lobby and from interviews that the founders of the village were largely Harbintsy,[132] although the Turchane are also represented by the instructional, bilingual manual, *How to Make a Talichka* (Turchane dress, distinct from the sarafan of Siberian groups who fled into China). In the introduction to this text, bilingual teacher Stan White comments that the Old Believer communities in Alaska are "predominantly" Harbintsy (Nikolaevsk School, 1984).[133]

Despite Harbintsy and Sinziantsy accounts of their relative freedom to provide for their families and practice their faith, these Russian refugees were by no means outside of the Soviet sphere of influence. The Soviet State they had fled had diplomats in Harbin, control of the CER after 1924, and mined in Xinjiang. They also suffered forced labor under Japanese control, and raids for supplies and men during WWII (Smithson 1977, 147-150). After China's communist revolution, it enforced the same type of land collectivization and repressive economic policies that

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[132] Smithson (1977) notes that most of the 20-25 families who settled the Albertan community were Harbintsy, and states the Harbintsy and Sinziantsy background of his Oregon interviewees, but does not provide this information about the Alaskan community (166, 512-3).

[133] Stan White was a non-Russian who married into an Old Believer Church (Kizzia, July 19, 1990). Talichkas are not worn to church (Morris 1991, 342).

had pushed the Old Believers out of the U.S.S.R. Forced and beguiled repatriation added to their desire to leave the continent altogether (Scheffel 1989b, 7; Smithson 1977, 151-4).

From living at opposites ends of two of the largest countries on earth it is no wonder that the Sinziantsy, Harbintsy, and Turchane faced challenges establishing co-religiosity in North America in the 1960s. After generations of isolation in Siberia, China, and Turkey and de facto priestlessness, they relied on small-scale or congregational (presbyterial) decision-making. Broad labels like 'Chasovennye' take second seat to practice in their determinations of co-religiosity. I am often reminded of a couple of stories Nadejda told me during my 2007 fieldwork as perfect illustrations of the generational shift on the question of Sinziantsy/Harbintsy co-religiosity.

Nadejda's engagement had not gone smoothly. Her story, like all stories I heard in Alaska or read from the NSBP, contained no sectarian labels. When pressed, she could not recall them.[134] *Yes, she was Harbintsy and her fiancé Sinziantsy, but that was not the problem, although she admitted it was for many of her generation. The problem was that her prospective mother-in-law wanted the new couple to join her congregation, which Nadejda characterized as radically strict and segregationist. In a tone expressing trepidation about such ritual extremism, she explained that her mother-in-law's small group does not even accept the use of holy water or a lot of other things that the rest of the bezpopovtsy do and that her group are not co-religious with the rest of the bezpopovtsy groups. With satisfied relief she related how her husband had told his mother he would not be married in her church, nor would he raise his children in it. Regional subgroups were by no means internally harmonious and unified (pers. comm., July 30, 2007).*

Years later one of Nadejda's daughters came home from school scared and crying because a classmate told her that there were "foreign," in other words 'dangerous', Sinziantsy in the village. Nadejda laughingly recalled how she had to tell daughter that she not only knew of their presence there, but that the girl's father was one of them. In the space of a generation together in Oregon and Alaska the meaningfulness of centuries of separation and the salience of regional subgroups had disappeared.

What matters in group-making in new settlements are the ways in which Church authority, degrees of worldly accommodation, and particularities of practice are defined and decided. The

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[134]Scheffel noted that after generations of migration there are many gaps in the Albertan Old Believers' ethnohistory and denominational specificity (1991, 117).

following two sections explore how these aspects of co-religiosity influenced the Old Believers' steps in their winding route to Nikolaevsk. To better understand the microschism we must look at the ways the congregation was already divided. The Old Believers' North American settlement contains stories of unification of individuals long separated by time, space, and distinct modes of religious preservation. But these were unifications with fault lines, marriages with prenuptial agreements, ready to splinter over centuries-old debates.

2.3.2. Alaska: "The Last Frontier"

The histories of the Pomortsy and Chasovennye alike show that internal pressures are as much responsible for the Old Believers' many migrations as external threats and persecution. In a mix of practical and metaphysical language, one journalist wrote that the:

> [Old Believers'] transitory history suggests that a home may be temporary, and their religion teaches that life on earth is of a temporary nature. On the other hand, the people seem to have found the self-sufficiency, isolation and freedom they have sought for so long. Perhaps Alaska is, indeed, the final stop of a 300 year journey. (Gay 1988, 58)[135]

But their journey has not ended. Since Nikolaevsk was founded, communities in northern Alberta, Minnesota, and Washington have also been settled as well as several more villages in Alaska.

In the 50-year period between the Russian Revolution and the foundation of Nikolaevsk its settlers resided in four countries (Russia, China, Hong Kong, and Brazil or Argentina) and one U.S. state (Oregon). I now pick up their odyssey in Hong Kong, where the Harbintsy and Sinziantsy who had been separated by over 4000km and unaware of one another's existence met for the first time in 1958-9. Their village settlements, as well the Turchane's, in three continents were similarly small-scale and physically and socially isolated. This corresponded with their ideological and practical (again, persecution) desire to segregate and ensure their congregants' purity and states of grace as well as congregational-level organization of authority (Sabey 1969, 65; Smithson 1977, 158-164, 210-1, 238; Smithson 1991, 61-2).

Old Believers began appealing for refuge from China through then-British controlled Hong Kong as early as 1945, but found their way blocked by lack of (Soviet-held) identifying papers and bureaucratic un-cooperation. Under 1000 of the "uncounted thousands" of Old Believers who lived in China between the early 1920s and late 1950s escaped mandatory

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[135] Lund (May 3, 1979) also terms Alaskan Old Believers' travels as "ended" in her report of the naturalization ceremony of 86 individuals.

repatriation and made it to Hong Kong ('legally' or otherwise), in most cases penniless. (Smithson 1977, 154-7). The World Council of Churches, Red Cross, and the Ford Foundation[136] helped Old Believer refugees during their layover in Hong Kong and provided them with the choice of land in Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, Paraguay, or Uruguay. The majority chose to go to Australia and Brazil (Piepkorn 1977, 114: Smithson 1977, 157; Colfer 1985, 7-8; Gay 1988, 27).

Most of those who later found their way to Oregon came by way of Brazil.[137] Two boatloads sailed from Hong Kong with aid from the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration to 6,000 acres (24.28km^2) of land near Ponta Grossa (500k SW of São Paulo) (Rearden 1972, 411-413; Smithson 1977, 157-9). Despite their pleasant surprise at finding other bezpopovtsy who survived the Revolution by crossing Russia's southern border, the two groups asked for separate pieces of land in Brazil. Perhaps perceived differences in practices or the desire to maintain their close-knit, largely family-based villages in yet another country motivated their initial desire to remain distinct. But the three Harbintsy and five Sinziantsy villages settled between 1959 and 1961 were all near one another (Smithson 1977, 158-9). Today, these ethnic subgroupings of Sinziantsy, Harbintsy, and Turchane are largely irrelevant. Far more drastic divides exist now.

The North American Chasovennye's next stage of migration began in 1962 when individuals who were unhappy with the poor economic opportunities, competition, and unfamiliar climate and soil conditions in Brazil searched for a U.S. immigration sponsor. The Tolstoy Foundation[138] in New York handled the application of some 1300 Old Believers in Brazil in 1964. They also applied for entry to Canada, but they were denied as undesirable immigrants who had no wish to integrate. All applicants were accepted as refugees to the U.S. with the aid of Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy (Scheffel 1989b, 7-8). Others remained and continue to live in Brazil.

According to one story, they chose to settle in the Willamette Valley of northwest Oregon because a few had heard of the riches of its soil from fellow Russian religious refugees, the Molokans,[139] who they met when one of their boats from Hong Kong stopped in Los Angeles on their way to Brazil (Smithson 1977, 158; Biggins 1985, 44-5; Map 3). They arrived in Oregon too

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[136] https://www.oikoumene.org/en/ ; www. fordfoundation.org ;

[137] One of my informants was born in Argentina, the rest cite Brazil as their family's temporary refuge after China.

[138] http://www.tolstoyfoundation.org/

[139] See Morris (1981, 1991) for a comparison of the cultural boundaries of the Russian Pentecostals, Molokans, and Old Believers in the Willamette Valley of Oregon.

indebted to the Brazilian government and banks (from which they had taken loans for farming equipment), airlines, and immigration sponsors to be able to purchase a large enough plot to recreate the socially cohesive village setting their community was used to in Russia, China, and even Brazil (Smithson 1977, 159-164). But they thrived. Oregon's Willamette Valley and Woodburn area (30 miles from Portland) today has the largest population, over 10,000,[140] of Old Believers in North America.

While Oregon boasts the religious freedom and economic self-sufficiency necessary to support a separatist enclave, a handful of Old Believer families left the state in search of seclusion only four years after they arrived. They especially feared for their children, who "...were beginning to fall away from the old ways" (Smithson 1977, 164). In the words of one of Nikolaevsk's first settlers, "it became difficult for us in Oregon, because of the Americans surrounding us, and for the children's sake we began to think of moving to another place" (Basargin 1984, 1). So, they sent out "teams of scouts" to Washington, British Colombia, Yukon Territory, Alberta, as well as to Alaska (Scheffel 1989b, 8). The latter was most appealing because its commercial fishing opportunities promised independent living that provided them the vol'nost' necessary to better practice their faith (days off for Holy Days) and aspects of their daily, lived religion (e.g., purity laws and social duality) (Smithson 1977, 164; Basargin 1984).

Five families purchased and then subdivided amongst themselves 2.6 square kilometers of virgin forest near the tip of the Kenai Peninsula in south-central Alaska on which they carved out their private, sheltered sanctuary (*HN,* January 2, 1969, 2, 6). An additional 5.8 square kilometers were soon after leased (Fortier 1970, 34). By the early 1970s some 20-25 families had moved to the Kenai Peninsula. Twenty more families (mostly Harbintsy) later moved to north-central Alberta, Canada in 1973 for the same reasons (Smithson 1977, 166; Jaffe 1990, 57-8), namely, the perception that "...the social and moral fabric of their community in Oregon was disintegrating" (Gay 1988, 27). In these more secluded enclaves, they were able to recreate a close-knit village structure to insulate the community's "fabric"---interwoven threads of distinct subgroup and

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[140] http://www.berkeleydailyplanet.com/issue/2001-11-24/article/8516?headline=Three-centuries-on-Russian-Old-Believers-hang-on-in-Oregon--By-Andrew-Kramer-The-Associated-Press But numbers are deceptive, Fr. Evanoff claimed to have some 200 people belonging to his congregation, but only 6-8 elderly individuals made it to services each Sunday.

sectarian colors with a cohesive pattern. But these threads were ready to unravel. The North and South American Chasovennye communities are entwined through blood, marital, and co-religious relations, but soon found themselves divided on the priesthood question.

Unlike Erie Old Believers, in Oregon and Alaska they are a visible minority, or at least married women are with their adapted Russian peasant style long dresses (sarafani or talichki) and head scarves. Men more readily blend in unless they are wearing their Sunday best, as the untrimmed and wild beards emblematic of Old Belief stand out less in Alaska where such facial hair is common. When Old Believers first settled in Oregon and Alaska it is no wonder that they struck the eyes of their neighbors as unmistakably other and determinedly so. "In many aspects, this constitutes a visual boundary identifying them among their own brethren as well as making them clearly identifiable to outsiders" (Morris 1981, 91). In one popular journal article, Nikolaevsk was romantically described as "the most accurate replica of a nineteenth Century Siberian village to be found in North America—and probably in Russia...that looks like a stage set from the movie, 'Dr. Zhivago'..." (Fortier 1970, 34). This anachronism ignored the fact that at the time the village was also filled with modern tents, a metal trailer for their school, and large heavy machinery for building roads and houses.

Nikolaevsk's founders were introduced to other Alaskans and Americans as a cultural curiosity in news and popular journals that made no attempt to describe their theological leanings, beyond a few sentences defining them as religious fanatics, rare on Earth, and stuck in time (e.g., Fortier 1970, 34; Reardon 1972). But more significant to the popular press than Nikolaevsk's antiquated quaintness, was that its inhabitants' story was so easily malleable to the classic Cold War dichotomy between the evils of the Soviet State that persecuted its religious minorities and 'America: Land of the Free.' Erie's first Old Believers, who came too close to the initial Revolution and Red Scare and came at a time where the pressure to assimilate was direct and explicit, were met with less welcoming arms (e.g., this headline: "Americanization is necessary asserts Erie School head," *Erie Dispatch* January 6, 1920).

Nikolaevsk settlers faced enormous physical struggles carving out a village in the harsh, virgin wilderness, building their own road and houses while living in tents, demonstrating the importance they placed in not only physical seclusion, but in living together as a social entity—a community apart. I now turn to the Turchane, whose unique history best demonstrates the role selective modernity plays in the variability of Old Believer co-religiosity.

2.3.3. The Turchane: Sometimes Selves and Others

The relationship of the Turchane,[141] as those who formerly lived in Turkey came to be known by the Sinziantsy and Harbintsy, to other U.S. Old Believers demonstrates the variability of co-religiosity classifications. Groupness is made and unmade with migrations. The Turchane 'group's' internal differences concerning their region of origin, Turkish settlements, Cossack identity, and place on priesthood spectrum were confused and conflated once in the U.S.; distinctions often do not translate to new homes and new neighbors. The complexity of their story illustrates not only the labyrinthine network of Old Believer subgroups, but how these subgroups interact and determine co-religiosity in new environments. In this case, as in so many others, it was the questions of worldly accommodation and religious authority that determined their relationship to other American Old Believers.

First, there is the story, then there are all the messy historical and sectarian details the narrative obscures. The first *New York Times* article (April 22, 1963) that introduced the Turchane to Americans framed their struggle in a manner befitting Cold War politics: *Last 250 Russians in Old Sect in Turkey Will Resettle in U.S: Flight to Rockland Approved for Group Under Pressure to Return to Soviet.* Soviet propaganda had encouraged the majority (1000-1200) of Turchane to return 'home' in September 1962 (Bigart, April 27, 1966; Biggins 1985, 41). Similar to the experience of the Chasovennye in China, those compelled to return to the U.S.S.R. were effectively lost to their families (Basargin [1980] 1990, 1989; DF, pers. comm., August 5, 2013). And again, similar to the Chasovennye's emigration from South America to Oregon, it was Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy who declared that "'Immediate action is required to prevent [the group's] complete demoralization'" (*New York Times,* April 22, 1963), i.e., life in the U.S.S.R. "Land of the free" to the rescue again. These narratives of religious refuge in the U.S., so foundational to its national myth, put the 'Turkish' and 'Chinese' Old Believers in vastly different position that that of the first American Old Believers in Pennsylvania in the early twentieth century who faced their era's negativity against the "New Immigration."

Another popular news story told readers that after 300 years in the "tightly controlled religious colony" near Lake Manyas, 224 people emigrated, propelled by the desire to find like-

[141] Also transliterated as: 'Turyetski' (Jaffe 1990); Turyetskij (Colfer 1985); Turchany (Dolitsky and Muth 1998); and Turano (Biggins 1985).

faith spouses (Hall 1969, 51-2; Smithson 1977, 162-3; Untiedt 1977, 146; Scheffel 1989b, 7).[142] The article reported: "The tiny remnant that remained in Turkey faced extinction. Its religion forbade its members to marry Moslems-they must marry other Christians, preferably of their own sect. So, they had the choice of moving to a Christian land or dying out" (Bigart, *New York Times,* April 27, 1966). As life in Turkey became unsustainable, the Tolstoy Foundation (again, like the Chasovennye's migration from South America to Oregon) orchestrated the Turchane's settlement in New Jersey (Beliajeff 1977, 79). The Tolstoy Foundation saw their efforts in the same salvatory light, stating in a mission report from Oregon that: "These people are the only remnants in the Western world of the Old Believers from Turkey with some 1200 persons lured politically back to the 'communist homeland'" (in Untiedt 1977, 146)

Of course, these Old Believer refugees were not 'from' Turkey and in fact the majority were not even from Lake Manyas. Their story began in the southern Don and Volga region, which was a beglopopovtsy center in imperial Russia where religious and political rebels of various stripes were supported by local Cossacks, not all of whom were Old Believer, but who nevertheless honored and possessed a greater level of autonomy.[143] But they were not safe from tsarist persecution there either. Old Believers fled southern Russia into the Altai Mountains, Iran, and Turkey relatively early in their history, in the beginning of the eighteenth century (*New York Times*, April 22, 1963; Biggins 1985, 53n11; Scheffel 1989a, 110; Jaffe 1990, 57; Stricker 1990, 28-9).

'*Nekrasovtsy*' is sometimes, somewhat erroneously, applied to the whole of the group who came from Turkey to New Jersey when in fact they were the minority with only 25 individuals coming in 1963 after the majority of their "colony" (1000 people) were repatriated in 1960 (Piepkorn 1977, 111; Biggins 1985, 42). They are named after Hetman Ignat Nekrasov (c.1660-1737), who originally led his fellow Don Cossacks south to the Kuban River in Ottoman territory

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[142] And it appears to have done the trick, three years later there were already 29 U.S. births (Bigart, *New York Times,* April 27, 1966).

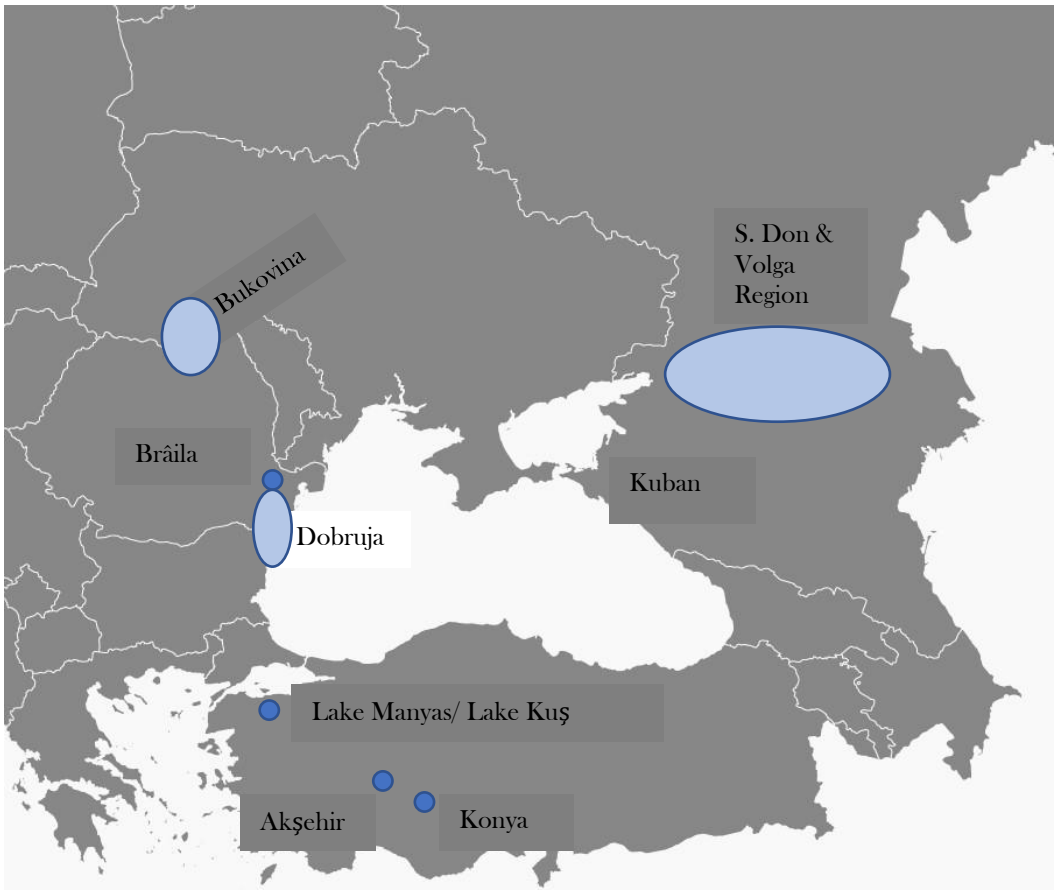
[143] Cossack support in 1650-1690s of Old Believers priests and monasteries were a factor for prevalence of priestly in south frontiers. Cossack strong ideals of order, leadership, discipline less inclined for the "priesthood of all believers" bezpopovtsy authoritative model. In general, the priestly were centered southwest of Moscow and in Volga region while bezpopovtsy were more in the north and northeast of the empire (until spread further east upon persecution). (Stricker 1990, 28; Paert 2003, 31).

in 1708 after the failed Bulavin Rebellion (Beliajeff 1977, 79-80, Biggins 1985, 28-9; Scheffel 1989a, 113). But as the tsarist forces neared in 1740-1, the Nekrasovtsy, now called *Kubantsy*,[144] were granted permission from the Ottoman Sultan to settle in Dobrudja on the right bank of the Danube (present-day Romania). There, they exchanged their renown military prowess for freedom of religion and freedom from taxes (Biggins 1985, 30). But, again, they did not stay for long. In 1814, facing external political pressures,[145] most Nekrasovtsy moved further south into Turkish territory. The majority eventually settled near Lake Manyas (or Mainos, 100 miles southwest of Istanbul; now called Lake Kuş; town of Koca Göl) in northwest Turkey (Piepkorn 1979, 111; Biggins 1985, 30-31).

[144] Biggins uses 'cy', another transliteration of 'tsi' or 'tsy'; suffix indicates a plural subject.

[145] They were in competition with the Zaporožcy Cossacks who came in the late eighteenth century and Catherine the Great's forces fought for control of the area.

Map 7: Southern Russia, Romania, and Turkey[vi]



A second wave of Old Believer emigration to Turkey occurred in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They left Dobruja much later and were named for their long sojourn on the Danube—the Dunaki, although they sometimes will refer to themselves as the Nekrasovtsy as well. They left the region after the newly consolidated Kingdom of Romania introduced objectionable measures such as mandatory vaccination (c. 1880) (Biggins 1985, 36, 39, 42). Some moved to Hamidiye, also in the Lake Manyas area, three hours by horseback from the Nekrasovtsy's primary settlement at Bir Evler. But the largest group who came to New Jersey were from Kazak Köyü (or Kazakköy, "Cossack Village" as the Turkish called it, in Konya province)

[vi] https://freevectormaps.com/world-maps/WRLD-EPS-01-0013?ref=atr

near Akşehir a several days journey from their co-religionists (~500k) (Hall 1969, 51; Piepkorn 1979, 113; Biggins 1985, 36; Holdeman 2002, 93).[146]

But by far the greatest error of conflating the two groups is that they held dissimilar positions on the priesthood spectrum. The Nekrasovtsy were beglopopovtsy when they immigrated to Turkey in the early eighteenth century and became popovtsy in the mid-nineteenth century when the community was split between those who joined Belaya Krinitsa and Edinoverie hierarchies (Piepkorn 1979, 111).[147] After the Nekrasovtsy fled to Turkey, the Dunaki stayed and mingled with other groups of Old Believers from further north in Bukovina (then Austrian) and Moldavia, with the Lipovane (Romania), and with the flood of Old Believer peasants from Starodubcy and Belorussian forests into fled into the Danube region during Nicholas I's reign (Biggins 1985, 32-5, 39, 42). The Dunaki were de facto bezpopovtsy (like other Chasovennye in Russia and China) who explicitly rejected those hierarchies as incorrectly ordained. They also held many of the more puritanical measures of other priestless groups (Piepkorn 1977, 113-114; Biggins 1985, 38-9), which critically affected their negative perceptions of the Millville Pomortsy group and prevented their co-religiosity with them.

Despite the differences and distance between the Nekrasovtsy and Dunaki they were certainly more similar to each other than the surrounding Muslim population and kept contacts to facilitate endogamy (Hall 1969, 51; Biggins 1985, 37; Morris 1991, 29). This demonstrates the relativity of groupness. In the New World the Nekrasovtsy/Kubantsy (popovtsy who settled near Lake Manyas in early nineteenth century) and the Dunaki (de facto bezpopovtsy who settled near Akşehir in late nineteenth/early twentieth centuries) all became "Nekrasovtsy" and "Turchane." But the majority Dunaki (175 immigrated to U.S.) had lost much of their distinct Cossack heritage, tongue, and oral history while the Nekrasovtsy cherished and retained these aspects of their identity (Biggins 1985, 42).

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[146] Biggins says it is now called Cedediye, I do not find one in this area. Google maps comes up with nothing for the coordinates he gives (38 25N 31 38E), which is near Akşehir and Konya; Hall merely recorded that they were from Konya. There is a Kaala Koyu 277km from Akşehir.

[147] Piepkorn goes on to say that after WWI they received priests from ROCOR and after WWII from the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul, an unthinkable option to most Old Believers past and present.

The salience of subgroup identities based on past migratory history diminishes in new socio-environmental settings, but the bezpopovtsy/popovtsy distinction mattered a great deal to the Turchane's co-religiosity with other American Old Believers. There were already Pomortsy Old Believers in southern New Jersey with an established (1936) church in Millville. Old Rite groups have often come in and out of contact with one another as multiple migration paths have intersected over the centuries. The Pomortsy and Turchane were not unknown to one another in the Old World. The bezpopovtsy in Masuria (Poland, Map 4) were aware of "co-Believers" in Turkey. One of their delegates had even visited the Turchane in 1846 to consider (and reject) relocating there to resist government drafts, birth registrations, mandatory schooling for girls, and forced tithes to their local Protestant parish. Issues of an 1860s religious publication (polemics, religious literature) from Poland also reached Turkey (Iwaniec 1981, 18-19).

If there are no salvation deal-breakers contact permits subgroup unifications. As discussed earlier, in the eighteenth century the Fedoseevtsy and Pomortsy found themselves together in Poland, originally non-co-religious. But when their descendants laid the Erie Church of the Nativity's cornerstone in 1919 they proclaimed the congregation as part of the Pomortsy Concord. Similarly, the Harbintsy and Sinziantsy met in Hong Kong and took time to come together 'as one.'

In terms of their stated goal of finding co-religious spouses, the Pomortsy-Turchane U.S. 'reunion' was not successful although both were bezpopovtsy. The Turchane disapproved of the older Pomortsy community's disregard of certain traditions, such as prohibitions against eating and drinking with non-believers and general lack of purity and social duality practices. In general, they found themselves too exposed to outside society in New Jersey. They were shocked by their Americanized modes of dress and the fact that many men shaved; they refused to attend church with shaven men. In turn, the Pomortsy were surprised by the Turchane's colorful clothing in services, which contrasted sharply with their black robes and dresses. All in all, the Turchane and Pomortsy had limited interaction, as most soon joined the Chasovennye Oregon, and shortly

afterwards, [148] Only one woman stayed in Millville after marrying a local Old Believer (Piepkorn 1977, 114; Biggins 1985, 41-2; Holdeman 2002, 93n107).

The conflation of the popovtsy Nekrasovtsy/Kubantsy and the 'bezpopovtsy' Dunaki reveals a common theme in portraits of Old Belief that overlap a group's position on the priesthood spectrum with their degrees of worldliness. For example, Bigart's *New York Times* article (April 27, 1966) represents the difference between the "fanatics" in Oregon and those then planning to move to Alaska because "even [in Oregon] they feel the oppressive breath of megapolis..." and the 8 families in Paterson, NJ who use TV to learn English and are "so assimilated that men have shaved off their beards" and even attend ROC services (!) as separate poles of adaptation. "Finding it hard to keep their way of life" in New Jersey (Beliajeff 1977, 79), "the most fanatic...fearing the corruption of urban life" (Bigart, April 27, 1966) collectively purchased and subdivided a plot of land in Willamette Valley in 1964 that came to be known as the "Turkish Village" or "Little Turkey" (Smithson 1977, 163-4, 238; Biggins 1985, 48; Jaffe 1990, 57; Holdeman 2002, 93).[149] Bigart further characterized the Turchane who remained in Lakewood, NJ as somewhere in between these poles, although noted that they were also considering moving to Oregon to escape the "stern pressure to conform to American customs" (*New York Times,* April 27, 1966).

Interesting in Bigart's popular news account is his description of community difference as being on a spectrum of assimilation— Paterson, on the left, where new immigrants shave and even attend New Rite services, Lakewood somewhere in between, and Oregon and Alaska social isolationists on the far right. Bigart erroneously describes them all as from Lake Manyas, again conflating the two groups whose Turkish villages were some 500km apart. But more telling is his eliding of the fundamental distinction that there were two different New Jersey resettlements of two different 'Turkish' Old Believer groups. The 25 individuals in Paterson, NJ (215km from Millville)

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[148] Hall (1969, 52) and Piepkorn (1979, 113) says 33 families left for Oregon from New Jersey in 1964. Tolstoy Foundation report from 1970 "Duty-trip" to Oregon states that the Turkish group was originally some 42 families with 124 members, and that there were then 46 families of 167 people living in their village in Bethlehem-Gervais (in Untiedt 1970, 146).

[149] But people move both ways on the spectrum. Two young men returned to New Jersey from Oregon "in rebellion against the religious strictness of their families" (Bigart, *New York Times*, April 27, 1966).

and Valley Cottage, NY[150] were the popovtsy Nekrasovtsy and the much larger group (~175) near Millville and in Lakewood (130km from Millville) were (de facto) bezpopovtsy (Piepkorn 1979, 111, 113; Biggins 1985, 38-9).[151] The Tolstoy Foundation purposefully separated the two Turchane groups in the U.S. "to avoid antagonisms" (Biggins 1985, 41).

Therefore, it is less surprising that the very few popovtsy Turchane in Paterson—indeed, the only priested Old Believer community in the U.S. at that time—searched out other Eastern Orthodox churches in which to practice. Any Edinovertsy among their number would have already accepted priests from the ROC, and in this case, they were accepting a ROCOR priest specifically ordained in the Old Rite in 1965 to cater to new Old Believer immigrants. Twenty-three years later this priest, Fr. Dimitry, became ROCOR's first Old Rite bishop (Bishop Daniel) (Piepkorn 1977, 111, 115n13; Hudanish 1988, 7).[152] And it is the 'bezpopovtsy' second wave Turchane (the Dunaki) who clashed with the practices and lifestyle of the Millville Pomortsy and moved to Oregon. Less than a decade later some of this group moved to Nikolaevsk in pursuit of social isolation. The small number who remained in New Jersey, very close to New York City in fact, were primarily the popovtsy Nekrasovtsy/Kubantsy (Biggins 1985, 41-2). This connection of perceived degrees of assimilation and the priesthood spectrum is common, and I found it constantly repeated in both my own interviews and in other ethnographies of American Old Believers (more Chapter Six, See Figure 15).

The Turchane are outnumbered by the Chasovennye in Oregon and Alaska by 20:1 (Biggins 1985, 46), but differences in dress (e.g., talichka versus sarafan dresses), dialect, Turkish

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[150] Home of the Tolstoy farm, where Morris (1991, 34) states they were "processed," before settling in NJ. It is unclear if anyone settled in that area.

[151] May also clarify the discrepancy between the immigrants numbers in different sources, as Holdeman (2002, 93,n105) pointed out the New York Times (April 27, 1966) and others (e.g. Smithson 1977, 163) statement that 250 'Turkish' Old Believers came in 1963 are contradictory to Piepkorn (1977, 113) who wrote that 25 Nekrasovtsy/Kubantsy and 175 Dunaki came, and Biggins' 224 (1985, 41). A 1970 report from the Tolstoy Foundation, which played a primary role in the group's immigration, states that the original number that moved to Oregon was 124 (Untiedt 1977, 146).

[152] Piepkorn says they also obtained "priestly ministrations" from other Eastern Orthodox priests (1977, 111).

surnames,[153] and other practices have faded over the years. In 1967, a sobor in Oregon declared the Turchane group co-religious with the Sinziantsy and Harbintsy, noting that there were only small differences between the three subgroups. This important, official decision facilitated subgroup intermarriage (Reardon 1972, 410-1; Smithson 1977, 163, 217; Colfer 1985;) and erased centuries of distance and distinct ritual evolutions. The passage of generations of co-habitation and intermarriage have since minimized distinctions and otherness. The priesthood microschisms created a much larger, and more salient due to its dogmatic and historical implications, local division that trumped classifications based on one's parents' or grandparents' pre-U.S. settlement.

These in-group appellations are very telling in that they reference previous habitation rather than sectarian differences. Perhaps because all three groups were formerly beglopopovtsy yet de facto bezpopovtsy for nearly two centuries there was no other sectarian name or subgroup to classify their different practices caused over the years by the local evolution of religiosity due to localized determinations of authentic practices (i.e., congregationalism) and isolation. These group-identities become obsolete with each migration and each merger, for example the group that called themselves Dunaki after their family's former Romanian homeland were called Turchane by the 'Chinese' Old Believers (Biggins 1985, 42).

Old Believers from Poland, from the Baltic countries, from Turkey, and from China met in the U.S. where they pieced together new groups (new selves) out of a multitude of variations of internal Others in a foreign setting full of new external Others. The Turchane's story is illustrative of the vital importance Old Believers' place on 1. The priesthood question and 2. Similar selective modernities and worldliness (or degrees of social duality) in their determinations of co-religiosity. ORRO group-making is a complex history of unifications and schisms over recurrent theological issues and the challenges of maintaining their faith under constantly evolving external pressures. Persecutions, military conscriptions, and encroaching poganyi society are a few of the "social sources" contributing to their schisms and undoubtably causal factors in their many migrations. Yet the above history also shows that while the European, sectarian, and immigration backgrounds of

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[153] They were required to change their names to Turkish forms in early twentieth century. Some have names that similar to their original Russian names, others are based on characteristics like 'blue-eyes.' Some of these names have since been Americanized, but they are distinct from more obviously Russian names of their co-religionists (Biggins 1985, 39).

the Old Believers in Erie and Nikolaevsk were radically different, their theological queries and challenges of lived Orthodoxy were the same. These have been the same for centuries. Simply, the 1980s American Old Believer microschisms were the result of long-standing 'internal' disputes about the nature of the Church and the contemporary spiritual state of the world (and how much they should socially participate in it).

Throughout ORRO history, regardless of setting, groups have merged (Fedoseevtsy and Pomortsy; Harbintsy, Sinziantsy, and Dunaki) and groups have divided as sobory and schisms forge unique paths of Old Rite continuity. Old Believers' determination of co-religiosity rests on far more issues than the priesthood question alone: it rests on ancient purity laws, segregation habits, and the ritual markers of life's passage through birth, marriage, and death. Above all it rests on each congregation's agreed upon definition of "Orthodox and saving" and the essential unchangeable elements of their faith. In the following chapter, I explore these practices through Old Believers' life stages as co-religiosity determinants and regulatory functions of group preservation as they strive to map their Christian ideals onto the mundanities of daily life.

Chapter 3
A Separate Union: Managing Continuity

> *My dear Christian Readers, the filthiness of the world is also surrounding us in this land. Theatres, shows, magazines, and many other things are saturated with immorality and uncleanness; the sense of shame and modesty is almost not known to our young generation. Only the strictest watch over the eyes, and ears, and heart can keep us and our children from being defiled and from becoming as filthy as the residents of [Sodom and Gomorrah] were. We may use the things of the world, but only in the wise way: otherwise we may become slaves of them. The worldly advantages of our modern life often become the snares for us, and especially for our youngsters. Greed of gain of the riches, pleasures, and other pleasant things of this life may inspire us to make a wrong choice, like Lot made, when he pitched his tent toward Sodom...Let us instruct our children to have the most careful watch over their eyes and ears, and impulses, so that also they could be saved from misfortunes and perishing. Their young hearts are more impressionable, and the wickedness of this age may easy overpower them. Therefore they must be aided by good and loving parental instruction, and, most of all, by good personal example of the parents. And let us start a new season of our life with a new strength and decision to stay firmly in our faith,*[154] *so that the wickedness of the outside world could not entangle us in its snares.*
> —Fr. Smolakov, *SSW*#370, December 31, 1964

The above excerpt from one of Father Smolakov's Sunday School Weeklies (*SSW*) sums up several themes in this chapter that might, without such documentation, come off as gross generalizations on my part. In Old Believers' writings, sermons, and conversations I observed broad, sweeping, dualities that characterized everything from people (non-co-religious/co-religious; Khristianiki/poganyi) to food (clean/unclean) to metaphysical spheres of existence (not of this world/worldly; Spirit/flesh). I frequently turn to my coded analysis of *SSW*s to illustrate, in the words of a respected religious leader, the dualistic concepts that structure ORRO co-religiosity and selective modernity decisions. The epithet above describes "the world" as filthy, unclean, wicked, immoral, defiling, enslaving, and shameless. It is Othered, and outside their community. "Modern life" and the "wickedness of this age" are perceived as compounding the ancient opposition between God's will and the ways of the world.[155] I begin this chapter with an exposition of these

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[154] A congregant of Erie's bezpopovtsy Church of the Holy Trinity lent me her collection of *SSW*s. This phrase was underlined by hand.

[155] "Do not love the world or the things in the world. The love of the Father is not in those who love the world; for all that is in the world—the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, the pride in riches—comes not from the Father but from the world. And the world and its desire are passing away, but those who do the will of God live forever" (1 John 2:15-17). This chapter also contains one of the many instances in the New Testament of the light/believer/love versus darkness/hate dualistic imagery (8-11).

commonly used conceptual dichotomies to theologically contextualize American Old Believers' practices of social duality. Generalized dualistic perspectives are actualized in everyday practices of social duality in the form of physical segregation from the 'world', social exclusion of the non-co-religious, endogamy, and ritual exclusion of those out of grace (more on this in Chapter Four). These practices serve to keep an Old Believer enclave spiritually united (in sobornost'), distinct and separate from the "filthiness of the world...surrounding us in this land" (*SSW*#370, December 31, 1964).

Fr. Smolakov refers above to the story of Lot (Genesis 18-19) to illustrate to his congregants that, as Christians, they are making choices in worldly orientation (between a fallen city and a saved future) everyday that could have fiery consequences. Similarly, I focus on selective modernity to highlight the choices made by individuals, congregations, even ecumenical councils that seek to follow an absolute, divine will even with ever-changing circumstances of passing time. Like Lot, the wise believer (hopefully wiser than Lot) must carefully pick and choose which direction to look on the 'road to salvation'. In the chapter's second section, I explore worldly/spiritual orientation first within the Orthodox theological framework of sobornost' (conciliarity; oneness). Then, I turn to comparable anthropological theories concerning purity. I also demonstrate how Old Believers' practical application of these dualistic concepts through social and/or physical segregation on the individual level mirror schisms on the congregational and institutional levels in that unity is assured through the exclusion of spiritual deviants. Everyday socio-ritualistic separations and larger religious ruptures have similar effect of redefining and confirming boundaries of belonging.

The wise believer must also carefully protect their faith and the faith of their children. Religious continuity comes down to whether one's children stay in the church as adults or are lost to the world. Old Believers' rhetoric and practices of segregation and purity are aimed at saving their youth "from misfortunes and perishing," and from being overpowered and defiled by "the wickedness of the outside world" (*SSW*#370, December 31, 1964). They can be saved through example and instruction, so that they chose correctly. In the last section, I trace American Old Believers' attempts to control these choices and preserve individuals' spiritual integrity through the life phases of education, marriage, and death. The Erie and Nikolaevsk enclaves exhibit different degrees of social and physical segregation, the former is in an urban environment and seventy years older. However, the internal debates and challenges each community has faced in selecting

acceptable accommodations and adjusting to life in the U.S. reveals similar priorities of religious continuity (transmission of religious knowledge) and desire to save souls; they differ in methodology, not purpose.

All change is a choice: whither one pitches their tent orients their worldly and/or spiritual affiliation. Whether one is exogamous, prayerful, modest, unshaven, Slavonic-literate, and selfless are the compositional decisions of Old Rite continuity. This dissertation looks at how two American Old Believer communities collectively debated these choices, and the process of decision-making on one of the most fundamental choices a religious group can make—the formalized co-religiosity of ecumenical affiliation—eventually divided two congregations. For the present, I explore how Old Believers' theologically rooted, categorical dualism (e.g., us/them, modern/traditional, pravoslavnye/heresy) is enacted and disputed in their everyday social and ritual lives.

3.1. Qualifications: The Dark and Sinful World of Material Flesh

Boris was standing for most of our interview. He paced, gesticulated broadly, and searched for materials to support his impassioned explanations. But it was not his tale of the recent past, the microschism that split Nikolaevsk, that made him stand and speak with the urgency of warning—but the present. "The End is nigh" is not just a cliché sidewalk placard, but a message shouted everywhere. "We carry Satan in our pockets!" His sign is written on our credit cards. On barcodes. On our phones. We are already lost.

Polarization is ever-present in Christian thought and scripture. For the more conservative Old Believers, the poles are magnetic and absolutely repel one another. The concepts of good and evil, light and dark, and Christ and Antichrist are not simple opposites; a qualitative right/wrong dimension always overlays these poles that affects everyday social ethics. The methods of social duality I discuss in this chapter are the practical application of this polarized worldview. Here, I discuss the broad ideological framework of the division between Us and Them (or, Khristianiki/poganyi; nimirskie/mirskie; saved doomed). The Erie and Nikolaevsk congregations differ greatly in service rituals, material culture, purification practices, language, and societal (worldly) orientation and organization, yet they share the fundamentally dualistic perception of the world that is ingrained in the Scriptures and read and expounded on in weekly sermons.

As we see from the brief accounts I offered of Pomortsy and Chasovennye's European histories, the qualification of practices as either acceptable worldliness or allegiance with the Antichrist has been a common source of ORRO schism (e.g. prayer for the tsar, conscription). 'The world' and 'modernity' are similar motifs of Othering in traditionalist, ascetic-leaning Orthodox religiosity; these vague terms are used at times interchangeably (as in Fr. Smolakov's words above). The imperative aspect of the divide between the material (worldly) and the immaterial (godly) is the underlying temporal dimension of salvation religions. The earth and people's lives on it "are temporary and perishing" (*SSW*#682, September 5, 1971).[156] This is precisely why each day and decision are so crucial.

Perhaps the most commonly known biblical polarization of the eternal and temporary worlds is the juxtaposition of God and mammon (wealth),[157] and Jesus' admonition that no person can serve both (Mt 6:24, Luke 16:13). In Fr. Smolakov's exposition of this parable, he argues that people "in the contemporary world" are distracted and enslaved by more than just money. Mammon may be drinking or "the drugs [that] attack the young generation" (*SSW*#672, June 27, 1971). Over a third (35%, or 34/95) of my *SSW* sample made explicit the opposition between the material world and the eternal world of God as competing moral modalities.

The world, "now ruled mostly by God's adversary, the devil" causes a spiritual blindness that keeps one from the truth and the light (*SSW*#760, June 3, 1973).[158] The Devil is as much a key summarizing symbol of Christianity as the cross; both are fundamental aspects of the dualistic system as opposing modes of orientation for believer's attitudes, commitments, and actions (Ortner 1973). Fr. Smolakov frequently referenced the active role Satan and his servants take in the temptation of Christians (21/95, 22%). His fears about that influential, blinding dark star

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[156] Similar phrases were present in *SSW*#315, July 14, 1963, and *SSW*#686, October 10, 1971.

[157] 'Mammon' is sometimes translated as 'money', but the term often refers to 'riches', or as material wealth and power more generally. *NOAB* (1756, 1861) translates the Greek 'mammon' simply as 'wealth'.

[158] In another illustration of this principle, Fr. Smolakov compares "worldly hearts" to the thorns in the Parable of the Sower that prevent the seed (the Gospel truth) from growing in unfertile grounds (*SSW*#735, October 22, 1972).

Lucifer and worldly society often centered on Erie's younger Old Believers.[159] And perhaps he was right, although in an unexpected way. That same youth faced schism as adults as they struggled to reconcile their faith to socioeconomic, educational, marital, and occupational shifts and diminishing religious and linguistic knowledge.

External threats to religious continuity are also the internal trials through which salvation is achieved. Fr. Smolakov drew a clear connection between early Christians' asceticism, renunciation of material possessions, and service to others and the ancient, unchanged goal of Christian life to vanquish the "baser nature" of humanity's essential duality.

> Though about two thousand years passed since the time, when St. Paul preached the denying of himself, and many things changed in the world, the goal of the Christian life has remained the same, and even, the seeking of the Kingdom of Heaven. The human being was created by God of two main components: of the perishing body and of the immortal soul, which was breathed into the lifeless body by God's Divine breath: therefore, the purpose of this life is our test of fitness for the coming life, and for the return to the Giver of life, the Almighty God. (*SSW*#356, August 2, 1964)

In other words, a Christian must overcome the temporal and perishing, the worldly and material—half their nature—to gain salvation.

Beyond attaining God's saving grace, an Orthodox Christian should aim to become Christ-like, sanctified, even deified. Fr. Simon's sermon on the "Sunday of the Blind Man," so named for the parable (John 9; Mark 8) read towards the end of the Paschal season, defined the meaning of Christian life using the common light/dark dualistic imagery. The Orthodox Christian's purpose is to be "illuminated...that we can change ourselves from the fallen, dark creatures in which we were created on this earth after the fallen human beings who chose that path...To raise ourselves up and reach the state of *theosis*, of deification, that is the goal of Christianity. To raise ourselves up, so

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[159] 13% of my sample discuss the need to keep youth in the church or specific moral threats to young Old Believers (*SSW*#s 12, October 16, 1955; *SSW*#15, November 6, 1955; *SSW*#116, March 23, 1958; *SSW*#144, December 7, 1958; *SSW*#309, May 12, 1963; *SSW*#328, November 17, 1963; *SSW*#370, December 31, 1964; *SSW*#377, February 21, 1965; *SSW*#402, October 31, 1965; *SSW*#511, March 24, 1968; *SSW*#672, June 27, 1971; *SSW*#682, September 5, 1971).

that we can be in God's image and likeness" (CN sermon, June 9, 2013).[160] The very goal of Christianity, at least in Fr. Simon's point of view, is intimately tied to transcending materiality. This basic theological principle is shared by American Old Believers, although methods vary.

But are our cell phones the physical embodiment of Satan or do these objects figuratively tie us to the material world that he rules? Given Nikolaevsk's Boris' further characterization of computers, Visa credit cards, QR codes, and retail barcodes as connected to the Devil and/or his mark (666), I suspected he was being quite literal.[161] But to Erie's Fr. Simon (to offer another example brought up by a concerned mother in Sunday school), nail polish does not inherently possess evil characteristics. Instead, its use holds the spiritual consequences of vanity and material predilection in red tints of suggestive promiscuity. Fr. Simon elaborated his argument in a later interview; I was self-conscious of my colorful nails. Sure, he does not like nail polish, but doubts that wearing lacquer is a grave or mortal sin. "Looking like a harlot" is the sin. Vanity is a sin. Fr. Simon may not wish to condone contemporary conventions that he disapproves of, but "we need to pick our battles." It is only on matters of faith that there can be no concession or compromise, he argued. These are the battles that must be fought (pers. comm. December 30, 2012, January 2, 2013).

Fr. Simon's explanation on the fine points of selective modernity, innovations, and novel considerations is arena of religious determination of what matters. Whether some practice concerns an absolute, unchangeable matter of faith is the question that repeatedly divides Old Believers from one another. As shaving, cosmetic products, and shorter haircuts for women have become normalized for the Americanized Erie community, the line between minor transgressions and salvation-jeopardizing sins has been redrawn. In Nikolaevsk, we find different borderlines of acceptability; different battles are chosen. These variations in classification portray the degree to

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[160] Fr. Simon argued that the point of Orthodoxy is to become illuminated, to raise oneself up towards deification/theosis and away from a fallen state of darkness. He also argued that the concept of theosis is largely lost in Western Christianity and that the Roman Catholic Mass could be much shorter because there was no goal of sanctification. It takes a lot more time to commune with God, let alone reach a state of godliness, than most are willing to give.

[161] In the alphanumeric system A=6, B=12, C=18, 666 is the combined total of the letters in 'computer'. I did not honestly understand how the three squares in QR barcodes signaled the beast. VISA: VI Roman 6, S the Cyrillic 6, and he was unsure (and I have not found) in what language an 'A' signifies a 6 (pers. comms. Aug. 26, 2013).

which the world itself is believed ruled by the forces of the Antichrist. How the othered and the outside world is conceptualized and navigated theologically, socially, and physically is investigated in the next section below.

3.2. 'Closed' Concepts in Anthropology and Orthodoxy

The field of anthropology has certainly moved beyond looking at communities as closed and uniquely formed socially symbolic systems, or 'Cultures.' An urban enclave is not conceptually confinable. And even Nikolaevsk is open. But the closed/open dichotomy remains a vernacularly relevant one. I heard those in Erie describe Nikolaevsk as closed, and people in Nikolaevsk describe the communities in Alberta and Minnesota as "enclosed" and even "closed-minded." The ever-exuberant Grigori gave a bold shout of "FREEDOM!" á la *Braveheart,* to describe the difference between Nikolaevsk and Minnesota (pers. comm., July 8, 2013). His popular culture reference simultaneously demonstrated the former's lack of social seclusion and the persistence of these categories despite their inaccuracy.

In Erie, people marveled at my going to research the 'Old Believer' types they see as entirely Other, 'more' Russian, cultural curios. Terms like 'closed' and 'cult' and 'backwards' and 'enclave mentality' were dropped. They wondered, was I allowed into the village? Was I able to attend services? Did they talk to me?[162]

Old Believers are clearly not a unified community[163] in any sense of the word; this is a dissertation about schism after all. But members of the group, in broad terms, with all its subdivisions, does share a history, theology, symbolic language, and value system that helps define membership and claim to the name 'Old Believer.' These external and internal ins and outs are the boundary lines of belonging, and they are held in place through the concepts and practices of purity (Bowie 2006, 62-3). Enclaves that are by definition othered from their external, social

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[162] November 6, 2012, May 6, 2013, June 1, 2013

[163] I use 'community' in its generic, vernacular form, as the term is "so vague as to be virtually meaningless," and has lost all meaning as an analytical category after decades of definition and symbolic analysis attempts (Cohen, A 2002, 169). Cohen's epilogue to Amit's (2002) edited volume is largely in conversation with his hugely influential *Symbolic Construction of Community* (1985), which he updated by arguing against his former central position about the relational quality of boundaries and reasserts (despite vagary of term) 'community's' salient role in the construction of self-identity and social belonging.

environment including those considered to be more closed by internal standards (i.e., Erie's view of Nikolaevsk, Nikolaevsk's view of Alberta) are, nevertheless, global. The Amish, for example, are secluded in quiet colonies to the popular imagination, but actively engage in economic exchanges with outsiders through cottage industries of furniture, quilts, and other goods.[164] Old Believers are members of internationally connected networks, economically participating in global markets, and avowed[165] citizens of a NATO and G7 state. Their knowledge (and comfort) that there are other Old Believers elsewhere in the diaspora, even non-co-religious ones, supports their dogged declaration that "Old Believers will never die"[166] despite their local struggles with acculturation, continuity maintenance, exogamy, and the decline of religious knowledge (CS, calendar rubric, Russian) and participation of the Old Rite that defines them.

This chapter (and dissertation) explores the variant means through which distinctions in belonging are construed and continuously negotiated. In other words, I am looking at how unity is constructed through divisive processes through the creation of co-religious and non-co-religious categories. Below, I conceptually frame Old Believers' religious segregation in keeping with classical anthropological thought on purity and boundary creation. Mary Douglas (1966) famously described purity/pollution laws as controls for the dangerous messiness of category confusion. To her clear claim that "purity is the enemy of change, of ambiguity and compromise" (200), I introduce the Orthodox concept of *sobornost'* (togetherness, conciliarity). Further review of Eastern Christianity's particular emphasis on the unified integrity of its spiritual bodies large (ecumenical) and small (congregational) will theologically center (in their own terms) and broaden the anthropology of Christianity's understanding of our interlocutors' group-making and socio-ritual boundaries.

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[164] Olshan (1994, 133-146) discusses this as a "Trojan horse" into their colonies, a double-edged sword that ensures economic self-sufficiency to live separate while forcing members to become "open" up and be friendly to outsiders.

[165] Group Naturalization Ceremonies in Nikolaevsk reported in local newspapers: 1975 59 (Smithson 1977, 166); 1979 64 adults 22 children (Lund, *HN*, May 3, 1979); 26 in 1987 (O'Meara, *HN*, Oct 22, 1987) and 22 in 1993 (Loshbaugh, *HN,* May 27, 1993).

[166] Fr. Simon stated, "We're not going to die. We'll never die. We'll always have a body," before discussing the two primary reasons for the Erie churches' lessening numbers, 1. the lower fertility rate of 2nd generation Erie Old Believers (in comparison to the Old Believers in Oregon and Alaska) and 2. higher level of education that the local job market cannot satisfy (Jan. 2, 2013).

3.2.1. An Orthodox Union (Sobornost')

My view was obstructed. If I had bought tickets for this pre-dawn service, I would have received a discounted fare. I feel guilty portraying the group with the image of the glowering, unwelcoming few, but they were there too. Did Anna stay in the vestibule today out of kindness to me or did she do something wrong? A woman of a certain age, I doubt she was excluded because she was "on the rag," to quote from her husband's list of sanctuary exclusions.[167] *At least I knew why I was there, and the reason for the scrunched, lowered eyebrows of some, and the "I'm looking through you" stare of others. But as Anna fixed the lay of my shawl over my inadequately covered shoulders, I suspected she was there on my account. This stood out as salient for its contradictoriness— the closeness of a maternal touch, Anna's welcome, my nerves, her calm, temptations in the smallest margins of flesh, the setting's meditative dark, thick-scented ambiance, the somnolent Slavonic chants, and the marginalization of conspicuous segregation. I was not pure; I was apart, not a part of. But I was offered the chance to see.*

Sobornost' has been defined as the "principle of collective organization" and "quality of catholic unity" (Humphrey 2014, 201n10), and "episcopal conciliarism" (Sidorov 2001, 238). More simply, it is "togetherness" (Agadjanian 2011, 16). I am approaching ritual unity, co-religious belonging, and sobornost' in a rather clinical manner, divorced from the spirit of Durkheim's effervescence or Turner's communitas.[168] Religious leaders (elders and nastavniki or priests) make reasoned decisions through scriptural study, not during the sacred time of rituals. But in making this distinction I do not want to take away from the fact that this spirit of union and oneness, as a primary Christian ideal, *is* the motivation behind the mechanisms of social control explored in this chapter. How is unity diagnosed? And if ailing, how is it treated? In part, the spiritual health of the congregation is maintained by prohibiting polluting elements. This section explores Orthodox conceptions of belonging as they relate to classical anthropological concepts of purity and boundaries.

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[167] A note on gender segregation in addition to the prohibition against menstruating women and those who recently gave birth in the sanctuary: In Erie, the men largely stay to the left and the women the right. In Nikolaevsk, the men gravitate towards the front, with women behind, and younger members behind their same sexed elders.

[168] Davis has a very interesting discussion on the relationship between Turner's communitas (1969) and Christianity's *koinonia* (communion, between believers with each other, and with Holy Spirit) (2002, 126-130).

'Boundaries', or the social lines through which those who belong and those who do not traverse, remains a meaningful, classical anthropological concept, despite these lines' flexibility, changeability, and relativity in social life.[169] The malleability of community boundaries is precisely what makes them anthropologically valuable as exemplary of social negotiations between ideals and experience. Within the church, an invisible line between the vestibule and nave is also a boundary between acceptable and non-acceptable behavior. The importance of boundary reification to group identity is why schism is such a fruitful arena of religious research. *Are there beardless Old Believers?* At what point or degree of border crossing, other mixing, and rule altering does one lose their insider status?

In post-microschism Nikolaevsk and Erie, 'congregation' is a more accurate term than 'community' to indicate the type of self-identified social belonging and solidarity associated with an enclave's attempted closedness. The congregation is the lowest common denominator of within-boundary Old Believer social groupings. Even co-religious congregations remain locally determined moral communities.[170] While the four U.S. Pomortsy groups once held conferences to maintain their co-religiosity, decisions ranging from burial allowances (*PC* 5, 1957, Q3; *PC* 7, 1959, Q6; *PC* 12, 1966, Q2-3) to candle usage (*PC* 3, 1955, Q3; *PC* 4, 1956, Q1) were left to individual nastavniki and/or committees of elders.

Furthermore, the congregation is the social grouping responsible for maintaining the theological imperative (Creed; Ephesians 4) of Christian oneness so expressively exhibited in Old Believers' distinctive "one voice" (*edinoglassie*, monophonic) prayers. The majority of their service's bows, signs of the cross, and prayers are performed in unison. The most striking

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[169] Mary Douglas recognized boundaries are not immutable or timeless and do not exist in a vacuum (5). Cohen worked to repair what he felt to be an exaggerated influence of his 'Symbolic Community', which he wrote against Barth's famous essay (Barth 1969). Cohen moved away from his earlier emphasis on relativity of boundaries and corrected his deemphasis on how one's claim of community belonging impacts their identity (2002, 166-8). For a more in-depth discussion on the relationship between religious identity, purity, and social boundaries, see Laidlaw's (1995) "Riches and Renunciation" and Bowie (2006, 62-81). For discussions of Old Believer boundaries and community paradigms see Robson (1995, 96-126) and Crummey (2011, 99-118). Morris (1981, 1991) theoretically centers his discussion of Old Believers in Oregon on Barth.

[170] See Rogers (2008) for a discussion of Old Believers' competing (due to similar schism over priesthood) sense of community belonging and purpose shaped by shared moral conceptions and social goals that accounts for the internal variation, conflict, and transformation lacking in earlier discussions of "moral community."

difference I noted when I attended a New Rite service (OCA, in Montréal) was the absence of Slavonic chanting as one group, in one key, at one time.

The ascetic and xenophobic aspects of the early ROC contextualize contemporary Old Believers' particularly puritanical strain of Orthodox practice. The extension of purification rites from the sanctuary to daily life was a unique feature of Muscovite religiosity, a lasting influence of Byzantinism,[171] and a tenet of the Zealots of Piety movement which immediately preceded the seventeenth century schism (Zenkovsky 1957; Zernov 1963, 7-8; Michels 1999, 3). Scheffel (1991) astutely describes how priestless Old Believers' exclusivist, puritanical tendencies compensate for the lost of ecumenical sobornost' and hierarchical assurances of orthodox compliance.

Peter I, whose reign began a mere 16 years after the schism, is known as the Great Westernizer or Great Modernizer. To Old Believers past and present he was the Great Antichrist—the personification of Russia's shift away from tradition (Holdeman 2002, 48n50; Duncan 2000, 2, 15, 97). For example, by forcing his nobles to shave he was leading others into sin since shaving meant defacing that which was made in the image of God (Scheffel 1991, 50; *Hammermill Bond* 1937). But worst of all, Peter I broke down the strength of the Russian Church by replacing the Patriarch with a Synod of sycophants (in 1721, Zenkovsky 1957; Zernov 1978, 113-122; Pospielovsky 1984, 43-5; Michels 1999, 2).

Peter, the infiltration of "The West," modernity, and the debasement of Russian Orthodoxy are inexorably linked in the narrative of the genesis of Old Belief. And in response, puritanical segregationalism and spirit of anti-modernity (conflated with 'the West') became the hallmark of the dissenters' and their descendants' religious and social practices. Zernov, whose history Barbara had recommended to me, summarized this interrelationship of theo-history Russian's special place in the history of Christianity as preservers of the *true* Church and ethno-religious segregationism:

> The keenest among them combined this ritualism of daily life (bytovoe blagochestie) with a puritanical disapproval of popular amusements and with severe moral and bodily discipline. The Christian West was dismissed as affected by heresy and corruption. Not only western creeds but western manners and customs were regarded as degrading. The Russians believed that their special mission was to be the guardians of unpolluted Orthodoxy, and this conviction was linked with the idea of Moscow as the third Rome, the last universal capital of

[171] For more on this influence, which Fr. Simon and the RSG looked at during Erie's priesthood debates, see Fedotov 1966, 21-60, 132-157; Meyendorff, J. 1974, 1981, 1982, 1996; Sidorov 2001, 44-52; and Pott 2010.

> Christendom. It was inevitable therefore that when Tsar (1645-76) and his friend the Patriarch Nikon (1653-66) introduced certain changes into the ritual of the Russian Church in order to bring it nearer to the Greek and Ukrainian pattern, the move motivated by the Russian political expansion, these reforms met with fierce resistance...The schism made the defeat of the Muscovite order easier, but at the same time it increased the opposition between new and old Russia, creating a deep-seated resentment against the West, which extended far beyond the limits of the Old Believers' community. (Zernov 1963, 7-8)

Nikon, by altering the Russian rites to match the Greeks, and Peter, by promoting certain Western fashion (men's dress and shaving) and customs, frustrated the narrative of Russian exceptionalism at best. At worse, the Patriarch and Tsar led their people into heresy.

Emic *pomieschanie* (mixing) infractions correspond with Douglas' (1966) and DeVos' (1975) descriptions of purity rituals as methods of controlling dangerous social relations and the messiness of mixing across complexly interwoven socio-religious categories (orthodox/heterodox; Russian/West). Scheffel, who worked with priestless Old Believers in Alberta described their perception of contact with the worldly as "...one of the gravest infractions an Old Believer can be guilty of" (1991, 61-1). Pomieschanie may result in an individual's temporary excommunication from prayer with "members in good standing;" this means they would have to stay in the vestibule with the likes of me. They would use the dishes reserved for poganyi guests (Colfer 1985, 48-9; Scheffel 1991, 51, 201-202), that one Alaskan called the "dog[172] dishes."

Mixing with internal others can result in similar consequences. One should shun relations with Others, or *hahli* (singular, *hahol*), a broad term once used by the Erie community to variously refer to New Rite ROC members, other ethnic groups, those who left the church, and those with only one ORRO parent (Robson 1985, 187n12). For example, one bezpopovtsy woman expected

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[172] While the prohibition against dogs no longer stands in Erie and was never universal (Holdeman 2002, 50), it is very present in Nikolaevsk. My host, Annitta, always put her dogs outside before visits from her neighbors. Fr. Smolakov explained that dogs are an unclean animal and therefore it is a sin to keep one in a "Christian home." Church laws have unclean animals, and clean animals which may be sacrificed to God (sheep, cows), and half-clean animals like cats may be kept in one's home but are not suitable for sacrifice (*PC* 7, 1959 Q3; following Leviticus, also effects notes of which animals may be eaten Douglas 1966, 51-71; Morris 1981, 126-8; Scheffel 1991, 174-181). Dogs' unclean status may be connected to the demise of the much-maligned Queen Jezebel (they ate her body; 1 Kings 21 and 2 Kings 9). Old Believers had dogs in China as a necessity for hunting, but they were not allowed in the home (pers. comm. DF, August 5, 2013). Albertans practice use of separate dishes as well (Harris 2010).

to atone after she returned from her upcoming visit to family in Alberta because the congregation there is no longer co-religious with Nikolaevsk after mutual accusations of heresy. Before the congregation a penitent recites:

> God be merciful to me a sinner (cross, bow to waist)
> Thou hast created me; Lord, have mercy on me. (cross, bow to waist)
> I have sinned immeasurably; Lord, have mercy and forgive me a sinner (cross, and bow to waist)
> (*Proschaneeye*, Remission Prayer)

To Douglas (1966), purity rituals like the prayer above performatively demarcate boundaries and manage external threats to group survival (27, 150-8, 172). This is why it is said at the margins of days and nights, before and after meals, and at ones' entrances and departures from sacred spaces and "Christian homes."[173] There is danger in the ambiguous margins of the internal/us external/them binary. Bodily and group integrity requires continuous efforts of separation from polluted zones, objects, and persons. This is one function of purity rituals. They also punish transgressions of the social system's order and boundary-crossing, like the segregation and public penance of those guilty of mixing (Douglas 1966, 5-6, 47-50, 166-170).[174]

This "entrance prayer" or "prayer of forgiveness" is both an act of separation of sacred space and time (said before entering prayer space for services) and an atonement for undue border crossing. In Erie, during Fr. Pancerev's (1923-46), and to a lesser extent Fr. Yokoff's (1946-1952), nastavnik-ships those out of grace remained in the vestibule and bowed to the floor as others entered the nave. Monthly meetings were once full of the business of temporary ritual banishment, penances, and pleas for community forgiveness (Robson 1985, 77-79, 1998, 5). These mentions disappeared during Fr. Smolakov's tenure (Robson 1985, 91-3; Holdeman 2002, 106).

While Erie Old Believers no longer practice ritual banishment and spatial segregation of outsiders (whether external outsiders from another faith or internal spiritual outsiders temporarily out of grace) (Robson 1985, 76-78, 90), they still say this prayer "...when beginning divine services to cleanse themselves from the pollution of non-Old Believer society" (Robson 1998, 6). The

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[173] Genuflections to the floor during Great (Paschal) Lent. Written 11 times in the 28 page long Alaskan publication Old Believers Prayer Book: Morning and Evening Prayers (2000, 1, 2, 6, 7, 15, 19, 20, 22-3, 24, 25, 26-7); aka "Entrance Bows," "Departure Bows," and said during morning and evening prayers, and before and after meals (*OOBP* 2001, 1, 15, 21).

[174] And other prohibitions like those found in Leviticus deal with anomalies and hybrids which are unclassifiable and that which "confounds the general scheme" (Douglas 1966, 66-69).

prayer itself remains unchanged as it encapsulates basic Christian conceptions about human fallibility. More generally, Douglas saw ritual as the ongoing process of culture creation and maintenance that enacts and symbolizes "...a particular set of assumptions by which experience is controlled" (1966, 158). Daily pleas for God's mercy and forgiveness continuously enact the Orthodox Christian's assumption that human error requires conscientious and constant self-correction (See Appendix 4).

Pollution prohibitions maintain a group's "social self-integrity" (DeVos 1975, 86) and "wholeness" (Douglas 1966, 64-66). For the Orthodox, this spiritual oneness is a canonical and scriptural injunction. Catholicity, or the universal oneness of the Church, is a dogmatic principle (more Chapter Seven). Old Believers reject their characterization as a 'sect' outside of this entity. Nevertheless, it is hard to escape this term in academic discussions of such 'separatist' groups. Weber specifically included an increased focus on purity as a criterion in his definition of sects as communities of "called" and "religiously qualified" individuals markedly different from institutionalized churches, which "permit their light to shine on the just and unjust alike" (Tönnies et al. 1973, 141-2; also, Niebuhr [1929] 1954, 18-19 and Troeltsch [1911] 1960, 331-343). And tight control of the socio-religious community and puritanical exclusivity is indeed a well-explored aspect of Old Belief (Smithson 1977; Morris 1981; Scheffel 1991), particularly of the bezpopovtsy who, in lieu of hierarchical determinations of authenticity, must err on the side of caution. But as we see in Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox regulations of who may receive Communion,[175] this closed sect/open Church dichotomy also has its provisos.

Councils, large and small, control continuity and assure believers of their conformity with the will of God for his Church. "During the sobor the Holy Spirit is said to penetrate and organize itself inside the participants such that the transcendent and otherworldly unity of the church is actualized among them" (Humphrey 2014, 221n10). For isolated bezpopovtsy congregations without these assurances, local maintenance of group unity with one another and with God becomes more crucial and more heavily regulated. Because unity and sobornost' are such paramount concepts of Christian organization, it is potentially polluting to worship with non-believers or those out of grace. This tenet predates the existence of ORRO by 1000 years. The

[175] I did not include Protestant denominations in this note because not all practice the Eucharistic rite.

earliest Canon of the Church (*AC* 15)[176] morally obliged individuals to separate from leaders who preached heresy or otherwise proved themselves unworthy. This law has been referenced by Old Believers as justification for their rejection of New Rite Russian Orthodoxy, or what religious studies' researchers or historians may call their sectarianism.[177]

Schisms are like an institutional purity ritual that removes impure elements of heresy ("wrong teachings") and inauthenticity. In the 1980s, as in the 1660s, the anathemas were mutual—each side of the schism thought the other was simply, wrong, on matters where to be wrong is to be damned. In this sense, schisms are a means of keeping the unity of the *true* Orthodox Church whole and intact. In another example of the relationship between pollution and wholeness concepts (Douglas 1966), the genesis of Israel as qualitatively Other has also been analyzed as a process of boundary construction through rituals of purification (Moore 2000). Old Believers, considering themselves the defenders of the authentic Christian Church, also asked themselves, "Could the Old Believers be called 'The Chosen People of God'?"[178] And schisms redraw social boundaries (Kurtz 1986, Humphrey 2014), as conscientious moments of group-definition determined by a careful consideration of history and doctrine.

What is 'modern' and what is 'traditional' are vast a vast pole? and ever-changing poles. For Old Believers past and present, modernity has become an antithetical catchword for the end of a Christian way of life, a life of prayer and humility. Modernity transgresses boundaries, and creates

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[176] The Eastern Orthodox Churches accept 85 laws attributed to the Apostles, I use this translation throughout the dissertation: http://www.holytrinitymission.org/books/english/canons_apostles_grabbe.htm#_Toc68522492

[177] I owe my awareness of the importance of this law to Protodeacon Andrei Psarev (who also publishes ROCOR's newsletter and translates important historical and current missives into English), who spoke to Erie's Adult Sunday School, and later to me of his then-ongoing doctoral work on this law (Psarev 2018). "If any presbyter, or deacon, or any other of the list of the clergy, shall leave his own parish, and go into another, and having entirely forsaken his own, shall make his abode in the other parish without the permission of his own bishop, we ordain that he shall no longer perform divine service; more especially if his own bishop having exhorted him to return he has refused to do so, and persists in his disorderly conduct. But let him communicate there as a layman." http://www.holytrinitymission.org/books/english/canons_apostles_grabbe.htm#_Toc68522492 http://www.voskrese.info/spl/aposcanon.html

[178] Fr. Smolakov instructed them to simply keep their faith, remain humble, naming the elect and the saved is "God's jurisdiction." He quoted Luke 18:14 "Everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (*PC* 4, 1956, Q10)

and celebrates a unity comprised of disunity and diversity (Berman [1982] 2010, 15-16). Orthodoxy strives for oneness and sobornost'. Valliere (1991) contrasted modernity's theological liberalism and its promotion of an individual's freedom of conscience over what he calls this "culture of wholeness."

> By 'the culture of wholeness' I mean the mentality formed by a number of related tendencies in Russian Orthodoxy: the pancosmism of Orthodox theology, the ecclesiology of sobornost', the idea of church-state *symphonia* and the ethics of consensus in traditional Russian society. (109)

Soviet morality of brotherhood retained and translated Orthodox concepts of right belief and community like sobornost' (Agadjanian 2011). But this wholeness and togetherness is created by excluding dissenters; the Old Believers are all too aware of this fact.

On a congregational level, wholeness is also created by excluding transgressors. People can fall out of grace for smoking, poor church attendance, exogamy (the ultimate pomieschanie), shaving one's beard, or other accusations of worldliness and Americanization (Robson 1985, 77; Holdeman 2002, 74). Of course, as with all aspects of ORRO, there is a wide range of implementations of puritanical ideals. And these are changing. Fr. Pancerev for example once tore the scarf off a woman's head and kicked her out of choir for the sin of cutting her hair (Robson 1985, 76; pers. comms.). This is now a nonissue in Erie.

Nevertheless, congregational purity and segregation remain *within* the church. In Nikolaevsk, I remained in the vestibule of both churches, and it was clear my entrance was barred from the nave, that invisible line of belonging. In Erie, I stayed in the back or vestibules only to minimize any distraction I may have caused, and I was invited to approach further. Fr. Simon went as far as calling the relegation of non-believers to the foyer as being "unchristian" (pers. comms., December 27, 2012). But in all four churches I was instructed personally and/or by written notices

"not to perform external acts of worship."[179] This is Orthodox exclusive oneness and the creation of the authentic, pure church community in action.

One must belong religiously (to the congregation or a co-religious one) and morally (be in state of grace, or "good standing") to be permitted to join in common worship. For the Old Believers, commitment to the same set of belief-rituals and compliance with the agreed upon set of mores, beliefs, and practices defines the church community, who belongs to it and who may practice it. This is co-religiosity. Society at large defines their own community in the negative, the Others are the heathens, heretics, or the worldly, which it resists in principle and in many ways seeks to distance itself—this is the work of purity and segregation.

3.2.2. Purity and Segregation

People in Erie also correlated closedness, closeness, community, and authentic Old Believer lifestyles with the ethno-religious enclave represented by their past and Nikolaevsk's present. Fr. Simon told me how some people come to Erie expecting to see a community like the one in Alaska:

> *...And I told you before you came here, that's not what we are. We're American people, living American ways of life who still happen to be Orthodox Christians who follow the Old Rite. But there's no, it's not, you know, there's a community, and you can sense that when you come to Sunday School and that. But it's not a community in terms of the fact that everybody sits down and does knitting and quilting and that on Sunday and that. And a lot of those Old Believers do, I've been with them, and I know they'll sit together...but we're American people living very busy lives and so forth who will try to give some time to the whole thing, but very different from the Alaska type of community.*

In Fr. Simon's estimation, there are Old Believers who are a community on one hand and there are Americans who practice the Old Rite on the other. He continued to reiterate this distinction,

> *And I've said this many times before: 'We are Orthodox Christians using the Old Rite. If you're looking for some sociological type of Old Believers, who you know, everybody's*

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[179] Robson (1985, 188n13) noted that the Church of the Nativity meeting minutes of March 27, 1947 decreed that outsiders could be present if they obeyed regulations. The first question of the first inter-congregational Pomortsy sobor asked, "should people of other faith be allowed in our church?" It was decided that they are allowed to enter and "stay within" as long as behavior and clothing meet Church standards (i.e., shawls on women), But "they must not pray." There was no mention of spatial segregation (May 30, 1953). 6th Conference (Aug 31, 1958, Q10) reiterated that outsiders may be present but should not pray. Significantly, readers were reminded of the parable of the Publican and Pharisee, and that Christians should not judge others.

> *walking around with their rubashkas [men's shirt], you're not going to find it here. That's gone. It's gone. It was gone before I was a child.*

He is aware that people blame him for the break in the church, but on this issue he is firm, Americanization predates his leadership.

> *But if something is different than people expected to have been in an Old Believer community, or what they heard in Russia or whatever the case is, and they kind of come to me and say 'Fr. Pimen, you must have...' No, I didn't change anything, other than priesthood. That's the way it was done even when I was young. The women were cutting their hair, the women weren't wearing scarves, the men were shaving their beards, they were going to the CYS club when they shouldn't have been going to the CYS club. It has really been this way for 50, 60, 70 years already. Take it back to 90 years ago, yes, it probably was different, and they were all living together, and they probably did taffy pulls on Sunday. But that was a long time ago.* (FS, pers. comms., January 31, 2013; see also Holdeman 2002, 109-111)

This section explores the historical extension of purity laws outside the sanctuary and general embrace of Muscovite religiosity and glorification of that golden age when daily life was infused with Christ. The application of these laws in daily life varied in the U.S. *and* Europe between ORRO groups, frequently causing internal division. Old Belief became ideologically tied to a rejection of secular modernity's relocation of God to the sanctuary and sanctuary alone. The history of the Old Rite is punctuated with periods of direct state persecution that necessitated its practitioners' social and physical distancing from non-co-religious others. More conservative groups, like the families who settled villages in Alaska and Alberta, have exercised these methods of seclusion and social exclusion in times of relative security, primarily for ideological purposes. These practices exemplify the enactment of social dualism that forms a major facet of Old Believer group-making.

In some cases, ritual assurances of cleanliness are quite literal, as in the use of a *bania* (steam bath, lightly switch oneself with willow twigs used to open up the pores) before vespers; a bride also visits the bania before her wedding (Scheffel 1991, 132, 157). The *podruchnik* (podruchniki, pl) are small cushions or quilted squares that are used to make sure one's hands, which make the sign of the cross and therefore must be clean, do not become soiled during prostrations (CN n.d.; Robson 1985, 61-2). The most illustrative examples of the extension of sanctuary purity laws to secular life regard the most routine aspect of daily life—eating. In a historical example, the Old Believers correlated the ROC schism and Russia's modernization, which in turn caused the prohibition the foreign products the reviled Peter I introduced and/or

promoted such as tobacco,[180] coffee, and tea. Caffeinated beverages are still banned by the more conservative bezpopovtsy (Iwaniec 1981, 24; Colfer 1985, 29-30; Scheffel 1991, 51, 169, 198-201; Holdeman 2002, 49n56). Douglas makes an interesting note that food becomes suspect matter only in a "system under pressure" (1966, 157). An Old Believer's home is an extension of the sacred space of the church, in both spaces the Proschaneeye (Entrance Prayer) is said before icons (Robson 1998, 15; pers. comm.). This corner (East facing) of the home where the icons rest is "our 'House church,' sanctifying the whole house by its holiness (*PC* 10, 1963, Q9). Restricting who may eat at the family table and/or with the family's dinnerware is an extension of the restrictions over who may take Communion.

Where there is no Eucharist, in case of priestless Old Believers, ritually confirming the community of believers and social markers of belonging in day-to-day life is especially purposed and critical. In Douglas's language, there is an increased insecurity and danger in the ambiguous and unstructured areas of social life where formalized social controls are wanting, and it is here we see an increased vigilance against suspected pollutants (1966, 5, 127-8, 162-3, 172). Old Believers throughout history have been known for their "...excessive emphasis on the observance of the canonical rules, especially regarding diet and ritual" (Paert 2010:83). Where Us/Them, saved/doomed, Khristianiki/poganyi, nimirskie/mirskie binaries are not authoritatively delineated, they are underlined through ritual performance.

In my experience, in Erie there were no such markers of separation at the table. No one I spoke with in Erie kept separate set of poganyi plates, and only a couple of individuals could vaguely remember their mother having a 'special cup' or recall some signifier of dining segregation before they were old enough to know its purpose (pers. comms.; Robson 1998, 6-7). And in more conservative Nikolaevsk, I only noted the distinction in bezpopovtsy households, where there was also some variation in compliance. Nadejda only made a point of following separation practices when her elder brother was around. Anna served amazing salmon and rice vermicelli perogies on paper plates. I fetched my own cup to share in some *braga* (homemade, therefore pure, fruit wine).

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[180] In 1697, Peter lifted the ban Tsar Michael Feodorevich placed on its importation in 1627 (Romaniello 2009, 9). See Chrissidis' argument that the religious condemnation began only in the late seventeenth century and Robson on Old Believers' ritual and symbolic language of tobacco vilification, both in Romaniello and Stark's edited volume *Tobacco in Russian History and Culture* (2009).

Of course, I could have been served with dishes invisibly labeled *mirskaya* (for use by the mirskie, worldly; Scheffel 1991, 177-8) in popovtsy homes as well, although some people specifically dismissed such traditions. One Nikolaevsk popovtsy elder explained that the rule on separate plates was only intended for monks (DF, pers. comm., August 5, 2013), which corresponded with an Erie elder's point that only the late Bishop Daniel kept such distinctions and general dismissal of this aspect of ORRO tradition (Pearl, pers. comms., May 26, 2013; LM, pers. comm., May 28, 2013).[181]

Social segregation practices were highly varied in Europe throughout the seventeenth through twentieth centuries as well. In general, the immigrants who settled in Oregon were far more conservative than those who settled in Pennsylvania. The Old Believer diaspora in Eastern Europe grappled with acculturation with society at large long before Americanization became a threat to the preservation of the Old Rite. Social control and religious observance varied by congregation, and even Old Believer immigrants from the same concord and region recounted different degrees of strictness concerning their conduct in church, pressures of endogamy, and social segregation from the non-co-religious (Robson 1985, 80-4; Holdeman 2002, 49-51). Historically, as I detailed in the previous chapter, issues concerning societal participation and interaction played a part in several bezpopovtsy microschisms. A prime expel is Rogers's (2009) multilayered account of a late nineteenth century Pomortsy microschism in the Urals, where there were "...shifting expectations about ethical practice that informed the positions and opinions advanced by all sides" (72). Simply put, conflict over selective modernity and the confrontation of change from outside society is neither novel nor a result of transcontinental migration.

As mentioned, boundaries are always shifting. During my fieldwork, I found that Nikolaevsk's popovtsy had begun to question and forgo such markers of separation, deeming them increasingly unnecessary (DF, pers. comm., August 5, 2013). In fact, popovtsy elders from both states explained their respective congregations' move away from purity rituals in the same manner—as the group became more educated, and less "brainwashed," these traditions fell away (DF, pers. comms., August 5, 2013; LM, pers. comm., May 28, 2013). There may be some correlation between priesthood (with associated authority structures, access to grace of Eucharist and other

[181] For biblical discussion, see Galatians 2 on the subject of the observation of Jewish dietary law and Jews and Gentiles eating with one another (*NOAB* 2045).

rites) and segregation practices (later in Chapter Six, See Figure 18), but Erie's shift away from purity laws predates their microschism. The early Pomortsy communities in Pennsylvania were once "self-exiled" with strong beliefs in the "uncleanliness of outsiders" (Sokoloff [1914] 1974; Robson 1985, 80, 102), but as Fr. Simon explained above, those days were long gone. Conversely, such issues are so important to some Alaskan bezpopovtsy Old Believers that plans to build a new public school building for an extremely remote (inaccessible by standard car) Kachemak Bay village even included an "Old Believer lunch program/kitchen" (among other linguistic and culturally specific accommodations) designed to fit their religious needs.[182]

I was more keenly aware of my outsider status in Nikolaevsk, although the presence of non-Old Believers has grown since the villages' inception. Linguistic othering, absent in the English-speaking Erie community, was a significant factor in this. Symbolic boundaries, such as particular forms of dress, were also present (Hostetler 1964; Wuthnow 1988, 9-10; Bowie 2006, 62-81). The way I dressed, and spoke, and interacted with others immediately set me apart. "That's because you're a *neveyednik*. Do you know what that means? A non-believer. And they have a stronger sense of that than we do," Fr. Simon explained (pers. comm. January 31, 2013). But the primary scenes of otherness I witnessed were in churches in both states, where my mandated non-participatory observation and little notebook immediately set me apart. And all four congregations were small enough to note an outsider in their presence.

According to Fr. Simon, the greatest change brought by modernity was the removal of Christianity from daily life. Whereas Byzantium extended the Church and its prohibitions into the world, modernity erected a wall between the spiritual and secular realms.[183] In Enlightenment era (Peter I's reign in Russia), religion and moral decision-making was relegated to the private sphere (Asad 1998, 6, 245-6; Robbins 2004). It is not a coincidence that many mystic sects arose at the same time as Old Belief, in part as reactions to the privatization of religion and Nikon and Peter's church reforms. Even mainstream ROC monks referred to Peter as the Antichrist. As Paert states,

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[182] http://kachemakselo.blogs.kpbsd.k12.ak.us/wpmu/files/2012/03/Parent_Meeting_Notes_9_6_12.pdf, still not built eight years later, Peterson, February 11, 2020, https://www.edweek.org/leadership/an-alaskan-villages-long-wait-for-a-new-school/2020/02.

[183] Hence modernity's connection with secularization, for discussion and critique of this conflation of concepts, see Cannell (2010, 86-90), also Latour (1993).

"the religious crisis that marked Russia's entry into the modern era had an impact on the popular understanding of spiritual authority" (2010, 45-7)

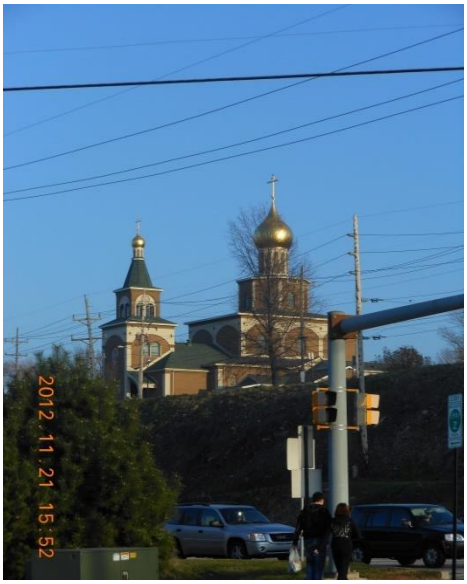
Robson's description of Erie's post-war suburbanization relates the physical separation of church and home life to the decline of Old Believer religious culture. The temporal duality of religious life split into secular (i.e., most of the time) and sacred (i.e., when in church) categories became more visually apparent as rubashkas and long skirts and scarves were worn only at services. Men shaved their beards until retirement. The baby-boomers were "buoyed by the period's counter-culturalism and experimental individualism" and were drawn further away from the ethno-religiosity of their grandparents' generation (Robson 1998, 6-7). While Keane correctly notes that there are variant modernities, a point I address in this dissertation, "the association of modernity with the emancipated subject has been powerful across a range of contexts." Free modern subjects were free to reject long-held social constraints, "fetishes," enclaves, and traditionalism's (whatever the brand) rule over everyday decisions (Keane 2007, 4-5; also, Allen 1981, 97-116).

Old Believers' use of physical space contributes in several ways to their maintenance of ORRO. Enclaves both keep the group together and keep outsiders out. Remote forests shield State dissidents from detection. Nearby neighbors are on the watch for transgressions. Limited local government and distance from bureaucratic observance allowed them to evade taxers and drafters. In Erie, people seemed to distinguish between these "real Old Believers," like those in Nikolaevsk and the closed community of their past that existed before suburban sprawl, from Americans practicing the Old Rite like themselves.

Compare, for example, the photographs below:

Image 4 (left): Nikolaevsk Enclave From Hill Above

Image 5 (right): Erie Church of the Nativity (popovtsy)



Erie is a city. Nikolaevsk and the Kachemak Bay villages in Alaska are purposely segregated enclaves— tiny settlements or "intentional communities" carved out of the forest. Erie's first Old Believers were in the First Ward, in the center of downtown, a conspicuous and distinctively Eastern beacon overlooking Lake Erie's busy docks. The Church of the Nativity's and the Church of St. Nicholas's founding members were similarly constrained by linguistic, educational, and financial barriers. But the latter made a purposeful effort to remain socially and physically segregated.

Early on, yes, "Russian town" was an enclave; and they remained relatively socially segregated despite their downtown location. The Pomortsy's church in Erie was built in 1919 by immigrants and their children, people who still married co-religionists, who spoke Russian, understood Church Slavonic, and attended religious education classes after public school (Robson 1985, 80). But the Pomortsy immigrants were never as segregated in the social or physical sense as the Chasovennye immigrants very intentionally were. Yet the Pomortsy were not segregationists in Europe either. For over half a century, the Erie Old Believers have been neither an urban ethno-religious enclave nor a distinct neighborhood; they have Americanized, integrated, and suburbanized. And they are not merely passively present amidst others, they are active members of their local civil society. The Church of the Nativity hosts an annual Russian festival that draws in other Erie-ites, allows tours of the church, and participates in hosting a homeless shelter overflow

in cooperation with other local churches. Nikolaevsk, on the other hand, has one tourist attraction (Samovar Café)[184]; it is matter of contention in the village and signs pointing the way are routinely defaced.

As we saw in Chapter Two, the obvious external threat of physical persecution and internal divisions were often combined in the history of Old Believer communities, and motivated efforts to extract the pure in-group from the heretical other. Migration is a staple of the Old Believers' survival tool kit (Scheffel 1989a; Dolitsky, Muth, and Kuzmina 1991; Silva 2009). Historically, they are Russia's prime example of covert religiosity. Fletcher's discussion of the "catacomb," "underground" of Russian Orthodoxy in the Soviet period frequently referenced Old Believers' experiences in the tsarist period (1971). The permafrost of Siberia provided Russian religious dissidents of all stripes with a "friction of distance" (Scott 2009) from the tsarist empire. The periphery of the Russian Empire both protected and encouraged Old Belief (see Sidorov 2001, 61-69 on the geography of the schism).

Overt oppression was not the only motivation for Old Believers' migration. They founded villages in Alaska only four years after they moved to Oregon from Brazil and Turkey, not for the goal of freedom of religious practice, but to further distance themselves from the non-religious. Temptation was seen as a particular kind of threat, an eternally grave spiritual persecution of the faithful in the midst of Tribulation and their Champion has yet to arrive. The encroachments of society's alluring "desires of the flesh" (Gal 5, 16; i.e., drink, drugs, negative peer influences, fast-food culture, heretical practices, and non-Old Believer boy/girlfriends)[185] are the primary reasons American Old Believers gave past ethnographers for their continual retreat to more and more remote locations (Smithson 1977; Dolitsky and Kuz'mina 1986; Dolitsky et al. 1991; Scheffel 1991). This narrative of social escape is written into the auto-ethnohistorical narrative, *The Story of Nikolaevsk* (Basargin 1984), and recounted to me by those who had moved to the forested enclave as children. That was their parents' intention, they explained, but not the current reality. Instead, other enclaves in Alberta, Minnesota, and Kachemak Bay were considered the 'conservative' ones (pers. comms.).

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[184] For more on its owner, see "Finding Nina," Trailwood Films, which Nina uploaded https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m7GAxnUEzIM Accessed May 22, 2019.

[185] Much of this concern related to the fear that their children would fall away from the church.

The Pomortsy's choice of settlement in an urban environment in the U.S. is not a shocking departure from their lives in Europe, where some of the immigrants had lived in the cities of Suwalki and Sejny where they worked and went to school with non-Old Believers (Holdeman 2002, 43-44, 49), as did many other ORRO groups in Russia and Europe (Paert 2010, 45-7, 224n54). The Polish influence on their spoken Russian indicates they were not socially 'closed' to their Polish neighbors (Holdeman 2002, 50). They were not socially segregated or physically isolated in the way that the Chasovennye in eastern Siberia and China were. Of course, Erie Old Believers did not experience two World Wars in their backyard, nor Stalin. In Fr. Simon's words, although he hated to sound critical of his fore-parents, they were perhaps not the "cream of the crop" or the "real Old Believers," who would not have chosen to leave Russia (pre-Revolution) for the U.S. because this would have led to a more acute cultural clash. What is more, they had not come to preserve their religion; but were like any other kind of economic immigrant. And it was not very long before their kids were playing football and skipping Saturday services (pers. comms., January 31, 2013). Settling a homogenous village in the middle of the Alaskan woods would have been a radicalization.

Simply, the founders of the Church of the Nativity did not *choose* to segregate. They also did not seek out independent occupations like farming and fishing that allowed the Alaskan communities self-sufficiency and independence, and therefore greater isolation and ability to attend weekday services and keep ritual taboos (Smithson 1977, 234-6, 410; Morris 1981, 116-7; Colfer 1985, 68-9; Dolitsky and Kuz'mina 1986, 227). The earliest Erie Old Believers engaged in trade and industry (Pancerev 1938, 13; Hood 1978; Robson 1985, 106, 1998, 2), as did many Old Believers in Russia. This is an under-represented aspect of the group's historical narrative despite the existence of literature that expounds the role of Muscovite Old Believers in Russia's industrialization (Blackwell 1965; Pospielovsky 1984, 69; Robson 1995, 34; Duncan 2000, 15; Hudson Jr. 2002; Crummey 2011, 177).

The suburbanization process in the post WWII period hit the Erie Old Believers in the same way it hit the rest of the country. This is "part and parcel" with waning church attendance (pers. comms., FS, March 27, 2013; Holdeman 2002, 101-2, 106). Old Believers in Poland experienced the same situation after WWII, when more and more peasants abandoned their farms for the cities (Iwaniec 1981, 23). Even the CYS moved to a more suburban location in the early 1980s (Robson 1998, 7). When the community was founded in 1927, all of its eleven

founding members lived in the enclave; by the RSG of 1982, only 8 of its 39 members still lived in the enclave.[186] As I discuss further in the following section, higher education is intimately intertwined with the physical dispersal of people away from their ethno-religious enclaves.

Nikolaevsk, like other villages in Kachemak Bay, Alberta, and Minnesota, was explicitly created to escape Americanization and temptations and society in general. Old Believers began looking to leave Oregon as early as April 1966 and were drawn by the hunting and fishing opportunities in Alaska (Bigart, April 27, 1966). They gathered while the urban enclave dissolved. It is not just that the ritual prohibitions that keep outsiders out are losing power, but the social controls that keep insiders *in* are being deprioritized. Far from being an Old Believer-specific problem, apathy and the "culture of nones" are global threats to religious conservativism.

In his typical manner of answering questions with scripture and a story, Fr. Simon directly connected societal change and the vitality and solidarity of their religious community to secularism and the removal of Christ from everyday life:

> *So, why did Paul refer to certain people as 'saints'?" He looked up and called on an elder of the church: "You remember when you were growing up? Everyone was right here. Weren't you right on Front and Parade [Map 5]? There would be chairs 'round outside the neighborhood house. Women from their auxiliary meeting calling out to youths. We were always getting yelled at!" A woman piped up, "Yeah, but it was in Russian, so we didn't understand." Everyone laughed.*
> *Fr. Simon continued, "It was a society raising kids all together, 'it takes a village,' type of thing. Now, I'm not saying we can bring back that world, we can't. But we should have a community! We see families who fade away from church, and it would be fine if they were becoming Protestants or something, but they're not; they're just not coming. They're just not going to any church. There was time we'd have 200 here; now we have 65. Society and culture have changed. We're living in a world now where culture and church are so divided. Paul's Epistles were written to 'living saints', people who consecrated their whole lives to Christ in original church. There was no separation from church and their society. They gave their lives to the church. (CN, Adult Sunday School, January 27, 2013)*

Anthropologists talk of "lived Christianity" (e.g., Orsi 2005); Paul talked of "living saints." The New Testament teaches how to live a moral life; it is relatively mute, however, on how to

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[186] I included one founding CYS member who lived only one block off the enclave map represented in Map 5 (Erie, Pennsylvania, Chart Book 8, 739); list of RSG members included their addresses (CN, n.d.), I included three individuals who lived slightly off the map.

worship *in* a church.[187] Fr. Simon made the same point, unlike the saints the early Church, their own era was defined by a separation of the church life from society. That people may stop going to church at all is a pressing fear for more than just ORRO religious leaders. The following section explores American Old Believers' fight against growing apathy, and their daily enactment of polarizing us/them and pure/impure binaries throughout life's stages.

3.3. Temptation, Apathy, and the Messy Ex/Internal

The relationship between internal temptation and external threats is yet another blurry borderline, the determination of which is yet another challenge of lived Christianity. Ethnographies of ethno-religious enclaves in the U.S. have commonly analyzed the negotiations of threats by conservative religious groups, specifically threats to change (e.g., Smithson 1977; Morris 1981; Kraybill and Olshan 1994). I find temptation a more fitting term for the negative forces of change because it implies the combination of both internal and external threats. The appeal of the apple rests not only in its shimmer and the serpent's call for it is also sensually craved and desired; the mouth waters for it. The experience of temptation is feeling desire for the forbidden, and, as seen above, it can be mediated through rituals of purification. This section will continue this discussion through the life phases of education, marriage, and death.

To categorize pressures as either internal or external is not only inaccurate, it also elides the fact that it is precisely the messy ambiguity of us/them boundaries that purification rituals seek to resolve. It is not just that Nikolaevsk children are going to an American public school where they meet potential non-co-religious spouses and learn English, they are also no longer going to Slavonic schools afterwards, and endogamy is a waning priority for young adults (Holdeman also made these correlations in Erie, 2002, 198). Again, it is a question of choice and options.

Apathy is perhaps the greatest challenge to Old Rite preservation. Diminished church attendance is not only due to competing calls on one's time, but the fact that those calls are also

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[187] "It is essential to believe in Jesus Christ, the Trinity, must accept the dogmas of the Church being formulated, but there is no mention in the early Church anywhere about what manner of fingers were being used then when praying, how were they bowing, what types of images were being used, what type of music was being used, what books were they using. We have no indications exactly of what points of ritual that might have been from that particular time" (RSG 1, August 25, 1982, 4). This is very important distinction discussed in Chapters Five and Six.

being answered. Other obligations are being prioritized. To discuss the systemic threat of apathy and the ex/internal temptation of the wayward Other, I turn first to examining public and religious education practices. Deficiencies in religious education (lack of teachers and/or pupils) combined with an increased amount of secular education illustrates the push/pull aspects of diminishing religious knowledge and participation.[188]

The second subsection deals with the next stage of life, marriage, and the challenges of endogamy faced by this highly divided diaspora. Finally, separation of the unworthy, "not in good standing," out of grace individuals through death best demonstrates the eternality of qualitative divisions of group belonging; eventually, the pure and impure may become the saved and the damned. By framing the life challenges of Christian separatist communities in terms of temptation I mean to evoke the primary risk of negative (sinful) action, namely, eternal damnation.

In in several issues of my SSW sample(11/95), Fr. Smolakov decried the low attendance and the waning interest of congregants. This decline in enthusiasm for church attendance and participation is not a new problem, but how it is dealt with is changing. Fr. Simon reminded his Adult Sunday School class that they grew up in a different time:

> *Fr. Smolakov chewed us out all the time! But I catch myself in my sermons thinking that I don't want to scare them away. I don't want people to not come because they think they'll be harangued about not coming, or not living the way they should. They won't want to come if they are always yelled at. I find myself censoring this type of talk during services. We are living in a culture where, 'God forbid, we hold people accountable!' I saw an advice column recently where a woman was writing in about her nine-year-old being unmanageable, and the answer was that in the 1960s we took a mistaken turn in child-rearing. Children became the center of the universe.*
>
> *Two mothers chimed in, "That's the value of Orthodoxy. It teaches children discipline.* (Jan. 27, 2013)

Yes, Orthodoxy teaches children discipline— but only with proper education.

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[188] Naumescu (2010, 156, 172) has an interesting discussion (following Whitehouse 2000, 44) connecting the transmission of religious knowledge and boredom to emergent schisms and shifts between imagistic and doctrinal modes of religiosity.

3.3.1. Education

A young Old Believer's education is twofold and clearly divided into separate sacred/secular and private/public binaries. A simplistic polar argument imagines the continuity efforts of Church Slavonic teachers and Sunday preachers in competition with processes of change in the U.S. public school system for the time and interest of its youth. In this dissertation I hope to present a more nuanced account of the opposing desires, waning interest, prioritization, economies, and legalities involved in the successful transmission of religious knowledge in Nikolaevsk and Erie.

The competition model may be partially true for some Alaskan children who begin their formal education primarily speaking Russian and with little former experience with non-Old Believers. Their negotiations with the public school system have often positioned secular education as a challenge to be overcome. But contradicting the illustration of an Old Believer's first day of kindergarten as a "culture clash" of the Russian-speaking, sheltered child's confrontation with English-speaking, secular society is the fact that in their village school they belong to the majority, which has adjusted its calendars, curriculum, and school lunch programs to accommodate them. Furthermore, English is spoken in more homes nowadays, especially if there are older siblings, and is no longer a foreign tongue to kindergarteners.[189]

Unlike their Alaskan counterparts, Erie Old Believer children have never been in the majority, never received the same accommodations or preservation efforts on the part of the

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[189] Approximately 75% of the 73 students enrolled in Nikolaevsk School are "Russian Old Believers," although, "more non-Russian Old Believer families are starting to move into the community." http://nikolaevskschool.blogs.kpbsd.k12.ak.us/wpmu/ accessed March 9, 2015. In Razdolna, Kachemak Selo, Voznesenka, and Beryozova on Kachemak Bay the school children are almost, if not all, Old Believer. In 1988, many non-Old Believer parents resisted Kenai Peninsula School Board's decision to enforce school boundaries which zoned their children in Nikolaevsk School fearing they would be ostracized, harassed, and labeled 'pagana' and forced to accept their Julian-adjusted school calendar (O'Meara, *HN*, March 24, 1988, 1, 15; Gay, *HN*, September 15, 1988 and September 22, 1988; *HN*, March 31, 1988, 5; Silva 2009, 53-7). It became a debate over constitutional separation of church and state and undue accommodation of an ethno-religious other. "'I want to send my daughter to go to school where they say the Pledge of Allegiance every day'" (Chappell, *ADN*, May 1, 1988).

State,[190] and have lost the cultural markers that distinguish them from other Americans. The early enclave found it financially impossible to homeschool or establish a parochial school to meet governmental requirements (Robson 1985, 82); August (born in early 1940s), could not remember ever hearing of the option of homeschooling until twenty years ago (pers. comm., May 26, 2013). But while public education may not be perceived as a threat in the same degree in Erie as in Alaska, school sports, events, and friendships have called its youth away from the church (pers. comm.). Higher education presents a risk to the health of the community in the sense that there simply are not enough jobs in Erie to employ the higher degrees its young adults are obtaining.

In the spiritual realm, education is crucial to the preservation of the church community. Without religious education there is no one to lead the services, no one able to read the Kanon and Gospels, and no one able to participate in, much less understand, the Church Slavonic (CS) prayers. ORRO cannot be maintained without arduous religious training. The word '*nastavnik*', as the bezpopovtsy call the man[191] they elect to lead prayer services, means 'teacher'. And Erie's nastavnik, Fr. Smolakov, was most deserving of that title. I continuously call on his many works (See Appendix 2) throughout the dissertation. This is because, first, his posthumous opinion found in his many essays, pamphlets, and written sermons was referred to by his former congregants in their reunification debates. Second, his corpus of writings is an enormous database for any scholar or practitioner of the Old Rite. His life exemplifies perfectly the important pedagogical leadership role the bezpopovtsy 'reverend' plays in the strength and sustenance of an Old Believer congregation.

Members of both Erie congregations spoke of Fr. Vladimir Smolakov with appreciative reverence. "He was tough, but I liked that," Barbara told me (pers. comms., June 6, 2013). Lola clearly valued his writings and teachings, for she amassed a vast archive of his works, which she so kindly lent me for my research. The adults who made the decision to radically alter their religious practices less than ten years after his retirement were raised under his tutelage or had been young adults when he assumed leadership. As children, they attended Sunday school and CS lessons with

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[190] In addition to language instruction mentioned here, "variance calendars" (more thorough discussion in Silva 2009, 58-61, appendices 3 and 4) and Nikolaevsk School's bilingual heritage projects turned publications (Silva 2009, Appendix 5) were designed to accommodate ORRO unique temporal and ethno-linguistic heritage.

[191] Popovtsy priests and bezpopovtsy nastavniki are male, more on this topic in Chapter Seven.

him from Monday to Friday from 4-6pm.[192] No one laid at his feet any blame for the congregation's break.

In his effort to turn American, English-only speaking Old Believers into CS-literate preservers of the faith, Fr. Smolakov translated prayers, psalms, and other important readings. His 763 Sunday School Weeklies were distributed with the express purpose of providing the community with English church literature.[193] The booklets he compiled included alphabets, handwritten CS prayers with singing notations (*krootki*, Image 6), English translations, directions (bow to waist, bow to floor, make sign of cross, repeat 3 or 12 times),[194] transliterations of CS for pronunciation (Image 7),[195] and/or English translations beside typed Cyrillic.[196] These texts were intended for private study, rather than for use in the church (Robson 1985, 111, 1998, 6).

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[192] Pearl attended these courses but felt that she could only read without comprehension (pers. comm., May 30, 2013). Lola (b. 1943) remembered another "very stern man" teaching the course (pers. comm., February 7, 2013).

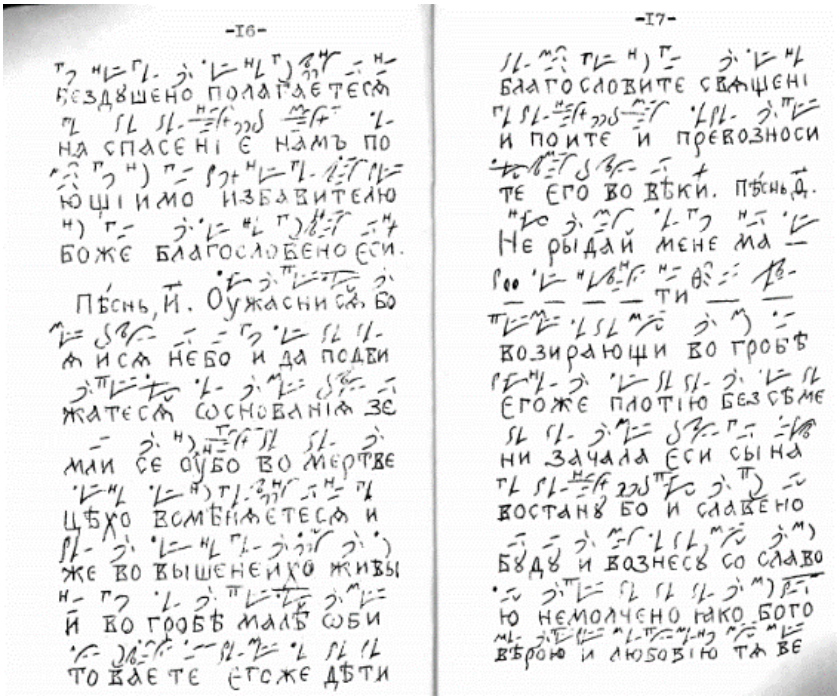
[193] "This is my last regular Weekly, my dear Readers. For eighteen years I edited them, wishing to give you knowledge of the Spiritual matters as good as I could, and to make the Church literature available in English. Please accept my apology, if I failed sometimes to do this work properly, because of my own poor knowledge and my human's errors. But as much as God gave me, I tried to give it to you. Thank you for your understanding and patience with me. God Bless you!" (*SSW*#763, June 24, 1973)

[194] *Prayer Book for Servicemen and Students* (1961) contains most common prayers of an Old Believer's ritual life (morning prayers, meal prayers, prayers before bed, 50th Psalm), some of which I have placed in Appendix 4.

[195] *Prayer and Song Book* (n.d.)

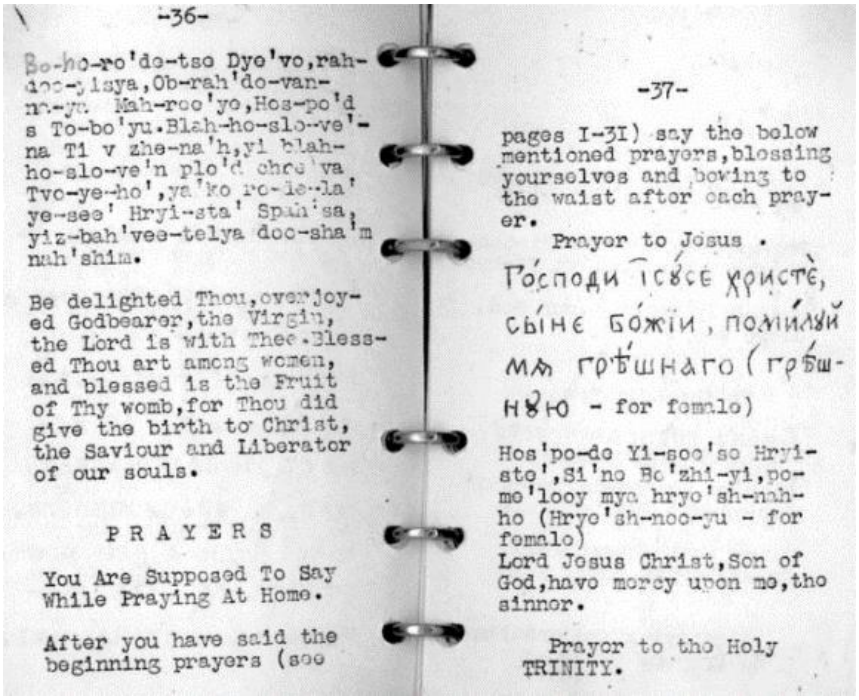
[196] *Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes* (n.d.)

Image 6: *Krootki* (singing notations) in *Easter Songs* (Fr. Smolakov 1955)



In Fr. Smolakov's time there were rumblings of the shift to English services that took place five years after his retirement. He authorized the use of English during people's individual prayers at home. In his bilingual *Prayer Book for Servicemen and Students*, he provides an introductory lecture on prayer that closes with the sentence, "Pray in any language, but do not stay without praying; make yourselves known to God through your prayer, and He will meet your needs, and will treat you as a good Father" (Fr. Smolakov 1961, 4). But when the Pomortsy Council was asked "Is it permissible to have church service in English?" "The Chairman" (unidentified, not "Rev. V. Smolakov," for his answers are so labelled) declared "No, it is forbidden" (*PC* 3, 1955, Q6).

Image 7: Translations in *Prayer and Song Book* (Fr. Smolakov n.d.)



-36-

Bo-ho-ro'de-tse Dye'vo,rah-
dos-ysya,Ob-rah'do-van-
no-yu Mah-ree'yo,Hos-po'd
s To-bo'yu.Blah-ho-slo-ve'-
na Ti v zhe-na'h,yi blah-
ho-slo-ve'n plo'd chre'va
Tvo-ye-ho',ya'ko ro-le-la'
ye-see' Hryi-sta' Spah'sa
yiz-bah'vee-telya dos-sha'm
nah'shim.

Be delighted Thou,overjoy-
ed Godbearer,the Virgin,
the Lord is with Thee.Bless-
ed Thou art among women,
and blessed is the Fruit
of Thy womb,for Thou did
give the birth to Christ,
the Saviour and Liberator
of our souls.

PRAYERS

You Are Supposed To Say
While Praying At Home.

After you have said the
beginning prayers (see

-37-

pages I-3I) say the below
mentioned prayers,blessing
yourselves and bowing to
the waist after each pray-
er.

Prayer to Jesus .

Го́споди Іи́се Христѐ,
сы́не Бо́жіи, поми́луй
мя гро́шнаго (гро́ш-
ную - for female)

Hos'po-de Yi-soo'se Hryi-
sto',Si'no Bo'zhi-yi,po-
mo'looy mya hryo'sh-nah-
ho (Hryo'sh-noo-yu - for
female)
Lord Jesus Christ,Son of
God,have mercy upon me,the
sinner.

Prayer to the Holy
TRINITY.

Insufficient Russian language instruction is a critical point of contention between Alaskan parents and public schools (e.g., reduced instruction hours, de-emphasis on Russian cursive).[197] Although Alaskan Old Believer children have received some linguistic accommodation in terms of courses and bilingual tutors for children speaking English as a second language, parents are concerned with their community's declining Russian use.

Waning interest, language loss, and competing demands on Old Believers' time have heavy impacts on ORRO preservation. Fr. Simon, like Fr. Smolakov before him,[198] repeatedly decried low attendance and participation in services, Sunday school, and choir. Apathy is perhaps the greatest threat to the transmission of religious knowledge. Erie has been facing a deficit in eligible, trained leaders since the death of their first Nastavnik in 1946 (more Chapter Seven). Their second short-termed nastavnik was traditionally too young (under 35). And Fr. Smolakov, their third, lived

[197] Kachemak Selo Parent-Teacher meeting minutes records a dispute about the delayed age of Russian cursive instruction. English cursive is no longer taught as high schoolers begin keyboard lessons instead. https://kachemakselo.blogs.kpbsd.k12.ak.us/files/2012/03/Parent_Meeting_Notes_11_15_12.pdf. Arts education has taken a hit across the nation due to limited funding, which has affected Russian lessons. In my time in Nikolaevsk, several parents and community members decried cuts to Russian instruction in schools (pers. comm.).

[198] 25/95 SSW in my sample dealt with losing children's participation, low attendance, apathy, see Appendix 2.

in Marianna and had to be convinced to take on the position in Erie (Robson 1985, 89; Holdeman 2002, 104).

In Nikolaevsk, neither church at the time of my visit had a regimented course for religious instruction of its youth, although a couple of individuals have tutored one or two students privately. Fr. Yakunin said larger classes were held in the past, but that parents have become increasingly responsible for their child's service comprehension.[199] This is yet another way the microschism has cut through previous support systems and community cohesion.

But time may simply erode Alaskan Old Believer' linguistic heritage, as it did in Erie (Holdeman 2002). And without everyday Russian, learning CS becomes incalculably more difficult. For the moment, a recent analysis of linguistic and cultural transmission in the Alaskan Old Believer community determined that they were managing cultural continuity, but concluded that they might soon reach an "irreversible momentum" of acculturation (Bass 2015, 199-200). Both churches in Nikolaevsk have so few CS-literate, active congregants that women are called on as readers (Chapter Seven). While internal desires regulate prioritization, external factors are clearly drawing peoples' time and energy away from the church. "They don't care about the Bible; it's only computers now," said one bezpopovtsy elder about his failed efforts to tutor a couple teenagers (pers. comm., August 26, 2013). It is not just that the children and youth in religious enclaves are learning about evolution and sexuality in public schools, it is that they are no longer learning religious knowledge at home.

Much has already been written about the interaction between state education systems and conservative religious minorities like the Old Believers (Sabey 1969; Jaffe 1990; Stenger 2004) and the Amish (Hostetler and Huntington 1971; Hostetler 1972; Huntington 1994). The tension between external pressures of acculturation and the state's attempts at accommodation are present in the Alaskan Old Believer village schools. On one hand, children are taught in English, but may take Russian as an elective and have Russian-speaking aides; their time is regimented by the state

[199] Pers. comm., August 22, 2013; quotes a sermon imploring parents' involvement (Bass 2015, 199); similar shift in responsibility occurred in Poland as well (Iwaniec 1981, 16).

government which determines minimum drop-out age[200] and attendance requirements. On the other hand, the Kenai Peninsula School Board adjusted the calendar to account for ORRO holy days, for example having their Christmas break encompass January 7th. But change is cumulative, and even parents in these largely isolated and homogenous hamlets have seen a decline in Russian use and religious participation.

In both Erie and Nikolaevsk there is an increased prioritization of post-secondary education. This is a radical shift for the original Chasovennye immigrants, who had little to no formal education (Sabey 1969, 72-4; Smithson 1977, 224; Gay, *HN,* May 23, 1985, 11; Kizzia, *ADN*, April 15, 1990; Holdeman 2002, 80). By 1985, just three years after the local community college saw its first Old Believer students enroll to become bilingual teachers' aides, their attendance "skyrocketed" to some 15-18 individuals taking a variety of courses (including those who had already married young, Gay, *HN,* May 23, 1985, 13). This has drawn youth out of the farming and fishing occupations which have traditionally been so important to the self-sufficiency and seclusion of enclaves. For this reason, the Amish have largely discouraged education, preferring instead to dedicate themselves to a farming lifestyle (Hostetler 1972; FS, pers. comm., January 2, 2013). Old Believers in Alberta are seeing also seeing rising education levels (not dropping out at age 14 to farm) and public school enrollment rates (rather than homeschooling) (Harris 2010).

The Erie enclave did not take this route to religious preservation. Several people connected the increase of the community's (and country's) financial security after WWII with a decline in active membership (pers. comms.). Small towns and cities everywhere feel the effect of higher education leading its "best and brightest" away from a place that has no jobs for them. The 1961 Pomortsy sobor even discussed motivating interest in religious education by combining secular and spiritual education priorities by means of college scholarships and the establishment of

[200] Nikolaevsk School gradually added more grade levels, but only after a congregational sobor agreed to extend the education level of the school beyond Alaska's minimum for school attendance (currently age 16, https://nces.ed.gov/programs/statereform/tab5_1.asp). The first high school graduation of an Alaskan Old Believer occurred in 1983 (Duce, *HN,* June 2, 1983, 22; pers. comm., Bob Moore, August 8, 2007).

local "seminaries" such as that taught by Fr. Smolakov.[201] Fr. Simon identified this "brain drain" and the general economic instability of Erie as one of the greatest threats to his congregation's preservation (pers. comm., FS, March 27, 2013; also Holdeman 2002, 101-2, 106). But again, this is not a unique American issue: Iwaniec (1981), for example, discussed the same process among Old Believer communities in Poland (16, 23).

For Fr. Simon, both religious and secular education concerns weighed heavily on the 'pros' side of the question of institutionalization. Joining ROCOR's hierarchy was a conservation measure in this regard—at least people could still attend services outside of Erie, although only within New Rite churches. Moreover, affiliation with ROCOR provided access to its seminaries (like Jordanville) and hence the training of religiously educated clergy who might fill Fr. Simon's shoes when he retires (FS, pers. comm., December. 27, 2012). When I conducted my research, only three of the four Pomortsy congregations had a nastavnik; since then, the last, Fr. Larry, has passed and it is unknown whether a replacement will be found. A lack in religious education among younger generations is as detrimental to a congregation's survival as the rise of secular public and higher education that pulls youth away from their enclaves. I move now to address the next stage of life and the next pull away from the enclave—exogamous marriage.

3.3.2. Marriage

What is a better example of the ex/internal messiness of social change than marriage? A lifelong pairing of a Self with an Other; a sacrament that once undertaken affects every aspect of one's daily life. It should come as no surprise at this point that the vexed issue of sectarian "mixed marriages" is not merely a contemporary concern for ORRO Christians. In 1788-9, the Fedoseevtsy and Pomortsy organized a formal debate about intermarriage between members of their groups asking, first, whether it should it be allowed, and second, whether the converting spouse must be re-baptized. There was no consensus; they remained non-co-religious (Paert 2003, 153, 161). These questions still plague Old Believers today, except they now contend not only with marriages between members of non-co-religious Old Rite congregations, but also marriages between Old Believers and non-Russian Orthodox spouses.

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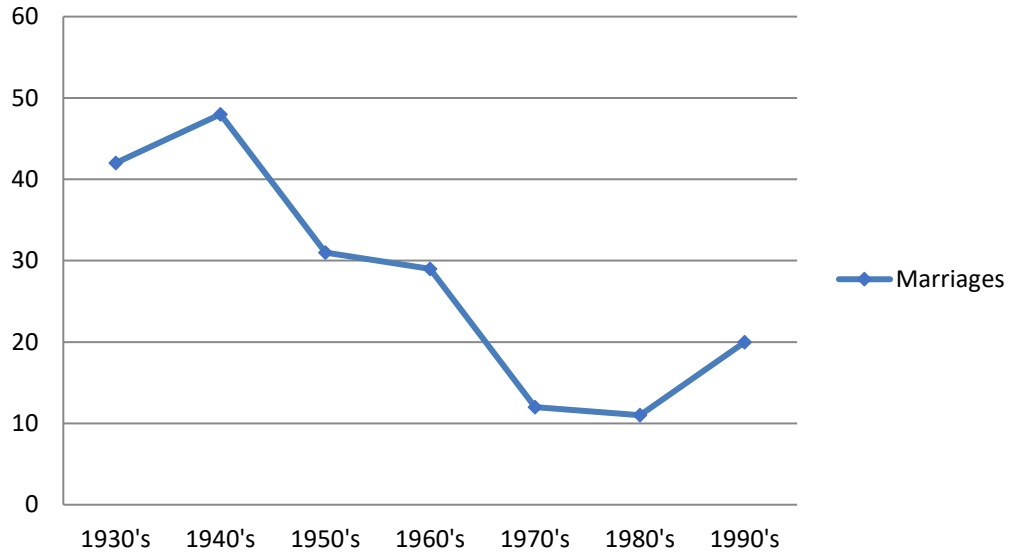
[201] Fr. Simon attended this "Old Orthodox Seminary" for three summers in the 1960s, where he studied "The History of the Russian Orthodox Church, The History of the Christian Church, Bible, Church Ordinance, Russian, The World's Religions to name a few of our courses" (Letter to Bishop Gregory, August 8, 1982).

The age of the Erie and Nikolaevsk churches is an important factor in considering decreasing rates of endogamy. WWI effectively cut off the flow of Pomortsy immigrants from the Baltic and Suwalki areas, sealing off the Erie and Pittsburgh congregations from a key source of like-faith spouses. Exogamy is expected now in Pennsylvania, although the conversion of the non-Orthodox spouse is still desired. Unfortunately, exogamy also sometimes leads to an Old Believer's conversion to their non-Old Believer spouse's faith (*SSW*#12, October 16, 1955). For example, Judy (who I met because she was the administrative assistant at T.J.'s daycare, who told me she grew up attending CN in the 1950s and 1960s), had converted to Methodism when she married, "although I'm not a regular goer [to the Methodist church], I think, because when we were growing up we had to go SO much" (Judy, pers. comms, June 14, 2013). Marriage shifts indicate Americanization, miscegenation, and the metaphorical mixing between us/them categories summed up in the offense of 'pomieschanie'. But the most important shift is how pomieschanie is characterized. Is intermarriage still regarded as such a bad thing? Is it still a salvation deal-breaker?

Figure 3: Church of the Nativity Marriages[vii]



The greatest threat posed by exogamy is the loss of children to the faith.[202] There is a link between the decrease in endogamous marriages and increased contact and integration with non-Old Believers through public education (Colfer 1985; Robson 1985, 82-4; Holdeman 2002, 80). The threats of relative proximity to American society and its temptations, including potential attraction to non-Old Believer mates, is cited as one of the reasons families left Oregon for Alaska (Reardon 1972, 410).

Colfer (1985) focused on endogamy in his exploration of the Old Believer social boundaries in Oregon, and stressed the importance of marriage to ORRO preservation in the U.S. Given the fact that Old Belief is an *ethno*-religious group, endogamy laws also serve to retain the 'Russianness' of the group. In Erie, marriages with non-Russians hastened Russian language death (Holdeman 2002, 198-9). Conversions and life-long dedication to the faith of an ORRO spouses' faith is not unknown, even in the most socially and physically secluded enclaves. In Nikolaevsk,

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[vii] Metrical Books from Church of the Nativity from 1924-2003, there were 10 marriages in 1924-9 and 2 between 2000 and 2003. The later numbers are from a packet filled with marriage licenses from (1979-2003) were digitized in same file as CNMB 7 (1953-1970). The records are likely incomplete between 1971-8, but nevertheless, the large drop off in marriage in the 1970s in consistent with the 1980s numbers.

[202] Fr. Simon also felt that the question of how to raise the children (i.e., in what faith) can also be a point of contention for interfaith marriages (FS, pers. comm., January 2, 2013).

there were a handful of spouses (that I know of there was an American of unknown lineage, a Native American, and a Mexican American) who had converted to the Old Rite for marriage and had practiced for decades. But marriages between members of non-co-religious ORRO groups, despite their complications, are more common. The efforts required of the converting spouse can range from catechism classes, rebaptism and/or chrismation. The converting spouse may also face a long-distance move (several Nikolaevsk residents had been raised in Oregon and moved to Nikolaevsk upon marriage, and at least one marriage was made with someone from a community in Brazil); they may also be shunned by members of their natal families.

Like-faith marriage is more than a means of social control and community preservation. Strictly speaking (i.e., according to Orthodox canonical law), marriage outside one's faith is tantamount to fornication.[203] Only marriage ceremonies performed in the church by a nastavnik or priest 'count', and which religious leader counts of course depends on who you ask. And one can only be married in the church if both spouses are of like-faith. But this is law and not life. Marriage is also a sacrament, an indissoluble union, "a mini-church", nevertheless an increasing number of divorces and remarriages permitted under "pastoral concession" of *economia* (flexibility and leniency; *oikonomia*, Agadjanian 2011, 22).[204] Interfaith marriages (and the penances doled out to those who partake in them or the parents that permit them) also fall under the priest or nastavnik's discretion (*PC* 4, 1956, Q4).

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[203] FS, CN Adult Sunday School, January 2, 2013

[204] The Orthodox Church "...confirms the primary value of the steadfast and unique Christian marriage, which does not mean that this steadfastness should be seen, in all of life's circumstances, as the downright irrevocable. preservation of a juridical affirmation. The Orthodox Church does not want to shut the door of mercy inexorably, but holds still, to the teaching of the New Testament. Bishop Athenagorus of Sinope (Church of Greece) 2005 http://www.orthodoxresearchinstitute.org/articles/liturgics/athenagoras_remarriage.htm#42
Almost half of Pennsylvania Marriage Licenses from 1979-2003 found packaged within Church of the Nativity's "Church Registry of the Married" Book 2 (1953-1970) were *economia* cases, wherein one or both intended spouses were divorcés, which is much closer to the national average than the ideal of ORRO endogamy. It is impossible to know the rate of acceptance of such marriages, because those denied would not be in the church register. The Pomortsy Conference of 1959, citing the 1909 First All Russian Meeting of the Old Orthodoxians and the Canon of St. Basil (9th, 18th, 21st, 35th, 77th) laid out the few justifications for divorce (*PC* 7, 1959, Q15).

Maintaining endogamy is further complicated by canonical laws which define incest as a union within eight steps on a family tree that includes in-law and godparent relationships as well as consanguine ones (Hall 1970, 27). Out of the necessity imposed by limited choice (another emergency act for which the Old Believers must rely on God's mercy) interdictions against marrying a godparent's child or sister-in-law's cousin may be put aside (Colfer 1985, 97-109; Holdeman 2002, 50-51, n58, 59). Yet given the small populations and kin-constructed nature of Alaskan villages, individuals must still look elsewhere in the diaspora for an Old Rite spouse.

In the early twentieth century, many marriages were made between the four co-religious east coast Old Believers as well (Holdeman 2002, 56, 94, 198; pers. comms.), when the communities were continuing to expand rapidly and their endogamous options were greater, before immigration was cut off by two World Wars (Holdeman 2002, 56, 94, 198; personal communications). Conversely, Alaskan Old Believers are well-connected with potential like-faith spouses, thanks to an estimated 10,000 in Oregon, in addition to the Brazil, Argentina, Alberta, and Australia communities. This reinforces and creates new links between congregations, in effect allowing the Old Believers to be classified as a diaspora and global enclave rather than a collection of unconnected, isolated villages. Young people can hope to find a co-religious partner. An additional factor impeding the east coast Old Believers is that they are now having much fewer children than their grandparents did (and much fewer than the North American Chasovennye), so they are working with far fewer fish in the sea (FS, pers. comm., March 27, 2013).

The Turkish enclaves' pressing need for like-faith spouses is cited as the primary motivation for their immigration to the U.S. (Bigart 1966; Smithson 1977, 162-3; Untiedt 1977, 146; Scheffel 1989b, 7). Scheffel does not elaborate on the motivations that led the "tradition-minded" and "dissatisfied" Oregon settlers to Alberta and Alaska, but he does make it clear that because of strict endogamy and broad incest laws, the two "colonies," "would be at a loss for suitable marriage partners if it were not for their recourse to the large, albeit culturally adulterated, pool of their co-religionists in Oregon" (1991, 80-81). Perhaps a lapsed or lazy Old Ritualist is better than a devout Methodist. As such inter-group marriages cannot be considered practically endogamous and may even necessitate rebaptism and result in family conflict.

The microschisms which ruptured the Erie and Nikolaevsk enclaves created new non-co-religious popovtsy and bezpopovtsy others, further complicating their (attempt at) endogamous

practices.[205] The regular occurrence of marriages that cross the bezpopovtsy/popovtsy gulf indicates the prioritization of Old Rite likeness over sectarian likeness. For example, Fr. Nikola will only perform an exogamous marriage if the spouse converts to his church. His own son's bezpopovtsy in-laws were not very happy about the match and their daughter's conversion. But while they did not personally attend her wedding, two sisters and a brother were sent in their stead. They were considered "pretty open-minded" for allowing as much (pers. comm., August 22, 2013). The relative ease with which such matches are made depends on parental as well as pastoral concession.

Not only should Old Believer spouses be ideally of like-faith, but all those present at the ceremony should (again, *ideally*) be of like-faith to meet the condition of sobornost', or unanimity in spiritual condition and understanding and conciliarity (Sabey 1969, 38-9; Colfer 1985, 81). Exogamy either precludes sobornost' at a wedding ceremony or bars the convert's family from attending. The degree to which this exclusion is expected and the degree to which individual nastavniki follow particular interdictions is another instance of pastoral economia.

Mixed marriages may consequently weaken, repress, or dissolve other social links by physically, socially, and religiously distancing the convert from their former co-religionists. As a point of comparison, Amish youth also utilize the links of co-religiosity (or "in fellowship," as the Anabaptists term it) between settlements to find spouses. And while it is always acceptable to marry into a "more orthodox affiliation," one could face the serious social consequence of *meidung* (shunning) by marrying into a more progressive one (Hostetler 1968, 158; Kraybill 1994a, 5-6). Elder Erie Old Believers in 1985 told Robson of the extent of shunning for marital-pomieschanie once practiced in the Church of the Nativity. Punishments included relegation to the vestibule, prostration obligations when members of good standing passed into nave, and/or 10 to 20 years of extra fasting on Mondays (in addition to standard fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays) (1985, 83-4). The 1958 Pomortsy Sobor judged that parents were not responsible for mixed marriages if they explicitly objected to the union. But if they participate in the showers and parties, attend the ceremony, or "permit their children go steady with outsiders, for the youngsters are induced then to a wrong marriage," then they are "accomplices of the sinful marriage and are subjects to server Church punishment" (*PC* 6, 1958, Q18; also *PC* 4, 1956, Q4). On some issues (like use of special

[205] More on this in Silva 2009, 44, 79-81

dishes) and other purity laws Pearl and August (a popovtsy couple who had been married nearly 60 years at that point) said that their parents were not that strict. But when I asked if they were allowed to date non-Old Believers, they both emphatically declared "No!" in unison (pers. comm., May 26, 2013).

Such strict reprimands for exogamy waned in the latter half of the twentieth century, although milder 'punishments' exist to this day (Holdeman 2002, 49n50, 106). Those who married outside faith were often expelled from church (Robson 1985, 77-8; Holdeman 2002, 74-75). Others left the church over these matters. For example, Judy's older brother had wanted his fiancée baptized but, "the priest at that time didn't believe in doing that, he said 'you're not going to keep the religion,' so then they were teed-off, you know how that goes." And so, he stopped attending services altogether (pers. comm, June 14, 2013).

Redrawn lines of co-religiosity after the microschisms and shifting boundaries of 'likeness' in terms of a potential spouse's acceptability to family and church signal conceptual changes of belonging and group-making. The Sinziantsy, Harbintsy, and Turchane subgroupings, which stemmed from the west coast Old Believers' post-Siberia settlements, have become almost meaningless after the 50 years that these communities have been in the U.S (Silva 2009, 78; pers. comm.). Likewise, Fedoseevtsy heritage quickly became an irrelevant distinction from the Pomortsy majority in Pennsylvania. Indeed, that anyone in Erie was originally non-Pomortsy is rarely mentioned. Interestingly, the only specific mention I heard of a person's Fedoseevtsy heritage was in relation to a disagreement over the sanctification of priestless marriage, which had been the main point of contention between the two bezpopovtsy groups since the eighteenth century (Chapter Two).

Endogamy is an ideal, one that is no longer expected in Erie, and in Nikolaevsk, is no longer as narrowly conceived as it was in the 1960s and 1970s when it was still an issue to marry between migratory subgroups. Fr. Simon considered the ease with which one might convince an American or someone of another faith to convert as one of the goals of forging ecumenical connections with ROCOR and an additional appeal of English language services. For "what non-Russian would want to convert to a rigorous faith they have no hope of understanding?" (FS, pers. comm., December 27, 2012). Fr. Nikola likewise linked the growing need for English-use in church to intermarriage with non-Orthodox Americans. He has performed English and bilingual marriage services in his church (pers. comm, August 22, 2013). The BK priest in Oregon

requested Fr. Simon's translation of the marriage service as well (pers. comm., FS, December 27, 2012). Marriage practices are not only changing, but they are also impelling further religious change.

I now move onto the last mystery of one's life: death—another life milestone which has been greatly complicated by exogamy. For example, Erie Old Believers had to convene a meeting of church elders, psalter readers, and memorial service helpers to determine how to handle funerals of the inter-married. Since according to canonical law (*AC*46 prohibits the acceptance of "any sacrifices from outsiders," which was interpreted to mean any funds) Old Believers were prohibited from taking money from a widow who was "an outsider," and by secular law all property of her deceased husband became hers. In this case, the "people concerned" asked not to be paid; Fr. Smolakov strongly suggested that such individuals pre-arrange and pay for their funerals (*SSW*#116, March 23, 1958). American Old Believers found many ways of adapting to new circumstances and deviations without causing schism. Today, Old Believer elders must grapple with an additional challenge caused by exogamy—how to speak to bereaved children who were raised in another faith about keeping ORRO funerary practices and post-mortuary prayers. This was Pearl's current concern when we talked, feeling strongly that her ailing sister must have *paneheedas* (memorial prayers said on 3rd, 9th, and 40th day after one's passing) when the time came, but unsure how to raise the issue respectfully and sensitively with her evangelical niece. Co-religious boundaries of belonging affect Old Believers' decisions about who they spend their lives with as by whom they (or rather, their bodies) spend death nearby.

3.3.3. Death

Death divides. The living are separated from those who have passed, and all those no longer with us are qualitatively and eternally segregated by Divine Judgment. As I conclude this chapter and my review of the influence considerations of purity, belonging, and moral standing have on Old Believers' social and ritual relationships, I turn to the ways in which these divisions and separations are marked within cemeteries by the memorialization of those who passed. The ways in which tombs, cemeteries, and memorial rituals and events (e.g., Memorial Day, Day of the Dead) connect the living to their ancestral pasts (however recent) has long been of anthropological consideration (Warner 1959, Bloch 1971, Norget 2006). Here, I discuss how cemeteries and memorials also mark disconnections between the living. Old Believer cemeteries demarcate separations in several ways: 1] Old Believer cemeteries are apart from those of other faiths; 2]

Their cemeteries spatially mark the moral status of those who have passed and whether they were in good standing with the congregation, and able to receive full funerary rites and other blessings; 3] In Erie, the microschism's division between the popovtsy and bezpopovtsy is reproduced within the sacred grounds of the *Eaoaun Bohoslov* Cemetery.

The first point is rather basic, the Old Believers have their own cemeteries, only for their own congregational members, as do many churches. Warner (1959) noted an increasing trend of more collective Protestant cemeteries that "symbolically unite" Protestants of various denominations in a "common sacred space where all sects can disregard their doctrinal differences" (295), but this is not the case for the ORRO. Interestingly, two of the largest and most influential centers of Old Belief in Moscow (bezpopovtsy Preobrazhenskoe and Priested Rogozhskoe) were both founded during the plague epidemic of 1771 to deal with their need to for their own cemeteries (Paert 2003, 61, 65).

The second point, the separation of the pure/impure or in good standing/out of good standing is imprinted on the cemetery landscape. Within churches, the spatial markers of grace and ritual purity was once clear in Erie and still is in Nikolaevsk: those who were in the nave had it and those who were in the vestibule did not. It is still clear in the Erie cemetery, however, where the segregation of those internally judged to be lacking grace or moral qualifications is physical and permanent; it is an enclave on consecrated ground, a sign that temptation won.

In the Erie Old Believers' cemetery, in a small corner separated by two roads lies a section marked with a decaying wooden sign that announces, "Area C" in fading black paint.[206] Death records give some of the reasons a person may find their resting place apart from their family and other faithful, for example "'shaven, worldly'" (Holdeman 2002, 74). But over a third (35-42%, Figure 4) of the inhabitants of this cemetery section are simply infants who passed before their baptism, a sad fact that both current Erie leaders described as cruel and even "asinine."

[206] A rare English note on a 1939 Church of the Nativity death records refers to it as the "second section" (CNMB 2, entry 4). Marianna's Old Believers have a similar section in their cemetery that is no longer used (Holdeman 2002, 74).

Image 8: Eaoaun Bohoslov Cemetery (Erie) "Area C" on right

Erie's first nastavnik, Nicon, is remembered (by the few who still can, and by their children who have been told) as an extremely strict and exacting spiritual leader. He gave heavy penances including the denial of full burial rites for "sins of Americanization (shaving, dyeing, and cutting hair, not keeping fasts, not attending regular church, dancing at weddings)" (Holdeman 2002, 74). Church records do not always give a reason for an individual's post-mortem exclusion. Some notes show that although physically separated, the individual *did* receive the full services. Individuals were also buried in Area C because they never went to church or they were alcoholics or "hobos" (pers. comm, LM, May 28, 2013).

Image 9: Eaoaun Bohoslov Cemetery (Erie) "Area C" on left

Although she always spoke with determined passion, I vividly recall how adamantly Barbara declared during a conversation one afternoon that those who had been buried in Area C were NOT 'poganyi' or unclean. The separation was merely to show the nastavnik whose graves could not receive the blessing with the incense during the holy days dedicated to prayers for the dead in the Orthodox liturgical calendar. The vestibules in Nikolaevsk continue to serve the same purpose. An unbaptized infant or stillbirth may not be considered 'unclean', but their remains a visual implication that perhaps their souls may have a may difficult route to heaven. As I discuss further in the following chapter, the people I spoke to varied a good deal in where they drew the line on the limits of God's grace and redemptive mercy. It is generally true that there are more definitive declarations and practices of lost grace in Nikolaevsk, but *which* sins are characterized as salvation deal-breakers are changing in both places. The physical marker of one's moral status (rather then economic status displayed in large stones and placement in more affluent cemeteries, Warner 1959, 32, 297-9), at least in Erie, has undoubtedly changed---Area C has not been used since 1988.[207]

[207] Besides one other burial in 1987 the section had not been used since 1969. The last metrical book on deaths in my possession (CNMB 6b) ends its record in 1979. The list of death (CNMB 10) only lists names, dates of deaths, and age of death, and a fourth column, where a smaller number of individuals are marked 'T', with no explanation.

For example, even the absolute necessity of men wearing beards has been questioned. In previous generations in Erie, and more conservative ORRO congregations today, the shaved were unequivocally considered damned. Fr. Simon felt that the beard laws had become hypocritical. How is it right that a man may wait until his deathbed, then confess and "grow a few whiskers" and still be considered saved? Or that a full bearded man who beats his wife may go uncensured and receive full burial rites? (pers. comm., January 2, 2013).[208] Along with the other Pomortsy nastavniki, Fr. Smolakov decided (*PC* 2, 1954, Q2; *PC* 3, 1955, Q3), citing Canon Law (98th of 6th Universal Council), that despite the sin of shaving, "if we see a repenting heart in the last confession, we never refuse to minister a proper burial" (*SSW*#116, March 23, 1958). When the hypothetical question was posed at one sobor if a man may receive funerary rites if they confessed annually, died unexpectedly, "but shaves his beard, because it is life-necessary for him." Fr. Smolakov left the answer up to the priest's discretion. The priest, who is responsible before God, must decide on a number of factors: devotion, sincerity of confessions, works, charity, and attendance (*PC* 10, 1963, Q8). This is the very definition of 'pastoral economia.'

But God has the final say on mercy. As a young, bearded man in Nikolaevsk's told me, beards could even be a hindrance to grace, if one kept theirs only in vain exhibition of their own saved state, but God sees one's true intentions. Twenty years later, beards were one of the first issues dealt with by the AOB after the schism, as reported its meeting's minutes After citing the failure of a 1909 Pomortsy sobor to solve this issue, they agreed that in the meantime, "anybody who went to confession within 3 years should have a funeral with full rites. They have decided to let God be the judge. We are not scratching it out that it is not a sin!!!" (AOB, November 6, 1983). There is no apparent spatial separation of those in/out of grace on the post-schism bezpopovtsy side of the cemetery.

Area C fell out of disuse before the microschism. But at one point the issue of burial segregation and the treatment of those out of grace, shaven, sinful, or with less than stellar rates of participation was rigid enough to warrant the creation of a second Erie Old Believer cemetery in 1938. At the height of the conflict between Fr. Nicon and CYS members (7.1.2.), a second cemetery was created to cater to club members and other Old Believers who could not be admitted into the church's cemetery (Dolan 1991, 59-60; pers. comm, LM, May 28, 2013). Fr.

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[208] Robson 1985 also noted that the otherwise strict Fr. Pancerev ignored domestic abuse (76).

Nicon's successor, Fr. Yokoff, would not perform burial prayers in the new cemetery (Robson 1985, 87-88). It too, has fallen into disuse and is now managed by the popovtsy Church of the Nativity (FS, pers. comm., December 27, 2012; WO, pers. comm., June 10, 2013).

Figure 4: "Area C" Burials by Nastavnik (CN)

Nastavnik	Area C Burials (45)	Infants (16-19/45)	Military (5/45)
Pancerev	16	5 (31%)	2 WWI Veterans
Yokoff	4	3 (75%)	
Smolakov	12	4 (33%)	3 WWII Veterans
Evanoff	1	1 (100%)	
Simon	2	0	
Undated	7	3-6[viii]	

The waning practice of burial segregation is not a popovtsy/bezpopovtsy issue. But the microschisms did create new spatial markers of distinction. In the settlement between Erie's bezpopovtsy and the popovtsy majority, the latter kept the Church of the Nativity and its cemetery. A new section was carved out for the final resting place of Erie's resolute priestless. Several people brought this up as one of the most upsetting aspects of the split. "We don't even have a tree!" Lola lamented about their desolate corner so far removed from the rest of the graveyard, their families, friends, and their Pomortsy forebearers who first purchased the land for the cemetery in 1918. Their separation unjustly visually represents a symbolic break from their ancestors[209] that does not exist, they remain Pomortsy. Fr. Simon understands that the bezpopovtsy feel marginalized in the new section and stated that he has no problem if they wish to be buried next to their families in the original area, but also knows they would never accept his graveside prayers (FS, pers. comm, December 27, 2012).

[viii] Death records are missing between the years 1946 and 1952. I have included a 1946 burial is of a two-year-old child as an infant. Perhaps the family lived farther away and simply had not yet made it to Erie for baptism, or the child was the product of a mixed marriage. Holdeman's discussion of this section found a "child whose father was living unlawfully with a woman of another faith'", which he cites as the reason for the baby's burial in Area C (2002, 74). "Living unlawfully" does not necessarily mean they were not married, as they could have been married outside of the church, which would have been necessary if spouse did not convert. Two of these seven unmarked or undated graves are marked "infant" and a surname, and judging by the small size of their graves, another three appear to be infants.

[209] See Bloch (1971) on how tombs create bonds between the living and their ancestors and their past (however far now geographically or as regards their daily, "profane" lives) and well as help orient the kinship groupings, social organization, and sense of "belonging" amongst the living (33, 105-127).

Indeed, after the schism the bezpopovtsy Erie elders, at least for the present, decided in favor of funerals wherein a family is split so that the "not 'Staroveri'" [popovtsy] family must say their goodbyes in the home, that they may "stand in the back and not pray," but they may not approach the open casket to say their goodbyes within the bezpopovtsy church (PC 1984, 5). To Fr. Simon, this was an impossible compromise, "how can I hear '*Slava tebya bojha*' (Glory to thee, our God) and not cross myself?!"

Image 10: Eaoaun Bohoslov Cemetery (Erie) Post-microschism Bezpopovtsy Section (taken from near main section)

Added to the pervading sense of sadness are five headstones in this section awaiting the deceased's years of death to be engraved next to their departed spouses. There are currently only six or seven regular congregants to the Church of the Holy Trinity's services. The expectation of death and loss constantly intruded into my observations there, where I was usually the youngest person by a good 30 years. But nowhere was the fear of the Pomortsy's congregation dying off, and the social devastation of the microschism, so clearly evident to me as in that small clump of tombstones.

Image 11: Eaoaun Bohoslov Cemetery (Erie) Post-microschism Bezpopovtsy Section

In Nikolaevsk, rather than solid stones that mark the dead's "rite of passage" from the living to the dead and provide a "permanent sign of sacred ceremony" (Warner 1959, 31-2), most graves are marked with simple crosses made of wood or stone. Many do not have names, or these inscriptions have faded. All are white. The simplicity and impermanence are perhaps more symbolic of the temporality of life and the anonymity of death. Or as Morris (1991) more beautifully expressed: "the decaying, disintegrating crosses with little or no identifying information serve as a powerful reminder that the dead have been consigned to the next world and that the living must take care of their own. The wooden marker stands, disintegrates, and falls—along with the living memory of the deceased in his community" (319).

I was surprised that some bezpopovtsy would still be buried in the Nikolaevsk cemetery after the microschism. Nevertheless, whoever does not own shares in this 'popovtsy' cemetery may be buried in the "other cemetery" (B., pers. comm, August 26, 2013). No one ever gave me a clear description of where this cemetery was located or explained exactly why it existed before the microschism. The land was set aside for burials when the acreage for one of the "back villages" was

purchased.[210] It is a tiny space uphill into the woods across a small creek without a bridge. I was not going to venture past the "No Trespassing" signs that mark off-road areas (and appeared on some houses and spray-painted on sheds) in search of it. Honestly, I was more than happy to obey the no-wandering vibe that pervaded the village (not to mention my more-than-slight paranoia about wandering in the woods with a toddler in bear country).

Fr. Yakunin says that although those who die out of communion or lacking a state of grace are buried "further back" in the cemetery, the whole area is still censed during the week of prayers[211] for the dead. Any real spatial or qualitative divide in his mind or practice was not apparent. His biggest worry concerned their commemoration, *Radonitsa*, or the "Joyful Prayers for the Departed, which is marked by graveside prayers, that occurs annually 9 days after Easter Sunday. Sometimes they have had to accommodate Alaskan winter and postpone these services because a thick, impassible snow still covered their cemetery (FN, pers. comm., August 22, 2013). While 'joy' may not be a term naturally associated with cemeteries and memorials, the Orthodox are not alone in this such celebrations where the living can rejoice in the delights of life and take hope in a far greater heavenly joy to come (compare the paradoxes of joy of Day of the Dead in Mexico, Norget 2006, 195-6, 218-9, 238-255).

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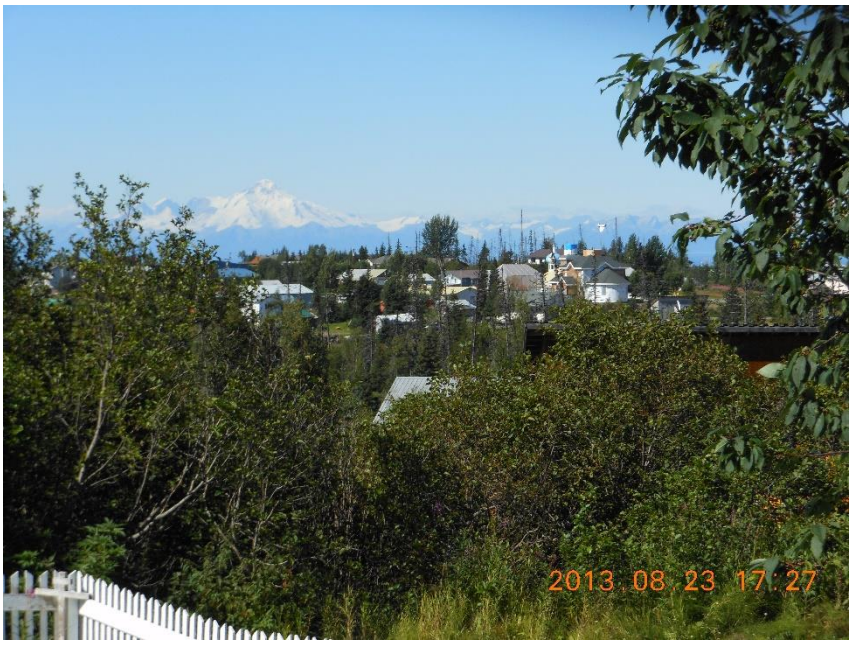
[210] There was also a separate prayer space pre-schism, due to the lack of roads and difficult weather conditions prior to the microschism. Fr. Nikola also noted that cemetery existed beforehand, when the Basargins, and then later the Reutovs, bought land for the new villages (FN, pers. comm., August 22, 2013).

[211] It was not clear which period he was referring to, as there are many such holy days, all Saturdays, that shift according to the given year. A comparison of the Nikolaevsk (2007) and Erie (2013) calendars marks different dates, but same periods in the liturgical cycle. The "Commemoration of the Departed" days are: the day before Meatfare Sunday .(before Great Lent begins), the following Sunday is "Forgiveness Sunday;" also the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Saturdays of Great Lent. in addition to other days (all Saturdays). The "Saturday of St. Demetrius: Commemoration for the Departed" was on November 3, 2007 and November 2, 2013 (the 23rd and 19th Saturday after Pentecost, respectively). And "Prayers for the Departed" falls on the day before Pentecost Sunday.

Image 12: A Cemetery with a View (Nikolaevsk)[ix]



Fr. Smolakov noted the distinction between the "regular Paneheedas" (memorial prayers) that are said for known souls who "died and were buried in accordance with Church rules" and the Vselanskaya Paneheedas (Universal Memorial Prayer) that are prayed annually for the "souls of all Christians" regardless of their state of grace (*PC* 9, 1961, Q9). Six questions were asked about the Memorial Services during the 1953-1966 Pomortsy conferences (third largest issue of sacramental practices, See Appendix 3). The regular paneheedas that are apart of the full funerary rites of the church are said on the 3rd, 9th, and 40th to pray for the soul's redemption and heavenly admittance.[212] In these services, the living are commemorating not only their love ones who have passed, but reconfirming their dogmatic perspectives of Christian life, death, and salvation. Warner (1959) described this as the "fundamental sacred problem" of cemeteries to symbolically portray hopes of salvation while alleviating the living's fears and anxieties of their own mortality, and "assurances of

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[ix] I was not instructed not to take a photograph but I suspect that the bezpopovtsy would not want me to take photographs of specific graves, names, or of the whole, which is surrounded by the white, picket fence visible (along with one cross) in bottom left.

[212] It is especially important that the last be exactly on the 40th, even if it is Pascha or Lenten day, though others may be adjusted (*PC* 2, 1954, Q6; *PC* 10, 1963, Q5). In another conference, Fr. Smolakov again distinguishes that the Vselan'naya Paneheeda (spelled differently this time) to "entreat God to be merciful to all the dead." The sobor also debated the 40th day prayer for the unconfessed (*PC* 5, 1957, Q4).

life hereafter" for both the living and the dead through the maintenance of these sacred spaces (185). Fr. Smolakov described the importance of their prayers for the dead in a less functionalist manner, but the frequent ritual enactment of their beliefs in the resurrection to come is apparent:

> Soul, being immortal, continues living also after the physical death of the body, waiting for the Second Coming of the Lord and for the final judgment. Then it shall enter into its renewed body, and face the Judge. In this mean-time, the dead cannot do anything for himself: he cannot pray to God; cannot confess the sins; cannot plead for Gods' mercy; all these things, except confession, may and must be done by the survivors. Prayer for the Decease, like a regular Paneheedas, Kanon, Universal Memorial Prayer for all deceased, alms etc. is the plea of the survivors for God's mercy to the dead, and they may bring him justification as long as the final judgment is not yet pronounced. Because of these reason, we pray for our dead, believing that they may benefit from our praying and offering. We do not know the ways of God and His judgments...(*PC* 8, 1960,Q17)

But not all Old Believers were so sanguine as to the chances of the unconfessed and grave sinners. A bezpopovtsy elder in Nikolaevsk clearly marked the dead-soul's state of purity. He intimated that a recent suicide had been buried "like a dog" in the back of the woods rather than in the cemetery, although his family could not deny him a cross. And he understood that mercy. There were also no services held for a member's sister who had recently drank herself to death. "There is no place in heaven for them when they die drunk," the elder said to me sadly; since death by drink counts as suicide, these unfortunate individuals are not buried in the main Nikolaevsk cemetery (pers. comm, August 26, 2013). Morris' (1991) wrote of an Old Believer cemetery in Oregon that the adults were all grouped together, regardless of family, the children in another section, and a third section "off in a corner" for those who "were not in union" (319).

Degrees of difference and separation are spatially enacted and marked on the local scale and in individuals' lives and deaths, in dining rooms, sanctuaries, and cemeteries within American Old Believer enclaves. In Pennsylvania and Alaska alike, formerly stringent markers of social segregation and isolation have lessened since these communities were settled. The salvation deal-breakers, as spatially signified in burial designations, have declined in number while the instances of pastoral economia have increased. Acts of burial segregation are lasting reminders the importance of one's spiritual status in life, and a symbolic signal of more grave concerns that the deceased may not rise up with the rest of true believers to join the Messiah upon His return.

In this chapter, I have primarily focused on American Old Believers' methods of puritanical segregation in a negative sense—the people excluded and those who do not belong. Yet these methods may be viewed positively as well, as Webster (2018) argued in his work with the

Plymouth Brethren in North Ireland, who believe that "to live a life of separation is to live a life worth living; it is to live a life that is good...through separation the spiritual goals of Christianity are sought and realized. Separation redeems the Brethren soul from an evil world; separation restores, reconciles, and heals their relationship with God and with fellow Brethren" (326). In the theological turn below, in which I shift from questions of purity to questions of grace as cornerstones of Old Believers' boundaries of co-religious belonging, and of their separations and exclusions, it is necessary to remember the "spiritual goals" they seek—to make unions between believers with God, and with one another, under his grace (Romans 6:14).

Chapter 4
Group-making and the Presumption of Grace

> *For many come to faith, but few are brought into the Heavenly Kingdom. And many serve God with their tongue, but turn from Him in their lives. From this we should reflect on two things. The first is that no one should presume concerning his own salvation; for though he is called to the faith, he knows not whether he will be chosen to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. The second is, that no one should take it upon himself to despair of his neighbor, whom he sees steeped in vice, because no one knows the richness of the divine mercy.*
> —St. Gregory the Dialogist of Rome (†604)[213]

This dissertation argues that schism demonstrates "what matters" to a religious group and the intersections of dogma and group identity, boiled down to crudely abstracted points I call salvation deal-breakers (SDB). The theologian John Meyendorff (1996) argued that the "fundamental differences" of dogma between Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christianities (and I would add Protestants to this discussion) such as the filioque and papal primacy "can only be resolved if there is a common understanding of what makes one a Christian, of the doctrine of salvation" (4). Salvation, and by extension '*grace*', which refers to God's gift of mercy, redemption, and salvation to his believers (Romans 5, 6; Eph 2; Acts 15:11; Titus 2:13; 1 Peter 1:10; Pitt-Rivers [1992] 2011, 441), is central both to Christianity as a whole and to understanding the theological boundaries of co-religiosity. At what point does an individual or branch of Christianity lose "what makes one a Christian"? At what point does one lose grace and forfeit salvation? In this chapter, I discuss grace as a unifying theological concept that joins individual Christians in a social relationship with one another and to God[214] that contrarily plays a fundamental role in Christian group-making and divisions ('sectarianism').

Grace is a pardon; it is gratuitous and irreciprocal; it is an "unmerited" mercy; it negates the severity of law (Pitt-Rivers [1992] 2011, 429, following Louis Ott 1955). Only God determines one's state of grace; "final judgment" is a divine determination (Romans 9; Metropolitan Philaret,

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[213] The Cenacle Press and St. John of Kronstadt Press (1990) *What the Church Fathers Say about Salvation.* I found this pamphlet in cubby of literature offered in the CN's outer vestibule.

[214] Evident in the introduction of nearly every New Testament epistle, for example "To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 1:7) or "To Titus, my loyal child in the faith we share: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior" (Titus 2:4)

#L213 (2290), 2). But people are expected to strive and work for grace, and to believe in it.[215] "For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!" (Romans 6:14-15). Here, Paul instructs Christians in Rome that it is not enough to rely on their faith in God's grace, they must endeavor to deserve it.

How exactly one should endeavor and seek grace has divided Christian groups (e.g., Fedoseevtsy and Pomortsy celibacy v. priestless marriage debates). Co-religiosity determinations (and their underlying SDBs) in times of schisms (and unifications) reflect a group's understanding of what *should* be believed (dogma), and what *should* be done in daily life (guarding purity and "good standing") and in church rituals (maintaining orthodoxy and continuity). These decisions also make statements about what *may* be forgiven (to receive salvation/grace/redemption. To better understand ORRO religiosity and how it impacts their daily lives and social relationships, or in other words, 'lived Christianity', it is necessary for the anthropologist of Christianity to further engage with our interlocutors' theological perspectives of the ways in which "divinity inhabits and helps constitute [their] social world" (Seeman 2018, 336, 353).

In Chapter Three, I surveyed the practices Old Believers employ to maintain one another's moral "good standing" and orthodox continuity through the lens of anthropological theories concerning purity and pollution to describe the measures of social control meant to ensure an individual's actions comply with the group's ethical standards and ideological rubric (e.g., the will of God). Russian Orthodox purity laws serve to keep individuals in a "state of grace," or in the condition to receive God's eternal favor (Pitt-Rivers [1992] 2011, 430, 432, 435).[216] This chapter turns from the anthropological determinants of social belonging (e.g., whether one is pure or poganyi) to theological determinants (e.g., whether one has grace, is 'with God') that necessarily involve a divine actor (the final determiner). The similarity between these constructs demonstrates

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[215] For verses on the necessity of combining "good works" or "good deeds" with faith and belief to gain salvation see Mt 5:16; 3:8; Ephesians 2; Colossians 1:4-14; Titus 1, 2:7; Hebrews 10:24; and James 2:24. Paul's letters to the Galatians and Romans weigh especially on the importance of faith and should be seen contextually within questions surrounding new Christians' duty to Roman and Jewish law (for example, in question of whether gentile converts should be circumcised, Galatians 5.)

[216] See Pitt-Rivers ([1992] 2011) on the applicability of concepts of grace in other faiths and to the field of anthropology more broadly.

the symmetry between earthly belonging in a congregation or Church and otherworldly belonging in the eternal hereafter. As Carroll (2017) found in his research with Eastern Orthodox Christians in London and Greece, "...theology—as a set of cultural categories of understanding and practice of and with God—is an active element within the value judgements, decision-making processes, and mode of life of many Orthodox Christians" (Carroll 2017, 7). Simply, theology is "lived."

Schism studies often focus on social factors of intrareligious division to the exclusion or underemphasis of the dogmatic issues at hand. I argue that theology should be front and center. People are not the only actors in schisms because their decisions are intended to correspond to divine guidance, will, and later, judgment. Many Old Believers with whom I spoke emphasized that the exact workings of God's calculus of faith, works, and repentance is unknowable. However, our discussions of co-religiosity and condemnations of heresy often implied the opposite. I argue that ORRO co-religiosity decisions on institutional and congregational levels reflect a group's understanding about what acts, what faith, and which individuals might hope to receive God's gift of grace and salvation.

On an ecumenical (institutional, global) level, Old Believers' perceptions of Christian Others' states of grace effects Christian group-making through schism and conciliar decision-making (dogma-encoding). On a local level, their perceptions of congregants' states of grace determine who is in good standing and who may enter the nave, to worship as one, or be buried with their family. 'Grace,' is similar to the concept of 'purity' in that both are one part of a qualitative dichotomy. Grace finds its opposite in damnation (as a blessing is to a curse); purity finds its opposite in the unclean. Both conceptual pairs operate on a good/evil binary that categorizes individuals based on their perceived moral qualifications. And both concepts operate on a Us/Them binary that categories individuals into *social groupings* (heterodox/orthodox; blagovernyi/poganyi) based on how others perceive their moral qualification.

Another way to phrase the foundational social duality of Christianity, is to say that purity operates on the level of social belonging and grace operates on the level of divine belonging. People are sorted on earth as they are presumed (as this is an unknowable blessing bestowed by the divine actor) to be sorted after life. Transgressions (or "sins") against purity laws and God's laws demand repentance, penance, and redemption. Many Christian groups ritually oversee this process (*e.g.,* sacrament of Confession). A transgressor may be excluded from sacred and/or social spaces and rituals. Old Believers must ask forgiveness of their congregation, when they are socially

judged to be not in good standing, just as they must ask for God's mercy in their daily prayers. In fact, it is the same prayer (Proschaneeye, Appendix 4). This is the dual meaning of excommunication: you are excised from the Christian community (Church) and you are denied Communion (Eucharist).

Before I examine how the Erie and Nikolaevsk 1983 microschisms demonstrate how and why intrareligious divides occur, and what these events show us (Chapter Five), I must discuss the broader theological underpinnings of the relationship between dogma and Christian group-making. Throughout the history of Christianity, salvation deal-breakers were co-religiosity deal-breakers. Many times "heretics" were excommunicated from, and persecuted by, the Church (be it Roman Catholic, Russian Orthodox, or Anglican). For example, the third and fourth Ecumenical Councils (Ephesus 431 and Chalcedon 451, respectively) solidified orthodox Christology while simultaneously condemning Nestorian (Christ has two distinct natures, divine and human, rather than union of the two) and Monophysite (one nature) Christologies as heretical. To be denied the sacraments, for many Christians, is tantamount to damnation. An individual's ability to receive rites on earth and (again, presumably) obtain God's grace and salvation in the hereafter has run parallel to Christian group-making and belonging since the first centuries of Christianity.

Perceived limits of grace, this "gift of God" (Eph. 2:8), are inherent in the notion that a sin can be mortal (i.e., mortal vs. venial sins) or that salvation can have deal-breakers. I begin this chapter with a question: Are there limits to God's grace? The Old Believers are an apt case-study of the relationship between dogma and Church belonging because the history of ORRO, from its initial schism from the Russian Orthodox Church and secondary priesthood/priested schisms, were hinged on the idea that certain acts and dogmas are heretical, SDBs, and that a Church institution could also lose grace. The pre-schism ROC's emphasis on purity, ritual absolutism, and belief in the ethno-religious primacy of Moscow as the "Third Rome" after the fall of Constantinople (and therefore its Church, 1453) are key elements to understanding variations in Old Belief group-making over the centuries. Concepts of heretical contamination influence Old Believers' evaluations of individuals' states of grace (that determine whether one can ritually and/or socially participate with the congregation), as well as their considerations of an institutional Church's legitimacy (that determine whether one is bezpopovtsy or popovtsy).

I continue this inquiry with a second question: Do individuals have the equal right to leave a Church in heresy? Whether Patriarch Nikon committed heresy and whether the "New Rite"

ROC maintained grace, were fundamental questions of Old Believer group-making since the seventeenth century. Whether the ROC or any other hierarchy retained the institutionalization of grace—apostolic succession—and retained the ability to extend grace to believers through the sacraments was a critical element of nineteenth and twentieth century Old Believers' evaluations of the Belaya Krinitsa, Edinoverie, and ROC/ROCOR hierarchies. This priesthood question led to Nikolaevsk's and Erie's microschisms in 1983. The Old Believers were created by a curse, or "negative grace," (Pitt-Rivers [1992] 2011, 426); the ROC's (and ROCOR's) annulment of that anathema in the early 1970s had momentous implications. Can Old Believers, or God, forgive the atrocities which followed this curse? Can grace be restored? The popovtsy groups in both Erie and Nikolaevsk looked at these questions of heresy and institutional grace and came to new conclusions and rewrote their theo-historical narrative of Church loss. The congregations were split between opposing ecclesiologies and this was a clear co-religiosity deal-breaker.

The anthropology of Christianity cannot "bracket out" questions about God and theology that influence how Christians perceive the world and chose to live their lives (Carroll 2017; Lemons 2018a; Robbins 2020). Doctrines of soteriology (salvation) and ecclesiology (Church) are at the root of Old Believer schisms, whether the specific deal-breaker is a matter of marriage, the sign of the cross, or apostolic succession. Old Believers are unique branch of Christianity ripe for inquiry into the intersections of dogma and group identity because heretical (wrong dogma, wrong rites) threats to God's forgiveness have precluded co-religiosity and framed their practices of social duality since the time of Nikon. The dispossessed of grace have always been Othered.

4.1. Questioning the Limits of God's Grace

Schisms are simultaneously group-defining and dogma-encoding events. As such, ruptures in co-religiosity are unique points in history where the intersections of religious groups' identities and beliefs are illuminated. If, as Meyendorff claimed, the doctrine of salvation is the common denominator of Christian groups (1996, 4), does it follow that soteriology is at the root of Christian group-making? The answer depends on the extent to which God is believed to be lenient and forgiving about issues, from orthopraxy to the little sins of everyday failings. How much deviation from the ideal is acceptable? Are there *any* salvation deal-breakers? Or is God's mercy, like his power, unlimited? This section explores historical and contemporary variance in Russian Orthodox Christians' ("New" and "Old") answers to these heavy queries to demonstrate the

underlying problematics of Christian dualism at the root of Old Believer schisms.

My intent is to broaden anthropology's classical literature on purity and religious group-making to include the divine. Only God judges who has the *right* beliefs and the *right* acts to gain salvation, but Churches and congregations frame membership on an understanding of these judgments. Therefore, I argue that studies of Christian intrareligious divisions must consider the opposition between dogma and heresy. Because claims of the Other's heresy are so frequent in intrareligious disputes, accusations of false teachings, unorthodox interpretations, and outright blasphemy draw the ideological borderlines that socially separate Christian groups.

Since belief is a requirement for salvation (John 3:16 is the most placard-famous example of this tenet), are there limits to God's mercy that are contingent on the form and specificity of beliefs which one holds? How orthodox must you be? How orthopraxical? Or, as the title of one missionary leaflet I purchased at the Erie Church of the Nativity's bookstore asked: "Will the heterodox be saved?" (Metropolitan Philaret, #L213 (2290), 3-4). These questions affect social relations and ritual participation and trigger microschisms on the local, congregational level and schisms, anathemas, and co-religious unifications on the institutional level.

The tangled relationship between dogma, ritual, and belonging is especially evident in Orthodox theology in general and ORRO in particular. On an individual level, Old Believers ask for God's mercy repeatedly in their daily prayers (See Appendix 4). Grace is also the theological corner stone of Old Believers' puritanical practices (Chapter Three), which are punitive, corrective, and protective measures to guard congregants' state of good standing. Similarly, in Amish communities, those "who have taken the baptismal vow and then spurn the teachings of the church face excommunicate and social avoidance. Based on biblical teaching, shunning is a powerful form of social control that is intended to help maintain the purity of the church" (Kraybill 1994a, 5-6). In the remaining chapters, I demonstrate how grace and salvation are primary considerations in Old Believers' co-religiosity and selective modernity decisions.

Ironically, the emphasis on *oneness* of a spiritual body has often led to division within ORRO. If a congregation must be in sobornost' and possess the right spirit (or "purity") to worship as one and have rites and prayers "count" as sanctifying, then those outside the spirit must be excluded. The same theological concept determines co-religiosity on an ecumenical/institutional level. Russian Orthodoxy's preoccupation with grace and heresy is at the root of the birth of Old Belief as a distinct branch of Eastern Orthodoxy Christianity. On one hand, people who rejected

Nikon's reforms were motivated by the desire to "...protect the traditions of the past, which they sincerely believed were the means of salvation" (Hood 1978, 11). On the other hand, the ROC schism was sealed in 1666 with the anathematization, a "negative grace" (Pitt-Rivers [1992] 2011, 426) and curse, of Old Rite practitioners. Neither side of the dispute accepted a multiplicity of rites as orthodox.

Going back further, the divisiveness of Nikon's reforms must be contextualized by two previous Russian Orthodox movements that sought to ensure ritual uniformity (the Josephites/Possessors) and limit individual and institutional moral corruption (Zealots of Piety). Fr. Simon argued that "nothing could be more critical in beginning to understand the schism" than the Possessor/Non-possessor debate (late 1400s-early 1500s) which fostered a generalized understanding in Russia that there could only be one, authentic, salutary ("saving") manner of ritual practice.

Figure 5: Summary of Possessor and Non-possessor Debate (RSG 3, September 22, 3-4)

Joseph of Volokolansk and the Possessors	Nil of Sorsky (Nilus of Sora) and the Non-possessors
Large Monasteries, Church major property holders	Small Monasteries, monks should live in poverty
Close relationship of Church and State	Separation, inner spiritual life, *hesychasm* (gk. Stillness, Divine quietness, mystical and monastic practice of meditative prayer)
Persecute heretics	Opposed persecution
Western influence (persecution, absolute authority, worldly power of Church)	Byzantine influence
Ritual uniformity "essential"	Uniformity of ritual "not critical"
Allowed Vasily III (then Duke of Moscow) to put aside wife and remarry	Opposed remarriage, Nil imprisoned, died (1508) "disgraced" (later canonized)

According to Fr. Simon, "...if the possessors had not won against the non-possessors, there would not have been a schism in the Russian Orthodox Church," because both New and Old Ritualists were Josephites (RSG 3, September 22, 1982, 3). The prevailing Josephite views of rigid pravoslavnye, absolute Church authority, and the absolute singularity of the way to salvation made

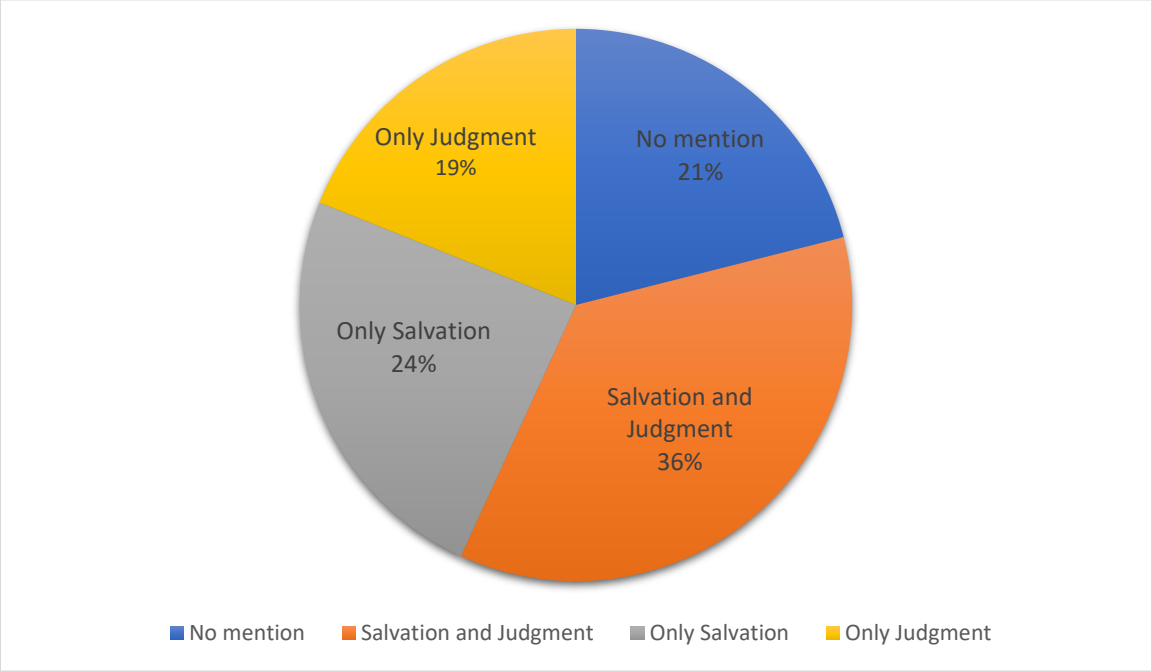
the ROC schism unavoidable (Fedotov 1966, 377-381). To the dissenters, changes to the Typikon (Book of Ritual) were the "central nerve" of their "disenchantment" with the ROC (RSG 4, September 29, 1982, 5). To Nikon and other hierarchs (and Tsar Alexis I), dissenters and deviant practitioners could not belong to the Church.

Patriarch Nikon and reform opposition leaders like Avvakum were also both members of the Zealots of Piety movement which, as the name suggests, was a puritan-type movement that aimed to reform the Church institution and Russian religious life (Zenkovsky 1957; Zernov 1963, 7-8; RSG 4, September 29, 1982, 4-5; Hosking 1997, 65; Michels 1999, 3; See Naumescu 2011, 62-65 on Avvakum's continued importance moral model and religious education). For example, the Zealots stressed the Muscovite exclusion of outsiders (including Greek Orthodox) and those "out of grace" from sacred spaces and practices. The "acceleration of this whole concept of unworthiness" led many to live un-sacramented lives while they served (often years-long) penances (*epitimias*) (RSG 3, September 22, 1982, 7). As discussed in the previous chapter, these themes of purity and exclusion continue to frame the worldviews and social duality practices in conservative, Old Believer enclaves.

Other themes within the Zealots' movement such as apocalypticism, the revivalist idealization of the golden past of old Muscovy, and the belief that "troubles in Russia could be equated to a lack of loyalty to the past" (RSG 4, September 29, 1982, 4-5) are found in early and contemporary Old Believer polemics. Together, the Josephite and Zealots of Piety movements' emphasis on continuity, orthopraxy, and worthiness of participants were central aspects of seventeenth century Russian Orthodox Christianity that provided a fertile bed for schism. This section introduces the debates around the polarized relationship between heresy and salvation—an essential component of Old Believer group-making.

While the above history was thoroughly examined by Erie Old Believers during their microschism, my sample (95) of SSWs do not indicate that the causes and history of schisms were a prevailing concern in the previous decades: Fr. Smolakov discussed the Great Schism (1054) twice, ROC schism thrice, and intra-ORRO schisms not at all (See Appendix 2). However, the related, broader binary between grace/salvation and judgment/eternal punishment was a predominant theme of Fr. Smolakov's sermons. The vast majority of the sample (79%, 75/95) discussed positive and/or negative afterlife consequences of individuals' faith and actions.

Figure 6: Percentage of *SSW* Sample (95) with Discussions of Eternal Salvation and/or Punishment



American Old Believers are by no means agreed on how one gains, or loses, grace. A conversation I had with Fr. Simon on the relationship between Church belonging and salvation stuck with me as especially illustrative. He felt that grace was the key sticking point, the CDB, between his popovtsy church and the (BK) popovtsy in Oregon and Alaska. He paraphrased what he had told a priest and others there:

> **FS:** *"...I would be glad to join you if you would come to...if you can realize and at least recognize that the only Christian people who have any grace in the world are not the Old Believers of Russia who follow the books of the Patriarch Joseph before the Patriarch Nikon." Switching to address me, he elaborated, "That's what an Old Believer believes. You understand? That's the basic concept. There is no grace in the entire world of Christianity other than the Old Believers who follow the books of the Russian Orthodox ritual, the pre-Nikonian ritual. That's the thing that I accepted myself as a kid growing up."*
>
> **AS:** *"That's the thing that's hard...it's very hard to wrap your head around..."*
>
> **FS:** *"...and as I got older, there's no way I'm going to ever agree to that because I think it's wrong. It's just wrong. It doesn't make sense." (pers. comm., January 2, 2013).*

Since that conversation, I kept considering the paradoxical limits of God's grace apparent in the social duality of Old Belief. Which groups are truly blagovernyi, pravoslavnye, and saved? What heretical dogma and acts are damning? What deviations are forgivable? Bezpopovtsy see

themselves as in an "emergency situation" that necessitated deviation, and even cancelation, of sacramental practices. They cannot have the Eucharist without priests, and they console themselves in the belief that God understands and forgives this lapse.

Elsewhere, I observed an explicit, vocalized divide between "what counts" and "doesn't count." For example, after my very first service at an Old Believer church (2007, Nikolaevsk popovtsy) an elder man demonstrated to me the difference between the ORRO and Roman Catholic sign of the cross, telling me that the latter "didn't count." Where, I wondered, did they find God's abacus? One meaning of a rite that "counts" refers to its effectiveness. To pronounce the three-finger method 'not salutary,' means that the supplication, the worship, the curse-expelling powers of the symbol are negated by heteropraxy. Fr. Smolakov instructed one Pomortsy Conference of the Trinitarian procedure for emergency home baptism, and warned that baptism in Jesus' name alone "is not acknowledged as a rightful baptism, and the baby is regarded as not baptized" (*PC* 8, 1960, Q7). It appeared to me that the calculation of final judgment was a convoluted rubric of scriptural and canonical interpretation, active [and ortho] worship, pious living (*bytovoe blagochestie*), and intentionality (or *sincerity*, Keane 2007). Old Believers' results for this moral arithmetic often varied. It was clear was that the overlap between salvation and co-religiosity deal-breakers is a persistent feature of ORRO.

Schism exposes a delicate dance on the fine lines of contradictory dogma. For example, Fr. Smolakov leaned on Apostolic Canon 46's instruction that Old Believers are not to accept sacrifices from outsiders to explain why a non-OB widow could not pay for her late husband's funeral rites. Yet in the same written sermon he trusted in the "saving power of redemption" to save the widow's shaved, <u>but confessed</u>, husband (*SSW*#116, March 23, 1958). For over one hundred years Pomortsy American Old Believers debated whether grace would be given to the shaven, or whether full burial blessings could be performed, for an individual obliged to shave for employment (Beliajeff 1977, 79; Hood 1978, 18-9; Robson 1985, 91; Dolan 1991, 50; Holdeman 2002, 54). Shaving was the most addressed issue concerning the care and treatment of the body during the Pomortsy Conferences (12/22, See Appendix 3). A softline stance on this question, like that expressed by Fr. Smolakov during the 1955 conference, is that "The mercy of God is unlimited, and His ways are unexplorable" (*PC* 3, 1955, Q3).

But while Fr. Smolakov put his hope in mercy, it does not follow that he also accepted the participation of shaved men in services or blessed their graves after death. Grace is God's pardon;

priests are perhaps more bound to "the Book."[217] This contrast illustrates another Christian duality. In a long list of "parallel modes of conduct…which correspond to the old opposition between the heart and the head," there is a parallel, soteriological opposition between the rule of grace and the law (Pitt-Rivers [1992] 2011, 428-430). Fr. Smolakov emphasized the importance of human actions, intentions, and contrition to understanding the nuanced relationship of this dichotomy: "Mercy is never shown at the expense of justice, but on account of self accusation, humbleness and submission to the will of God" (*SSW*#116, March 23, 1958). Again, there is no consensus among American Old Believers on the consequential relationship between any practice and salvation. In Erie today, beards are more frequently seen on retired men (Robson 1985, 91; pers. comm.; compare to Rogers 2009), while in Nikolaevsk, beards remain the standard.

From beards, the most commonly referenced material marker of Old Belief, I turn to the most commonly referenced ritual marker—the sign of the cross (*krestnoye zhamenie*) to exemplify how considerations of orthopraxy impacts ORRO co-religiosity decisions. In Chapter Six, I address a recent American Old Believer microschism over this very issue. To Fr. Simon, the hardline (Josephite) view that there was only one ritual form (or Typikon), one Church, that would gain salvation prevented the Erie and Oregon popovtsy's co-religiosity. Fr. Smolakov's position is less clear. For example, the Cross was discussed in seven of my sample *SSW*s as representative of the act of Jesus' sacrifice; orthopraxic form was not mentioned.[218] This may be a given. Yet in another sample SSW, he wrote that, "The bows must be done properly. The negligence may cause the anger of God rather than His Grace. Therefore be careful when praying and bowing" (*SSW*#6, August 14, 1955), and bows are always punctuated with the sign. If unintentional deviation is a

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[217] Again, on the question of the shaven receiving funeral rites, Fr. Smolakov hoped in God's mercy, yet he must uphold the law. "Therefore my answer and my advice to all of you: Do good deeds, hoard them as many as possible, and all your sins will be washed up by them. But don't require from us, the clergymen, to change the rules, which were set up not by us, but by the Fathers of the Church, who interpreted the will of God" (*PC* 3, 1955, Q2).

[218] On the use of *podruchniki* to keep hands that make the sign clean (*SSW*#6, August 14, 1955); "The Cross Divided the World" on the beginning of Christianity and separation of humanity into the saved believers and the damned unbelievers (*SSW*#235, April 23, 1961; cites Mk 16:16); sign as "the best weapon against dark powers," (*SSW*#416, March 13, 1966); on saving power of cross (*SSW*#511, March 24, 1968); on the "Power of the Sign," (*SSW*#537, October 6, 1968); on St. John the Golden Mouthed's last act before "he gave up the ghost," (*SSW*#545, December 1, 1968); and on final judgment (*SSW*#672, June 27, 1971).

threat to grace, heteropraxy is certainly a greater danger.

As I discuss in the following section, Fr. Smolakov was more definitive in specific cases, such as the Greek Orthodox or Roman Catholic Churches' loss of grace, "correctness," and AS. His successor, Fr. Yokoff, adamantly argued that the ROC lost grace to the Erie's Restoration Study Group (RSG). The Old Rite church in Erie could not take the blessing of ordination and chrismation from ROCOR "because they are in heresy and you would be one of them. If you do not accept them, you are still maintaining the true faith. Once you accept a dirty work, you are the dirty one to [SIC]" (RSG 9, November 17, 1982, 8). Becoming "dirty" due to contaminated blessing or giver of that blessing is the essence of heretical contamination. When grilled further on the relationship between heresy and Church membership, Fr. Yokoff was inflexible in his contention that orthopraxy and undeviating continuity to past practices determines salvation. To return to Fr. Smolakov's example of orthopraxic deviation (*SSW*#6, August 14, 1955), Fr. Yokoff was asked: "You said the old books say that heresy is not bowing to the ground?" He answered, "Yes, that is change" (RSG 9, November 17, 1982, 7). At least to this leading voice of the bezpopovtsy minority 'heresy,' 'dirtiness,' and 'change' were synonyms, and deal-breakers.

The question of grace outside the Church and the singularity of the path to salvation has an undeniably ethnocentric component. Are there only Russian Orthodox in heaven? The most rigid orthopraxic stance would have it that New Rite and non-co-religious Old Believers are also damned. Fr. Yokoff was asked by one of the RSG members, "You are saying that we are the only ones right? Our little group here." "Yes," he affirmed (RSG 9, November 17, 1982, 10-11). Other Old Believers with whom I spoke appeared to echo this sentiment, but most left this answer to God (e.g., "we do not know the ways of the Lord, and we cannot say definitely, who is condemned, or who is acquitted by Him," *PC* 5, 1957, Q4). I implicitly do the same in not offering an answer to this chapter's exploratory question: Is God's Grace limitless?

The Metropolitan Philaret (ROCOR "First Hierarch" 1964-1985) attempted to answer: "If the Orthodox faith is the only true faith, can Christians of other confessions be saved?" He (like Fr. Smolakov and the Amish [Kraybill 1994, 5-6]) held a more damning view of those who left Orthodoxy than to those who had the misfortune to be raised Methodist (#L213 (2290)).[219] This position is biblically supported by Jesus' claim that the one sure act of perdition is a blasphemy

[219] Kraybill (1994a) recounts that the Amish hold a similar position (5-6).

against the Holy Spirit (the "Spirit of Truth"). In other words, to hear—and then deny--the Truth is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (Mt. 12:1-32; *SSW*#116, March 23, 1958).

> The Church dreadfully anathematizes such renegades in accordance with the words of the Savior Himself (Mt 18:17) and of the Apostle Paul (Gal. 1:8-9), threatening them with eternal damnation and calling them to return to the Orthodox fold. It is self-evident, however, that sincere[220] Christians who are Roman Catholics, or Lutherans, or members of other non-Orthodox confessions, cannot be termed renegades or heretics-i.e. those who *knowingly* pervert the truth…You ask, will the heterodox be saved…Why do you worry about them? They have a Saviour Who desires the salvation of every human being. He will take care of them…I will tell you one thing, however: should you, being Orthodox and possessing the Truth in its fullness, betray Orthodoxy, and enter a different faith, you will lose your soul forever. (Metropolitan Philaret, #L213 (2290), 3-4; citing the Blessed Theophan the Recluse's answer [d. 1894])

I asked an Erie popovtsy Old Believer, Daria, about the grace of other Churches: 'Could Protestants or Roman Catholics be saved?' I must paraphrase her response, as our interview was also a playground, playdate with our little ones (and therefore frequently interrupted), but she made a keen connection between the extent of God's mercy, heresy, and what she termed an "enclave mentality." *'Not to be critical, but a lot of people don't understand. You don't just pass down the language, or true teachings. They focus more on rules than on love; they focus on custom rather than on meaning. The depth is not there. And I think that is why they are dying."* Daria's "rules and love" mirror Pitt-River's ([1992] 2011) dichotomy of law and grace. "Custom" and "depth" similarly mirror the well-known form-matter, ritual-dogma, tradition-Tradition, theoretical dualities. What most struck me was the connection Daria made between orthopraxy and congregational death. I wondered how continuity might sometimes necessitate change and accommodation. I pursue this inquiry in Chapter Seven.

In its multitude of forms, Christianity espouses forgiveness and redemption. Yet there are also points of exclusion and damnation, Othering and persecution within and between Christian groups (not to mention historical treatment of non-Christian Others). In the hardline view of

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[220] One's sincerity in repentance and the effort to live righteously is a related line of inquiry (Keane 1997, 2006, 2007; Handman 2014a; Romans 6). The easy answer is that God knows the heart (1 Sam 16:7, Jeremiah 17:10, *SSW*#116, March 23, 1963), a person's intentions (after Kant), and is not fooled by hypocrites and false confessions. He might not go for "Lord, give me chastity, but not yet" tactic (common paraphrase of St. Augustine's quip in his "Confessions").

heretical contamination discussed below, these points indicate the co-religiosity deal-breakers which must be excised from the Church (fellowship and belonging). It is unknown if excommunication comes with the weight of nullify one's chance of grace (SDB) but it does end access to the blessings of the Church through rites and common prayer. The next section explores the greater extremes of exclusion that can delegitimize and anathematize both individuals and whole Church institutions. But first, I must again note that I heard many exceptions to the correlation between orthopraxy, puritanism, and grace—people also have mercy and support the common (non-biblical) phrase: "love the sinner, not the sin."

4.1.1. Heretical Contamination and Social Duality

Schisms are necessary acts for Christian groups who hold a hardline view of the threat of heretical contamination that damns by association. Breaking co-religiosity 1] Protects the faith from deviation away from God's will and 2] Protects the faithful from incurring his wrathful judgment on a group (congregational or institutional) level. Schism is an institutional or congregational codification of social duality that mirrors Old Believers' puritanical exclusions of individuals "out of grace" (Chapter Three). A group's (community, congregation, or council) condemnation of 'heresy' (or 'impurity' in the anthropological literature, e.g., Douglas 1966), polarizes people based on its perception of an individual's "standing," variously defined by adherence to moral and/or dogmatic laws. Indeed, Tönnies and Weber made this differentiation between the concepts of 'Church' (open membership) and 'Sect' (closed, "community of the religiously qualified") (Tönnies et al. 1973, 141-2; also Troeltsch [1911] 1960, 331-343), influencing studies of religion for decades. Now, it turn from personal morality to dogmatic deviation as an indicator of group belonging.

A social group's consensus concerning an individual's lack of "good standing," whether the failing is moral or dogmatic in nature, are similarly foundational aspects of Russian Orthodox ecclesiology that holds that its social body must be in one spirit to be "saving." Past and present Old Believers find direction for how to treat heretical contamination in the Apostolic Canon (*AC*), the laws for organization of the Church which details the actions for which a hierarch or clergyman is considered ineligible to preform or participate in divine services, attributed to Christ's apostles. One canon in particular has been especially influential to Old Believers' socio-ritualistic segregationism "If any one shall pray, even in a private house, with an excommunicated person, let him also be excommunicated" (*AC* 10). It is important to note that "excommunication" here is

likely temporary,[221] like that practiced in Nikolaevsk and other Old Believer enclaves (such as Alberta, Scheffel 1991) today. The common principle is that prayer with those disgraced is contaminating.

'Heresy' is a deviation from continuity with the Truth (as variously understood through scriptures and other authoritative texts and individuals) and a keyword of the ROC schism. Fear of heretical contamination operates on two levels—local and global. On the local level—individuals are shunned and/or excommunicated; on the global level—hierarchical institutions (ROCOR, BK) are delegitimized. The basic premise of 'contamination' on congregational and ecumenical levels is that heretics or impure people's presence invalidates "True" believers' rites and prayers, making them *not* salutary (saving, through God's grace); in other words, their participation makes the worship not "count." If a c/Church council determines that co-religionists have committed heresy, then excommunication and/or schism occurs.

To understand the interrelationship between heresy and grace, and damnation and salvation, on the local level I searched the Pomortsy Conferences from 1953-1966 questions on the issues of "Practices (Sacraments)" and "Co-religiosity and 'Outsiders'" (See Appendix 3). The only use of "unbelievers' heresy" was in a direct quote from the "Rules of the Church"[222] in reference to the shaven (*PC* 5, 1957, Q4). Fr. Smolakov's own words concerning whether shaved or un-confessed individuals may have funeral services, instead employed the dichotomy of Christian versus "Non Christian shape" (*PC* 3, 1955, Q2; *PC* 5, 1957, Q4) (also, "Non-Christian way," *PC* 5, 1957, Q13). Elsewhere, he polarized the "righteous" from the "sinful," qualifications which stood in place of salvation judgments outside human knowledge, we "not knowing the mysterious ways of the Lord" (*PC* 7, 1959, Q26). Once, concerning the Universal Memorial Prayer (*Vselanskaya Paneheedas*), Fr. Smolakov explained that the prayer is said "for the souls of Christians" whether or not they died confessed, or "ended his or her life either in a normal, or in an uncommon way" (*PC* 9, 1961, Q9). This may be crux of the relationship between grace,

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[221] AC 13 mentions the *lengthening* of an excommunication for another violation http://www.holytrinitymission.org/books/english/canons_apostles_grabbe.htm#_Toc68522492. Other canon mention specific time frames of excommunication, for example the 18th Canon of St. Basil indicates "an ousting from the Church" for 7 to 15 years for leaving one's wife and marrying another (*PC* 7, 1959, Q15).

[222] It is unclear which source Fr. Smolakov was quoting, for his full answer cites: "(Kormchaya, ch.47, the 98th Canon of the 6th Universal Council, Big Potrebnik, page 259, Stoglav, ch.40)."

salvation, heresy, and co-religiosity: Who counts as a "Christian"?

For Old Believer enclaves, ritual and social segregationism operates both *externally* (dividing the community from the social Other) and internally (ostracizing individuals "out of good standing" from the group). Elsewhere, the use of the term 'grace' in the Erie archives is used as a synonym for one's state of moral purity in the eyes of the community. For example, Robson invoked the term 'grace' several times (1985, 77) to describe the penances of doled out by Fr. Nicon (Erie nastavnik, 1923-46) when the nave was only "for those in good grace within the community." The relationship between grace and heresy is also alluded to in Fr. Smolakov's many warnings about the use of outsider's texts, or participation in outsider churches.

Fr. Smolakov does not appear to have explicitly applied the term 'heresy' to Christian "outsiders." He cautioned against use of English translations of scripture, which could contain "inexactness" through which "wrong dogma" might easily creep in. Therefore, he warned "only our books must be used for learning the true word of God, for they are in the strict accordance with the dogmas of our faith" (*PC* 11, 1965, Q6). Their dogma, their books, is "the only true for us" (*PC* 4, 1956, Q10). This is pointedly different than stating that *their* books and dogma were the *only* True, or only saving, to God. His directives often exhorted congregants' adherence to their own faith, as right and true, without condemning or questioning the salvation of Christian Others.

Perhaps Fr. Smolakov's harshest condemnations fell on his congregants who participated in another Christian church's rites—not for those raised in other Christian faiths. For example, attending funeral service at an "outsiders' church" would be "sinful," a "wrong occupation" against "rules of our church" that would result in a specific penance (30 lyesyenkas) (*PC* 6, 1958, Q11). This corresponds with the Metropolitan Philaret's essay that argued that Lutherans, for example, could not be called "renegades or heretics—i.e., those who *knowingly* pervert the truth" (#L213 (2290), 3-4). Fr. Smolakov used the language of criminality ("sinful," "guilty," "accomplice" "unlawful" "subjects to severe Church punishment") to describe a parent's involvement in their child's "mixed marriage" or "wrong marriage" (*PC* 4, 1956, Q4, 6; *PC* 6, 1958, Q18). In general, in response to questions about Christian "outsiders," Fr. Smolakov preached that they must continue the ways *they* know to be true, and "always must be humble, and not look or judge others" (he summarized the parable of the Publican and Pharisee to underline his point; *PC* 6, 1958, Q10).

On the global, institutional level, Fr. Smolakov's was unambiguous about the accusations of

heresy cast between the New Rite and Old Rite proponents in the mid-seventeenth century. "Naturally, the Dominant Church is regarded by the Old Believers as a new-established heresy."[223] Other times, he referred to Patriarch Nikon's "unnecessary alterations," improper reform" (*PC* 5, 1957,Q7), or "wrongful reform" (*SSW*#6, August 14, 1955). While euphemisms often took the place of anathemas in Fr. Smolakov's writings, his unequivocable stance that "the holy fire of the Apostolic Succession was once extinguished, and there was none capable to rekindle it" (*PC* 4, 1956, Q8) contains a pronouncement of heresy unspoken. Without the hierarchy, he explained, the Pomortsy retained only the "Utmost Necessary" sacraments (Baptism, Confession, Marriage), without which "no Christian life was possible" (*PC* 4, 1960, Q8). These rites bring believers "some particular **Grace of God**" (*PC* 10, 1963, Q2, emphasis mine). Contrarily, he explained that the four lost sacraments that require a priest or bishop (Unction, anointing with oil, a part of Chrismation; Communion/Eucharist; Ordination; Extreme Unction, anointing the sick, or "Last Rites"), like the "Communion of the Church, which deviated from the right faith, may be as bad as a **wrong medicine**" (*PC* 4, 1956, Q8, emphasis mine). In other words, a deviant rite, like the wrong medicine, does not save one's [eternal] life.

But is there any grace/healing in a sacrament/medicine if the clergymen/doctor is 'wrong'? The Apostolic Canon gives several conditions whereby a priest or bishop may be excommunicated and his ability to dispense grace through the sacraments extinguished.[224] On local and global levels, a clergymen or hierarch may become illegitimate—their ability to dispense God's grace through the sacraments lost. Fr. Smolakov noted "if a priest does not follow the rules of the church" this would be a "well-grounded reason" to change one's "spiritual father" (*PC* 3, 1955,Q9). He did not provide examples, but his listeners were all well aware that he had recently replaced a 'defrocked' nastavnik.

The idea that a 'contaminated' clergymen can lose the ability to dispense grace was used to delegitimize Patriarch Nikon's authority before he even instigated the reforms. Fr. Yokoff argued

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[223] In a brief history, "The Old Orthodoxy," attached as an Addendum to his *Review of the Twelve Pomortsy Conferences* (c. 1966-1973, 51-6).

[224] Examples of reasons for deposal: offering items on altar other than those ordained by Lord; putting aside his wife under pretense of religion; for "undertaking worldly business"; celebrating Easter before the vernal equinox (AC 3-8). Ineligibility examples: twice married after baptism or had concubine; married a widow, divorcee, servant-maid, prostitute, or actress; married two sisters or a niece; found guilty of perjury, fornication, or theft (AC 17-19, 25).

to the RSG that Patriarch Nikon already "condemned himself" in his 1653 decree which denied recidivist thieves the chance to repent and confess, and the subsequent right to communion and last rites, prior to execution. Indeed, the Eastern Patriarchs at the Council of 1666-7 "soundly criticized" Patriarch Nikon for this *mercilessness* (Kollman 2012, 294). To Fr. Yokoff, this extinguished the authority of the ROC before the reforms were even introduced: "The patriarch of Alexandria when hearing about this [denied rites] remarked: 'The devil himself sometimes looks for the truth. Nikon slanders truth and does not want to know about it. I and my congregation proclaim him as a heretic.' Right there and then you could say that everything was cut off" (RSG 9, November 17, 1982, 1). For a Church, to be "cut off" is to lose apostolic succession and ability to dispense grace through the sacraments; this form of institutional heretical contamination is a founding principle of ORRO.

The local/global levels of schism correspond to ecclesiastical distinction between a local church as a physical site of a congregation's worship and the Universal (Catholic) Church as the earthly bride or body of Christ comprised of his believers. Does a person ever have the moral *obligation* to leave the Church? Does a believer have the right and authority to remove themselves from "belonging" or "communion" with Church? What if the Church's hierarchy falls into heresy? These questions were also hotly debated between the anti-Separatists and Separatist factions of (Anglican) Puritanism. The former argued that individuals "had no right or authority to take the law into their own hands," and that the Church of England retained its saving value even if its members included "carnal hypocrites": reform should come from within (Collinson 2011, 58-59). To Separatists and the first 'Old Believers' alike schism was a moral responsibility to keep the spiritual-Church (i.e., not a 'sect') as a body of *'true' or 'righteous'* Christians safe from contamination from the fallen, institutional Church.

To explore this 'responsibility' further and illustrate how heretical contamination affects Old Believer co-religiosity the following subsection turns to prevailing perceptions of the Greek Orthodox Church's state of grace and legitimacy in seventeenth century Russia. The theo-historical narrative that interprets Moscow as the "Third Rome" set a precedent of fallen hierarchies and grace-less Churches and helped set the stage for the ROC schism. For contemporary American Old Believers, this responsibility and belief that a hierarchy may be contaminated and lose the ability to dispense grace and salutary sacraments also influenced how contemporary American Old

Believers perceived the "Anathema Reversals"[225] and the prospect of joining a hierarchy.

4.1.2. Heretical Hierarchies? The Fall of Constantinople

Socio-historical and anthropological interpretations of the ROC schism have contextualized dissenters' motivations and perspectives with the xenophobic character of Muscovite religiosity, Josephite absolutism, the role of the Zealots' of Piety movement, and Byzantian purism and monasticism (RSG studied this perspective in Fedotov [1946] 1966; see also Meyendorff 1981, 1982; Scheffel 1991, 12-20). This does not fully explain why Nikon's reforms and new liturgical books were met with such vehement rejections while earlier revisions of scripture were introduced and used without complaint.[226] Combined, these issues set the scene for a contingent of Russian Orthodox Christians' who adamantly objected to assimilation with Greek rites and translations. Indeed, this is how Fr. Simon told the story of the ROC schism to the Restoration Study Group (See Figure 8).

A visit from a seminarian to Erie's Church of the Nativity's "Adult Sunday School" alerted me to the theological underpinnings of heretical contamination and the obligatory exclusion of certain offenders found in the Apostolic Canon (e.g., three years excommunication for self-harm, AC 24). A complete narrative of the ROC schism must contain the historical, the anthropological, *and the theological* aspects of the genesis of 'Old Belief'. The remaining chapters of this dissertation seek a better understanding of Old Believer schisms by focusing on the theological issues (namely, pravoslavnye, eschatology, apostolic succession, and ecclesiology) at the center of their debates. I begin this discussion before the ROC schism, in the fifteenth century when the murky relationship between the Greek and Russian Orthodox Churches predestined the

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[225] For brevity, I use the term "Anathema Reversals" when speaking generally of the ROC's 1971 and ROCOR's 1974 sobory' decisions to annul the wholesale excommunication of Old Believers.

[226] For example, much of the dissenters' criticism was focused on the person of Arsenios the Greek, who had formerly been condemned as a heretic, imprisoned, and excommunicated (in 1649, for conversion to Islam under duress and later to Uniatism) (P. Meyendorff 1991, 101-8). But an earlier translator, "Maxim the Greek" (c. 1475-1556) was also educated in the West, yet his works were much revered by Old Believers (RSG 2, September 8, 1982, 2,4). Indeed, Fr. Yokoff's history of the schism cited the theologian's writings about the two fingered sign (RSG 9, November 17, 1982, 2).

potentially contentious interconnections of ethnohistorical identity, pravoslavnye, and Christian group-making.

Russian Orthodox exceptionalism was buoyed by the theory that Moscow is the "Third Rome,"—home of the one, True, Apostolic Church. According to the legend, Moscow held primacy after the fall of the original Rome to heresy (Great Schism, 1054) and the "second Rome," Constantinople, after its concessions to Roman Catholicism during the Council of Florence (1438-9) and subsequent conquest by the Ottoman Empire (1453). The legend also described the Third Rome as the ***Last*** earthly home to the Church before the End Times.[227] In the dissenters' point of view, the reforms contaminated not only Russian Orthodoxy, but the sanctity of the Christian Church on earth, with "incorrect" Greek rites and texts. To add insult to injury, the ROC furthermore abdicated its Church's position as the Third and *Last* center of Christian power before the End Times.

Fr. Yokoff's telling of the schism intertwines a detailed list of "the heresies of Nikon" (RSG 9, November 17, 1982, 4), the inauthenticity of Patriarch Nikons' sources, and mid-fifteenth century Greek history:

> The books of the true faith did not match with the Greek books for the slow deteriorating country had fallen into the hands of the Latin Western Church. Greece was plagued by a domination of the Turks for more than 300 years. The Greeks asked for help from the Romans to overthrow the Turks. Help was offered providing that the Greeks accept the Pope of Rome as the head of their Church. The offer was accepted but the Turks in 1453 overran Greece, destroyed the churches, burned the books and actually dictated who would be the head of the Church. After the war the Greeks began building the churches and sent their priests to Rome for their education neglecting the Russian Church. Nikon went ahead and completed his reforms. The reformed books were printed in France, Rome, Germany and Greece, none in Moscow. (RSG 9, November 17, 1982, 2)

'True believers' simply had to reject the Nikon's reforms and texts to remain in the "true faith."

The Eastern Patriarchs and bishops assembled in Moscow in 1666-7 rejected this narrative by 1] Supporting Nikon's reforms; 2] Anathemizing dissenters; and 3] Formally rejecting the Third

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[227] Promulgated by a letter by the monk Filofei of Pskov in 1510, also called the "Legend of the White Cowl" (Meyendorff 1996, 131-147; Zernov 1937, 1945). See Duncan (2000) for the story's lasting influence on Old Believers, when Nikon's reforms and especially Peter as Westernizing, "gave rise to the messianic expectations of the Old Believers and the chiliastic sects" (2) and resurged in the nationalistic imagination by late nineteenth century Slavophiles' and later Soviets' exceptionalism alike.

Rome narrative. In other words, the Council simultaneously wrote the future relationship between New and Old Rite Russian Orthodoxy and *rewrote* Russia's special place in theo-history of the Church on earth on the eschatological timeline. Political Scientist, Peter Duncan, convincingly argued that this denial of Moscow's "Third Rome" status was crucial to the State Church's effort to convince the populace that assimilation to Greek rites was not heresy and that the Greek Church not fallen for its "treachery at Florence," in furtherance of Tsar Alexis' imperial aims (Duncan 2000, 13).[228]

Old Believers did not create the theory of Russian exceptionalism—in a sense, it created them. "It is easy, if one has a mind conditioned by modern Protestantism, to misread the conflict as one which was concerned only with trivialities, but in the context of the mystical doctrine of Moscow as the Third Rome holding fast to a faith which is indivisible, the tragedy was not only understandable, but inevitable" (Bourdeaux 1966, 28-9, emphasis mine; similar argument Zernov 1963, 7). This line of thought fits well with many Old Believers' own practices, ethnohistorical narrative, and group identity as preservers of the one, True Christian Church.[229]

It was "inevitable," then, that a faction of Russian Orthodox Christians would vehemently reject fallen, Western-educated, Greek Orthodox translators and their texts printed in (Roman Catholic) Venice and Poland. Textual authenticity was an essential element of the first Old Believers' position (RSG 2, September 8, 1982, 4; P. Meyendorff 1991, 28-30, 106, 177; FS, pers. comm., January 31, 2013). Additionally, the authenticity of Nikonian texts was challenged because, despite the Patriarch's claims, his source material was not older (*i.e.*. more authentic) than those used to make earlier editions (time is a primary qualifier of legitimacy for Old Belief, after all).

Heretical contamination, institutional grace, and textual authority were the trifecta markers of ORRO since the seventeenth century, and as I discuss in Chapter Six, these elements of the faith were key factors in American Old Believers' recent considerations of the priesthood question. When a conference delegate asked about co-religiosity between the Old Believers and Greek

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[228] Tsar Alexis' hopes of claiming the power void created by the fall of Constantinople is a common interpretation of the Russian Church and State's motivations for the ritual reform (Zernov 1963, 6; P. Meyendorff 1991, 28, 222-3; Pott 2010, 250).

[229] Although Fr. Simon's thoughts on the elect nature of ORRO have changed, it is noteworthy that his undergraduate thesis in defense of the bezpopovtsy Old Rite was entitled "Third Rome" (FS, pers. comm., March 27, 2013; unpublished paper).

Orthodox Church, Fr. Smolakov's answer followed same timeline of lost grace and authenticity as Fr. Yokoff's. First, the "Greeks submitted themselves to the Pope of Rome" at the Council of Florence (1438-9), then Greece faced "subordination to the Asiatic Turks," after which their texts were printed in the West where they "became infected with the Catholics' ideas and alterations" (*PC* 7, 1959, Q19, emphasis mine). Therefore:

> Only in Russia, the holy Orthodox faith was kept pure and unchanged until the 17th century, when it became reformed by the patriarch Nicon, infected with the New Greek ideas. The church service books were altered according to the New Greek books, and also the church customs and rites were changed, so that they could become identical with the Greek customs, which were already wrong before. Therefore we cannot have anything common with the today's Greeks, for they, like the Niconians, have lost their old correct faith. (PC 7, 1959, Q19, emphasis mine)

To summarize the 'hardline' logic of heretical contamination incapsulated in the bezpopovtsy polemics I analyze in Chapters Five and Six: 1] 'Pravoslavnye' and 'heresy' are *absolutely* polarized and 2] Heretics and unclean/impure individuals corrupt *true* Christians' state of grace and the salutary ("saving") effect of their rituals. Fr. Yokoff's anti-priesthood argument exemplifies the relationship between heresy, salvation, and Christian group-making with frequent references to the polluting danger of heresy and injunctions against mixing with non-co-religious Others (Fr. Simon's RSG 7, October 27, 1982, Q15-16; RSG 9, November 17, 1982, 8-10; See Appendix 4). Similarly, the ROC and ROCOR councils (1971 and 1974, respectively) made this connection when after 300 years of persecution and excommunication, they acknowledged that the Old Rite was not heresy, but "Orthodox and saving" (Metropolitan Philaret, 1974).

The Anathema Reversals removed the formal barrier between New and Old Rite co-religiosity, except for the fact that mid-seventeenth century proclamations of the Other's heresy were mutual. The reverse of mainstream Russian Orthodoxy's position did not remove the Old Believers' objections to the New Rite. Were the persecutions forgivable? With the exception of the Edinoverie Church and the Erie Church of the Nativity, Old Believers (priestless and priested, past and present) reject any sobornost' or affiliation with the Russian Orthodox Church. Below, I discuss these two exceptions, and the question of forgiveness, which weighs heavy the long persecuted Old Believers' perceptions of the ROC's grace. This tangled web of salvation and practice and belonging was too engrained in the dogma and ethnohistorical narrative of ORRO identity to annul without social division.

4.2. "Orthodox and Saving": The Shifting Boundaries of Union

Old Believers' enacted delineations of co-religiosity are found in the space between the vestibule and nave, between those censed an un-censed, and within pronounced or implied presumptions of grace. The boundaries are constantly shifting. In Chapter Three, I discussed how American Old Believers have experienced these shifts on multiple levels. For example, on the subgroup level, co-religious boundaries shifted between the bezpopovtsy from China and Turkey who met as non-co-religious, wary strangers in Oregon in the 1960s and now worship with one another and intermarry without hesitation or stigma. On the individual level, there has been a shift in Erie on the state of grace of a shaved man and whether or not he may receive full funerary rites. Rogers' (2009) ethnography of Old Believers in the Urals, who do not impose strict moral and puritanical regulations until someone retires or reaches old age, further demonstrates how states of grace, and the accompanied ability to practice certain rites, can shift in the course of an individual's lifetime (45-50).

Schisms, micro- and macro-, are events that formalize shifts in co-religiosity. In this next section, I discuss how unifications and rapprochements similarly highlight the entangled web of soteriology and Old Believer identity and group-making. The seventeenth century schism initiated a centuries' long dance along the Orthodox/Heterodox and Ecumenical/Sectarian spectrums (See Figure 1) between distinct groups of Old Rite practitioners and their official Others. When the ROC reversed the anathemas, the Old Believers (in a manner typical of their longitudinal worldview) historically contextualized this ecumenical development. This was not the intertwined Russian Church and State's first attempt to re-incorporate the Old Rite under its wing, and watchful eye. Old Believers were largely skeptical[230] of Anathema Reversals because they recalled the so-called "One Faith" (*Edinoverie)* Church created in the early nineteenth century as a devious compromise that was intended to keep tabs on Old Rite dissidents.

The following subsection is a brief history of the Edinoverie Church, which Fr. Smolakov repeatedly[231] referenced to contextualize (and voice suspicions about) the Anathema Reversals. I

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[230] Fr. Simon addressed this as "The final question must be, is this for real? Are they serious? Do they mean it or is it subterfuge?" And he concluded from his visits and conversations with New Rite priests that they had "a real sincere desire for peace, for love, for harmony" (RSG 8, November 10, 1982, 5).

[231] See Smolakov 1973, 1975, 1976.

then turn to the ROC (1971) and ROCOR (1974) Councils' pronouncements concerning Old Believers' potential salvation and co-religiosity, and the American Old Believers' initial reactions. The crucial point of the two councils was the declaration that "the old rites do not express any unOrthodox teaching" [i.e. 'heresy]. The hierarchies then resolved "to consider the ancient liturgical customs and rites contained in the service books of the Russian Church before the middle of the seventeenth century as Orthodox and salutary [saving]; to consider the interdicts and anathemas...as null and void and rescinded" (Metropolitan Philaret, 1974).[232] In sum, the Anathema Reversals officially annulled the 1656 and 1666-7 Councils condemnation of the pre-Nikonian Russian Orthodox rites—Old Believers were not cursed. This directly led to Erie's microschism.

The concepts of grace and anathema are polar opposites, since "a curse is, of course, an expression of negative grace" (Pitt-Rivers [1992] 2011, 426). In these two reincorporation attempts, separated by some 170 years, Old Believers were given a choice that forced them to determine whether *the ROC* was likewise "Orthodox and saving." Without this concession and shift in ecclesiological perspective, no union between the New and Old Rite is possible. At the root of the priesthood debate that divided Nikolaevsk and Erie in 1983 was the existential question: Does the Church, institutional Grace, and apostolic succession (AS) exist after Patriarch Nikon? Chapter Six explores how this layered question is fundamental to ORRO group-making. Following a more recent trend of theological engagement in the anthropology of Christianity (Carroll 2017; Lemons 2018a; Robbins 2020), I argue that it is not possible, nor prudent, to divorce theology from the study of Christian group-making through unification and schism. The New Rite ROC's two attempts at rapprochement with the Old Believers, and narratives and interpretations of these attempts, demonstrates the overlapping and knotted boundaries lines between salvation/damnation, dogma/heresy, and co-religious Selves/non-co-religious Others.

4.2.1. The "One Faith Church" (Edinoverie[233])

The ROC's first, albeit bad-faith, attempt at 'reconciliation' with Old Believers

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[232] The ROCOR council's decision was reprinted in *Orthodox Life* 5, 1984.

[233] I capitalized for consistency with other ORRO churches. Edinovertsy refers to the people who belong to this church, Edinoverie the church itself.

contextualizes American Old Believers' response to the Anathema Reversals in both historical and emotional terms. According to Fr. Smolakov, the Edinoverie Church "...was a compromise of a dubious nature: 'You may use the cursed and heretical books and practices, and our Niconian priests shall conduct your worship and minister Sacraments, though in the old and condemned way! But curses and anathemas shall stay, as they were put on you, keepers of the Old faith'" (1973, 28). The "cursed" are excluded and Othered from the Church, refused rites, named heretics, and presumed to be without grace. Simply put, anathemas preclude co-religiosity.

Fr. Smolakov's successor, Father Simon, likewise criticized the untenable position of the Edinoverie Church, or any unification compromise that did not annul the anathemas (pers. comm., January 2, 2013). It is simply contradictory to belong to a hierarchy that has excommunicated you, he explained. But while the Anathema Reversals resolved the primary obstacle to a unified, "One Faith," Russian Orthodox Church, they could not obviate the lessons learnt from that case of false ecumenism. Unsurprisingly, most Old Believers found centuries of distrust, persecution, and multilayered theological doubts concerning the legitimacy of the New Rite Russian Orthodoxy, *irreversible*. Certainly, in Alaska were individuals' parents and grandparents had personally suffered and fled from the U.S.S.R., joining the ROC or ROCOR was never thought to be a plausible option (FN, pers. comm., August 18, 2013).

In 1800, Paul I (Emperor of Russia from 1796 until 1801) approved Metropolitan Platon (Levshin) of Moscow's "Rules of Edinoverie" (Paert 2004, 556n7), which created a branch within the Russian Orthodox Church where use of the Old Rite was legalized. Priests (who had been ordained in the New Rite) were appointed to administer the sacraments according to pre-Nikonian texts. While it ultimately did not attract the majority of priested, and far fewer bezpopovtsy, it disturbed the already fractured ORRO 'movement'.[234] The beglopopovtsy were especially vulnerable to conversion because their already dwindling number of leaders found among disenchanted (or even defrocked) ROC priests had become even smaller (Robson 1995, 17).

In his analysis of a 1911-1912 Old Believer publication,[235] Robson (1995) breaks down the reasons why most beglopopovtsy, who accepted converted fugitive ROC priests as leaders, rejected

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[234] Michels (1999) described the inaccuracy of the term 'movement' in regards to Old Belief as a collectivity before the 1850s (2-4).

[235] *Zlatostrui*, a likely Belaya Krinitsa affiliate, but with a broader intended readership (Robson 1995, 170).

the Edinoverie Church. First of all, Old Believers rejected the legitimacy of the "Holy Synod" Peter I created in 1721 to replace the Patriarchate. Secondly, the ROC broke with the Old Rite and kept an anathema against them. Thirdly, the beglopopovtsy preferred the lowest-ranked priests who were not yet enmeshed and committed to the apostate Synod. Finally, the beglopopovtsy publication maintained that "...rather than embracing old rite, many Edinovertsy churches had compromised themselves by deviating from that rite" (1995, 29-31, 145n66). The threat of deviation and corruption of the Old Rite at the hands of the New, whether in 1667, 1800, or 1974, ultimately rests on that fundamental question of Old Believer ethnohistory—were Nikon's reforms heretical?

Not only did the anathemas remain, but the New Rite priests assigned to serve in the Edinoverie Church found themselves in a similarly ambiguous state of grace as their cursed Old Rite congregants (Smolakov 1975, 28). The ROC leadership's negative judgment of the Old Rite as being less than salutary was blatantly demonstrated by the fact that it forbade[236] the Edinoverie priests from also serving New Rite congregations. This sacramental segregation of Edinovertsy priests, and their still 'cursed' congregations, illustrates the impossibility of Old and New Rite ecumenism under the "One Faith" Church (Smolakov 1976, 35).[237]

In Old Believer ethnohistory the Edinoverie Church is negatively associated with Nicholas I (Emperor of Russia from 1825 until 1855) who used it as another tool of observance, control, and conversion in his anti-Old Rite agenda. During the period of active state criminalization and persecution of all religious dissenters' marriages (1839-1874), the Edinoverie option had an additional appeal (Paert 2004, 555-6). In 1808, the Holy Synod condemned[238] unlawful unions and marriages performed outside the ROC by "unknown vagrants" and "it included under this category the priests of beglopopovtsy who were evidently winning customers from the Orthodox and Edinoverie parishes" (Paert 2004, 561). The Synod's decision was designed to coerce Old

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[236] Except in mortal cases; canonical "emergency loopholes" that permit layperson's administration of baptism and confession. as compromised and deviated, and official Orthodoxy viewing them as a tolerated evil.

[236] Synod reconfirmed a largely

[237]There is relatively little written about the Edinoverie. Perhaps the reason for this lays with their tenuous position, other Old Believers reject the church as heretically contaminated through its association with the ROC nor fully incorporated or on equal ground with other (New Rite) ROC hierarchs.

[238] Synod reconfirmed a largely un-enforced decree from 1722.

Ritualists into the Edinoverie Church.

Cases of forced attendance to ROC or Edinoverie churches and closures of Old Rite molennas certainly did not inspire the already wary Old Believers' voluntary union with official Orthodoxy (Iwaniec 1981, 14). The Irgiz communities near Saratov (700km from Moscow) were one of the first to feel the draconian side of the One Faith Church after its governor, Prince A. B. Golitsyn, forced leaders to accept Edinoverie and closed all unofficial monasteries and convents. Towards the end of Nicholas I's reign in the early 1850s the primary centers of Old Belief in both Moscow and St. Petersburg (including one of the most powerful and influential Fedoseevtsy (bezpopovtsy) strongholds at Preobrazhenskoe), were co-opted by the Edinoverie and their monastic brethren dispersed (Crummey 1993, 150).

Fr. Smolakov clearly linked the duplicitous creation of the Edinoverie Church, which he characterized as "a trap," with contemporary ROC and ROCOR Councils (1975, 29). He wrote to his congregants that the Edinoverie Church's intended purpose was "to attract Old Orthodox people to the New Orthodox Church" (1976, 34-5), or "to lure Old Believers back to the fold" (Robson 1995, 29; see also Rogers 2009, 39). How then could the Anathema Reversals be trusted? What were the hierarchy's intentions? It was a probable fear that official Orthodoxy simply wanted to reincorporate their property, and religious material culture (especially texts) destroyed by the Soviet State.[239]

The ROCOR Synod of Bishops hoped that their 1974 reorientation towards the Old Rite would go further than the stigmatized Edinoverie Church. The Synod proclaimed that the curses and prohibitions set in the councils of 1656 and 1667 were to be considered henceforth as "'void, abolished, and as never existing'" (Robson 1994, 133). Yet such a declaration does not undo the deaths of Old Rite martyrs or rebuild their lost churches and communities. Restoration would entail forgiveness not only of the annulled curses, but of the persecutions. Reconciliation entailed radical historical revisions, re-evaluations of what is considered heretical, and a repudiation of Othered identity constructs.

The genesis of Old Belief is a story of mutual pronouncements of heresy and a lost authority, lost continuity, lost apostolic succession, and lost grace. Restoration and reconciliation

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[239] My wording here is intentional, to echo the sentiments of Old Believers, but also because texts, churches, icons were decimated.

between Old and New Rite Russian Orthodoxies would involve a rewriting of Old Believers' narrative of their becoming and being the keepers of authentic Christianity. Apologies and forgiveness might be possible, but unification would prove a much more complex theological conundrum about the nature of heresy and state of the Church the post-Nikonian world. Chapters Five and Six explore these questions. The remainder of this chapter describes how priestless Old Believers in Erie and Nikolaevsk initially viewed the Anathema Reversals and the possibility of priesthood (under auspices of ROCOR or Belaya Krinitsa, respectively). This background to the microschisms demonstrates how closely narratives of historical identity and co-religiosity are bound to dogmatic issues of grace and continuity.

4.2.2. Forgiving Anathemas

The Edinoverie Church failed to draw the majority of Old Believers into its fold because it attempted reconciliation without resolution. The ROC's judgment against the Old Rite remained—whether or not official Orthodoxy permitted and abetted heresy in a controlled setting. Once the anathemas were nullified, what objections to reconciliation endured? This subsection outlines the Anathema Reversals, American Old Believers' initial reactions and doubts concerning ROC/ROCOR's sincerity and intentions, and the legacy of persecution, condemnations of heresy, and Othering that is integral component Old Believer identity.

The history of ORRO shifts in co-religiosity is marked by divisions and unifications. Sobory, or councils, manage both processes. They bring congregations and hierarchies together to codify dogma and redraw lines of belonging. For example, the sobory in the Russian Orthodox Church in 1656 and 1667 codified dogma by confirming Patriarch Nikon's liturgical changes and texts AND redefined belonging in the ROC by excommunicating those who did not accept these "New Rites." The ROC (1971) and ROCOR (1974) councils annulled the decisions of these seventeenth century sobory, redefined Old Rite as "Orthodox and saving" (i.e., not heretical), and opened the institutions' door to the Old Believers. Again, the overlap of dogma and Church belonging are revealed at times of schism and sobory.

The Pomortsy Old Believers in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Michigan left a record of their initial reactions to the Anathema Reversals. On September 14, 1975, Fr. Smolakov and the other three American Pomortsy nastavniki met in Marianna to consider the amended position of "New Orthodoxy" towards them, its dissidents. They treated it with a reasonable dose of skepticism and caution. First, they thanked God for enlightening the hierarchy on the orthodoxy of

the Old Rite; second, both councils were thanked for lifting the anathemas and curses "illegally put on the Old Orthodoxy"; and third, they humbly stated their continued adherence to the pre-Nikonian rites (*PC*, 1975).

The American Pomortsy's fourth resolution was to contact priestless communities in Europe in hopes that an ecumenical sobor of all Old Believers might be convened in the near future. They decided "until then, not to make any decision about change of our attitude toward the New Orthodox church, keeping in mind that we here, in America, are just a little group, which must not pass any fundamental decision" (*PC* 1975; similar view in Smolakov 1976, 35-6). The Anathema Reversals was one-sided. The "New Orthodox" sobor redefined its boundaries of co-religiosity, but an Old Orthodox sobor would need to also convene before it could redraw its own.

The legacy of persecution left many Old Believers suspicious of official Orthodoxy's intentions. They did not forget that other overtures the ROC made towards the Old Believers, most notably the Edinoverie Church, were just ploys to monitor, control, and convert them (Robson 1985, 120-1, 1994, 134). Fr. Larry stated his suspicion concerning the ROC's intentions simply, "They just wanted our books because they had destroyed theirs" (pers. comm.). In part, this suspicion is well founded; the Soviets certainly had largely destroyed what time and the tsars and tsarinas had not already. In the latter half of the Soviet period, archaeographers were sent to numerous centers of Old Orthodoxy with the aim to preserve the surviving national artifacts (Rogers 2009, 28-30, 159-173; Crummey 2011, 167-189). In the post-Soviet period, Old Believers represented a source of renewed national pride[240] and a connection to the Golden Age of Muscovite supremacy that might counter the impression of fallout of the crumbling Soviet empire and economy.[241]

The legacy of Old Believer persecution effected not only their lack of trust of, and desire to unify with, ROC/ROCOR. Some Old Believers argued that the Church's acts towards its dissidents from excommunications to executions may have affected its state of grace. Fr. Simon, as a part of his efforts unify the Erie Church of the Nativity with ROCOR, interpreted Fr. Smolakov's opinion

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[240] News article about President Putin being "enchanted" with Old Believers, and visit to an Edinoverie Church that has attracted others who are not "'hereditary old believers'" (Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin, June 7, 2017, https://realnoevremya.com/articles/1539-vsevolod-chaplin-roc-and-old-believers).

[241] Hilary Kaell (2017) describes similar government funded efforts to preserve and appropriate religious artifacts (the *croix de chemin*) as a part of Quebec's national heritage.

of ROC as one of suspicion rather than one of condemnation. "[Fr. Smolakov's] feeling at that time was not any expression that [ROC/ROCOR] were lacking grace, but he had a real question about the sincerity of the people who issued the decree. Was there really a desire to bring about a reconciliation based upon mutual respect and the respect of the old rite which the 1974 decree claimed?" (RSG 8, November 10, 1982, 1). Others in Erie argued that reunification was impossible on several fronts: the Church committed crimes against Orthodoxy by persecuting its faithful adherents, the Church never apologized, and perhaps most importantly, and the subject of much debate, Nikon's reforms remained heretical.

Fr. Smolakov noted that the ROC/ROCOR hierarchs *still* did not properly apologize to them for the centuries of persecution they suffered at the hands of the Russian Church and State. This is a theological critique, as there is no redemption without confession (Smolakov 1976, 33-4). What was worse, in Fr. Smolakov's opinion (1976, 26, 30-2), was that ROCOR's Metropolitan Philaret publicly[242] minimized the fact that "many zealots of the old rites suffered," refused to condemn the persecution "since all the participants have long ago appeared before the judgement seat of God" while "...appeal[ing] to them to forget those previous offences and injustices" (Metropolitan Philaret [1974] 1983, 39-41). Fr. Smolakov argued that dismissing the decisions of the 1656 and 1666-7 councils as if they "never had existed" was an incomplete act of repentance aimed to relinquished present hierarchs from guilt (1976, 33-35). Instead of an apology, the proclamation belittled past tortures, martyrdoms, church confiscations, immolations, and sacramental loss.

The following year, Fr. Smolakov powerfully underscored this theme in a speech thanking the famous political dissident and writer, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, for visiting them and for his efforts in appealing to ROCOR. He compared Solzhenitsyn to the Good Samaritan, who called on ROCOR to reverse the anathemas and who had "demanded their repentance...[and] tried to convince them to ask forgiveness from us..." (1977, 22).

> Old Orthodoxy was like the robbed man of the Lord's story. It also 'fell into robbers' in the 17th century, when it was robbed of its bishops and priests; of its churches and monasteries; of the freedom to exercise worship in the way all Russians did before. It was covered with wounds of persecution, unjustness, of the false accusations. Its believers were hunted like

[242] Fr. Smolakov quotes a newspaper article containing the Metropolitan's response to Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's appeal on behalf of the Old Believers. The Pomortsy nastavniki co-wrote a thank you letter to the author, which was printed in Fr. Smolakov's 1976 calendar.

> beasts, were arrested, tortured, and killed by millions. The whole body of the Old Orthodoxy was left half dead and helpless. And during of almost three centuries, no priest of the Dominant New Orthodox Church stopped over the suffering Church to give it a helping hand. On contrary, the New Orthodox clergy trampled it down into the dirt, blaming the Old faith and rituals; searching for its adherents to deliver them into the hands of the cruel and merciless interrogators. (Smolakov 1977, 22)

To forgive is Christ-like, but for many Old Believers, to join one's 'robbers' in prayer was simply inconceivable.

For Fr. Simon, the Anathema Reversals were the first step towards reconciliation. One without which he never would have led his church along that ecumenical path (pers. comm.; RSG 7, October 27, 1982, 3; RSG 8, November 10, 1982, 5).[243] Others questioned whether such deeds *were* forgivable. And while the importance of redemptive theology in Christianity is beyond the scope of this study, the Erie's bezpopovtsy clearly linked the ROC's persecution against Old Believers with the rhetoric of confession, forgiveness, and the possibility of unification with ROCOR. In the bezpopovtsy's petition against unification with ROCOR, and suggestion that Fr. Simon leave their church, illustrates the interwoven historical and theological components of their objections. "These same people who tortured us in 1666, trying to make us give up our religion and join their church. Since they could not beat us into submission, these past 300 years, they now want us to forgive and forget" (From all true Russian Orthodox Old Believers of the Pomortsi Faith, Fall 1982). To the Erie bezpopovtsy, the very suggestion of unification delegitimized Fr. Simon's nastavnik-ship.

Fr. Smolakov wrote several essays concerning the reconciliation gestures of official Russian Orthodoxy wherein he stated his appreciation and acceptance of the New Rite Churches' confessions. Old Believers should try to forgive, Fr. Smolakov stressed, for *they* are Christian. The Pomortsy nastavniki resolved (point 5 of 8) "To forget all harms and unjustness, caused to the Old believers in the past, and not to renew hostility between our Churches, especially now, when Godlessness and indifference to faith endanger every religion" (*PC*, 1975). However, not all Erie bezpopovtsy agreed with this resolution to forgive *and* forget. Fr. Yokoff, for one, stated that, "We

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[243] In *Rome and Constantinople,* Meyendorff (1996) similarly argued that the Roman Catholic Church's "lifting of anathemas" against Eastern Orthodoxy in 1965 was a crucial symbolic step towards a "rapprochement between Eastern and Western Christianities" (1-4).

forgave, we forgive right now, that was then but I'll tell you what, let us not forget so we don't get caught in that web of their belief" (RSG 9, November 17, 1982, 8).

Fr. Smolakov decisively rejected reunification and advised righteous resoluteness to his followers:

> Anyhow, we are to thank, and say our Christian 'Сраси, Господин'[244] to all Russian New Orthodox hierarchs, the partakers of the Council of 1971, for their good will to heal the breach between two brotherly Churches. But we must declare, too, that no reunion is possible for them any more, as it is not possible for the Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches, and to the Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches, for each Church has gone too far away from one another, being separated for the long centuries. Let us stay in our Old faith, my dear Old Orthodox Christians, receiving one more proof of its correctness and having the saving Grace of the Holy Spirit! (1973, 34)

To most Old Believers the decrees merely proved what they already knew and had spent their lives defending: they were right. A survey of Old Belief in the U.S. summarized the bezpopovtsy's general 'thanks, but no thanks' opinion of official Orthodoxy's olive branch.

> The American Old Orthodox, whether recent arrivals or not, were not greatly cheered by the lifting of the anathemas by the various Sobory. They had expected that act as no more than a necessary confession on the part of the New Orthodox Church. However, the lifting of the anathemas seems to be a good start, one which should help the cause of mutual understanding between the Old Orthodox and New Orthodox Churches. (Beliajeff 1977, 80)

When ROCOR consecrated its first Old Rite Bishop in 1988, the "mission in Woodburn, Oregon" was also put under his wing as "foremost among his labors will be the on-going efforts to reconcile to the Russian Orthodox Church those Old Believers still outside her salutary fold" (Hudanish 1988, 6). This was not to be the case.

The one thing that all the Old Believer groups have had in common was their Church's genesis in their anathemization by, and anathemization of, their New Rite Other. The notion that the ROC committed heresy by accepting Nikon's reforms, further broke from God's will by attacking "Orthodox and saving" rites, and therefore lost the inherited grace passed from Christ to Peter to generations of subsequent priests (apostolic succession), is foundational to the original Old/New Rite schism. In other words, it was no longer *the* Church, and held no power to define

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[244] This connects to Pitt-Rivers' ([1992] 2011) discussion of the etymology of grace and giving thanks (425, 429-432). Spasiba is common word of thanks in Russian, but this particular phrase has religious import. Literally, it means "Lord, save you".

dogma, dispense grace through the sacraments, or to give or annul curses (Smolakov 1976, 26; RSG 9, November 17, 1982, 7-8). "But, according to the Writings of the holy Fathers, if a bishop puts curses [i.e. anathemizes someone] not according to God's will, then God's punishment does not follow the curse. This is the reason, why the curses and anathemas of the Niconians' and Greeks' Councils were not feared by Old Believers, nor regarded as effective at any time" (Smolakov 1973, 32). Or as Fr. Yokoff said, "What right did they have to damn us? They were the persecutors..." (RSG 9, November 17, 1982, 7-8; also, Robson 1985, 128-9). In other words, the Anathema Reversals were effectively meaningless to most bezpopovtsy.

The category of Old Belief was created through an act of symbolic violence followed by physical violence on the part of both the State and Church. The Anathema Reversals removed the opposition which had created and maintained the dogmatic boundary between New and Old Rite Russian Orthodoxy. It is no wonder that their revision of the historical narrative of bezpopovtsy Old Believer identity as categorically Other, and necessarily separate, from the institutional (ecumenical, State-sponsored, 'official') hierarchy of Russian Orthodoxy (or any hierarchy) presented an existential crisis. As I detail in the next section and Chapter Five, although their priested factions joined different hierarchies, the Erie and Nikolaevsk Old Believers faced similar controversies over the possibility of regaining the priesthood and a resurrected Church. In the ensuing debates, American Old Believers confronted discrepancies in their oral histories and written accounts of the schism. The canonical, biblical, and eschatological legitimacy of the priestless state was called into question. And ultimately, divergences in congregants' theo-historical narrative of Church loss led to rupture.

4.3. 'Re'-Rhetoric: Restoring or Rewriting History?

Old Believers in ethno-religious enclaves in North America practice numerous measures to protect the 'purity' of fellow community members and maintain religious continuity (Chapter Three). Anthropological studies of these enclaves are certainly justified in utilizing Douglas' seminal *Purity and Danger* (1966); the word 'poganyi', which Old Believers apply to natural and social pollutants, literally means 'unclean'. Going forward, I contend the study of religious segregationism and enclaves should further engage with the theological basis for their subjects' desires to isolate and efforts to protect the spiritual well-being of their community members. In addition to purity, anthropologists should draw on the place of grace (Pitt-Rivers [1992] 2011) in

Christian groups' ideals and practices of social duality.

An individual's state of grace, as judged by their fellow congregants, determines their level of participation in the ritual and social life of the community. On the institutional level, individuals likewise judge the state of grace of their Church. Pravoslavnye—rightly worshipping and believing—is a defining characteristic of Eastern Orthodoxy. As I detail in Chapter Six, conciliar (congregational and ecumenical) decision-making about 'rightness' of a doctrine, prayer, or practice is judged by its continuity with the Church Fathers, scripture, canon law, and the instruction of local elders (Humphrey 2014, 216; Carroll 2017). The Church must also stand in rightness; it must not deviate into wrong teachings (heresy)—this is the root of original Old Believers' dissent of Nikon's reforms. The notion that the Russian Orthodox Church lost continuity with its ancient prayers, and therefore lost grace, is foundational to Old Believer identity as Othered and unjustly anathematized—the *true* Church. Belief and belonging, soteriology and sociality, are intimately tied in ORRO group-making.

Ecclesiological worldview is absolutely essential to ORRO groups' identities and internal divisions, most notably that between the priested and priestless branches. A close review of the Erie and Nikolaevsk microschisms (Chapter Five) illustrates the interconnection between the question of institutional grace, the state of the Church, and co-religiosity. Simply, Old Believers who do not believe the same thing *about* the Church cannot *belong to* the same Church. The doctrine of apostolic succession (AS) illustrates the heredity of institutionalized grace and continuity in Orthodox ecclesiology. In the following subsection, I summarize ORRO Christians' arguments for and against the New Rite ROC/ROCOR and Belaya Krinitsa (BK) Churches' possession of grace and apostolic succession.

I am conscientious of the wording I choose to describe the merger between once bezpopovtsy groups and established ROCOR and BK hierarchies. By the same principle through which Old Believers reject the name *Raskol'niki* (schismatics), 'reunification' and 'restoration' are inappropriate. As a basic point of fact, neither Erie nor Nikolaevsk's popovtsy factions became part of the ROC in 1983, and therefore neither merger was a 'reunion'. As 're' is a continuity claim, this rhetoric of going back to previous practices (full liturgy with Eucharist) and/or their previous Church is essentially an assertion of authenticity and pravoslavnye. Fr. Simon's used the term 'restoration' to signal the Erie Church of the Nativity's return to the full rites and ecumenical relationships enjoyed by Russian Orthodox Christians before Nikon. But what the priested viewed

as a joyous *re*clamation of the Eucharist and all that was lost, the priestless call a tragedy, a denial of martyrs, the loss of their house of worship, and a hint that the seventeenth century schism had been unnecessary.

The Erie and Nikolaevsk microschisms were simultaneously both a marriage and a divorce. The priested factions joined a Church and left a community. In forging ecumenical relations with a hierarchy, the popovtsy dissolved their reliance on a congregational scale of church authority (locally chosen nastavniki, local councils of elders guiding decisions). They also minimized the tendency for the group to experience strife and rupture due to interpersonal conflicts, which can take on an exaggerated effect when authority is limited to one individual nastavnik. The expression, "schism breeds schism" is in part used by "the Church" to critically indicate that the 'schismatic' group,[245] the sect, the Raskol'niki (again, all terms vehemently rejected by Old Believers), continues to subdivide as an effect of their isolation from ecumenical and hierarchical decision-making bodies (Rogers 2009, 82; Silva 2009, 63-4). Yet popovtsy hierarchies are also plagued by factioning and accusations of inauthenticity from non-co-religious ORRO groups. In schisms, both sides of the division make authenticity claims and follow two paths of continuity. In a sense, each side claims to be the 'Church' in the biblical sense as the most accurate representation of apostolic intentions for the Christian community; the Others are 'sects' that are less authentic at best, heretical at worst.

The divisive nature of schism obviously leads to multiple narratives of who and what caused the split and multiple narratives (and claims) of religious continuity; these narratives comprise the story of each Church's identity. Botros (2006) similarly described how Coptic Orthodox religious identity is tied to their unique historical narrative as a distinct Church following their anathematization from "the Christian Greco-Roman Byzantine world" during the Christology debates at the Council of Chalcedon (451). In the Erie and Nikolaevsk microschisms, it was also the very narrative of ecclesiological continuity or loss (and attendant eschatological implications) under contention (that is, the priesthood question). What is the state of the Church in the world

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[245] For example, the phrase was used in a review for *Rock and Sand* (Trenham 2015), which evaluates Protestantism from the point of view of an Orthodox theologian. https://churchsupplies.jordanville.org/9781939028365/ Fr. Simon explained the phrase to me, and also used in in a CN profile, available here, https://cnewa.org/magazine/profiles-33301/.

today? These two ethno-religious enclaves were founded by *bezpopovtsy* immigrants united in their answer to this question; when their ecclesiological narratives diverged, their co-religiosity ended.

Those who desired a priesthood in Erie were heavily steeped in 're' rhetoric. The Church of the Nativity congregants were concerned with not only the 're'covery of the Church and full rites, but of their waning religious and historical knowledge that had been concerning them for decades (Chapter Three). Take for example the following description of the Restoration Study Group (RSG):

> The dynamics of this group were striking, in that its members sought to recover Old Believer history that had been lost to many Old Believers. This was a self-conscious attempt to reclaim the history of the Old Belief by a new generation of the faithful, one whose roots to the faith had been severed by geography, time and distraction. What is more, the group planned to recommend a course of action specifically dependent on this renewed study of its own past. (Robson 1994, 134)

The goals of this "renewed study" were to "recover" and "reclaim" a lost history. Ultimately, the majority of the RSG saw "the opportunity to rectify the loss of priesthood, therefore, mandated that the Church be restored in its fullness" (Robson 1994, 135). The RSG members directed many "re" questions to Fr. Simon, such as what changes to expect "if [the Church of the Nativity] decided to reunite" or "re-establish[ed] the entire old rite" (RSG 7, October 27, 1982, Q9, also Q4, See Appendix 4). What changed was the entire historical narrative of Pomortsy Old Belief and its claims to righteous continuity and orthodox practice (pravoslavnye).

The first president of Erie's new bezpopovtsy Church of the Holy Trinity drew out the logical disconnect between this restorative rhetoric and the schism it had caused: "Under the guise of restoration, our former Nastavn[i]k hid behind democracy to divide his house against themselves. His method of dividing his flock and alienating families cannot possibly be defended under the eyes of God. Unity of the Church is absolutely the prime objective of any spiritual leader" (AOB, c. January/February 1983). How could this great divide be a celebrated unification?! To the Erie bezpopovtsy, who lost the church where their parents had worshipped in, the unification with ROCOR was a dissolution and denial of their forebearers' Church and religious identity.

The Erie microschism was a social tragedy that divided family and friends. But it is referred to as something positive by the present-day popovtsy. It was a 'restoration', a 'completion', a 'fulfillment', a correction of a centuries old mistake made possible by the Anathema Reversals. Fr.

Simon helpfully offered to lend me a thick manila folder for my research; "Restoration Packet" was written with a black sharpie across the front. It struck me right away; the popovtsy-leaning faction of the Church of the Nativity were not thinking of this as a split, but as a union. They were creating a tiny schism in order to undo a much larger one.

'Re' is a prefix that denotes historical authenticity; it is a claim that they are going back. Rewriting the ecclesiological narrative also revised the community's bezpopovtsy identity. For example, an RSG member asked: "if we were to go back would we be becoming as the old ritualists originally were?" or "would we be changing from being what we are [Pomortsy] to being like they [New Rite ROC] are now?" (RSG 7, October 27, 1982, Q5 and 9, Appendix 4). Fr. Simon answered that he was re-adding parts which were lost—not changing—but reverting. They would be practicing as Russian Orthodox Christians practiced before Nikon (except in English, more on this in Chapters Five and Seven). To the bezpopovtsy, the popovtsy's authenticity claims and reinterpretation of the institutional Church's state of grace (and how individuals can hope to obtain this gift) called into question centuries of priestless practice. In the second subsection below, I illustrate how schism decisions and revisions caused both sides to worry over their spiritual forebearers' salvation.

To the bezpopovtsy, the schism is clearly perceived to be in line with the long history of Staroveri persecution at the hands of a deceptive, graceless Other—encapsulated by the name "Nikonian."

> Once again the Old Believers are being tested by the Nikonians, and once again we must prove to them that over 13 million Staroveri did not die in vain. This time they infiltrated our church and pitted brother against brother, through the guise of democracy trying to force us to submission. When will they ever learn that the faithful will not compromise the religion left them by their humble parents. As you are all aware, the old church our parents built on Front Street church no longer belongs to the Staroveri but is now a remodeled Nikonian place of worship. (CHT, June 20, 1984)

The priesthood question called into doubt not only dogma (which is always enough for intrareligious breaks) about the nature of the Church, but the historical narrative and group identity and salvation of bezpopovtsy ORRO. The Nikonians annulled the anathemas, but they could not annul the martyrdom of persecuted Old Believers or the centuries they were forced to live without the full sacraments of the Church. Similarly, for the bezpopovtsy in Nikolaevsk, accepting the Belaya Krinitsa hierarchy as legitimate in the 1980s meant that eight generations of their forefathers and mothers lived without the liturgy and several mysteries "in vain."

Schisms show what matters, as Christian groups unite and divide over key points of their belief system and how to best live (or, *continue*) their faith in the modern world. What matters more than one's eternal salvation? Soteriology undergirds the theological branches (e.g., ecclesiology, eschatology) that have historically and recently divided Old Believer groupings. The Erie and Nikolaevsk microschisms resulted in four separate strains of Old Rite continuity, and selective modernity, in the U.S. Each path presents a distinct historical narrative of the ROC schism and a distinct theological narrative of the state of the Church and how to find grace in the world today.

4.3.1. The Tale of Two Hierarchies: Belaya Krinitsa and ROCOR

The priesthood question ripped apart the priestless congregations in Erie and Nikolaevsk in the 1980s as each community strove to understand their group's long and complicated relationship with ecumenical authority and the institutionalization of grace and "saving" worship. Ecclesiological narratives are an essential part of Old Believer subgroup identities since the priestless and priested ORRO branches first emerged shortly after the ROC schism. When Erie and Nikolaevsk congregation members' interpretation of the state of the Church in the world diverged, so too did their co-religiosity. The popovtsy contingents in both places answered the priesthood question differently than their parents had—yes, they decided, a legitimate, Church hierarchy with the authority to dispense grace through the sacraments exists. But they found continuity of pravoslavnye and apostolic succession in two separate, non-co-religious institutions.

The popovtsy factions emerged already set on distinct paths to (re)discovering Church authenticity that are indicative of their subgroups' already distinct socio-historical backgrounds (Chapter Two). In Erie, Fr. Simon made overtures to nearby ROCOR and OCA seminaries. In Nikolaevsk, individuals accessed their diasporic links to the Romanian Belaya Krinitsa (BK). In each of these choices there was a non-choice, and reasons (theological and otherwise[246]) why the other hierarchy was dismissed as inauthentic and lacking apostolic succession. In this subsection, I explore Erie's (ROCOR) and Nikolaevsk's (BK) priested congregations' evaluations of one another's authenticity claims to illustrate how considerations of grace and salvation are rudimentary

[246] Practical matters, like proximity (ROCOR's key seminary, publisher, and Synod seat are all within a five-hour drive of Erie) and social network (West Coast Old Believers' more recent immigration and close family ties in Eastern Europe) were certainly relevant factors in each popovtsy factions' decision-making.

components of Old Believer groups' (priested and priested alike) delineations of belief and belonging.

For the congregations in Erie and Nikolaevsk there was no return from the suggestion that the priesthood *might* still exist. To rewrite the fate of apostolic succession and the fall of official Orthodoxy after Nikon's liturgical corruptions is to reconstruct the existence and identity of *priestless* ORRO. As I argue in Chapter Six, the history of Old Belief can be presented as a debate over a set of interrelated theological questions about the nature of pravoslavnye, heresy, the Church, and eschatology that impact ORRO subgroup identities and boundaries of co-religiosity (Figure 11). Before I analyze the two communities' processes of reevaluating Old Rite history, I must review the choice of hierarchies[247] the popovtsy-leaning factions had at their disposal and how the legitimacy of each was evaluated by American Old Believers in the 1980s.

For Erie popovtsy, the choice was already laid out—now that the ROC had recanted its anathemas against the Old Rite the original schism could be healed. When ROCOR offered its own olive branch to ORRO Christians abroad most of the Church of the Nativity members accepted. In the Cold War context, the ROC made "little effort to reconcile" with Old Believers abroad (Robson 1985, 118). In Fr. Simon's words at the time (1982), "To consider the patriarchal of Moscow for our own use is silly" (RSG 6, October 20, 1982, 7). It was less silly to ROCOR in 2007, when its Synod of Bishops chose to come into an ecumenical relationship (or, 'reunite') with the Moscow Patriarchy. Fr. Simon was not for the move, but it was not a co-religiosity deal-breaker for the Church of the Nativity's congregation (pers. comm.).[248] Perhaps unification can breed unification.

For Nikolaevsk popovtsy, the Anathema Reversals did not also reverse their conviction in the ROC's illegitimacy. Again, the original schism was a bilateral anathematization between the New and Old Rite Russian Orthodoxies; each side branded the other as illegitimate (heretical,

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[247] Complicating the novice popovtsy's choice in hierarchy was the fact that both Romanian BK and ROCOR had non-co-religious branches in the U.S.S.R. ROCOR and ROC (Moscow Patriarchate, MP) have since united (2007), but the Romanian and Russian BK hierarchies are still separate despite several efforts to resolve their differences (over what issues is a fruitful area of future research) (FS, pers. comm., December 27, 2012).

[248] It was a deal-breaker for others, for example, the ROCA diocese in Australia and New Zealand https://auroca.org/who-we-are/. ROCOR, "Act of Canonical Communion" http://www.russianorthodoxchurch.ws/synod/engdocuments/enmat_akt.html.

even) and schismatic. It did not appear to me from our conversations that either side of the Nikolaevsk microschism questioned the view that Nikon's reforms *were* heretical, and that the ROC hierarchy had *lost* grace. Many of the adults who founded Nikolaevsk (including its first priest, Fr. Fefelov) were born in Russia or China; for them, the "Red Scare" was personal, and they were not at all inclined to trust or join the ROC or the Russian branch of the Belaya Krinitsa (FS, pers. comm., December 27, 2012). Some of their parents had been taken by Soviet sweeps (ostensibly looking for deserters) of Siberia and China and were never seen again (pers. comm.). As told in the recorded oral history of one of the Harbintsy founders of Nikolaevsk, "the Soviets came to Manchuria a few years later. They captured some men and took them back to Russia" (Basargin 1989, 15). Persecutions were too recent for them to be able to easily "forgive and forget."

ROCOR was not the only diasporic hierarchy available to Orthodox Christians in the diaspora; there is also the Orthodox Church of America (OCA). Years before Fr. Simon raised the priesthood issue to his congregation, he visited ROCOR's and OCA's "monasteries and headquarters."[249] He shared his observations and evaluations of how well each Church kept the ancient faith in a new land to the Restoration Study Group (RSG 6 and 8, Figure 8). He felt that ROCOR was a better co-religious fit because "although the OCA had a stronger organizational and educational structure, the [ROCOR] Synod kept much closer to the traditions of the faith and the teachings of Orthodox theologians. In the Synod he saw fasting, praying and Orthodox teachings many times lost in the OCA" (Robson 1985, 122-3). Fr. Simon leaned on the well-worn liberal/conservative dichotomy to summarize their choice (or at least his choice, there is no record of a debate on the issue within the RSG minutes) of ecumenical unions.

> The Orthodox Church of America is a Russian Orthodox Church but its prime problem is it has become quite liberal. They are not as good as they should be on fasting and some other things. The [ROCOR] Synod is very, very conservative, probably more conservative in their practices than we are. (RSG 6, October 20, 1982, 7)

In other words, ROCOR was the right co-religiosity choice because the institution was on a similar path of continuity and had made similar selective modernity decisions about what aspects of the faith are worth fighting for (e.g., the Julian calendar).

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[249] Fr. Simon visited the ROCOR monastery in Jordanville in the summer of 1979. "Many of our people have gone to Jordanville and have had very many positive experiences before they decided these people were devils because they had some association with Father Pimen" (RSG 8, November 10, 1982, 1).

Nikolaevsk's priesthood seekers gave about as much consideration to ROCOR as they had to the ROC. ROCOR was certainly interested in them and hoped that the newly consecrated Old Rite Bishop Daniel would "serve them and others in west" (Hudanish 1988, 6). However, there was a strong element of distrust in most American Old Believers' interpretations of the Anathema Reversals, the possibility of a larger ecumenical union, and (understandably) of mainstream Orthodoxy in general. "This attitude reflected the historical Old Believer position that the dominant Church would go to any ends to ensnare Old Believers into the New Rite. This position had historical credence" (Robson 1985, 129). Of my knowledge, Erie's Church of the Nativity is the only existing ORRO congregation affiliated with ROCOR.[250]

Fr. Simon rejected the legitimacy of the Belaya Krinitsa (BK) Church before the RSG even convened (RSG 5, October 6, 1982, 6-8) for the same reason both enclaves' Pomortsy and Chasovennye predecessors had remained priestless despite the emergence of an Old Rite hierarchy in the mid-nineteenth century. Sokoloff's ([1914] 1974) brief review of the range of ORRO leadership that I have called the priesthood spectrum (Figure 1) summarized this reasoning: "In the Greek church, ordination is a sacrament and can be performed only by a bishop. Now bishops can be appointed only by an assembly of bishops, and many Old Believers argue that the so-called 'Austrian' bishops are not lawful and they recognize only the priests of the Orthodox church who come over to the 'old belief' [the beglopopovtsy]. Others either wrangle about their priests, or do not recognize any [the bezpopovtsy]" (93). The Old Believers who *do* "recognize" priests (i.e. popovtsy/priested) do not recognize *all* ORRO priests as "lawful," (i.e., legitimate) or in possession of apostolic succession.

The priestless' who "do not recognize any" priests have local leaders, the nastavniki, but lost the entire organizational authority of the Church with the martyrdom of Bishop Paul of Kolomna in 1656 because a bishop is canonically required to ordain new priests (AC 1-2). Unlike the beglopopovtsy, they do not recognize New Rite (or other Orthodox) priests who have converted to the Old Rite. In the priestless ecclesiological narrative of Church legitimacy, Bishop Ambrosi's conversion to the Old Rite was irrelevant as he had been ordained by *illegitimate* (and/or heretical and graceless, in other words, not ORRO) bishops. But not all beglopopovtsy

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[250] *Directory of Hierarchy, Clergy, and Parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad* (ROCOR 2020) https://jordanville.org/files/2021-Files/Spisok_2021_Gratis_v5.pdf

recognized *this* bishop's conversion to the Old Rite because he had been previously deposed by the Greek Orthodox Church (which Old Believers generally consider to be in a questionable state of grace, as discussed above; RSG 5, October 6, 1982, 6-7; P. Meyendorff 1991, 28; Robson 1995, 31-3; Crummey 2011, 101-2).[251] To those who did recognize Bishop Ambrosi, his conversion meant that there would now be priests ordained in (rather than converted to) the Old Rite, but to reinstate the full hierarchy of the Church, there had to be bishops to follow after him.

A common criticism against the BK's legitimacy is that Bishop Ambrosi created the hierarchy by ordaining bishops on his own, rather than as an "assembly" in accordance with canon law (*AC* 1; Sokoloff [1914] 1974, 93; RSG 5, October 6, 1982, 6-7; Crummey 2011, 101-2). BK proponents cite an "emergency loophole" in the Canon that allows a single bishop to ordain another.[252] The post-Revolution Novozybkov hierarchy (which incidentally shares a sacred space, Rogozhskoe in Moscow, with a BK congregation), claim (greater) legitimacy from the fact that they were able to convert more than one bishop.[253] Interestingly, although they reject this loophole, the bezpopovtsy rely heavily on such contingency plans in many other cases: the sacraments, for instance, that they do practice are legitimated through such exceptions. For example, in the case of an imminent death where no priest is available, a layman is permitted to hear the dying individual's

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[251] Neither source states the specific reason he was removed from his See, but one RSG (5, October 6, 1982, 6) says it was for political reasons because "...the Turks were now in control of Constantinople and the Turks didn't like these bishops because they wouldn't play ball with them..." Robson clarifies that he was not defrocked.

[252] DF, pers. comm., August 5, 2013. In Chapter Seven, I discuss the Old Calendarist Greek Orthodox Churches, among whom dissension remains over the one bishop ordination issue. See Archbishop Gregory's of Colorado, "Genuine Orthodox Church of America), on the Apostolic Injunctions (he cites Book 8, Chapter 27) that permit use ordination of a bishop by one rather than two bishops and condemnation of other branches of Old Calendarists, which he lists under severe headings "False Orthodox" and "Other heretics." https://www.trueorthodoxy.org/polemics/ 2005

[253] Bishop Nikola (Pozdnev) converted in 1923, and Bishop Stephan Rastorguyev in 1929 (Stricker 1990, 42-3). In RSG 5,) there is a small mention of those who rejected Bishop Ambrosi, "in the early 1900's are able to get a runaway bishop from Russia after the revolution to become their bishop. They become known as the Popovtsi ancient orthodox Christians. The Popovtsi are now in the same boat as the bezpopovtsy because they are having great trouble getting priests. The Popovtsi does everything in the Church that was done before the schism according to the old rite. In fact, we have some books off Popovtsi printing presses which is okay because they are exactly the same books we have" (October 6, 1982, 7). This likely refers to the Novozybok hierarchy.

confession. The reasons why the ordination of bishops has been an especially divisive ecclesiological issue in the Orthodox world warrants greater study.

The history of Old Believers' schisms and unifications illustrates the place of grace in individual, congregational, and institutional co-religiosity decisions. The threat of heretical contamination (i.e., pollution) from outside temptations--those "obvious" works of the flesh that the epistles instruct Christians to avoid (Gal *5*; Eph *5*) AND those who commit such acts (Eph *5*:7) has been an enduring theme in Old Believers' [non]relationships and social integration with religious Others and 'the World'. This social duality is clearly visible during religious worship where the threat of heretical contamination keeps unorthodox practices and those outside of a "state of grace" effectively (barred from participation) and physically (often barred from entrance into nave) outside of common worship. The very existence of Old Belief as a path of continuity removed from the Nikonian heresy, as well as past and present Old Believers' consistent efforts to defend pravoslavnye, demonstrates that the institutional Church is not exempt from the threat of heresy and lost grace.

Old Believers' divergent perceptions of the contemporary state of the Church gets to the heart of ORRO subgroup identities and clearly illustrates the ways in which ecclesiological, eschatological, social, and moral worldviews overlap. Generally, ORRO polemicists argue that the righteous community must excise heretical and amoral Others or endanger Old Believers' own salvation, or negate the efficacy of their prayers, based on a fundamentalist or literal readings of the Apostolic Canon. This puritanical construction of 'Church' was an essential element of early Old Believers' dissent and why they fervently believed that the Old Rite was worth dying for. To rewrite this ecclesiological narrative, as the Erie popovtsy did, calls into question the legitimacy of the original Nikonian dissenters' mandate to leave the ROC. To leave a bishop without cause "with regard to religion or justice" is also an excommunicable offense (*AC* 31). The Nikolaevsk popovtsy rewrote their ecclesiological narrative in a different way, when they questioned the idea that apostolic succession was forever lost. Below, I explore how contemporary congregational and ecumenical decisions and continuity claims have the additional emotional weight of casting judgment on the grace and efficacy of past Old Believers' practices and potential salvation.

4.3.2. Polluting the Past: Retroactive Heretical Contamination

The entanglement of co-religiosity, group identity, and soteriology is not unique to ORRO Christianity. Nor is an individual's sense of the enormous weight of obligation to uphold their

understanding of continuity with Christ's message and vision for the Church an exclusive concern of the 'ultra-conservative'. The first New Rite tsars also struggled with the rupture caused by Patriarch Nikon's reforms—not solely due to the fact that opposition to the Russian Church equaled opposition to the State, but that their own denial of the pre-Nikonian rites' orthopraxy inferred that their ancestors had also been in the wrong (heterodox).

The aftermath of the ROC schism coincided with a dynastical struggle between Alexis I's (Tsar, 1645-1676) children by his first and second wives. When his eldest son, Feodor III (Tsar, 1667-1682), died (perhaps from poison), his sister Sophia became the Regent Regnant during her brother's (Ivan V) and half-brother's (Peter I) minority.[254] She inherited a broken Church. Her father, Alexis I, is ironically nicknamed "the Pious" in the textbooks of history, but as a supporter of Nikon's reforms, and as the leader who presided over the siege of the Old Rite stronghold at Solovetsky Monastery (1668-1676), his dissidents painted him as the Antichrist (literally, see Cherniavsky 1966, 14, Figure 6).[255] Sophia I might have healed the rift, but nuance between the orthodoxy (or, 'rightness') of the Nikonian texts and ritual procedures and that of the (by no means uniform) rites preserved by centuries of ORRO groups was nonexistent—heretical even. According to the Josephite perspective, they simply could not both be correct. And perhaps more perilous to the legitimacy of the Russian Empire, the logic of retroactive heretical contamination called into question its own sanctity and divine mandate.

Writing several months before the ROC's 1971 sobor, Fr. Smolakov's essay, "The Last Attempt to Restore the Old Faith in Russia," brought the past to vivid life and relevancy. He argued that Regent Sophia rejected the chance to heal the schism because if she were to grant equal orthodox and saving status to the Old Rites ruthlessly persecuted by the previous tsar and patriarch it would invalidate their rule, and in effect, her own. As such, "her regime treated the Old Believers simultaneously as apostates and as mortal enemies of the secular power" (Crummey 1970, 40). Ultimately, the theologian, Nikita Pustosviat of Suzdal, who presented the petition (of a monk Sergey and Savva Romanoff) before the throne and Patriarch Joachim was imprisoned,

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[254] Her brother, Ivan V, was deemed mentally incapable of tsardom, although he was the nominal co-ruler with Peter from 1682 until Ivan's death in 1696. The role of the Streltsy in this story the political turmoil at this time is far too convoluted for the current discussion.

[255] Early Old Believer did not fail to note the coincidence of his death and the fall of that famed center of Staroveri resistance, both in 1676. See Crummey (1670) for more on this period.

tortured, and beheaded; their plea to grant equal status to the pre-Nikonian rites and texts was denied (Smolakov 1971, 24-44).

The tsar was considered the God-mandated and chosen ruler of the land, so to suggest that Alexis I broke the oneness of his Church (and perhaps dabbled in heresy) and martyred true believers would invalidate his honored memory, the reforms and institutions he established, the lands he conquered, and more dangerous for Sophia, would also effectively disinherit his heirs. Sophia "perceived that acceptance of the restorationist agenda would stigmatize her father (Alexis) and brother (Feodor) as heretics and deprive her regency of legitimacy." She said, "If Afansy and Nikon were heretics, then so were our father and brother. This means that the reigning tsars are not tsars, the patriarchs not patriarchs and the prelates are not prelates. We refuse to listen to such blasphemy" (T. Robbins 2000, 211).

To recap the basic logic of heretical contamination, in the 'hardline' conception of heresy, pravoslavnye (and there can be only one) is considered to be a requisite of salvation and Church authority. Old Believers are defined as those who reject/ed the salutary powers of the New Rite and the authority (and perhaps the grace) of the Nikonian ROC, the Anathema Reversals portended an identity crisis. To also reverse their anathemas against mainstream Orthodoxy and decide that the New Rite was not heretical was to call into question the sanctity of centuries of Old Belief. For if the New Rites were not heretical then they had no cause to object. In Chapters Five and Six, I review the Nikolaevsk and Erie Old Believers' historical, scriptural, and canonical arguments and polemics made in defense of their position on the priesthood question as an insight into the American Old Believers' variant eschatological and ecclesiastical points of view. But I do not want to lose sight of the fact that the implications of the four congregations' contradictory theo-histories were also eternally personal due to a threatening line of logic that posits that if the New Rite is not heresy and the Church did not die, then contemporary Old Believers ancestors, who physically lost their lives as martyrs, had potentially spiritually lost their souls by living an unforced, un-sacramented life. Were past bezpopovtsy's confessions, baptisms, and marriages valid if they were not living in an 'emergency' situation caused by the fall of the ROC? Was the schism justified? Centuries of suffering could not have been meaningless.

When it comes to official pronouncements of heresy and Church anathemas, continuity goes both ways. Because past and contemporary Church councils make decisions about what is Orthodox and what is salutary—the pre-Eternal and changeless—what is True now was True then. If

the Regent Sophia were to proclaim the orthodoxy of pre-Nikonian rites, her father's siege of Solovetsky would be simultaneously condemned. If Erie Old Believers were to agree that Patriarch Nikon's reforms were not heretical, their ancestors were not compelled to the leave the Church. Foremost, Orthodox Christians ensure the authenticity of their practices and beliefs through continuity with scripture, canon law, and early Church Fathers, ancient and unassailable (Hann 2012; Humphrey 2014; Carroll 2017). Various forms of ORRO expression take emphasis here, deemphasis there, stress one text, ignore another—but for all, 'the authentic' takes its locus in the past. When the present rewrites the past, as the Nikolaevsk and Erie popovtsy have done concerning the theo-historical narrative of the state of the Church sacraments, a break in co-religiosity naturally ensues.

Generations of Old Believers supported their practices by looking backwards. The seventeenth century anathemas projected heresy into the past onto earlier saints. The Old Rite petitioners argued as much: "If we are cursed by them, then also all of our Russian Saints, and Wonder Workers, and the forefathers of the present csars (the names of the csars followed, starting with Ivan IV, and of all the patriarchs, and of all others who were keeping the Old faith and the Old piety), are cursed, as we are" (Smolakov 1973, 32). In the following two chapters, I break down the distinction between the bezpopovtsy and popovtsy's theo-historical considerations of the priesthood question and heretical contamination.

In the bezpopovtsy perspective, the recent Anathema Reversals confirmed the saving rites of millions of Old Believer martyrs; they were indeed in an "emergency" situation after the heretical reforms defiled the ROC, which subsequently anathematized them. They could be forgiven for their blameless, priestless state for they had a moral (and canonically supported, e.g., AC 10, 45-6) obligation to leave their bishops who were preaching heresy. The popovtsy perspective critiqued this age old logic: "But then we come back to the essential point again of before you are going to leave him, you better make sure he is really in heresy. So you better understand what heresy is. As long as there is no heresy, the Church's Apostolic Succession must continue unbroken. Where there is heresy the Grace is broken" (RSG 6, October 20, 1982, 6). The Nikolaevsk and Erie microschisms revealed that ecclesiological matters (especially those concerning apostolic succession) and the limits of God's grace were essential to the overlapping boundaries of belief and belonging between ORRO groups. In other words, salvation deal-breakers are co-religiosity deal-breakers.

Old Believers have been historically and ethnographically described by their stringent emphasis on orthopraxy, but they too believe in the redemptive possibility and in the greatness of God's mercy for which they repeatedly petition daily: "God be merciful to me a sinner. Thou hast created me; Lord, have mercy on me" (Proschaneeye). More generally, grace, whether of that of a charismatic individual or an institutional Church, is an essential element of Christian leadership and group-making. How far the relationship between dogma, co-religiosity, and soteriology extends into Christianity at large is a question for future research, for of course not all Christians hold the 'Josephite' hardline view of heretical contamination and rigid orthopraxy. What is clear, is that for Old Believers, the legitimacy of the Church as the earthly body of Christ is predicated on the authority of grace which he bestowed upon Peter to be passed throughout the generations between his crucifixion and second coming (i.e., apostolic succession). This heredity of grace is a very illustrative example of the importance of continuity (and rupture) which extends far outside the Orthodox world to become a common theme of exploration within the anthropology of Christianity (e.g., Robbins 2007a; Barker 2014; Carroll 2015, 2017).

Individuals are a lot more nuanced in their employment of grace as construct of social glue than is suggested by factioning parties' canonical arguments and polemics. Many Old Believers with whom I spoke were quick to note that it is not their understanding and judgment that matters, but God's. When I asked Lola whether Protestants and Roman Catholics can be saved, "Oh yes," she affirmed with a 'but, of course' expression. I discuss the more inclusive idea that there are many paths to heaven in Chapter Seven, because this concept of grace outside of the Church (can there only be one?) is not a point of which all Old Believer groups are agreed. It is in such disagreements, whether or not they lead to schism, where the intertangled elements of a Christian group's identity, theo-historical narrative, and theological convictions are exposed through rigorous analysis and conscientious choices. I turn now to these debates.

Chapter *5*
"Schism Breeds Schism": Case-studies of Religious Division

> *Throughout the 1970s and 80s, Erie's Old Believer community slowly moved in two directions. Some of the faithful hoped to preserve traditions at all cost, crystallizing the religious experience handed down by the first generation of immigrants. While acculturation took its toll, these community members retained religious traditions, hoping to keep them as unchanged as possible. Others, however, sought another path—adaptation to American culture while preserving core religious values. This second portion of the community sought to use English in the divine services, actively welcomed non-Russian converts, and inaugurated a dramatically new relationship with the rest of the Russian Orthodox Church*
> —Roy Robson, *Old Believers in Erie*[256]

This chapter presents two ethnohistories of microschism. I mean to demonstrate how the Old Believers' in Erie and Nikolaevsk found their communities divided by theo-historical outlooks concerning the nature of the Church and the most authentic path of ORRO continuity under their current position in time and place and came to the decision to rupture their respective congregations. Analyses of community schisms can throw into relief matters absolutely crucial to a group's identity and religiosity and allow anthropologists to see the translation of murky descriptions of 'belief systems' into specific assertions of dogma and Creed—'We believe X'. "Why?" is the appropriate primary question for the anthropological study of schisms. "How?" is equally important to religious groups wherein structures of and decision-making are dogma. What becomes clear from these analyses are the essential aspects of group identity, historical narrative, authority, and religiosity held by the Old Believer diaspora at large.

Independently, in 1983, two[257] priestless Old Rite Russian Orthodox parishes in the U.S. split over the question of whether or not a legitimate, apostolic succession bearing (true) Orthodox priesthood and hierarchical Church institution exists. Simultaneously, in Erie, Pennsylvania and Nikolaevsk, Alaska, once tight-knit communities engaged in a theo-historical debate that ultimately divided their congregations. The following two sections outline the processes of decision-making that formally split the congregations of the Church of the Nativity (CN, Erie) and the Church of St. Nicholas (CSN, Nikolaevsk). In the scenes of rupture, we can observe numerous other matters of

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[256] (1998, 7)

[257] There was a third. A priested Belaya Krinitsa congregation also arose in Oregon in concert with the Alaskan popovtsy. For the purposes of this dissertation, I only refer to the two with whom I conducted fieldwork.

theological import (e.g., eschatological state of contemporary world) arise in addition to those the congregants are actively debating (in these cases, the priesthood question). American Old Believers also debated the process of decision-making itself, the role of religious leaders (priests, nastavniks, elders, councils) and laypeople in determining a congregation's course of action, forgiveness (Chapter Four), the validity of conducting prayer in English, and more generalized perspectives of acceptable accommodation (or selective modernity) in their process of determining the best course of ORRO continuity.

Social factors undeniably frame religious disputes; context is always crucial. Yet context does not amount to causality. The religious and the social are inextricably entangled categorical dichotomies (for example, the overlap between pravoslavnye/heresy and Khristianiki/poganyi). Just as the social informs the religious, the religious informs the social and congregational breaks can point to conflicts on a much broader and even global level. Why *here*? Why *then*? Perhaps as Kokosalakis suggested the question is not whether a schism's causes were primarily religious or social, but if the cause was an ideological disconnect between religious traditions and current social perspectives (1971, 33-34; for example, the shifting perspectives concerning same sex marriage or female ordination have become contentious issues for several Christian denominations). As illustrated in Chapter Three, American Old Believers' means of conforming their religious duality into a social duality that excludes Outsiders varies greatly. The following case-study comparison supports the necessity of being more attentive to the 'religious' causes of congregational divides (as opposed to following the steady stream of the search for 'social' causes between Niebuhr 1929 and Wilson 1990, and beyond). In the cases examined below, the places and the people were different; the time and the key issues were the same. The challenges of lived Christian dualism were the same; both groups asked themselves how to practice their unchanging, ancient faith under current, rapidly adapting circumstances. Their groups ruptured when they could not find consensus. These are two stories of selective modernity wherein these struggles were negotiated, and four distinct paths of ORRO continuity and authenticity emerged.

Broadly, such thorough expositions of internal church conflicts bring the anthropologist of Christianity closer to their subjects' fundamental beliefs and how these dogma and ideals, *and* rites, are adapted to daily life. Specifically, here we see variants of ORRO's practical application, understanding of the mysteries (esp. concerning the Church and Eucharist), and the reframing or entrenchment of historical narratives of each as crucial aspects of Old Believer identity. The

questions themselves show the entanglement of social history and religiosity (hence, 'theo-history'): Were Nikon's reforms heretical? Did the Church die? Can it be restored? Are we living in the time of the Antichrist? Old Believers' group identity hinges on the concept of the historical continuity of a complexly interwoven ritual and belief system; at times of schism the dominant narrative is debated. Chapters Six and Seven explore the fundamental questions and salvation deal-breakers exposed by the Erie and Nikolaevsk microschism case-studies detailed below.

This chapter outlines the timeline, debate, and aftermath of two microschisms to illustrate the religious sources of the American Old Believers' congregational divides. I will account for the interpersonal conflicts that are a relevant part of individuals' decisions to follow, or not, the newly ordained priest in their community. My main concern, however, is to show the larger ecclesiological and historical disputes behind the popovtsy's and bezpopovtsy's distinct visions of ORRO continuity. To conclude this chapter, I return to the present. The social trauma of microschism is still palpable, its effects long-lasting and devastating. Socially, families, friendships, and even marriages broke apart causing lasting, multi-generational emotional damage. More than one person indicated that the conflict had "killed my mother" (pers. comm.). Opposite factions called each other heretics (Gay, *HN,* May 16, 1985; Chappell, *ADN*, May 1, 1988). There were lost friendships, disownments, and divorces and that should not be lost in the details. Architecturally, new churches were built to house the minority factions. Theologically, people were forced to openly question and debate their beliefs and the most authentically Christian mode of worship. Financially, members struggled to support a church on a withered congregational base. Geographically, people moved to form new like-faith villages. Institutionally, priested factions became incorporated into international ecclesiastical hierarchies.

Researchers of Old Believer communities (and the anthropology of religion more generally) should look to schisms because these are crucial events in the timeline of religious traditionalism and continuity; this is how change happens. Handman (2010, 2014b) and Bialecki (2014, which contains concise literature review of anthropological and sociological research on schism, and its blind spots) have similarly shifted away from the legacy of the search for social causes of denominationalism and towards the ways in which Christian groups' religious perspectives inform their societies. I continue this work to document how moments of rupture reveal the clearest drawn and defined ideological boundaries of a religious group's identity and the essentials of their belief system that researchers of the ethereal can hope to encounter.

5.1. Erie's microschism

Elusive questions like "what matters?" religious groups' identity and belief system are exposed by internal conflicts. These are the causes (and potential salvation deal-breakers) that signal the collapse of co-religiosity for Old Believers. The Church of the Nativity's breakdown had many causes and was years in the making. The priesthood question was only the 'final straw' that broke the Erie community. Granted, it was a big straw. The first two subsections below deal with the precursors to schism which occurred in the late 1970s. Many of the congregants who opposed to any change left the church when English services began in 1979; this weakened the congregation's traditionalist faction. At the same time, Fr. Simon questioned whether he should resign in the wake of this and other internal conflicts that were threatening to tear the congregation apart.

I next turn to a detailed timeline of the Erie microschism, as punctuated by congregants' and church leaders' correspondence and meetings. Unlike in Nikolaevsk, the Church of the Nativity's move to priesthood was well-documented, its debates preserved in the meeting minutes of the Restoration Study Group (RSG), and its unification chronicled in letters to congregants and to ROCOR hierarchs. Here, "the essentials" are explicitly stated. To the popovtsy, this record is a happy testimony of becoming. To the bezpopovtsy, it is evidence of injustice and breakdown. In the fourth subsection, I take a broader look at this documentation to explain how individuals at the time contested the record and denied their rival's narrative of the proceedings. In the private sphere, disputations were enshrined in anonymous petitions and personal notes. Here, I look further at the minority bezpopovtsy's Association of Old Believers (AOB), who shared an alternative narrative to the dominant theme of joyful restoration. In the public sphere, the enclave's internal conflict was also presented in the local media, much to the chagrin of all involved.

I conclude with a broader discussion of the forms of decision-making, majority rule versus a sobor's negotiated 'unanimity', that were also under contention during this tumultuous period of rapid ritual alteration. How sobornost', or spiritual unity, is maintained and confirmed is intimately tied to questions of Church affiliation and the organizational locus of decision-making (hierarchical or congregational) on a practical level and people's perspectives of the state of the Church on Earth today on a grander, theo-historical level that broke the Church of the Nativity. In Orthodox Christian thought, the will of God for his Church is determined through the unanimity of contemporary councils predicated on their continuity with decisions of past councils, known as

Canon. In other words, both decisions and the decision-making process are dogma. To Old Believers, the clash of democratic and sobornost' systems can be seen yet another modernity conflict. More broadly, the processes of determining authority and authenticity during times of schism demonstrates a group's understanding of divine will, how Christianity *should* be lived.

5.1.1. An English Russian Old Rite?

Barr's (1985) article "Erie's Russian Population" in *Erie Story* magazine gives a contemporary account of the community's microschism. Interestingly, his narrative of the religious conflict as one concerning accommodation to social change focused solely on the language issue, and made no mention of priesthood:

> The **modernization of the services in the Old Orthodox service has created a rift** between the Old Believers in Erie. Basically, older members who wish to adhere to the Russian language service have formed a new church called Old Believers Church of the Holy Trinity, at 3rd and Holland Streets. The group has received a substantial financial assist from the Church of the Nativity, where Reverend Simon conducts services in English.
>
> "I feel this is necessary to give our younger Russian-Americans the opportunity to find the services meaningful today,' says Reverend Simon. 'Many younger Russian-Americans don't speak or understand the Russian that their parents and grandparents spoke 70 years ago. (10, 12; emphasis mine)

I wish to draw attention to how Barr equated ritual change and with modernization. My interviewees also tended to lump liberalization, modernization, and the opening-up of "closed" religious communities with the shift towards priesthood. Fr. Simon's response to Barr paralleled the connection ethnographies of Christian groups (Kraybill 1994a4, 1994b, 24-5, 31, 1994d, 57, 74; Cannell 2006, 1-3, 316-8; Hann 2012; Handman 2014a) have made between modernity and the shift to individual understanding of, and commitment to, faith (adult baptism, vernacularization of services and scriptures). Neither the bezpopovtsy or popovtsy are aligned with reform Protestantism's "sola scriptura" or "priesthood of all believers" emphasis on individualistic learning and interpretation (more on this issue in Chapter Seven). But the vernacularization of services *was* a decisive radical change that prioritized member comprehension over the preservation of the Slavonic Old Rite. The distinction between (modern) individual understanding and (traditionalist) orthodox, ritualistic, rote performance also plays into the common polarization of Western and Eastern Christianity that I wish to critique (Rogers 2009, 51, 101-3; Hann 2012). Old Believers who wish to preserve CS also wish to ensure that their congregants understand services and readings and have a personal commitment to the faith. Similarly, the pro-English proponents are striving to keep the faith, but by different means.

The English debate, while perhaps not the primary cause of Erie's microschism, exemplifies the polarization of accommodation and conservativism faced by religious groups the world over. The issue was undeniably related to American acculturation; more recent U.S. immigrants in Nikolaevsk now also fear impending language death. When Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn visited the Millville congregation in 1976, he stressed above all the necessity of retaining Russian as a means of staving off "Americanization" and preserving the Old Faith.[258] Without a base knowledge of Russian, Church Slavonic is incomprehensible, its script as foreign as Greek or Hebrew. Despite the great efforts of Fr. Smolakov, the shift to English was inevitable. Even those who attended religious lessons and "lived in church"[259] could read, but not understand, Church Slavonic. For example, Pearl (popovtsy) told me she was thrilled with the translations because she could now truly comprehend the services that she had attended all her life (pers. comm., May 30, 2013). Larry (also popovtsy) was welcomed English services because he did not know CS (LM, pers. comm., May 28, 2013).

The switch to English is seen by both sides as part of the foundation of the second Old Believer church in Erie. It weakened the traditionalist faction of the Church of the Nativity, many of whom left to worship in their homes (in CS of course) years before the 1983 priesthood vote. As Holdeman explains, "most agree that the switch to English caused discord but would not have led to a split in the church. However, the split brought up conservative feelings among the Holy Trinity congregation and it returned to conducting services in Slavonic" (Holdeman 2002, 114). Robson (1985) clearly states that the issue led to congregational polarization (114-117). Father Simon also listed English as one of the major examples of congregational division that prompted him to consider resignation (Figure 7). He stated to me personally that it was one of the three reasons leading to the 1983 split.[260]

The controversy climaxed at a Special Congregational Meeting (SCM) held on December 17, 1978. Robson reports that the meeting was "raucous" with people talking out of turn and raised

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[258] Fr. Smolakov apologized for the "poor exposition of his speech," which "lacked those thoughtful and beautiful words" of Solzhenitsyn's, noting that the speech was not recorded and he reconstructed and translated it from memory (1977 calendar essay, 23).

[259] Lola, pers. comm., February 7, 2013

[260] The other two factors being the defrockment of Fr. Larry and (obviously) priesthood (pers. comm., January 2, 2013).

voices shouting over one another. Beyond the question of whether one *can* or *should* translate CS into English, there are eight tones (*glas*, 'voice' ORD 1998, 66; or 'tune' *CN*, 1969, 2) of singing to contend with. As Barbara explained to me, you cannot sing Silent Night to the tune of Jingle Bells (pers. comm., November 25, 2012). To prove to the SCM that it could be done, Father Simon chanted an Old Testament reading for the eve of the Nativity of Christ in English after which his brother, Philip Mitchell, read the same in Slavonic. Father Simon also offered canonical, historical, and biblical[261] support for the use of the vernacular. The majority of those assembled agreed with Father Simon and voted 109:33 (77%) in favor of English services (Robson 1985, 116).

Despite the wide acceptance, the change remained largely unimplemented nearly a year later. The church elders and trustees met on December 2, 1979 and decided that the use of English in all services would commence, and that Saturday vespers would alternate weekly between Slavonic and English, so that people had a choice of which language service to attend. Other services (Sundays and Holy Days) would be a combination of the two languages (as they are now, but the vast majority is in English). The elders also proposed that individuals could decide the language of personal sacraments such as baptisms, confessions, and marriages. A week later, the congregation as a whole agreed with the elders' choices (SCM Minutes, December 13, 1979; Robson 1985, 117). Those who considered this to be a incontrovertible deal-breaker abandoned the CN to its new path rather than catching CS vespers every other week. Others, like Pearl, August, Larry, and Anita happily embraced the shift to English services (pers. comm.).

A sacred space for the pro-Slavonic faction was maintained until a regular quarterly meeting (RQM) on August 8, 1982, when the congregation voted to no longer offer CS vespers. The pro-English side again had the vast majority (80%, 55:14). While the alternating the vesper service was meant to be fair and accommodating to the minority, it had the unintended effect of further polarizing an already divided congregation. People would go either to one or the other, and "the effect was a statement of loyalty to one language or another and a continuing rift between

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[261] The pro-English faction called on 1 Cor. 14: 13-16 (contextually about glossolalia, gift of speaking of tongues on Pentecost, which Paul advised should be practiced with translators to edify believers): "Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray for the power interpret. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unproductive. What should I do then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing praise with the spirit, but I will sing praise with the mind also. Otherwise if you say a blessing with the spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider say the 'Amen' to your thanksgiving, since the outsider does not know what you are saying?"

groups" (Robson 1985, 117). The removal of the CS vespers was reasoned as a move towards greater unity, but that unity was achieved only because the pro-Slavonic side stopped attending the Church of the Nativity altogether (Ibid).

When I see it retrospectively, I understand the trouble people had in interviews placing the switch to English on the microschism's timeline in relation to the priesthood battle. "It was tied together," Lola said, "all the changes" (pers. comm., February 7, 2013). This final blow to CS use came just two months after an SCM discussed the possibility of creating a second Old Rite parish (*CN,* June 13, 1982). The language issue was perhaps over-shadowed by this much bigger issue of certain, impending schism and slipped under the radar. The *Social News* letters of July 4, 1982 and September 5, 1982 did not mention the vote to cut the Slavonic vespers.

The pro-Slavonic side overlapped with the later bezpopovtsy faction. Conservatives were a minority in both disputes. Yet those opposed to vernacularization did not formerly leave to establish a second congregation in 1979. The introduction of priesthood into the Pomortsy congregation involved radical restructuring and reorganizing. While the services had certainly changed with the switch to English, the service's content and order of prayers remained the same. The presence of a priest meant the addition of previously skipped portions of the service: chrismations (a rite similar to confirmation in the Roman Catholic Church) were added to baptisms, the Eucharist was added to gospel and kanon readings, and an altar behind an iconostasis replaced a table of ancient texts. The establishment of the Church of the Holy Trinity in 1984 created a communal sacred space for those who had chosen to pray in private homes after the shift to English.

This precursor to the microschism raises several questions. Why did the Church of the Nativity survive this salvation deal-breaker and not the next one? We can argue that the language issue failed to reach a "critical mass" of opposition, but the minority held about a quarter of the votes in both cases (Figure 9). Did the initial retention of CS vespers reduce the fallout? This conflict exemplifies the argument that immigration and acculturation necessarily affect the practices of *ethno*-religious groups whose identity is characterized not only by the particularity of their dogma and rites, but by their ethnic, linguistic, and historical background and ties to other peoples in other lands. Can there even be a Russian Old Rite in English? If certain transliterations were SDBs for the original Old Believers (for example, when 'Isus' became 'Iisus'), would not the full translation of scripture be a much greater transgression against pravoslavnye? I return to these

questions and the theology of sacred languages in Chapter Seven. For the moment, I turn to how this and other divisive issues nearly cost the Church of the Nativity its nastavnik and the decisions the congregation made to prevent a microschism in 1979.

5.1.2. Early Warnings: Consensus and Leadership Struggles

It is easy to assign blame for congregational rupture to those in positions of power. Religious leaders are those who hold the authority to make authenticity claims and declare whether a practice is or is not "Orthodox and saving." It is also easy to pick out key social (large scale and interpersonal) causes like language death, acculturation, and leadership disputes behind intrareligious conflicts. But as clearly shown in the record of the Erie microschism, which began four years before the final vote, we see that its issues transcend the given individual in power at the time. The record also shows how the process of decision-making, authenticity-determination, and the nature of authority itself became points of contention. In this subsection, I recount the decisions the Erie congregation made to ward off dissolution, schism, and social catastrophe in 1979.

Amidst the vernacularization debate at the Church of the Nativity the congregation almost lost its nastavnik. Their formal acceptance of the use of English as a language of prayer and praise was a precursor of bigger changes and disputes that came later, but this was not the only indication of a potential schism to come. Two and a half years prior to the initial suggestion that a second Old Rite parish be established in Erie,[262] a SCM was held to discuss problems and divisions within their church.

The minutes record[263] that on December 9, 1979, Fr. Simon led the congregation in an opening prayer, explained why he was considering resigning, and then left the meeting in order to not prejudice proceedings. The then-president of the church said that after two long conversations with their nastavnik he knew that Fr. Simon was "...not throwing a temper tantrum or giving idle

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[262] A letter to CN parishioners dated June 2, 1982, is the earliest microschism source in my possession opens with, "Recently you received a letter informing you of a request for a SCM to discuss the possibility of establishing two parishes of Old Orthodox Christians in Erie."

[263] Unless otherwise indicated, this subsection is based on the Church of the Nativity's SCM minutes held on the Sunday evening of December 9, 1979 and dated December 13, 1979, signed by Marlene Meister, Recording Secretary.

threats." The majority of the SCM minutes were a presentation of the minutes of "the Elders, Officers, and trustees" meeting held one week before (December 2, 1979; record of this 'board of elders' vote indicates that it had twenty members), which had made several resolutions to solve the two main problems (division and apathy, Figure 7) Fr. Simon had identified. Members of the congregation in attendance were told that Fr. Simon would weigh his decision in the next week or two, and that they must come to a consensus (i.e., accept and/or amend the board of elders' solutions) on how to come to resolve their issues or lose their nastavnik.

The first problem was four separate issues under the broad category of "division of people":

> (a) Refusal to accept congregational decisions that have been voted on and recorded in the minutes.
> (b) Defrocking of Larry Evanoff--was voted on and recorded that he would never again serve as a priest.
> (c) English language issue.
> (d) Superstitions and traditions passed on that are not truly doctrine of our faith. (CN, December 13, 1979)

The second major problem Fr. Simon identified was "apathy," as apparent from low attendance in services and congregational meetings, fundraising difficulties, and "floundering" youth programs. Clearly, the congregation was divided and failing to maintain sobornost' well before the split.

Fr. Simon felt that he simply could not effectively function as their religious leader, and worried that the congregation itself would cease to function, under conditions as they stood. Three years after becoming nastavnik he was still struggling to gain the congregation's acceptance. There were too many issues for one person to manage—not just the pressure of choice and rule, but all the weight of blame. Besides the language issue, the SCM largely focused on new regulations to streamline decision-making, limit dissent, and shift authority from the nastavnik to the elders of the church.

I must stress how important the nastavnik's position was at this time. While the Church of the Nativity did not have a full-time nastavnik in its first years (1919-1923), there were far more CS-literate individuals to step in back then to lead services. In 1979 there was no nastavnik-in-waiting and it is improbable that the majority who had voted on Fr. Evanoff's permanent defrocking would reaccept him as their leader if Fr. Simon resigned. The CN had struggled to find its last three nastavniki. Fr. Smolakov returned to Erie six times to perform funerals the interim between Fr.

Evanoff and Fr. Simon.[264] It was therefore critical to the continuation of the Old Rite in Erie that his concerns be addressed; it was an ultimatum.

From the SCM minutes, it appears that the following decisions were determined by the board of elders the week beforehand, who raised each movement, who seconded, was noted. Then, the last paragraph of the record notes, the "issues presented by the board" were opened to comments from the congregation at large who assembled for the SCM—257 members. Their comments were not recorded, only that the "issue of church attendance dominated the discussion." To combat internal division, the elders decided to enforce decisions already agreed upon (this would include the defrocking issue) and that in the future motions passed by the congregation would "become binding and will not be subject to rehashing." In order to squash the "rumor mills" they furthermore decided that the congregational meeting minutes, such as the one I am dissecting here, would be sent each quarter to all congregation members (Regular Quarterly Minutes, RQM). Foreshadowing the microschism, the board also outlined the manner through which major decisions were to be made and determined. In the future, it was stipulated that controversial issues would be delayed for one month to allow the passion of arguments a cooling off period, out of town members would be sent absentee ballots, and a two-third majority of the full congregation (at an SCM) would be required.

A new Board of Elders was also going to be selected by Father Simon, subject to the congregation's approval. The new Board would have increased responsibilities and decision-making power. The board, rather than Fr. Simon, would hear all grievances and commentary on church matters. Father Simon was no longer solely responsible for all church decisions.[265] Also, the new board of elders would in the future, "...control removal or re-admittance of people not-in-good standing." This would reduce potential for interpersonal conflict between the laity and the nastavnik. This meeting also defined exactly what it meant to be a "member in good standing" in

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[264] CNMB 10, simplified spreadsheet of deaths 1935-1997. No baptisms performed between Fr. Evanoff and Fr. Simon (CNMB 8). The Marianna church's lack of a nastavnik was one of the primary issues of the 1984 Pomortsy Conference (*PC* 1984; Trambley, *TN*, September 2, 1984, 2b).

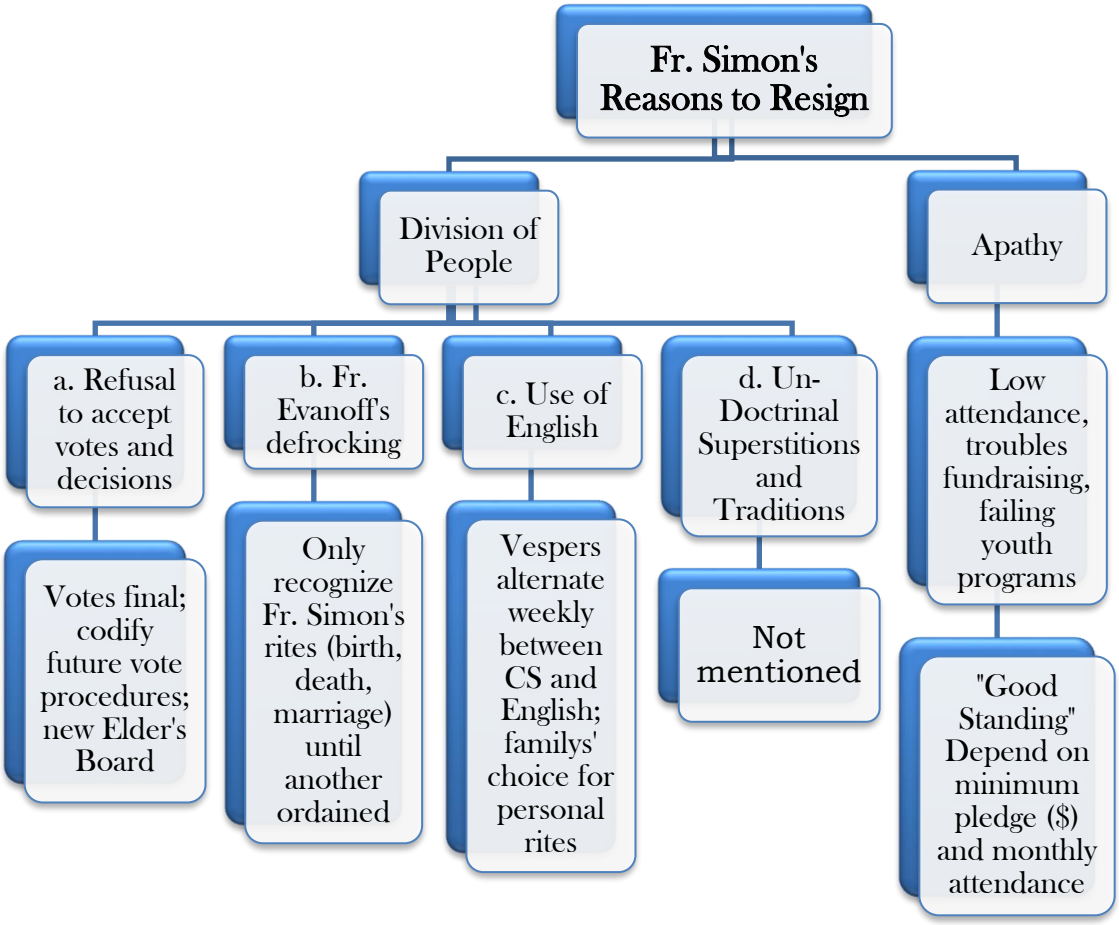
[265] This decision became a point of contention a few years later, when bezpopovtsy faction claimed that his new board. The September 1982 resignation demand stated that he had "abolished the elders of the church," but it is unclear if they referred to new board in 1979 or a more recent shift in council leadership. Also, AOB meeting minutes, November 6, 1983 "we will not call it an Elders group."

the effort to combat Fr. Simon's apathy concerns.

During my time in Erie (November 2012-June2013), apathy and waning participation were constant congregational concerns that were addressed in many sermons, Sunday school classes, and conversations This issue plagued Fr. Smolakov's time as well (Chapter Three, See Appendix 2). And this issue was clearly important to the congregation at large for this was the main issue of conversation once the board opened the floor up to comments from the congregation. Eventually, they found a "general consensus of opinion was that one service a month was not asking too much as a commitment for Church attendance."[266] In addition to minimal monthly attendance at church and/or Sunday school, a "member in good standing" must meet the (unspecified) minimum pledge requirement (unless granted a poverty exemption). This was in answer to funding concerns. If a person is, "...in arrears they will be denied the rights of the Church," but these rights (by which I think they meant rites such as burial and blessings) were not specified. Clearly, from the numbers represented in the SCM votes (See Figure 9) and use of absentee ballots, one could vote without meeting minimum attendance requirements. It is remarkable that there is no mention of sins and moral components of a person's "good standing" status or any of the purity issues discussed in Chapter Three. Church belonging to the late twentieth century Erie Old Believers appears to be largely predicated on participation.

[266] The definition of "members of good standing" during the December 2, 1979 elders' meeting was agreed upon by vote of 18:2, specific numbers for the other agreed upon points were not recorded, other than "the motion carried.".

Figure 7: Congregational decisions to prevent Fr. Simon's resignation (SCM, Dec. 09, 1979)



At the end of the meeting, 240 of the 257 congregants assembled agreed "...they were willing to commit themselves to the issues as outlined above."

Old Believers themselves link the lack of priesthood with the especial necessity for congregational unity, lest schism breed schism. A collapse of harmony between the leadership of Fr. Simon and elders and parishioners spelt doom for the community; they could not let Fr. Simon resign or leave the church's decision-making process unsettled.

> It is also vital that as many people as possible attend these quarterly meetings because since we do not have a church hierarchy we as a congregation must make the decisions. Once a motion is passed on it becomes binding when the majority votes it in. If the church congregation does not represent themselves at these meetings there is no hope of ever having unity among ourselves which is vital if we are to continue growing and becoming closer to the true values of Christianity. (December 13, 1979, 1)

In other words, sobornost' depends on participation.

Not all of Fr. Simon issues were dealt with explicitly during the meeting. Fr. Evanoff is not

specifically mentioned in the minutes, although it very well could have been an unrecorded topic of discussion from the congregation at large after the board presented the issues at hand. The question of competing leaders was dealt with indirectly when the board agreed on a motion to formally state that they would not recognize any baptism, marriage, or "any priested duties" performed by someone other than Fr. Simon until another person was "ordained."[267] Roger's (2009) ethnohistory of an nineteenth century Old Believer microschism in the Urals similarly indicated that personal attachment to particular nastavniki and the localized, decentralized nature of bezpopovtsy organization of authority causes conflicts over the election and discipline of religious leaders (82).

But the murmurs and interjections from members of the congregation present that day went unrecorded. Did people mumble or loudly proclaim that Fr. Simon should be allowed to resign and replaced by Fr. Evanoff or a newly ordained nastavnik? There were only 17 opposing votes out of total 257. Were these 17 hung up on one issue in particular? It appears that the vote covered all points from English services to creating a new board of elders. The meeting's minutes are related in stark, cut-and-dry tone, with no indication of the clamoring tension of what must have been a passionate scene. I am left curious about to what could have been the objectionable, non-dogmatic "superstitions." The minutes give no mention of the Great/Little tradition dichotomy in ORRO, which is a fruitful area of consideration (Redfield 1956; Crummey 1993; more on pamiats in Chapter Six). What is clear, is that the Church of the Nativity approached their next debate with a host of pre-existing issues, and a clearly dictated process of decision-making. I detail this process below.

5.1.3. Timing: Communications and Breakdown

If one thing is true about ORRO, it is that details matter. With the aid of Erie Old Believers' meticulous recording (and generous sharing), I am able to reconstruct a timeline of their microschism process through their meeting minutes and correspondence between Summer 1982 and January 1983. These documents indicate the individuals in positions of leadership (nastavniki, elders) and decision-making power (RSG, voting congregants). Two competing archives were

[267] By presbyterial succession that is, by the passing of a blessing from one nastavnik to the next, which occurs after the congregation and/or board as agreed upon a new leader.

shared with me, Fr. Simon's (popovtsy) and Lola's (bezpopovtsy) which present two narratives of the microschism. On one hand we see Fr. Simon's correspondence with ROCOR hierarchs officially negotiating unification; on the other hand, we see Delia's angry notes on the margins of congregational letters and anonymous petitions of the minority bezpopovtsy losing the battle for their church. Together the two archives demonstrate how congregational decisions are made through careful historical study and deliberations (a constant issue for bezpopovtsy who lack hierarchical and ecumenical determinations), as well as through passionate, committed, unshakable convictions.

The documents also outline the order of events—an issue at the heart of the bezpopovtsy's perception of Fr. Simon's culpability and invalidity of the final vote that split their church. *Did he "stack the deck" by choosing the councils members? Was he in cahoots with the fallen, heretical Nikonians? Was the result of the RSG's vote predetermined?* My bezpopovtsy interlocutors certainly felt that Fr. Simon had made his decision prior to the congregation's consideration of the matter (pers. comm.). He does not deny this, but adds that whether or not the congregation followed him into unification with ROCOR was their choice. He furthermore described (to me and the RSG) how deeply impactful his 1979 visit to ROCOR's seminary in Jordanville, New York was. There, he viewed "icons that were very similar to ours, churches that had candles, *lampatki*, he talked to people there and found a great similarity that he hadn't expected to find from 'new orthodox.'" He began to consider the possibility of an ecumenical relationship with ROCOR when he began to question "'were these other Orthodox all without grace?' Where they all simply nothing, much like we would categorize other religious that are apart from Orthodox people..." (RSG 8, November 10, 1982, 1). Again, presumptions of institutional grace (which Church holds AS; which Church's rituals are salutary) are a crucial component of Old Believers' determinations of co-religiosity and their ethnohistory as a group that emerged as a distinct branch of Russian Orthodoxy because they refused to pray with heretics.

In May 1982, the Church of the Nativity's president wrote the congregation to set a Special Congregational Meeting (SCM) on June 13th, "for the purpose of discussion in establishing a second parish." The fact that their church would soon split into two non-co-religious congregations had been established before the RSG began that August to debate whether to become priested and join ROCOR. The letter referred to the procedure agreed upon during the congregational crisis in December 1979 discussed above for addressing "critical" issues, as this surely was, "Since the

request to form a second parish is a serious matter, and since the subject of a second parish is open as to whom the second parish is for." The procedure dictated that first an SCM must be held, then the issue should be tabled for one month, before ballots (including absentee ballots by mail) were distributed. A 2/3 majority would decide the issue (Cabelof, May 1982). In other words, the split was predetermined, they just needed to see which side had to go and build anew.

Soon afterwards (June 2, 1982), Fr. Simon wrote the congregation to explain why two parishes might be better than a deeply divided one, as everyone was surely "aware that there are significant differences in opinion as to the direction our church has gone and is going." He expressed his hopes for a peaceful, respectful dialogue during the upcoming SCM: "I hope and pray that the parishioners of this church will see this meeting as a positive meeting to at least try to make everyone's religious life more meaningful and less traumatic. It seems better than simply pretending our problems are going to go away. And it also seems better than trying to force people to accept positions they find to be intolerable" (FS, June 2, 1982, emphasis original).

The result of this meeting was the commission of the Restoration Study Group (RSG), after some deliberation as to its members. The composition of the group is a matter of continued contention. *"He stacked the deck," Lola told me. I needed to ask the obvious: "Who elected the members of the study group?" "Who do you think? There were people on that list who were not even members who came to church regularly."*[268] The popovtsy, in turn, argued that those who showed up to the congregational Restoration vote were not all active members and that the bezpopovtsy had contacted families who had moved and/or were no longer practicing to vote.

Two days before the RSG held its first organizational meeting (on August 14, 1982; FS, August 9, 1982), Fr. Simon wrote the Secretary of ROCOR's Synod of Bishops to request permission to address its sobor in September. He wished to present the history of his parish and that of other American Old Believers and his position on unification with ROCOR. He also wished "to request ordination on my part at the earliest possible time" (FS, August 12, 1982). His mind was already quite decided, he would be popovtsy. In another letter that accompanied this

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[268] CN *Social News* (July 4, 1982) listed ten members of the RSG who were chosen "after much deliberation." Only five would be in the final RSG. 15 additional persons were thanked for volunteering, 10 of these were later members of the RSG. Clearly, there were more deliberations. It is not clear from the written record who had the most sway in the choosing the final 39. Eleven of the 34 who requested the June 13th SCM were later in the RSG.

"position paper" to ROCOR's Synod of Bishops, he reiterated that on a personal level he wished to be ordained and to receive (along with his family) chrismation (confirmation). He expected "the vast majority" of the congregation to vote for unification, but if not, he would start his own parish (September 8, 1982). It was a question of *how,* not if, to divide the congregation.

The RSG had ten meetings between August 25 and December 1,1982. While the group ended with a vote agreeing to recommend unification with ROCOR to the congregation at large, it was purported by church leadership to be a "scholastic endeavor," and not a decision-making body (RSG 1, August 25, 1982, 1). The entire congregation was assured of this fact and that "any changes in Church direction can only come from a congregational meeting (CN, "Social News," September 5, 1982). Everyone was provided with minute notes and access to taped proceedings.[269] But Fr. Simon's historical narrative through 2000 years of Christianity, and the logic of the lectures' argument—the definition of heresy, the determination that Nikon's reforms were ritualistic and not dogmatic and therefore not heresy, and the eternal nature of the universal Church and apostolic succession that could not die—led to a foregone conclusion (more in Chapter Six).

[269] The bottom of each RSG notes the following, in some variation: "More copies of these notes can be obtained at the Center. Questions and answers were not transcribed due to length. Tapes are also available at the Center for those interested in listening to them" (RSG 3, September 22, 1982, 7).

Figure 8: Topics Discussed at RSG Meetings, August 5-December 1, 1982

Number	Date	Meeting Key Topics and Questions
1	Aug. 25, 1982	"Introduction and History of Church through 988 CE": Fr. Simon's testimony; Church "administrative order" (apostolic succession, councils, unity despite regional differences)
2	Sept. 8, 1982	"988 CE to approx. 1300 CE": Religious Byzantianism; monasticism; Mysteries; Russification (Church Slavonic); uncleanliness; sacred texts and authority
3	Sept. 22, 1982	"Muscovy and Strigolniki": Unworthiness and penance; mystical Hesychasm; 3rd Rome theory; possessors (Josephites) and non-possessors (late 1400s to early 1500s ROC dispute); Stoglav 1551; 'pamiats'- importance of "memory" and little traditions passed down
4	Sept 29, 1982	"The Schism in the Russian Orthodox Church": Political context; Zealots of Piety; theocracy vs. fundamentalism; white (married, priests) vs. black (monastic) clergy; printing age and textual uniformity; pre-schism apocalypticism and ritualism; Nikon's reforms and revisions; key personages; 1666-7 Council and early persecution
5	Oct. 6, 1982	"Old Believers": priestless and priested branches and groups; nature of Church and Antichrist; Pomortsy history; presbyterial vs. apostolic succession; priestless sacraments and services
6	Oct. 20, 1982[270]	Summary: apostolic succession, nature of the Church
7	Oct. 27, 1982	"Questions and Answers" (Appendix 4)
8	Nov. 10, 1982	Fr. Simon's conclusion and pro-priesthood argument
9	Nov. 17, 1982	A. Yokoff's Opposing View, Questions and answers (appendix 4)
10	Dec. 1, 1982	Summary, rebuttal of Yokoff, vote to present Fr. Simon's proposal (recommend priesthood to congregation)

The question answerer, the church's leader, had already decided to unify. The fact that Fr. Simon was a lawyer before becoming their nastavnik was not lost on his critics; my bezpopovtsy interviewees brought up the fact as a condemnation, as a sign of rhetorical trickery. Fr. Yokoff presented the opposition, but Fr. Simon had the final session to give his rebuttal.

But if the leaders of the pro-priesthood decision already made their decision, so too had the pro-priestless side. As one elder described it, while the RSG met upstairs, the newly formed bezpopovtsy coalition, the Association of Old Believers (AOB), met downstairs. The AOB's first meeting was held just four days after the RSG's first meeting.[271] Its members went on to organize the following year the establishment of the bezpopovtsy Church of the Holy Trinity (CHT) the following year. Of course, many conservative members like Lola's parents stopped going to services and chose to pray at home because "they saw the writing on the wall" (pers. comm.) Other Old Believers I interviewed mentioned falling away before the schism because they were unhappy with Fr. Simon's leadership and the vernacularization of their services. "The minority group had, in the last committee meetings, decided that the vote would not be in their favor and began making plans for its future" (Robson 1985, 132). They first met at Fr. Larry's home outside the city for services and later secured a "temporary church" just days before Christmas 1983 (January 7) and the congregational vote (January 9) (AOB letter Jan. 1983; Lola, pers. comm., February 7, 2012).

On December 3, 1982, Fr. Simon wrote his congregation to call for an SCM on the December 12, "for the introduction of a resolution on the restoration of the full rites of the Church according to the Pre-Nikonian rites of the Russian Orthodox Church." He included the RSG's written pro-priesthood resolution, after securing 62% of all the RSG members (counting the six absent members; See Figure 9) in their last session two days prior. He also called for a congregational vote on this issue during a second SCM on January 9, 1983. The timing was key here, at least to the minority opposition, who protested that a full month had not elapsed between the discussion and the vote, as required for "critical issues" (as detailed in CN Bylaws, Cabelof, May 1982).

ROCOR's Bishop Gregory wrote to Fr. Simon to personally congratulate him on his

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[271] According to its January 1983 meeting minutes, their first session was at Camp Erie the Sunday after the Assumption of Virgin Mary, a fixed feast on August 28th (August 15, Julian; also CN's anniversary), which was a Saturday in 1982, making the first meeting August 29, 1982.

family's chrismation on June 29, 1983. On July 24, the Church of the Nativity was consecrated, Fr. Simon was ordained, and they had "now seen Liturgy for the first time and experienced the sight of Communion in our church." August saw a flurry of confessions and chrismations, as the new popovtsy prepared spiritually to "participate for the first time as an entire church body in the partaking of the Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior" on the church's 64th anniversary that Assumption of Mary (August 28).[272] Fr. Simon performed 352 chrismations in the August of 1983. Meanwhile, the bezpopovtsy began their services immediately before the vote in a separate space one block away where they worshipped until the CHT was completed in October 1984 (Image 13, Maps 1 and 5).

But the bezpopovtsy lost more than the building they once worshipped in. They also lost a link to their grandparents and to the first American Old Believers who built that church with money they had scrapped together over years. As an anti-priesthood petition phrased it, "If Father Simon wishes to join them [Nikonians] and take their sacraments, he goes with our blessing, but we the undersigned will never give them the church that our parents built with their sweat and blood."[273] In the following section, I present the personal side of the split. The details of the timeline are important because Fr. Simon has been accused of leading the church into the Nikonian hierarchy, and of stealing the bezpopovtsy's sacred space, icons, and legacy, but emotional, spiritual, and social devastation of the split should not be lost in the particulars. For the most part, my interlocutors were now elders in their respective churches, who remembered well the past vitality of their urban enclave, and whose pain over lost siblings, icons, and sacred spaces (church and cemetery) was terribly clear. Below, we hear traces Delia's narrative, Lola's mother, nearly lost to the record.

5.1.4. Public and Private Contestations

Months after I returned from the field, Lola called me via telephone to say she had found some extra documents from the split (pers. comm, November 18, 2013). When we had talked nine months before, she believed that she had burned such materials—painful reminders of a time she simply did not want to remember. Some of the information was entirely new to me: early

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[272] CN President of the Church Parish Council letter to congregation, July 28, 1983; notably a different individual than the one who wrote to inform the congregation of the June 13, 1982 SCM that began to organize the RSG.

[273] Lola had a blank, undated petition form. It may be a draft, extra copy, or an unsent record of dissent.

newsletter articles, fundraising letters for the establishment of the Church of the Holy Trinity for the stalwart bezpopovtsy, other letters, and a few session notes from the RSG meetings. But a few of the duplicates had new information—her mother, Delia, had heavily notated the letters written by the soon-to-be Priest, contradicting his every statement.

Fr. Simon's "Restoration Packet" (containing the RSG minutes, correspondence with ROCOR, congregational letters, and other documents) held relatively few documents of the bezpopovtsy faction's response to the Church of the Nativity leadership's (Fr. Simon, RSG moderator, CN President) many missives to congregants. Lola's archive allow us to hear a voice of dissent,[274] and compare a bezpopovtsy elder's personal, private, point of view with the limited written record's personal, theological, and historical narratives of opposition. The record accessible to the greater public and the exposure in the press of the community's schism to the city of Erie remains a painful matter for both sides.

The microschisms broke the Erie and Nikolaevsk congregations internally, and externally, any shell they had was cracked and allowed an external eye into the enclave. They were "in the papers." Nikolaevsk was very quietly ignored until there was a conflict. While Old Believer religious life may be social in both practice (like all religions) and in community assurances of its individual members' upholding its ritual precepts and moral standards (Chapter Three), in relation to the world at large and all the Others it is very private. Delia's opposition was a private matter, unheard, written notes in the margins of Fr. Simon's letters to the congregation, like yelling at the television Both sides bristled at how their very private conflict had been made public. The Nikolaevsk bezpopovtsy felt similarly, and the elders decided to no longer discuss the split with journalists from the local newspaper, *Homer News* (Gay, *HN,* May 16, 1985, 11).

Lola wrote a note at the top of Fr. Simon's July 11, 1983 letter to the congregation to state that the comments filling the margins and the spaces between paragraphs were written when Delia was 72 years old. It was a letter Father Simon wrote to the congregation shortly before he was to be ordained in which he apologizes, not for his recommendation for priesthood restoration, but for the turmoil, his own shortcomings, and any resulting hurt that could have been avoided in the process. Delia's response to his apology? "You are a <u>lawyer</u> at heart," her intended insult underlined.

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[274] Most notably the request for Fr. Simon's resignation and a request to have vote thrown out.

Of course, arguments for and against the split were not only theological and historical, for what could be more personal than faith? The personal elements of the bezpopovtsy's dissent fall into two categories: 1] Criticism of Fr. Simon and 2] The alignment of the bezpopovtsy with the religious efforts of their forefathers and mothers as keepers of the "true religion" (Delia's notes). Father Simon's credibility was questioned in several ways:

> 1] That he fraternized with the enemy, or he was out-right condemned as a Nikonian himself. This corresponds with Delia's accusation that the hierarchy he offered is Nikonian, and not of their religion. "Niconions, not the old believers" is written at the top of two letters. Also, "He found a Niconian [hierarchy], not our kind." And "they are not our old Religion."
>
> 2] That he had lied: "You promised at the dinner[275] you wouldn't change a thing" and "You said you could never lead our congregation if we were not compatible with the other congregations. We are not only not compatible with the other congregations but they themselves have confusions because of your decision and acts against our faith" (anon. September 1982).
>
> 3] That he did not even know any Russian. "Go to the library and get the history on our old religion and the killing of our people." (Delia's notes)

In the bezpopovtsy's illustration of the microschism events, Fr. Simon was painted as a liar and a traitor, who "split every family" on one hand, while they claimed the preservation of the true, Orthodox, faith of their parents. "Our faith," "our religion," "our people," "our kind," or "our priests/bishops" who were killed by "them" (the Nikonians) is the common theme of Delia's notes. "These Niconians were after our old Priests to join them, but they are not of our faith. We could have had them long ago, but Father Smolakov knew the true Religion and kept the old Russian faith" (Delia's notes). Simply, New Rite ("Niconian") Russian Orthodoxy had broken continuity with the authentic Church, further condemned themselves by persecuting the "true religion," and was a *different* faith incompatible with their own.

A petition titled, "From all true Russian Orthodox Old believers of the Pomortsi Faith" presented the same polarization between the faithful "us" and the heretical, Nikonian "them." But, the collective them who voted to join ROCOR are not criticized, only their leader is blamed. "We can no longer tolerate the direction that Father Simon is trying to persuade us to follow. He has forsaken the creeds, dogmas and traditions of the Pomortsi Faith and in his heart accepted the faith of the Niconian Orthodoxy." The petition at once calls him an un-true traitor, Nikonian, and

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[275] No record as to what event Delia was referencing.

a false prophet leading the faithful into heresy.[276] In another letter, the Church of the Nativity was called "the Nikonian Church" (*CHT*, June 20, 194). The first four of eleven points given in a September 1982 request for Father Simon's resignation outline this argument:

> I. You have admittedly accepted dogmas of a religion not of our faith and that does not comply with the charter of our church.
> II. You have admittedly participated in a service of this new religion.
> III. You have condoned priests from religions, other than ours, to pray and participate in our services.
> IV. You are outwardly persuading members of our faith to join another faith. (anon. September 1982)

The Erie church was founded as the "...Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of the Nativity, according to the dogmas, canons and precepts of the old believers..." (Court of Common Pleas of Erie County, No 128, 295), specifically those of the priestless Pomortsy, as proclaimed on their 1919 cornerstone (Mark 12:10-11; AOB January 1983). While there was always a priested tradition within Old Belief, it was not a part of "our faith" as conceived by these Erie Pomortsy. To rewrite history and reinterpret the ROC schism was considered to be a denial of their priestless heritage and their parents' practices (which may jeopardize their salvation). When the four Pomortsy congregations met in September 1984 for their last sobor they had three purposes: 1] Honor the original Old Believers; 2] Honor the CN founders, "our Humble Parents...who would not give up their faith"; and 3] Honor the steadfast people "...who are not going to give up their faith—who were born 'STAROVERI' and who will died 'STAROVERI.' Not <u>NIKONIANS and Not Anything Else</u> they want us to be (*PC* 1984).

The bezpopovtsy's narrative of the ROC schism answers the RSG's main question, "Restoration of the Full Rites of the Church-is it possible?" (*CN*, RSG Outline) with a resounding "No!" They rejected Fr. Simon's theo-historical logic that argued that as heresy is the only cause for rejecting the ministrations of a priest, and since the Nikonian reforms were wrong-headed and ruthlessly applied but <u>*not*</u> heretical, the ROC retained Grace and apostolic succession. In other words, the Church never died. The bezpopovtsy holds the opposite narrative. In Lola's archive we see again and again their clear declaration that *their* priesthood died, the hierarchy was lost, the

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[276] An important role in Old Believer eschatology, the false prophet, who at the time of the schism was not Nikon, but the scholar Arsenii Sukhanov, who supported him. Nikon was the beast, and Tsar Alexis the serpent in this "unholy trinity" (Cherniavsky 1966, 14, Figure 6).

Church is dead, because the ROC most definitely committed heresy.

Fr. Simon's and Delia's arguments both demonstrate how intimately dogma and history are combined. It also shows that Delia was not unaware of Old Believer history and just blindly following the traditions (*pamiats*) her parents taught her. And it was apparent that she resented this criticism. When Fr. Simon wrote, "although most of you never understood the distinction between being a Nastavnik and a Priest, I did" (Fr. Simon, July 11, 1983; also RSG 3, September 22, 1982), she responded, "We knew, speak for yourself" and "We knew this much better than you even before you were born," (Delia's notes).[277]

A major part Pomortsy oral tradition centers on persecution, as they are descendants of the defenders of the siege of Solovetsky (1668-1676). "Our bishops and priests were all killed and so we lost our true blessing. Our people died for the full rites. They were all killed." Another note reads, "We would love to have communion, but all our Bishops and Priests were killed." Fr. Larry said the same (pers. comm, April 28, 2013; and *PC* 1984, 6).

The RSG meetings are remembered as angry shouting matches rather than the calm, orderly seminars that one might infer from the minutes. Although she was not on the committee, Lola attended several meetings, which she described as "brutal" and "tragic" events that left her feeling physically ill (pers. comm., February 7, 2013). The minutes only present the lecture and Fr. Simon's logic, not the hour or more commentary and questions that followed. Although these were recorded and made available to the congregation at large, I was unable to track down their location during my fieldwork research.

The RSG update in a congregational *Social News* stated that there was an "overwhelming response" in favor of allowing "...anyone outside the Study Group who has some substantial arguments counter to the continuation of the succession to dress the group...as long as it was backed up with other then personal opinions" (*CN*, October 31, 1982). Fr. Yokoff took on the mantel of the voice of the opposition. He was grilled on his sources, and answered repeatedly that yes, Nikon DID commit heresy (as have Christian Others), therefore the Church, Eucharist, and

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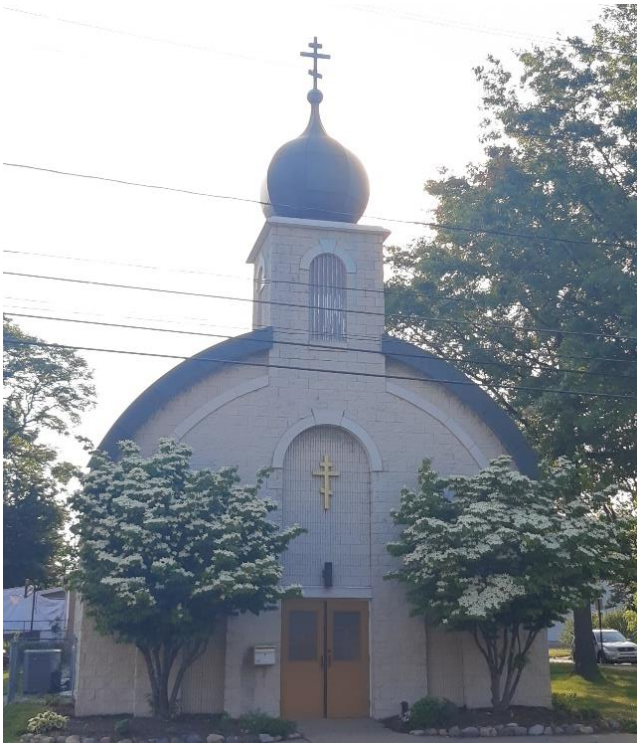
[277] Elsewhere, in the summary of the RSG given to the September 1984 Pomortsy sobor: "Without going into the minute details of all that transpired at these meetings we soon learned what a cunning man we had appointed to be our Nastavnik. He wanted us to embark upon a new path, a path that had been laid out centuries, until it became hidden by the brush of weeks of Division, Hatred, Schism, Ignorance and Demoniac Assault" (emphasis in original, summary section is quoted, appears to be from a named minority member of the committee).

apostolic succession, were lost (RSG 9, November 17, 1982; See Appendix 4 for chart of question topics). One of ten meetings condensed the bezpopovtsy argument, and it was followed by Fr. Simon's rebuttal. But their dissent is evident:

Image 13: Church of the Holy Trinity (Estb. 1984)



Each side blamed the other for exposure of their church dispute and the establishment of the second Old Rite church in Erie to the public eye. This is not the first time that the airing of "private matters" had caused qualms internally. Who was "on the outs" (i.e. not in good standing) became the neighborhood gossip to the point that congregants were demanded not to discuss such private (congregational) matters in public (non-believers) (Robson 1985, 79-80n10 cites CN meeting minutes from February 16, 1947; 1998, 5).

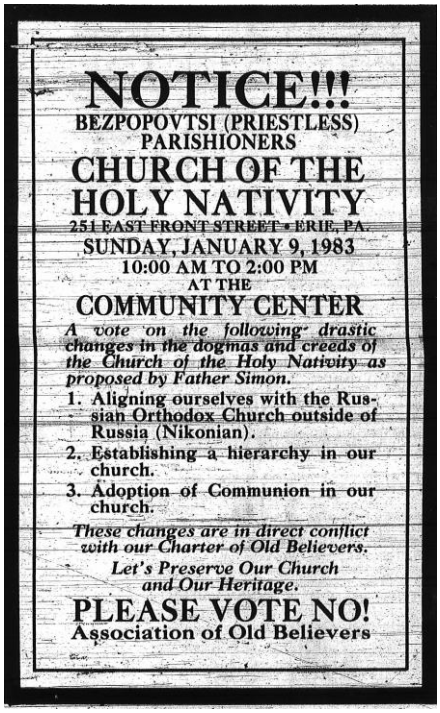
"*Really Amber, do you think this was necessary to put in the paper*?" Lola wrote to me on a post-it stuck to the backside of her newspaper clipping of the 1984 article on the Church of the Nativity's "first Christmas under Orthodox hierarchy." The front page of "The Sunday Living" section showed the priested mid-service and proudly displaying icons and quoted their joy about sharing communion as they proclaim "Christos razhaetsya!" (Christ is born; Knapp and Grygo, *TN,* January 8, 1984). It was one of many Erie newspaper articles over the years that discussed the timing and traditions of Orthodox Easter and Christmas. At the end of the article, below its closing

line, was a picture of a two-story building with upper-level double bay windows jutting over a very plain, humble front with dark drapes drawn behind the two large windows that herald its unpretentious outer screen door. Poking out through the left curtains is a small bunch of flowers tied with a ribbon. The caption reads: "This building, above, is temporary site of the Church of the Holy Trinity of the Old Believers of Erie, which recently broke away from the Church of the Nativity" (Knapp and Grygo, *Times-News*, January 8, 1984, 2D).

In essence, to say that the bezpopovtsy "broke away" is to all but name them Raskol'niki ("schismatics"). The term is as inaccurate here as it was in the 1660s. I made that mistake myself, when I asked Lola to show me who on the RSG list of members "left." *"Left?! No, we did not leave." I stammered, "no, I'm sorry, kicked out." "Yes, we stayed"* (Lola, pers. comm., February 7, 2013). Physically, they were no longer at the Church of the Nativity, a building, but they are not the ones who left their *Church*. They remained Pomortsy. They did not break away. Like before, they were exiled for not changing. The caption stung.

On the other side, Father Simon pointed out his embarrassment at the notice of the restoration vote published in local newspapers, and on Christmas day no less!

Image 14: NOTICE!!![x]



NOTICE!!!
BEZPOPOVTSI (PRIESTLESS)
PARISHIONERS
CHURCH OF THE
HOLY NATIVITY
251 EAST FRONT STREET • ERIE, PA.
SUNDAY, JANUARY 9, 1983
10:00 AM TO 2:00 PM
AT THE
COMMUNITY CENTER
A vote on the following drastic changes in the dogmas and creeds of the Church of the Holy Nativity as proposed by Father Simon.
1. Aligning ourselves with the Russian Orthodox Church outside of Russia (Nikonian).
2. Establishing a hierarchy in our church.
3. Adoption of Communion in our church.

These changes are in direct conflict with our Charter of Old Believers.
Let's Preserve Our Church and Our Heritage.
PLEASE VOTE NO!
Association of Old Believers

Several local newspaper articles were published on the issue in the days that surrounded the vote. Fr. Simon's objection to both the notice and the public airing of a private dispute was simultaneously published.[278] He said he only agreed to make a statement after he was informed that the story was considered newsworthy and would run with or without his commentary.

> The conservative group, calling itself the Association of Old Believers, is running an advertisement in *Erie Daily Times*, objecting to the 'drastic changes in the dogmas and creeds' of the church. The ad claims the changes would lead to an alignment with the Nikonian Church, or the Orthodox Church Outside Russia; establish a hierarchy, or ordained priests; and adopt a liturgy. The issues are complex, even to the members of this small sect. Fr. Simon maintains they are an internal matter which would be further confused by publicity. The Association of Old Believers, after considering a public statement, said they would let the ad speak for itself, at least until after Sunday's congregational meeting. (Thompson, *Erie Daily Times*, January 7, 1983)

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[x] (*Erie Daily Times,* January 7, 1983, 3a and *Morning News*, January 7, 1983, 11a) Ran in both papers that day, morning and evening editions. I did not find in earlier issues. Also included in Robson's Old Believer Exhibition in 1998 (14, exhibition number 47).

[278] A more detailed discussion of the controversial, "NOTICE!!!" ad, and a retelling of Fr. Simon's initial reluctance to speak, and his following statement can be found in an article that ran the next day (*Times News*, January 8, 1983, 6A).

The "NOTICE!!!" was an act of desperation. Calling all Old Believers: Change must be averted. I would think that active members would be well-aware of the date of the vote, even those who had already stopped attending. Both sides made claims that the others were the inactive members, that the RSG was filled with them, or that the bezpopovtsy called up family members who had not been to church in decades (pers. comm.). I cannot help but wonder who the ad was aimed at. Those who had moved away would not receive the paper, and they were by the CN's regulations supposed to be mailed ballots (*CN*, December 9, 1979). But had there been enough time? These accusations against the process and vote's legitimacy were just a few of the reasons bezpopovtsy's active dissent did not end at the vote, as we see below.

5.1.5. Debate and Democracy: Competing models of Unity

Detailed ethnohistories of congregational schisms are particularly valuable to the study of Orthodox Christianity because its decision-making process is dogma. Consensus makes the Church a divine mystery, ensures its unity with the Holy Spirit which leads it, and in turn, assures the authority and legitimacy of the Church through apostolic succession and the Holy Spirit's confirmation of orthodoxy through conciliar consensus (Troeltsch [1911] 1960, 92-100; Humphrey 2014, 221n10). Therefore, the breakdown of consensus is a theological and social matter of great significance. For Old Believers with ambiguous authority structures, authentication is an especially tenuous procedure. Here, I present how the process of decision-making itself came under fire during the Erie microschism. The minority side not only challenged the happenstance and result of the vote, but repudiated democracy, both the process of voting and the idea of the power of individuals to affect rule rather than the consensus of the group to find continuity with the will of God's for his Church. In other words, the consensus versus democratic decision-making methods is another instance of selective modernity laid bare by schism.

Votes crystalize divisions and allow researchers to draw a timeline of change that is clearly punctuated by conscious choices. Schisms enact change; therefore, these ruptures are of interest to all those who study 'fundamentalist' and other groups who actively seek continuity with a given tradition (religious or otherwise). Exacerbating the conflict between change and continuity was the fact that the conservative bezpopovtsy in Erie saw their church's use of democratic models of decision-making as a modern deviation. Democracy empowers individual voices. Conversely, traditional methods of sobornost' and conciliar consensus are believed to draw their legitimacy from the Holy Spirit.

Dogma is defined during ecumenical councils, as the Holy Spirit (circuitously evidenced by unanimity and consensus) confirms pravoslavnye, right faith and practice. Additionally, the Orthodox ensure continuity with apostles and with the intentions of Christ in founding the new covenant through the writings of the scriptures, early saints, or "Church Fathers," and the canon of councils (Holy Fathers, scriptures, canon law, *GC* xvii-xviii). Consensus marks the authority of powers higher than the 'rule of the people.' For his part, Fr. Simon attempted to explain how Church unity is created amidst a diversity of opinion (and, even, ritual particularities; RSG 1, August 25, 1982, 5), and is maintainable through continuity with the writings of the holy scriptures and Fathers (more on the 'question-answerers' in following chapter).

Unity is a creation of consensus; this is the purpose of councils. But since unanimity is rarely (if ever) achieved, the conciliar process of assembly (whether of hierarchs and bishops, or nastavniki, elders, and/or laypersons) to form a consensus is not without its remainder—the heretics and schismatics. The minority factions of the priesthood dispute in Erie and Nikolaevsk did not agree with the consensus, and therefore two new congregations, and four separate unions of ORRO continuity, were forged.

Heretical others were created by each of the Seven Universal Ecumenical Councils held before the Great Schism (1054) finalized the growing divide between the East and West (See Glossary). Most of these denounced threads of thought have to do with the tricky issue of Jesus Christ's human/divine dualistic nature, or Christology. Certain ideas became heresy and non-Christian in the Councils' act of defining key concepts. For example, the Nicene Creed (or, "Confession of Orthodox Faith") composed during the first Ecumenical Councils (Nicaea 325) defined Christianity, what Christian's believe, and who Jesus Christ was. It also declared Arianism (belief that Christ is Son of God, created, secondary and not consubstantial with God the Father) heretical.

The second Ecumenical Council (381, Constantinople) added a definition of the Holy Spirit to the Creed. In doing so the Church took an official position. Again, the council encoded dogma and set the boundary of church belonging between those who did, and did not, avow the Creed. It also cast out the Pneumatomachi who denied the Holy Spirit's divinity. And of course, the filioque addition to this definition was the straw on the camel's back, the salvation deal-breaker,

between the East and West in 1054.[279]

On a much smaller-scale, individual enclaves and priestless congregations use elders' councils to elect a nastavnik. They also hold sobory of members in good standing to make decisions. For example, Old Believers in Alaska had many decisions to make in their new country to determine the boundaries of their intentionally segregated community. Morris (1991) described the traditional practice of consensus-finding through sobory:

> In decision making, cohesiveness is maintained by the traditional rule of unanimous consent. Issues are brought up at the Sobor, a meeting of the congregation. Discussion is continued until all sides have modified their views to arrive at unanimous consent. Thus the important religious concept of 'in union' [sobornost'] is preserved, even in administrative affairs. (Morris 1991, 347)

Could they eat in restaurants since the food was prepared by unclean non-believers? Could they watch TV? (Smithson 1977, 272; Gay, *HN*, May 23, 1985, 13; Scheffel 1991, 61-2; Silva 2009, 46-8). More prohibitions remain as guiding principles rather than binding rules for practice, but each nastavnik and sobor decides for its congregation when and how transgressions against its moral order are made.

While the bezpopovtsy critiqued the very process of voting, this process had a precedent. For example, the literal foundation of the Church of the Nativity was voted on in 1918 when the "majority ruled" to determine their church's contractor after some "dissent" (Robson 1985, 68). The Pomortsy Conference of 1955 also recorded voting on a disputed issue (*PC* 3, 1955, Q1) and in the Church of the Nativity, "Nastavniki have been chosen through a basic democratic process. Usually, a committee has been formed to find one or more qualified men (always men), and from those the Church makes a decision by vote" (Robson 1985, 72).

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[279] Nikon's dissenters rejected a new translation in his texts that altered the Creed's definition of the Holy Spirit from "Lord and True" to simply "Lord." Fr. Simon argued that the former use of both words was due to a faulty translation of the originally Greek "To Kirion," which can be translated as either, but not both, true or Lord (RSG 4, September 29, 1982, 7; for detailed discussion of this issue see P. Meyendorff 1991, 177-180).

Figure 9: Church of the Nativity Congregational Votes

Date	Type	Proposition	Assent	Dissent	Abstain
Dec. 17, 1978[xi]	Special Congregational Meeting (SCM)	Begin services in English	109 (78%)	33	0
Dec. 2, 1979	Board of Elders	Definition of "good standing"	18 (90%)	2	0
Dec. 9, 1979[xii]	SCM	Several motions to unify and prevent Fr. S from resigning	240 (93%)	17	0
Aug. 8, 1982	Regular Quarterly Meeting (RQM)	Eliminate the Slavonic Vesper Service	55 (80%)	14	0
Dec. 1, 1982	Restoration Study Group (RSG)	Approve Fr. Simon's recommendation on the priesthood question	24 (60% of 40 members) group; 73% of 33 who voted)	7	2
Jan. 9, 1983	SCM/Full Congregational Vote	Restore Priesthood	75%[xiii]	25%	

[xi] Robson (1985, 116 and 1994, 133) discusses the meeting and quotes the minutes. I am not in possession of these minutes.

[xii] *CN*, December 13, 1979

[xiii] Robson only gives these percentages (1985, 132 and 1994, 136). This is the same source cited by Holdeman (2002; 113) who likewise does not give an exact count of the votes. Very surprised a record of this is not in one of the many documents on the restoration kept by Father Simon or given in the official Church of the Nativity's response (complete with 6 enclosures of past meetings' minutes and congregational letters) to the Association of Old Believers' January 13, 1983 request to have the vote thrown out (CN Executive Board, c. January 14, 1983).

The conservative faction of the church had a pre-existing antipathy towards voting after its experience with the last vote in the English/Slavonic controversy, which discontinued Slavonic vespers, on August 8, 1982, seventeen days before the RSG's first meeting. One of the eleven reasons listed in the request for Fr. Simon's resignation (anon., September 1982) was that, "You have accepted translations of our Slavonic language without any consideration from any committees, as you promised." The bezpopovtsy faction also criticized this vote because it took place at a Regular Quarterly Meeting (RQM), instead of an SCM, which usually garner greater attendance (Robson 1985, 117). And indeed, as shown in Figure 9 far fewer individuals were there to vote on the deathblow to CS.

In some documents, it appears that the terms consensus and vote are used interchangeably. For example, in the discussion about the RSG's upcoming vote to determine whether or not to suggest unification with ROCOR to the congregation of large. There appears to have been some back and forth within the RSG about the outline of events to come, how the vote would be worded. Notable point—this was written before Fr. Yokoff had his chance to present his opposition to unification. The path was messy, but the destination was all but ascertained:

> Father's recommendation would finally be that we can make no consensus at the present time for we need to find out what is going to happen in our parish before we make any type of determination. Once we have determined whether or not we are going to have two parishes, who's going and who's staying and who's going to take up those parishes, then the group that is interested in following through with this possibility [reconciliation] would have a consensus presented to them by the study committee and the study committee at that time ought to make a recommendation. Whatever parish would be looking at that ought to vote at that time whether this would be something they want to do. No vote should be taken at present time. (RSG 8, November 10, 1982, 8)

Bezpopovtsy called into question the validity of the priesthood vote before it took place in an "official protest" to the CN's Executive Board written between December 27, 1982, and January 8, 1983, and signed "MEMBER- Church of the Holy Nativity." Its first paragraph indicates it was written in direct response to a CN Executive Board letter (December 27) that clarified that the next step was the vote, and *only* a vote. The writer argued that determining the wording of the vote was not going to be undertaken by the entirety of the congregation, it would not be properly recorded in the minutes, proposed and seconded, motioned and questioned, during an SCM as they had

been "led to believe" in an earlier (FS, December 3, 1982) letter (MEMBER- Church of the Holy Nativity, December 27, 1982-January 8, 1983).

The Executive Board's December 27th letter stated that this prerequisite was fulfilled by the SCM held on December 12, 1982, which had been specifically called "...for the introduction of a resolution on the restoration of the full rites of the Church according to the Pre-Nikonian rites of the Russian Orthodox Church" (FS, December 3, 1982). The letter also outlined the Executive Board's decisions[280] on the manner of voting and gave the specific wording of the ballot:

> (1) I am for restoration under Father Simon as outlined in the Study Committee letter of December 3, 1982 at the present location (Church of the Nativity, 251 East Front Street).
> (2) I am against restoration as outlined by the Study Committee in the letter of December 3, 1982. (CN Executive Board Letter)

Notably, the definition of "good standing", which determines an individual's suffrage, was *voted* on in 1979 (see Figures 8 and 10). Officers were present at the January 9th vote to check whether people were "...presently a member in good standing of the church" and all family members ages 18-24 attending school were entitled to vote (CN Executive Board, December 27, 1982).

The bezpopovtsy officially requested the vote to be declared invalid in a January 13th letter, again critiquing the timing, how and by whom the vote was worded, as well as absentee ballot issues (validation of good standing, not everyone receiving ballots, and again, timing).[281] The now popovtsy Church of the Nativity's rebuttal enclosed six documents of meeting minutes and letters to conclude on each objection that "The Executive Board finds no reason to discard the vote of January 9, 1983 because of your above quoted comments."

Others saw the vote, and the RSG and Executive Board's membership as weighed in favor of Fr. Simon's large sphere of influence, and family.[282] This is another reason why Barbara

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[280] The Executive Board held a meeting on December 23, 1982 to settle these details. Minutes from this meeting were included (Enclosure D) in their response to a January 13, 1983 request to annul the vote (CN Executive Board, c. January 14, 1983), but I am missing this document.

[281] I am missing this letter, but from extensive quotes given in the rebuttal (CN Executive Board, c. January 14, 1983) show that it was very similar to the points raised in the bezpopovtsy's pre-vote objection, often differing only in tense.

[282] The Simons were an early and very prolific family in the church, 10 separate Simon families were recorded in the earliest CN baptismal records, several of whom had many children (Fred and Julia had 9, first in 1897; John and Anna had 12, the first in 1903; Sam and Xenia had 9, the first in 1903; George and Anna had 8, the first in 1913; and Thomas and Pauline had 10, the first in 1913) (CNMB 1, 381-397).

(bezpopovtsy) argued that "democracy doesn't work in a church." "Simon," a name she never failed to pronounce with heavy distain, "had eight aunts and uncles and a big family, of course they voted with him! Some were pushing for the vote because they were sick of talking about it anymore. So, they voted, and he won" (pers. comm., November 25, 2012). Four Simons were on the RSG, and they all received chrismation along with 18 other Simons in 1983 (CNMB 9).

Other family names were also heavily represented on the 1983 chrismation lists (18 Popoffs, including a later CN deacon and a priest, 17 Petroffs, and 14 Orloffs) (CNMB 9). But, "who's the head of their Church now?" Barbara asked me, seemingly vindicated. "The Moscow Patriarchy," I answered. "Simon didn't want it, he wanted to stay with ROCOR, but that's how it goes with a democracy. Now, the Church of the Nativity is a part of the same church that Putin attends, Mr. KGB" (pers. comm., November 25, 2012). If Fr. Simon's name was pronounced with disdain, then Putin's was said with utter malice, and this was before Russia's annexation of Crimea (2014) rebooted the Cold War. Fr. Simon admitted his initial trepidation about the unification between ROC and ROCOR, and that it validated his efforts to secure the CN's autonomy from ROCOR in terms of priest choice and general management, although a friend at the time had told him, "that he was writing the divorce into the marriage" (pers. comm., December 27, 2012).

There is an assumption embedded in the voting procedure that the group is collectively capable of determining the correct path. When the four remaining bezpopovtsy congregations conferred on September 1, 1984, they decided to no longer vote on anything, not limited to, but *especially* on religious matters.

> The group made a decision, we do not vote in our church on any religious matters. We voted 2 years ago on a religious matter and we lost our church. WE WILL NEVER DO THAT AGAIN. All the Nast[a]vniki have agreed never vote on religious matters. You have Holy-Books – you open the books and there is your answer...

They also agreed on measures to limit future "bickering" and squabbling over who knows the best, most correct way to keep the faith would have no place in their future get togethers.

> Our purpose is UNITY. We can't have UNITY if you are going to bicker. We will ask anyone if they would like to speak but, if it's a religious matter, we have men who, if they can't give you an answer immediately they will table it and will later look up the answer in the Holy Books. You Don't Have To Vote. (*PC* 1984, 2; also, Robson 1985, 135)

The main thing on the agenda for the last bezpopovtsy conference in September 1984 was to evaluate what the four congregations are doing and how, going forward, they would maintain their traditions. How were they going to keep "UNITY"? They appeared to lay their trust in the

books and traditional consensus-finding, but also to accept congregational idiosyncrasy. A meeting of the Association of Old Believer held a year before the new bezpopovtsy church was completed (1984) outlined the new congregational authority structures of their church, (including a board of 7-11 appointed, life-term, members called the "Dohovnic Committee"), and path to determining how best to keep their faith in the modern world:

> Our committee will be independent from the other churches. We will resolve our own problems. We will give help to the other churches by their request. Final passing of all issues by the presiding nastavnik...[Committee] membership by appointment only. Term is life. Members may be expelled under certain instances...All our decisions will come from the Holy Book – it will not be by vote. We are praying that all four congregations can get together as one. This is one of our goals. (AOB, November 6, 1983)

After the break in the largest Pomortsy congregation in the U.S., the four churches officially declared their shift from concord to congregational decision-making. The east coast bezpopovtsy, those few who continue to practice that is, have retained good relations and co-religiosity with one another. For their part, the popovtsy have maintained a high degree of congregational autonomy despite their affiliation with the Moscow Patriarchy (MP). In Oregon and Alaska, the Chasovennye have long relied on congregational sobory, or councils of elders (startsy) for decisions large and small. I now turn to their unique microschism trajectory as they grappled with the same priesthood question on the other side of the continent.

5.2. Nikolaevsk's Microschism

Old Believers in Erie and Nikolaevsk have forged four separate paths of religious continuity. Each path claims legitimacy, orthodoxy, and (hopefully) grace. The nearly synonymous issues of authenticity, continuity, and legitimate authority were at the heart of the original ROC schism *and* the primary distinction between the popovtsy and bezpopovtsy branches. For bezpopovtsy in both places, to question whether apostolic succession survived the ROC's fall into heresy challenged their theo-historical narrative and identity as unique and persecuted carriers of *true* Orthodoxy. A thorough review of the Nikolaevsk microschism and its aftermath reveals essential components of ORRO beliefs about the contemporary state of the Church (ecclesiology) and modern world at large (eschatology) and their self-identification as preservers of the pre-Nikonian Russian Orthodox Church.

Both the Erie and Nikolaevsk congregations divided over the priesthood question, yet the scope of the issues surrounding this question was unique for each community. In Erie, the RSG

asked themselves whether the ROC retained grace. In Nikolaevsk, people asked themselves whether a legitimate Old Rite hierarchy existed anywhere. In other words, Erie asked whether *this was* the Church and Nikolaevsk asked whether *there was* a Church. Both congregations in Nikolaevsk appeared to agree that Nikon's reforms were heretical. As heresy is the ultimate salvation deal-breaker, the anathema reversals were not a "precipitating factor" of their microschism (Wilson 1971) as they were in Erie. Among the Nikolaevsk popovtsy, I heard of no doubt that the ROC had unequivocally lost grace, nor did I observe any ambiguity about the New Rite's status as NOT "Orthodox and Saving."

The Nikolaevsk and Erie Old Believer priesthood debates present two trajectories of decision-making processes that culminated in the two congregations' priesthood factions joining different hierarchies. While both disputes involved raised voices and hard words, the Alaskan group did not organize into special commissions of structured study groups or hold formal votes. Instead, its process demonstrates close diasporic ties between other Chasovennye communities in South America, Oregon, and Alberta (and for the popovtsy, Romania) largely lost by Erie Old Believers. There were likely countless conversations on the subject between the villages that went unrecorded, a telephonic sobor if you will.

In Nikolaevsk, members' historical and theological research was far more individualized, and unfortunately, less documented. It was a relatively new 'community' whose members had not known each other their whole lives or grown up in the same country. Perhaps they would never have considered themselves co-religious before circumstances brought them together. The Alaskan microschism was less structured in terms of committees and votes and more volatile. What can be learned of the split is conveyed in local newspaper articles written by outsiders and the memories of those who were there. Unpleasant memories bitterly hardened into selective and blatantly biased tales reveal more in their tone than they relate do in their content. From these limited sources (the first priest, Fr. Kondraty, having since passed) I will attempt to portray 'what happened' with the realization that sentimental history may speak more to present feelings than the past decision-making processes. I close this chapter with a discussion of these contemporary tensions and the residual trauma still felt by living members of the community.

5.2.1. Lost and/or Found: The Belaya Krinitsa

For clarity's sake I will begin with the most basic point of difference between the Erie and Nikolaevsk popovtsy—they joined different, non-co-religious hierarchies. As shown in the RSG's

organized argument (Figure 8), Erie popovtsy determined that since Nikon's reforms were not heretical, the ROC never lost apostolic succession, and, having annulled the anathemas against the Old Believers, they could forge an ecumenical relation with the New Rite institution. The Nikolaevsk (and Oregon) popovtsy joined the Romanian Belaya Krinitsa (BK) hierarchy that stemmed from a bishop's conversion to the Russian Old Rite in the mid-nineteenth century (Chapter Four).

While the pattern of the east coast and west coast popovtsy diverged early in their quests for a hierarchical Church, several commonalities remain between the two congregations' ecclesiological narrative. Dennis Fefelov, son of Nikolaevsk's first priest (Fr. Kondraty), recounted that his father began with the same realization Fr. Simon had had that their services were missing a lot of liturgical details besides the main gap: the Eucharist. The elders wanted to know more about the sections in the old books they had to skip—that is, the words a priest would say and the acts a priest would perform. The select few priesthood-curious Chasovennye Old Believers who made the first trip to Romania, where they saw the full liturgy for the first time, were struck by just how much they had lost along with the hierarchy (Silva 2009, 66; DF, pers. comm., August 1, 2013).

As discussed in Chapter Two, the Old Believers in the western U.S. and Canada are broadly categorized as Chasovennye, a de facto priestless Old Belief concord that traces its lineage to the beglopopovtsy who accepted "fugitive priests" converted from New to Old Rite Russian Orthodoxy. When the BK hierarchy was founded in 1846, Chasovennye congregations were in a position similar to that of American Old Believers after the 1974 ROCOR anathema reversal. Priesthood (more specifically the rite of ordination) was a possibility, and now congregations had to determine whether the BK bishops had apostolic succession and legitimacy. This question had caused microschisms in the past (for example, within Nekrasovtsy/Kubantsy groups in Turkey, Piepkorn 1979, 111).

The Nikolaevsk Chasovennye were repeating history. As Dennis said, "They always had it in their minds that there was a priesthood somewhere." The grandparents of Alaskan Old Believers had themselves debated whether the BK hierarchy was legitimate. The Chasovennye in China where their parents and grandparents once lived had known of the hierarchy and had connections with the "Cossack" popovtsy groups who had fled to Australia. There were also BK in the Khabarovsk region from which the Harbintsy had fled. Fr. Kondraty returned to there four times to build a church, which was completed after ten years of effort in 1995 (NF, pers. comm.,

August 2, 2013). But at the time, their forefathers and mothers had "refused to acknowledge" the hierarchy's legitimacy because they were "stubborn" and "insisted on staying bezpopovtsy" (FN, pers. comm., August 18, 2013; NF, pers. comm., August 1-2, 2013). In a moment of relative security, individuals took the chance to reignite the search for the true hierarchy.

Dennis gave the more general "it is written in the Bible" pro-popovtsy argument behind his conviction that the Church survived the schism. I presumed he was referring to Fr. Simon's oft-quoted verse: "And I [Jesus] tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it" (Mt 16:18). Rumors had been (re)circulating since the 1970s about an extant priesthood or seminary somewhere in southeastern Europe and "they began to consider the possibility of locating a priest and returning to the village that pillar of the religious community" (Gay, *HN,* May 16, 1985, 10). The majority were convinced otherwise.

As in Erie, how community members discuss the start of the microschism is generally linked to accusations of "who started it." But unlike the Erie case, the person cited as responsible was not the nastavnik. Another member of the new popovtsy church and Fr. Kondraty's family told a newspaper reporter in 1985 that Prohor M.,[283] one of the four founders of Nikolaevsk, "had studied for years and years" before travelling to Greece, Italy, and finally Romania where he found an active Old Rite priesthood. "Finding that made him feel like he was home," and he returned to Nikolaevsk with the good news (Gay, *HN*, May 16, 1985, 10).

Fr. Kondraty's and Prohor's discovery motivated others to study the BK's claim (Gay, *HN*, May 16, 1985, 10). They did not immediately jump in excitement at the news. Would-be popovtsy in Erie and Nikolaevsk alike heavily researched their decision. "Some let the research drag on and on and never got to the point of accepting the hierarchy" (DF, pers. comm., August 5, 2013). Others flat-out rejected the possibility of priesthood immediately (theologically bezpopovtsy) or

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[283] Fr. Nikola told me that it was Prohor's wife, Galina, who knew (pers. comm., August 18, 2013). Dennis' story of how the priesthood was found aligns with others' detail-sketchy memories, although his is qualified as admittedly lacking because he had been living in KS at the time. He spoke more of Prohor's nephew, whose stepmother was from Bulgaria or Ukraine and knew of the Romanian hierarchy. He could not become priest himself because he remarried after his wife died in Alaska (pers. comm., August 5, 2013). The current nastavnik of Nikolaevsk divorced and remarried. Both Prohor and his nephew are commemorated on a plaque hung in Nikolaevsk School of the 59 Old Believers who became US citizens on July 19, 1975 in the first mass naturalization ceremony in Alaska (Loshbaugh, *HN,* April 16, 2000; Commemorative plaque, Nikolaevsk School).

denied the legitimacy of the BK hierarchy. One nastavnik who rejected the BK explained that he was "*bespopovetz*" because his congregation did not have a priest, but still popovtsy in the sense that he believed that as priests are scripturally told to be present in the latter days, they must be present now, therefore "valid priests are yet somewhere accessible" (Morris 1991, 349).

Originally some community members considered accessing the Belaya Krinitsa in the U.S.S.R. (which to complicate matters, is a separate, non-co-religious hierarchy of the same name),[284] but Fr. Kondraty was a denied a research visa to the land of his birth[285] (DF, pers. comm., Aug 5, 2013). Fr. Nikola dates Prohor and another individual's first trip to Romania in 1980. The following year, twelve[286] Old Believers based in Alaska (and perhaps Oregon as well, where a minority group also converted to popovtsy ORRO) travelled to Romania, ten of whom were re-baptized (with chrismation, which only a priest may offer) popovtsy while they were there (FN, pers. comm., August 18, 2013). When they found the active Romanian Belaya Krinitsa priesthood and "seminary," they decided to send someone who intended to study for ordination (Gay, 1988, 57). Dennis' father, Fr. Kondraty Fefelov, was chosen by the new converts as worthy of being their spiritual leader. He was ordained in Romania in 1983.

Whether to accept the BK's claim to legitimacy was a matter of independent study and personal faith. While elders did have to meet to decide how to formalize the divorce between the Alaskan popovtsy and bezpopovtsy, they did not hold the group studies and congregational votes that the Erie community did in its own process of decision-making. The schism process and fallout

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[284] Although the Romanian and Russian BK have not merged their hierarchies, Fr. Kondraty helped finance and organize the establishment of a church in Khabarovsk (near Russia's eastern coast), only 50 miles away from a *Nikolayevskaya*, and 450 miles from Harbin area where he once lived. His daughter-in-law, Nina Fefelov, who immigrated to U.S. from this region in 1991 was instrumental in this process. How Old Believers in the far east of Russia and Alaska came into contact in the mid-1980s is unclear (pers. comm., August 1-2, 2013). The church's information is found through the "Russian Orthodox Old Believer Church" (http://en.rpsc.ru/) under the Moscow Metropolitanate at Rogozhsky (Russian BK): http://rpsc.ru/church/geo/rossiya/habarovskij-kraj/ accessed May 14, 2019.

[285] (Efrosina, pers. comm., August 1, 2007; Silva 2009, 66). Fr. Nikola also said that it was easier to go to Romania than Russia at the time (pers. comm., August 18, 2013). Russia has recently granted eight Old Believer "leaders" in the U.S. and Brazil Russian citizenship before repatriation, a part of a program that moves ex-patriots to the Russian Far East https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/10/29/putin-gives-russian-passports-old-believers-us-brazil-a67952

[286] Fr. Kondraty's obituary stated that six families were baptized in Romania (*ADN*, May 18, 2008).

differed in Erie and Nikolaevsk, but the timeline of events discussed below shows a similar pattern.

Figure 10: Basic Timeline of Erie and Nikolaevsk Microschism

But, as Fr. Nikola said of his church's move to priesthood in direct comparison to Erie's organized process, "it wasn't that civilized."

5.2.2. "It wasn't that civilized"

After Fr. Nikola told me of the diasporic links and visits that converted the first of Nikolaevsk's bezpopovtsy to the Belaya Krinitsa Church, I asked if there were any sobory in Nikolaevsk or Oregon? How was the decision to rewrite their narrative of Church loss made? I described to him the discussion groups and debates held in Erie. Fr. Nikola replied, "No, there was not a lot of formal discussion. It did not go smoothly...It immediately started to break apart. It broke before Fr. Kondraty was even ordained." He used the word "civilized" as a synonym for reasoned order. Yet Erie had also experienced the yelling and vitriol, and the broken families and friendships. The process was different, but not the passion.

There are hints of accusations—of the bezpopovtsy majority's stubbornness or the popovtsy's bombastic zeal. Noteworthy in the order of events is that people were already split over the priesthood question (might a legitimate hierarchy exist?), but not the answer (Belaya Krinitsa). There were those who were willing to pursue the possibility of joining an institutional church, who in the end remained bezpopovtsy. The Harbintsy were in proximity to priested Old Believers (as well as New Rite "White Russians," who also fled after the Revolution), some of whom had left China for Australia at the same time that they left for Brazil and Argentina (FN, pers. comm., August 18, 2013). Bezpopovtsy Turchane (Dunaki) were in contact with priested (Kubancy/Nekrasovtsy) Old Believers in Turkey, and later in New Jersey. The authority claims of these internal Others had already been rejected for canonical (below) and ritual (ordained in Greek rite) reasons by those who remained without priests in China and Turkey.

The first issue surrounding Bishop Ambrosi's authority is whether he was *really* a bishop. This relates to Erie's RSG premise—did the ROC or other Orthodox Churches retain apostolic

succession? Were Nikon's reforms heretical? He was ordained and consecrated in the Greek ritual, which Nikon's New Rite emulated. Many in Nikolaevsk were not interested in studying the legitimacy of BK because they already believed the Church to be lost. In other words, while their Chasovennye ancestors in Russia had been beglopopovtsy, they were ideologically, as well as practically, bezpopovtsy. Circumstances surrounding the conversion or ordination of subsequent bishops were immaterial if Bishop Ambrosi's ordination could be discounted as non-Orthodox. He was not originally ordained in the Old Rite. Furthermore, some claimed he had received a "Latin baptism" (sprinkling rather than full emersion) and "if this were true, it would cast into doubt the orthodoxy of the entire line to which he gave rise" (Morris 1991, 29). To the bezpopovtsy, he had no claim to AS. Many beglopopovtsy in the mid-nineteenth century also doubted his Greek consecration and "...question[ed] whether he was even baptized properly" (RSG 5, October 6, 1982, 7). The second issue was that Bishop Ambrosi, in contravention of canon law (*AC* 1), founded the hierarchy by ordaining new bishops by himself when two or more bishops were required (the BK argue for emergency exceptions in cases of persecution and necessity).

Besides the fine points of Bishop Ambrosi's ordination and ordination of others and understanding of the current nature of the Church as an institutionalized organization for the distribution of grace, there is of course the issue of ritual practice. Some of those who considered the possibility of priesthood, even some of those who travelled all the way to Romania, rejected what they saw there. Some were too shocked by the differences in practices between their familiar bezpopovtsy molebin and the novel popovtsy liturgy. Others who chose to convert refused to be re-baptized, a long-standing issue for inter-OB group conversions. Again, the idea that popovtsy converts would need to be rebaptized, or have their marriages reconsecrated was a "particular offense" for this would imply the invalidity of their forebearers rites as "improperly blessed" (Morris 1991, 347; 4.3.2.). Gregori said that he was given the choice of whether to be re-baptized when he married into a popovtsy church; he chose not to because the idea of re-doing the rite made him "uncomfortable" (pers. comm., July 8, 2013).

The contemporary written record of Nikolaevsk's microschism does not contain these arguments. Reporters concentrated on the aftermath of people's decisions on the priesthood matter. The dispute became a spectacle—the enclave had been exposed. Police were called multiple times to ease tensions, "keep the peace," and patrolled the village. The "a Superior Court

judge" was even involved to settle who would retain use of the church (Gay, *HN*, May 16, 1985, 10).

Of course, arson, if it was in fact arson, is most 'uncivilized'. The summer after the split, on July 6, 1984, the Anchor Point Voluntary Fire Department responded to a fire at the bezpopovtsy church after their 7-9p.m. service in spiritual preparation for the early morning molebin to honor St. John the Baptist.[287] The popovtsy suggest that the fire began because a candle or incense censor had been left burning after services. This is certainly a plausible explanation; Erie's Church of the Nativity suffered such fires twice. Yet, while no one was ever charged and the cause of the fire was undetermined, some remain convinced that the popovtsy were to blame. There were rumors that a popovtsy man threatened to burn it down, but he denied this and produced an alibi (Gay, *HN*, May 16, 1985).

Boris: (stated as fact) *"They burned our church!"*

AS: *I remember reading about that. I've also heard of other fires in Orthodox churches, could it have been candles, lampi (oil lamps under ikons), or incense…?*

Boris: *No. There were no lampi, just candles. There were explosions. Well, someone heard explosions. I was in Oregon. It was after there was a big argument about the church building and they [popovtsy] built a new one. They said it was a candle, but candles don't explode."* (August 26, 2013)

As a local reporter wrote at the time, "With the old church burned, and the priestless without a chapel, the rift expanded into near-warfare…threats of violence were shouted in the road, neighbors yelled at each other across fences. An icy truce followed" (Gay, May 16, 1985). The truce still felt icy to me in 2013.

The popovtsy also suffered. While more bezpopovtsy began to move to the four Kachemak Bay villages (where almost everyone eschewed the priesthood option) after the conflict (Gay, *HN,* May 23, 1985, 13; Chappell, *ADN*, May 1, 1988), the one popovtsy family living in that area were driven out of town and back to Nikolaevsk. Efrosina remembered her cousins and former friends throwing rocks at her, and spitting at her, whenever, as a teenager, she was returning home from school (Silva 2009, 67; ES, pers. comm., August 1, 2007). Five years later a newspaper article recorded the lasting tensions affecting the village youth, at Nikolaevsk School, where the

[287] July 7th (June 24th Gregorian) fixed feast, Nativity of St. John the Baptist

"children call each other heretics" (Chappell, ADN, May 1, 1988).

In comparing the Nikolaevsk and Erie microschisms, one must keep in mind the age of each community. While this differentiating factor discounts immigration or Americanization as the cause of the conflicts, it is relevant to how the decision-making progressed. Nikolaevsk was settled only 15 years before its rupture by newly landed[288] U.S. immigrants. The village's 'community' members came from different countries and backgrounds, each rather isolated and congregationally idiosyncratic. As demonstrated by the Erie bezpopovtsy post-schism rejection of voting and embrace of congregational sobornost, the decision-making process and authoritative structures are key aspects of ORRO. The priesthood question forced careful consideration of the group's identity, historical narrative, and understanding of Orthodox ecclesiology. The fallout of the two congregations' divergent theo-historical perspectives was the creation of two new paths (via two new Churches) of ORRO continuity in the U.S.

5.3. Schism Spaces: Rebuilding Churches and Regrouping Congregations

Schism leaves a lasting mark upon the landscape of a community (Image 13). As a congregation's identity is in part tied to the location where its members meet to pray, a microschism entails rebuilding in more ways than one. The most obvious lasting effect of the microschisms was the construction of new churches. The division of property in such a divorce entails a legal record and trail, helpful to the researcher. The physicality of the original churches is a marker of continuity. Sacred spaces are at once deeply held personal spaces and socially vital. Is there a congregation without a church? The rebuilding process is multifaceted and solidifies separation and materializes the borderlines of co-religiosity. This section deals with several contentious issues concerning the use of sacred spaces.

First there is the space in the most material sense—the physical church where the now-divided congregation once prayed. One of the first and most contentious questions in the microschisms' aftermaths was "Who gets the church?" In Moscow there are famous examples of

[288] Arrived in Oregon at the most four years before moved to Alaska.

non-co-religious ORRO parishes sharing a chapel or cathedral.[289] As I describe below, this was not the route taken in Erie or Nikolaevsk, where the majority factions kept the church and the minority restarted from the ground up. The sacred material (icons and books) within the churches was another major source of conflict in the aftermath of the microschisms. The second issue expands on the physicality of a prayer space, the bezpopovtsy's and popovtsy's services are different and so too are their sanctuaries as the latter require an altar and iconostasis to perform the Eucharist. This was an explosive issue in Nikolaevsk. Thirdly, the design components of the post-schism churches and how the minority factions chose to rebuild, their relative modesty of design for example, was noted with self-pride or Other-criticism. The last and most drastic aspect of rebuilding was the physical relocation of some of Nikolaevsk's bezpopovtsy that contributed to the continued growth and establishment of new villages on Kachemak Bay. I conclude the chapter by returning to the present, and my perception of the lasting effects of congregational schism and the tense social space I experienced in both communities.

Barbara invited me for breakfast after the bezpopovtsy service in Erie one Sunday and we had quickly ended up on schism subject. "Whose church is it?!" she demanded, as she made us scrambled eggs. Luckily, I did not have to answer. She continued. Throughout our first conversation she stressed how awful the split had been for her, both emotionally and socially, but we returned to this question of ownership and later she repeated, "Whose church is it? Whose icons are they?" The icon issue came up a few times during my interviews. Barbara was especially bothered by the loss of "the three large icons upfront." Fr. Simon knew exactly which ones she meant (Christ enthroned, John the Baptist with Archangel Michael, and the Mary with Archangel Gabriel), which were purchased by Fr. Nicon in the 1940s and he insisted belonged unquestionably to the Church of the Nativity. While some were able to retrieve their icons and books from the Church of the Nativity after the split, "...many were lost to the Nikonians" (CHT, June 20, 1984).

Fr. Simon recalled this "horrible" retrieval. *"That I remember because I was there, and*

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[289] The Rogozhskoe Church in Moscow is shared between the popovtsy "Novozybok hierarchy," also known as "Old Believer Church of the Ancient Orthodox Christians' (Bourdeaux 1966, 28-31, 178; or "Old Orthodox Archbishopric of Novozybkov, Moscow and All Russia" (Stricker 1990, 42-3) and Russian branch of the Belaya Krinitsa. The Preobrazhenskoe Church space is also shared by the Pomortsy and Fedoseevtsy, which have essentially merged into a co-religious group (Stricker 1990, 44).

you don't forget something like that. It was a terrible type of situation." But he stressed that there was "never a discussion about the icons." The legal matters mostly centered around the cemetery, and the monetary compensation the bezpopovtsy would receive. After he conceded that a bezpopovtsy leader could come take an icon donated by the family of a "sweet old lady" with Alzheimer's, about 30 people came after service. "There was never an argument. They simply came in and stripped icons out of the church claiming they were theirs." An elder responded to his interjections that "This is no goddamned church!" But they decided "we're not going to get in a war with you" or call the police. After that he wrote a letter giving former congregants three months to claim "their" icons (pers. comm., March 27, 2013).

Physical possession of the church, icons, and books was prized for the materials themselves, but also for the inherent claims to legacy such possession entailed. But if the bezpopovtsy were correct that the Church of the Nativity is no longer a part of the true Church after accepting co-religiosity with heretics, does it have right to these precious, holy heirlooms? Do the sacred items belong to the church as an entity, the majority popovtsy possessors, or their bezpopovtsy family who continue to worship as their grandparents once did? In Erie's case the majority was for change; they retained continuity of place, but not of practice. This was one of the greatest issues of the break as both claimed legitimacy through continuity.

Bezpopovtsy regard 'change' as an insult to their parent's memory, this is elsewhere exemplified in Fr. Yokoff's defense of the bezpopovtsy Old Rite that equated alteration and heresy (Appendix 4). Another example in an early CHT letter ties the physical church, their identity as Old Believers, and the way their forebearers practiced their beliefs:

> ...Fr. Steven Simon examined the posture of <u>their</u> [ROCOR] church and found them to be correct and the Staroveri wrong. Fathers, Makindosky, Phillips, Pancerev, Smolokov and Konstatinov to mention a few; must all have been stupid not to see how wrong we were these past 300 years. But low and behold, they may have not had the formal education necessary to change things legally as well as religiously. Well everything was changed nice and legal and we are going about our business of building another Old Believers Church in Erie, PA. (CHT, June 20, 1984)

When the implications of being "wrong" may potentially affect the salvation of priestless practitioners (4.3.2.), the loss of their church was felt as a cruel insult on injury.

Days before the final vote, the Erie bezpopovtsy assembled in an empty storefront on the southeast corner of Second and German streets (Map 5) that became their temporary prayer space while their new church was constructed. "The day after the meeting [January 4th] a group of men

and women, some of who were in their sixties and seventies (on hands and knees) scrubbed the floor, cleaned the wall, drapes appeared, an alter [sic] was formed and bible dated 1640 was offered to be used to read out of" (AOB, January 1983). They held their Nativity vigil there two days later.

The Erie bezpopovtsy avoided court and accepted the popovtsy's $75,000, which they believed to be very poor compensation for the much more valuable ($300,000 by one estimate) church they had lost (Barbara, pers. comm., November 25, 2012). In the planning stages the CHT Financial Committee believed they would need approximately $1000 per family, ten times the amount asked of the Church of the Nativity's first congregants in 1919 (AOB, November 6, 1983; Robson 1994, 136). In an appeal for building funds the first president of the CHT wrote their struggle into a familiar Old Believer narrative of perseverance in the face of ungodly persecution:

> This persecution of Old Believers has been practiced by the Nikonians since the sixteen hundreds and they are still not convinced that we do not accept these changes. Instead, we prefer to be the ignorant Staroveri that they imply our parents were..."The original Church, built with the blood and sweat of your forefathers, has been restored to the Diocese of the Orthodox Church outside of Russia, headquartered in New York City" ...With your help, the Staroveri shall return from the woods as they did 300 years ago to adhere to the dogmas, creeds and traditions of our forefathers and build another church where the humble are welcome. (CHT, n.d.)

With a continued sense of loss, they held their second Nativity vigil in the old store while they struggled to rebuild.

But when Fr. Larry spoke to a journalist nine months later he was able to show their nearly finished church and describe its future bells and domes, all made and funded by Old Believers in Erie and the other three Pomortsy congregations (Trambley, *TN,* September 2, 1984, 2b).[290] On October 14, 1984 they held their first services in the new Church of the Holy Trinity. And the day after their one-year anniversary of their first services in the repurposed storefront, Mr. Warnoff[291] in California sent a check to pay off the mortgage in full; "fantastic" (Delia's notes).

In Alaska, it was also the minority who were forced to rebuild, in this case, the popovtsy. And they also had to negotiate what the majority owed them financially. But it was another building

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[290] At that time, Fr. Larry estimated that there were 150 families in Erie area, 225 member families of Detroit, 60 families in Millville and 110 in Marianna.

[291] I cannot trace his lineage without his first name, but Sam and Efimia were an early couple in Erie who had 8 children, the first in 1894, presumably in Europe because no place or officiant was listed (CNMB 1, 426).

controversy that brought troopers into Nikolaevsk and alerted the general population to the depth of the conflict. State troopers maintained continuous patrol in the village one weekend in September 1983 after the popovtsy were served a restraining order after they had physically altered the prayer space to prevent them from entering their old church (O'Meara, *HN,* September 29, 1983). Two weeks later it was "settled" when Fr. Kondraty resigned as "trustee in the traditional congregation," and his faction waved property rights of any church in district.[292] They also had to remove the offending alteration: an altar and iconostasis. In return, the bezpopovtsy church had to give the priested converts $5,000 to build a new church, which was completed across the street that same Fall (*HN,* October 13, 1983; Gay, *HN*, May 16, 1985, 10-11; Gay 1988, 57).

Like Nikolaevsk's popovtsy, the Church of the Nativity's congregation also had to redesign their prayer space to include the iconostasis, a screen or wall of icons that separates the nave from view of the inner sanctuary and an altar where the transformation of bread and wine into the body and blood takes place (Eucharistic mystery) (RSG 2, September 8, 1982, 4). The newly priested congregants also needed a sacramental addition of sorts. The pre-Nikonian Rite of Baptism includes a Chrismation, or anointing with oil, that must be performed by a priest (and therefore this part of the rite is skipped by the bezpopovtsy). Since the Church of the Nativity joined ROCOR, nearly 500 (493 individuals; 484 of which Fr. Simon performed) who had been previously baptized in the Old Rite received Chrismation. Most (352) had the sacrament in the August of 1983 preceding the celebration of the congregation's first liturgy on the church's anniversary.[293]

Both the Erie popovtsy church and Nikolaevsk bezpopovtsy church were ravaged by fire, in 1986 and 1984, respectively. How these congregations as well as the Erie's bezpopovtsy chose to rebuild, and the use and variant appearances of ORRO ritual spaces is worth future study. Boris explained that after the bezpopovtsy's molenna burnt, they began using a pre-existing prayer space in the back village. So many others had left to the Kachemak Bay villages, just a few had stayed. Boris apologized for its "humility," which quickly brought to mind Fr. Larry's soft pride in his

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[292] The judicial specification that they relinquish rights over "any church in the Third Judicial district" (southern Alaska) not just the church specifically under contention, that included the secondary bezpopovtsy prayer space in one of the "back villages" of Nikolaevsk and others in Kachemak Bay.

[293] 55/73 of the 1984 Chrismations were performed in April, in time for the congregation's first Easter, another 10 were done for or on its first Christmas celebration (January 7, 1984).

"humble" church. Their simple structures are offered up as unflashy comparisons to the full murals and gold domes of their popovtsy rivals. A common thread between these bezpopovtsy startsy was criticism a of popovtsy (sometimes overt, sometimes implied) pomp and grandeur, especially their many vestment changes, as Boris commented, "they go in, they change their clothes; they come out, they change their clothes…") (August 22, 2013).

The most extensive congregation rebuilding occurred when Old Believers first arrived in Pennsylvania and Alaska and the continued dispersion and settlement of Old Believers in new regions throughout North America (Map 3). In Chapter Two, I have mentioned several instances of the connection between migration and microschisms in Europe, as settlements in Prussia and Northeastern Poland have their roots in small-scale religious conflicts. For the highly divided Old Rite diaspora, demographic dispersion is the result of in-group factioning as much as it is of from State/Church persecution. The proliferation of Old Believer villages on Alaska's Kenai Peninsula is also due to high birth rate and their continued desire for greater physical separation.

In Erie, the physical move away from the urban enclave long predates the microschism. In Nikolaevsk, Old Believers (joined by co-religionists from Oregon) began moving to nearby Kachemak Bay for greater seclusion and assumedly practical reasons to do with the increased importance of fishing as men's primary occupation. The first village, Kachemak Selo, was begun with an initial land purchase in 1977 (Loshbaugh, D., HN, September 24, 1992). Razdolna's development mirrors the group settlement that founded Nikolaevsk; 20 families jointly purchased one square mile (2.59square kilometers), which they then subdivided at the beginning of 1982 (with the microschism already underway).[294] Voznesenka was founded by 29 families who bought and subdivided a 160-acre homestead in 1984 (Gay, *HN*, August 16, 1984). While the initial development of Old Believer enclaves on Kachemak Bay predates the microschism, several interlocutors attributed the dispersion and increase of Old Believers on the Kenai Peninsula to people's desire to escape the intrareligious tensions in Nikolaevsk.

The speed of the villages' growth[295] and the demographic decline of the original enclave is

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[294] Excluding uninhabitable land, and hayfields for horse and dairy cow fodder, each household received two and a half acres (Kizzia, *HN*, January 21, 1982, 11).

[295] Over 500 people in four villages on Kachemak Bay area by 1990 (Kizzia, ADN, July 19, 1990).

clearly linked to the outflow of Nikolaevsk's bezpopovtsy faction following the 1983 split.[296] As the "spokesman" for the new village explained to a Homer News writer, "they elected to leave Nikolaevsk because of religious differences with the remaining group that could no longer be tolerated" (Gay, *HN,* August 16, 1984). Mr. Moore,[297] could clearly feel the friction of the microschism for years noted the decline in enrollment as families moved to the bay or in Matanuska Valley near Willow (closer to Anchorage) (Gay, *HN*, May 23, 1985). He did not allow the split to be discussed in school, but the children certainly still felt the social and emotional effects of their community's rupture. I now turn to these lasting tensions.

5.3.1. Ex-co-religionists Make Unharmonious Neighbors

I first visited Nikolaevsk twenty-four years after its microschism (2007), well before I knew about the existence of the Erie church, let alone its similar split. The residual tension evident among people was enough to make the rupture feel contemporary, and I was at first wary of prying into it. But how could I not question the coincidence of the priesthood schisms' timing when five years after my first fieldwork experience in Nikolaevsk, I came to Erie and discovered its own microschism. Despite the differences between the communities' decision-making processes, ruptures, and unifications (different hierarchies involved, different levels of documentation)—the matters—remained the same: Incompatible ecclesiological narratives preclude co-religiosity.

The lasting tension was more palpable in Nikolaevsk, and with the drama of fire and police patrols it is easy to sensationalize its split in comparison to Erie's well-documented study groups and votes. Social and physical isolation may lend to an exaggerated impact of minor social encounters and make the perceived sense of social division appear far more visceral than in Erie, where the congregants are dispersed throughout the city and only the churches' locations are close (Map 1).

There was no Nikolaevsk Village "line in the sand," but a general pattern in which more popovtsy tended to live on one side of the village, and more bezpopovtsy on the other. The unmapped (as far as google.com/maps is concerned) or elsewhere mentioned names of the "back villages" have no signposts. I lived on this intersection where Nikolaevsk Road ends and splits in

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[296] Gay, *HN*, May 16, 1985, 11; O'Meara, *HN,* May 12, 1988, Gay, *HN,* August 16, 1984; Gay, *HN,* 1988, 58; Chappell, ADN, May 1, 1988.

[297] First teacher in Nikolaevsk, later the principle of Nikolaevsk School, see Moore 1993.

either direction into the back villages, with popovtsy and bezpopovtsy neighbors (See Map 2). Cautiously walking the village's social fault line was an ever-conscious concern for me, I can only imagine the pressure in the immediate social fallout of religious rupture. People with whom I talked were aware that I was there to get both sides of the story and was attending both churches' services to understand ritualistic differences. Not that everyone liked the fact. I recall Barbara exclaiming "Oh, I don't want to hear that," on my admission of going to Erie's popovtsy church.

It might have been 30 years ago, but the feelings of bitterness, anger, and betrayal are fresh. I made old ladies cry when they recounted the breakdown of their communities' unity. There are parents and children, and brothers and sisters, who still do not speak to one another. Others got divorced. And yes, two churches had burnt down, although in Erie I only heard one person vaguely hint at the cause being God's retribution, and there were no accusations of arson there. But Erie has its lasting tensions too. The bezpopovtsy opposition sees its church's incorporation with ROCOR not as a happy restoration, but a conversion, and they largely blamed Fr. Simon (pers. comms.; Robson 1994, 136). Worse yet, it was a conversion to the New Rite "Nikonian" Church that persecuted them for centuries, the antithesis of their identity as ORRO Christians:

> To honor the people present who are not going to take the promise of SATAN (who will eventually lead his group like Jim Jones) but people who are not going to give up their faith—who were born "STAROVERI" and who will die "STAROVERI." Not NIKONIANS and Not Anything Else they want us to be. We have nothing against the Catholics or Nikonians but when they infiltrate our churches and take our church away from us (a church built with the people's pennies) and give it to a Diocese, then it hurts. We will never never let it happen again. (*PC* 1984, 3)

Forgiveness (and related concepts of redemption and mercy) is an important concept in Christianity, and the ideal of "turning the other cheek" (Mt 5:39) was discussed by American Old Believers in the years after the Anathema Reversals. It was not a term I heard used to refer to the more recent schism. I heard blame. I also heard people attempt to modify their language to correct their over-critical tones about those on the other side.

The split in the community and in families and between friends is certainly still a sensitive and emotional issue for both sides. In one interview, a (popovtsy) sister cried for her (bezpopovtsy) brother, who she doubted would ever speak to her again. Elder bezpopovtsy cried for their church, their cemetery, their community. The lapse of time since the division has not lessened all tensions; on the contrary, it has deepened some. In 1983, the move to priesthood in Erie resulted in the bezpopovtsy's loss of their physical church, their place of prayer, and their place of final repose. In

2013, the move to priesthood in Erie came to mean that the Pomortsy might cease to come together in worship in Erie and that they might lose their sense of Church, for they no longer had the numbers or future leaders to sustain it (7.2.3.).

The Pomortsy's polarized use of names highlights their authenticity claims. It was the Staroveri versus the Nikonians. They practiced as their parents had. They lost their church for not changing. The microschisms pitted revisionist Church history against a key element of Old Believer identity—the perseverance of Truth. My comparative analysis of two Old Believer microschisms reveals several similarities. The key questions were the same: How does the integral Holiness of the Church outlive its wholeness? How does it survive heresy? How is authority and authenticity determined? Scriptures, democracy, the Holy Spirit, the Fathers of the Church, canon law, the current man of the cloth—these are the question-answerers American Old Believers consulted in their determinations of the best (most 'authentic') way to preserve ORRO in their current lives. I now turn to these versions of orthodox Christian continuity with the will of Christ for his Church as revealed in the Old Believer groups' recurrent theo-historical debates. These large questions of heresy, Church death, and the state of the world on the eschatological timeline are the essential matters of ORRO Christians' determinations of co-religiosity. Old Believer groups may be non-co-religious, but they share the same sources and the same concerns. They are distinguished by how they answer these key questions, which determines their distinct, but hopefully more harmonious paths, of selective modernity.

Chapter 6
History: A Debate

> *Thus the presences and absences embodied in sources (artifacts and bodies that turn an event into fact) or archives (facts collected, thematized, and processed as documents and monuments) are neither neutral or natural. They are created...Mentions and silences are thus active, dialectical counterparts of which history is the synthesis...Inequalities experienced by the actors lead to uneven historical power in the inscription of traces. Sources built upon these traces in turn privilege some events over others, not always the ones privileged by the actors. Sources are thus instances of inclusion, the other face of which is of course, what is excluded. This may now be obvious enough to those of us who have learned (though more recently than we care to remember) that sources imply choices."*
> —Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*[298]

Schisms are the result of irreconcilable differences between points of dogma and practice, between selective modernity choices, and between theo-historical narratives of God's will for humanity's past, present, and future that orients each 'new' group's identity. Each side of a congregational or ecumenical faction curates religious 'continuity' (so integral to Orthodoxy, Hann and Goltz 2010; Carroll 2017) with facts and sources—often the same ones—interpreted differently. In addition, each side constructs an archive for their ideological descendants comprised of "mentions and silences" (Trouillot, 1995, 48) through which their definitive statements—and choices—concerning dogma and belonging are affirmed. Yet first, this labor of "making history" necessitates that the schisming parties' break from the "inertia that traditionalists call 'continuity,'" differentiate their present state and practices from an othered, questioned past, in order to reformulate certain truths and givens under contention (de Certeau [1975] 1988, 36-38). This chapter retraces ORRO history, group-making, and group-breaking through its critical, divisive questions, source choices, and silence choices to illustrate American Old Believers' multiple variants of selective continuity. A schism always has (at least) two narratives and is therefore always up for debate.

My understanding of Erie's microschism is largely shaped by the detailed archive Fr. Simon loaned me of Church of the Nativity correspondence and lecture reviews of the Restoration Study Group's (RSG) ten-week long trudge through Russian Orthodoxy's thousand-year history. 'Lecture' is the wrong word for events which, I was told, often ended as enraged shouting matches.

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[298] (1995, 48)

The majority (7/10, See Figure 8) of the RSG meeting' minutes comprise a narrative of Russian Orthodoxy and its seventeenth century schism prepared by pro-priesthood leadership. In the recorded minutes, flare-ups are cooled—and the bezpopovtsy objections silenced—through the redaction process. Lola's archive of the Erie bezpopovtsy AOB and CHT letters (as well as her trove of SSW, which she so generously lent me) were instrumental in filling this gap.

Consideration of Fr. Simon's archive in light of the bezpopovtsy's painful memories graciously shared is a powerful reminder that historical accounts are always curated, varied, and contentious. The interview process also made it excruciatingly clear the impossibility of separating the past from the present (de Certeau [1975] 1988, 36); American Old Believers' oral histories appeared to me to be similarly burdened by the weight of centuries and recent social traumas. The lingering tensions were uncomfortably vivid: the bitterness of those who lost their church, the sadness of both popovtsy and bezpopovtsy elders recounting their once strong community, the broken and friendships and families, the judgments about graceless Others, and the tears of women who feared that the bezpopovtsy faith of their parents dying out. There were also awkward silences and evasions about, in one (popovtsy) elder man's words, "our trouble in the 80s," (he also referred to the CYS conflict as "a glitch") (instead, we spoke of his meticulously constructed archive of the early Erie Old Believers' genealogies and residences). I remember hearing once, 'every Old Believer is a historian'.

This history is personal, and biased. Thirty years is little time for a group nursing centuries' old wounds that are commonly referenced as formative and summary answers for their contemporary practices. I heard echoes of the 1660s in accounts of the 1980s. For example, Delia argued back to Fr. Simon's (July 11, 1983) letter that they could not have the Eucharist and full liturgy because, "our Bishops and Priests were all killed," and her daughter (and others) told me that the split "killed my mother" (pers. comm., 2013). While it is reductive to say that 'history is written by victors' (and there would be far fewer Confederate statues left to tear down if this were true), as a narrator of *this* ethnohistory, I must amplify the relatively quieter Erie bezpopovtsy and Alaskan voices (Trouillot 1995, 48-53).

Beyond the historiographical spoils of victory, the majority faction of a schism inherit may the congregational sacred space, as happened in Erie and Nikolaevsk. The victors may also lay claim to continuity institutionally through apostolic succession, for example, in 1667 it was the Russian Orthodox Church who labeled the pre-Nikonian rite 'heretical' (<u>wrong</u> teachings) and its

practitioners, 'Raskol'niki'. But both sides of the 1666 and 1983 Old Believer schisms claimed orthodoxy (right faith) and authenticity; dual narratives are necessary. In other words, the archivists of schisms, the 'winners' and 'losers' alike, make claims to both the authenticity of the process of historical events (Trouillot 1995, 150-1) and the authenticity of Christianity itself.

I am able to present a far more detailed account of the Erie enclave where bezpopovtsy and popovtsy elders alike shared their wealth of recordings. In 1982, Erie's Church of the Nativity congregants were living the "ambiguity inherent in the two sides of historicity"—the social process, and its narration (Trouillot 1995, 23). Yet not all the actors in history are active narrators. In Alaska, the only documents I obtained were a few local newspaper articles detailing the curious case of those backwoods Russians who needed police patrols (O'Meara, *HN,* September 29, 1983) and restraining orders (*HN,* October 6, 1983) to contain their religious dispute.

In the previous chapter, I presented the ethnohistories of the Erie and Nikolaevsk microschisms as a thorough debate and detailed decision-making process of fine points of canon law and essential theological matters. Here, I present the multiple histories of Old Belief through its most divisive issues and questions. While the outbursts and arguments are absent from the RSG record, the final meetings clearly illustrate the microschism as a historical and theological debate. Each side critiqued the other's sources and demanded written proofs. Fr. Yokoff's "Opposing Arguments" and Fr. Simon's point by point rebuttal (RSG 9 and RSG 10, respectively) present the bezpopovtsy and popovtsy positions over key ORRO questions as a dialogue (literally, in the case of the question-and-answer periods with both religious leaders, See Appendix 4). Congregants were then compelled to choose which narrative and whose answers they agreed with, and these choices determined how, and with whom, they would maintain the Old Rite.

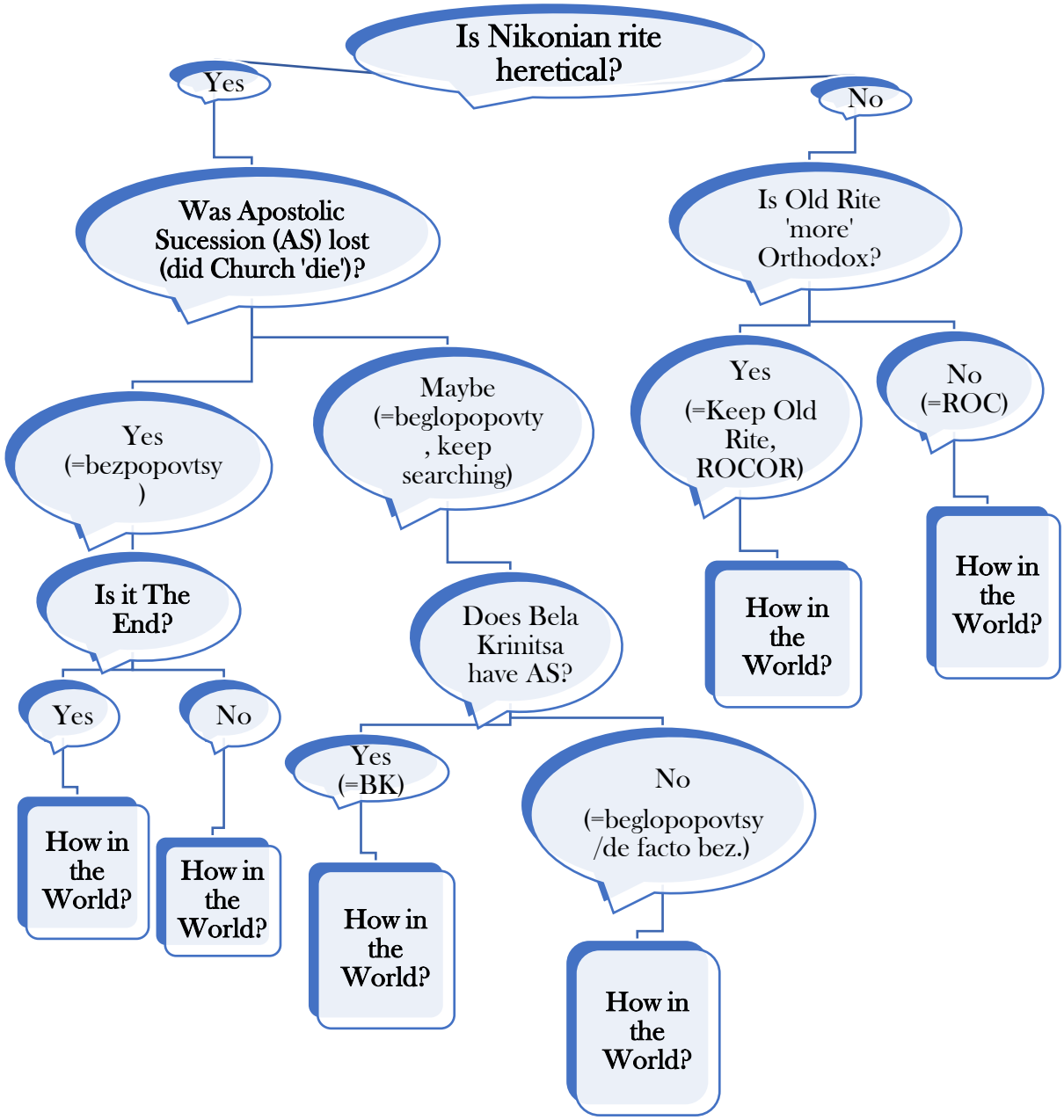
For Old Believers, the authenticity of their Christian practices (in and out of church) is maintained and legitimized through 'continuity' with scripture, canon, Church Fathers, as well as the oral teachings and traditions passed down to them by their parents and elders (the 'pamiats', RSG 3; or 'predanie', "truths handed down," Humphrey 2014, 218). The historical ethnographer must explore how continuity is constructed, how history is told and debated, and who and what has the authority to determine what is 'Ortho.' In this effort, I first ask: 'who are the question-answerers?' Then, I attempt to outline how divergent paths of ORRO continuity were forged at times of schism when former co-religionists began to answer the big questions of Russian Orthodox theo-history in different ways. As the organization of this section shows, the answerers

are decidedly masculine. However, the majority of my informants, intimates, and those I witnessed worshipping every Sunday were female. This is a common silence of history I hope to account for here.

For the silences, and for the losers, I present this chapter as a debate rather than a chronology. I condensed Old Belief into four rudimentary questions that have perennially determined ORRO co-religiosity : 1] What qualifies as heresy? 2] Does the Church "die" if the hierarchy commits heresy? 3] Is it the End? and 4] How do you maintain continuity after radical change and live Old Belief in the 'Modern Age' (and possibly apocalyptic and Antichrist-ruled era). This may be wildly reductive, but an archive-through-inquiry approach allows for multiple narratives and multiple answers.

I contend that an individual's answers to questions raised in times of congregational dispute are active, conscientious, studied choices that determine their co-religious community. I also contend that one's answers to these questions follow a hierarchical order, the descent through which places them within a particular variant of Old Belief. For example, a mid-seventeenth century Russian Orthodox Christian who answered 'no' to the question, 'Are Nikon's reforms heretical?' would not ask themselves whether the Church had lost AS and 'died'. A mid-eighteenth century Old Believer suffering increasing persecutions would be less likely to ask themselves "Is it the End?" if they believed that the Church and AS was reinstituted with the Belaya Krinitsa hierarchy. Every group, in every path of decision-making, and every variant of ORRO continuity asks themselves, 'How in the world do I live my faith?' In this crude way I illustrate how fine points of practice and past 'details' relate to the larger elements and essentials of ORRO dogma and group-making.

Figure 11: Key Questions of ORRO Co-religiosity



The Erie and Nikolaevsk microschisms were reenactments of old debates and old questions, questions that have remained a vital part of contemporary Old Believers' internal struggles to define themselves and their practices through theo-historical analysis. It is essential to review the recurrent points (e.g., priesthood question) over which congregants consider a lack of

consensus to indicate 'we do not believe the same thing, therefore we do not belong to the same religion' to understand ORRO. The fact that schism and social rupture is the result of factions' differing answers and interpretations to these key questions demonstrates the entangled overlap of group identity, narrative, and dogma. This is why anthropologists of Christianity must study schisms.

6.1. The Question-answerers: Texts, Authorities, and Interpretations

Schism is a conscientious group decision-making process that re-defines and re-orients two groups as opposed and othered. The process necessarily involves thoughtful consideration of sources, authenticity, authority, and historical narrative as each side defends their position. In addition to the scriptural and church writings on which Old Believers construct and affirm the orthodoxy of their practices, they also recognize the importance of scholarly historical works. The 12th Annual Conference (1966) addressed their urgent need for an English history of Old Orthodoxy, for, "If we do not know the history of our Church, we cannot prove its correctness and advantages of our belief." Attendees unanimously requested Fr. Smolakov compose one. While expressing his regret that he had not the time or resources sufficient to the task, for "every sentence and every statement of the history must be based on the holy Scripture, Tradition, and historical facts. Otherwise, the history won't be trustworthy and convincing" (*PC* 12, 1966, Q10).

Fr. Smolakov cautioned his flock against "outsider authors." Although some have managed an unbiased account, "...every precaution is necessary when using such books" (*PC* 12, 1966, Q11), for there are those who wish to prove ORRO wrong (*PC* 12, 1966, Q12). Fr. Simon and Barbara both recommended different outsider histories to me.[299] Fr. Simon (who also taught courses in Russian history and culture at Erie's Mercyhurst University) appreciated Paul Meyendorff's painstakingly detailed breakdown of Nikon's reforms and the historian's understanding that while the changes were ill-advised and ruthlessly upheld, they were not

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[299] (P. Meyendorff's *Russia, Ritual and Reform* (1991) and Zernov's *The Russians and their Church* (1945), respectively). Fr. Simon recommended several books on the history of the Church and the conversion of Russia in 988, as the RSG began its historical review with the years following the death of Jesus: R. M. *French's Eastern Orthodox Church*; Latourette's *The History of Christianity*; Steven Runciman's *Eastern Schism*; and Nicholas Zurnoff's *Eastern Christendom* (RSG 1, August 25, 1982, 3).

necessarily heretical. He furthermore agreed with Paul Meyendorff's (1991, 222-3) argument that the motivation behind them was ultimately political (pers. comm., January 31, 2013).

Barbara felt that Zernov 'got it', that "their [Church] hasn't changed even a little bit, it is EXACTLY as it originally was" (pers. comm., November 25, 2012). Barbara and Fr. Simon did not recommend the same history (and Barbara would strongly disagree with Meyendorff's estimation of Nikon's reforms), but they both had similar constructions of authority: the antiquity of textual sources, reasoned interpretations (that they were inclined to agree with), and a conflation of continuity (variously configured) with authenticity. I base my own (admittedly limited) 'authority' to write as an outsider about Old Believer religious decision-making processes on three sets of primary source data from Erie: Fr. Smolakov's *SSW*'s (1953-1973, See Appendix 2), the first 12 Conferences of the four Pomortsy congregations (1953-1966, See Appendix 3), and the minutes of the 10 meetings of the RSG (August 25-December 1, 1982, See Figure 8). The bezpopovtsy and popovtsy factions both drew upon the teachings and writings of Fr. Smolakov—their shared spiritual father (RSG 5, October 6, 1982, 8; RSG 6, October 20, 1982, 2). The figure below details Fr. Smolakov's source choices, and from this analysis I divided my discussion of the question-answerers into four categories: 1] Scripture; 2] Church Fathers, councils, and their canons; 3] Forefathers and *pamiats*; and 4] and spiritual fathers and mothers.

Figure 12: Fr. Smolakov's References[xiv]

ARCHIVE	SOURCE					
	Gospel	New Testament	Old Testament	Canon, Fathers, and Councils	Oral and Written Histories	Other
SSW	70	37	54	23	21	39
PC	17	5	7	39	10	41

[xiv] I included uncited biblical references in their proper category (*PC* 5, 1957, Q9 on Pentecost and Q10 on Fourth Commandment; *PC* 6, 1958, Q10 Publican and Pharisee; *PC* 7, 1959, Q3 on acceptable animal sacrifices). There was much overlap in the 'Canon, Fathers and Councils,' I counted each individual canon number, as well as the council or father when provided. 'Other' includes generic "rules of the Church" (20 uses in *PC*) as well as specific texts of ordinances such as the *Nomocanon* and *Kormchaya*.

Broader issues of power or authority (e.g., Shin and Park 1988) and interpersonal issues with those in power (Rogers 2009, 93-101) can certainly contribute to intrareligious conflicts. Although much more can be said of the key players of the Erie and Nikolaevsk microschisms, here, I focus on the Ultimate Authority, and his trusted interlocutors, that help American Old Believers maintain continuity with this will.

> In the Orthodox Church, doctrinal unity is secured by understanding the Bible as it has been explained by those saintly men who are called the Holy Fathers. The Church does not elevate one particular teacher to preeminence, nor does it canonize mere antiquity, nor does it imagine to find among the Fathers unanimity; rather, it accepts the consensus of the Fathers as indicative of its true teaching. In this way, Orthodoxy obviates the need or desire of men for a single authoritarian organizational figure to define its faith, and at the same time it is saved from the chaos that results from the vagaries of a multitude of individual interpretations of the Bible. (*GC,* xvii-xviii) [300]

In marking Eastern Orthodoxy's superior claim to historical continuity, Fr. Ciuba (New Rite Russian Orthodox) manages to criticize in a single sentence the whole of Western Christianity, from "the Latins'" (as several interlocutors referred to Roman Catholics) reliance on the Pope, to Protestants' 'sola scriptura'. Nevertheless, American Old Believers could not find consensus. When congregants' divergent interpretations of scripture and canon led to contradictory answers to the questions most essential to their ORRO faith, and their identity as its preservers, their "doctrinal unity" and co-religiosity ruptured.

6.1.1. "...according to the Scriptures"

Broadly, scripture is a pillar of all the "religions of the book" as the Abrahamic religions are also known. Within Christianity it is pivotal.[301] The Nicene Creed (or Confession of Orthodox Faith) is a dogmatic summary that cites pronounces its authority as: "according to the scriptures." The testimonies of the earliest Christians (i.e., the New Testament) serve as formative examples

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[300] Hieromonk German Ciuba translated the *GC* into English in 2002, dedicated to Fr. Pimen Simon, for his congregation with the blessing of Bishop Daniel. Hieromonk Ciuba also translated from Slavonic into English the Horologion (Book of Hours) using "standard Slavonic copies" from Preobrazhenskoe in Moscow (founded by Fedoseevtsy) (http://www.churchofthenativity.net/church-of-the-nativity/publications/the-horologion).

[301] Theologically the connection between Jesus as the Word "full of grace and truth" in the Beginning (John 1:1-14) or the role of the Book at the End (Revelations) is too expansive a topic for the present.

and instructions for how Christians 'should' live. Fr. Smolakov wrote that, "almost all Church writings, prayers, and sermons teach and remind us to be Christians;" that is their purpose (*SSW*#491, October 29, 1967). Bezpopovtsy and popovtsy alike read from the Gospel and Epistles every week (PC 9, year, Q12), following a complex rubric of readings according to the liturgical calendar's fixed and moveable holy days. More generally speaking, reading (and associate commentary, homilies, and sermons) is such an integral part of Christian worship that Engelke (2009) suggested we consider Christianity a "religion of readers" as well as a "religion of the Book" (151).

Some lessons are important enough to hear annually, for example, the Sunday after Easter Orthodox Christians hear the story of the apostle Thomas. One such Sunday, Fr. Simon expounded the importance of St. Thomas' role in the foundation of Christianity. The apostle's doubt was recorded. So too was the physical proof he demanded of Jesus to confirm his resurrection. "Thomas' doubt is a gift to us. We have the right to doubt." But he died believing, a martyr, in India "spreading the word so far that most people couldn't imagine it or have any idea where it was...his belief after doubting is to show us there can be no doubt, that we should believe" (CN sermon, May 12, 2013). Fr. Smolakov described scripture as "Our guide to Heaven," and asked, "Can the scientists disprove this fact and refute this historical event, witnessed by more than a hundred persons and recorded in writing?" (*SSW*#655, February 21, 1971). The written and preached word of the apostles (and Paul, 1 Cor. 15:6-11) marked the testimonies of the resurrection, the belief in which is saving (1 Cor. 15:1-4; *SSW*#632, September 6, 1970). Simply, Thomas' job was to bear witness, and make history. The Gospels announce the "Good News" and simultaneously (along with the epistles) instruct Christians to spread the Word. The rapidly expanding branch of Christianity is aptly named for this purpose—evangelist.

Within Russian Orthodoxy, "Scripture" has a wider frame of reference than what is commonly interpreted (like in Luther's sola scriptura) as Bible-specific. First of all, the Canon, or approved books of the New and Old Testaments is not the same for Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox Churches. The latter has the greatest number of books including Apocrypha and histories not accepted by the other Canons (*NOAB* 2187, 2191)[302] At times, Fr.

[302] ROC scripture is not a unified text like the English Bible; the gospels may be found in one volume, the epistles in another, and the Psaltery contains psalms.

Smolakov used the phrase "in the Scripture" to refer to sermons of early Fathers, prayers, or for example, to introduce a story about an unnamed "holy Father" in a monastery (*PC* 7, 1959, Q26). Fr. Simon linked the broader reference point of 'scripture' in Russia with the rejection of Nikon's service books. Quoting the historian Fedotov, he explained the conflation of all types of books (liturgies and moral books such as the popular fifteenth century "Izmaragd") as holy scripture.

> The Russian idea of 'books', or even 'sacred' or 'divine' books does not correspond to the theological idea of the 'Holy Scripture' as a God-inspired, infallible set of writings, commonly known as the Books (Bible). There was no attempt in Russia to distinguish divine revelation from theology, as represented in the writings of the Church Fathers. All religious literature is 'sacred' and 'divine', and tradition is included in the Scriptures and participates in the charisma of divine inspiration...Hence, [Russians'] extreme veneration of all books and their wisdom (Fedotov, [1946] 1966, 41; RSG 2, September 8, 1982, 4-5).

The importance of various holy books only increased after the schism, when Old Believers were cut off from the institutional Church and any future canon law written to solve ever-evolving accommodation issues and help determine how orthodoxy should be lived in the modern age.

Reading texts also became the pillar of religious services and rituals in lieu of the lost Eucharist to the point that Old Believers are referred to as a "textual community' (Crummey 1993; Hosking 1997; Rogers 2009).[303] Old Believers today only use reproductions, and in some cases treasured 400-year-old volumes, of pre-Nikonian (pre-1652) texts for their services. The rebirth of bezpopovtsy's services in Erie was pinned on an ancient (1640) text; it was the only highlight of their first Christmas apart from the Church of the Nativity (AOB Letter, January 1983).

One can be assured of their Christian choices in life and their path to heaven by keeping continuity with the truth found in scripture *and* the Church Fathers *and* traditions. "The Church depends on Holy Scripture and Tradition for her teachings. Contributing to this Tradition are the writings of the venerable 'Fathers' and elders. These men of God present us with the living Faith of our ancestors-i.e., those who have gone before us in the sure knowledge of the truth. The fathers weave a tapestry of unchangeable truth and secure for us a continuity with the early Church of the apostles and martyrs."[304] Yet the bezpopovtsy and popovtsy have the same scripture and same

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[303] Naumescu (2016) also demonstrates the importance of religious texts in the formation of Romanian Old Believers' "moral-textual-communities and ethical personhoods" (325).

[304] (The Cenacle Press and The St. John of Kronstadt Press 1993, 2). I purchased this pamphlet for 40 cents in the CN Bookstore.

fathers; they differed on interpretation and on the selection and emphasis of key verses (e.g., more on Mt 16:18 later). They also differed on their degree of rigid literalism, an obstacle to co-religiosity that is especially clear in Old Believers' consideration of canon law.

6.1.2. Church Fathers, Canon, and Councils

American Old Believers' frequently lean on the writings of the early Church Fathers (especially, St. Basil), canon law, and council decisions to determine the authentic path of lived Christianity and ORRO practice. When a conflict arises, they consult the books. When a questionable new innovation or technology is introduced to daily life, they consult the books, even if the effort involves some extrapolation. For example, while the Pomortsy conferences agreed that they should not use loudspeakers in church (*PC* 7, 1959, Q2) or hold confessions over the telephone because these issues were "not foreseen in our Church Ordinance" (*PC* 7, 1959, Q23), they permitted blood transfusions. The latter was an acceptable aspect of modernity because John (15:13) spoke of sacrifice for another's life as a form of love, and it is good to prolong a person's life and give them a greater chance to be saved (conversely, bloodletting for research was deemed unacceptable; *PC* 7, 1959, Q7).

Old Believers were obliged to rely on canon to support their practices, to find loopholes for the priestless state, and to find answers to contemporary challenges because they did not have the hierarchy to decide orthodoxy for them. For the bezpopovtsy, the "official" texts (those produced by the ROC before 1654) are their sole remnant of institutional authority (Weber's priestly or patriarchal powers, 1946, 245, 296, 351). Expertise, as well of as a greater level of literacy compared to the general population of the Russian Empire, was required to keep the Old Rite (Hosking 1997, 214).

The Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches[305] maintain continuity and fidelity to the religious philosophy of Christ through Scriptures, writings of early Fathers, and canons of the Universal Councils (See Glossary) which defined the structure and dogma of the Church and social life of its members. Interestingly, these writings supported a major *change* in the practices of his church for Fr. Simon. He spoke to me of his introduction to the Fathers of the Church as a

[305] I cannot speak for all branches of Protestantism, but in my experience of Non-denominational and Episcopalian services and Pentecostal services, youth group, and weekly Bible study, I do not recall use of any writing other than the Bible.

turning moment in his religious training and development (pers. comm., December 27, 2012). He is not the only one. An Orthodox (OCA) seminary student who spoke to Erie's Adult Sunday School after service one day also cited the Fathers' writings as critical in his conversion from Roman Catholicism (March 24, 2013).

Fr. Smolakov referred to specific fathers, including St. John Chrysostom (the Golden-Mouthed, *PC* 2, 1954, Q8) and St. Gregory the Theologian (*PC* 7, 1959, Q11) to answer questions that arose during the Pomortsy Conferences. Other times he only referred to the Fathers more generally (*PC* 3, 1955, Q2; *PC* 12, 1966, Q2). As an example, he called upon a miracle of St. Pahomy of Egypt "in scripture" (another extra-biblical usage of the word) as well as the biblical *Acts of the Apostles* to argue that it was acceptable to use other languages to explain the meaning of prayers and to confess (*PC* 5, 1957, Q9). Of course, this question was readdressed years later, with divisive results.

"Canon" is a term with many usages: 1] "The Canon" or canonical books of the Bible are those the early Church agreed were authentic; 2] Numbered canons are the decrees of councils; and 3] Eastern Orthodoxy uses the term to refer to certain songs used in ritual. In the course of fieldwork, I most often heard the term used in this last capacity, for example the "Great Kanon" read during the Paschal, or Great, Lent (e.g., CHT Newsletter, March and April 2013). The Greek term 'kanon' or "rule" is used in the epistles of St. Paul to refer to the limits of one's sphere or field of action (2 Cor 10:13-16; see note *NOAB*, 2036) or for the blessing "for those who will follow this rule" (Gal 6:16). The *NOAB* interprets "this rule" as "the standards of Christian faith and behavior Paul has advocated throughout the letter" (2051). Early Church Fathers including Basil, Irenæus, and Eusebius equated canon with the truth and "true religion."[306]

Fr. Smolakov made greater use of canon law in his annual review of the Pomortsy conferences than he did in his *SSW*s, because the former answered questions of practice and the latter were biblical sermons (See Figure 12). He often cited specific canon law decrees as "rules." For example, to answer whether they could attend services at another church he stated that "the Apostolic rules [Apostolic Canon] forbid us to pray together with the outsiders (rules 45 and 65);" he recommended prayer at home to those who physically left the enclaves and lost access to

[306] (http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf214.vii.vi.ii.html Websites contents has link to all Canon of the seven Universal Councils.

Pomortsy services (*PC* 11, 1965, Q4 and Q9). Other times he referred specifically to the "Canon of the holy Apostles" or the "Canon of St. Basil the Great" (*PC* 7, 1959, Q11, Q15). Often he more generally cited, the "rule(s) of our Church" (*PC* 6, 1958, Q10, 11; *PC* 7, 1959, Q5, 14; *PC* 9, 1961, Q2; *PC* 10, 1963, Q7), or simply "the church" (*PC* 11, 1965, Q8). Fr. Smolakov conference reviews also referenced Eastern Orthodoxy's "Nomocanon,"[307] which combines secular and ecclesiastical law.

The decrees of councils and canon law are often used synonymously, particularly in reference to the seven Universal Councils. Canon law that stems from ecumenical councils derives its authority from the consensus or sobornost' of the hierarchs present who are inspired (literally) by the Holy Spirit (Troeltsch [1911] 1960, 92-100; Meyendorff 1978, 45-6; Humphrey 2014, 221n10). Fr. Smolakov also referenced the laws of smaller councils like "Rule 3 of the Local Council in Antioch" (341) about a priest choosing to leave his position (*PC* 9, 1961, Q1) or the "5th Canon of the Local Council in Gangre" (340) condemning people who miss services without good reason (*PC* 7, 1959, Q18). The "First All Russian Conference of the Old Believers Pomortsi" was cited several times, as it "was one of the most important convocations of the Old Believers, assembled from all parts of Russia" (*PC* 11, 1965, Q1) in 1909 (*PC* 3, 1955, Q2; *PC* 6, 1958, Q4; *PC* 7, 1959, Q15; *PC* 10, 1963, Q8).

Locally, councils are an important part of the authentication of congregational practices and individual understanding of the faith. The American Pomortsy conferences stated purpose was to maintain unity and dogmatic consensus between the four conferences through "...a higher knowledge of our religion..." (*PC* 6, 1958, Q2). When some delegates later complained of the conferences' lack of formality, usefulness, and effectiveness, Fr. Smolakov defended the importance of teaching their congregants "Church Ordinance and customs."

> Further, in the work of a conference, the most important factor are the people themselves, the partakers of the conferences, in their great mass, who come together to seek knowledge of the religion, and to demonstrate the unity of our religious group, very small in this land. Our conferences have been convoked, and also will take place in the future as long as there will be an adequate number of zealous believers and keepers of our Old faith, for whom formalities are not important, for the essentiality of our religious work is not in the formalities, but in the strong spirit and true wish of our people to continue the work of these annual convocations. (*PC* 10, 1963, Q12)

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[307] Fr. Smolakov described this as the "Book of Rules" (*PC* 8, 1960, Q2) and "rules of the Church" (*PC* 9, 1961, Q16).

Those assembled that year ultimately voted unanimously to continue meeting annually.

In the *SSW* for the Holy day "The Universal Councils of the Holy Fathers," Fr. Smolakov wrote of that the general purpose of sobory was to fight heresy (wrong teachings) that are a danger to the spiritual oneness of their broader Pomortsy community (*SSW*#627, July 26, 1970). The *Review's* general index of questions illustrates the practical means through which co-religiosity between congregations was maintained through uniformity of practice and interpretative understanding of their faith. In addition to 12 (of 75) categories on the sacraments, an additional 20 categories pertained to details of worship (See Appendix 3).[308] In this way, The American Pomortsy were able to create an orthopraxic communitas, not the ephemeral unity of spirit experienced during worship that Turner (1969) spoke of, but group-making through rigid compliance, or group-building through the "doctrinal mode" of the transmission of religious knowledge through ritual routinization and textual engagement (Whitehouse 2000; Naumescu 2007, 2011). Their more difficult threat to continuity was the fight against apathy and to maintain the "strong spirit" to keep the faith (*PC* 10, 1963,Q12).[309]

Clearly, knowledge of the scriptures, fathers, and councils is a major component of orthodox continuity and authentication of practice. As discussed above, Fr. Simon argued that pre-schism Russian use of "scripture" had been over-broad and created a false equivalency between all church texts. He also argued that it was incomplete. The Fathers' sermons were never fully translated and compiled. Instead, the portions used as Gospel commentary and for certain services were in various books depending on their use in the liturgical calendar or feast day (complicating

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[308] Concerning sacraments: autopsies, baptism, confession, communion, circumcision, divorces, funeral services, godparents, kooteeya (eaten at memorial services), marriage, sacraments, and weddings.
Concerning services: bath; beginning prayer, candles, church services, clothing (to church), Kadeelo (censer), kneeling, loudspeaking (use in church), memorial services, outsiders (coming to Pomortsy church, going to non-Pomortsy church), prayer and praying, priests, remission prayer, rosary, sign of the cross (church) singing, standing in church, translation, transfer of parishioners (between the four congregations), women readers
44 of the 95 *SSW*s coded discuss particularities of rites and practices (and an additional 38 on Lenten periods).

[309] See Naumescu (2007, 2010) for more on dialectic of religious change between doctrinal and imagistic modes, following Whitehouse (2000), wherein the apathy of routinization (like Weber's discussion of charismatic powers, 1946, 245-252) may be cured by revitalization (including schism) from the opposite mode. This dichotomy is complex in Eastern Orthodoxy, which consistently operates on both modes.

the already challenging task of following the rubric of readings and find finding readers with sufficient knowledge to lead services).

> Obviously, the peril of this is that it is going to leave an incomplete theology. On is not going to have all of the patristic writings which are the very essence of the theology of the Church. If we do not have the complete writings of the Fathers, then we are going to have a gap in the theology of the Church. (RSG 2, September 8, 1982, 4)

The issue of an "incomplete theology" came up years before the microschism, when Fr. Simon was contemplating resignation (See Figure 7). Among his chief concerns for the congregation was what he felt to be an under-reliance on Church law and an overreliance on 'pamiats' and traditions passed down from generation to generation. I now turn to the authority of more recent forefathers, whose knowledge was a source of polemic support (especially for the bezpopovtsy) during the priesthood debates.

6.1.3. Forefathers and Pamiats

Time to honor and pray for the souls of one's forefathers in faith is an established holy day in the Russian Orthodox liturgical calendar.[310] I discussed previously how the bezpopovtsy faction perceived certain shifts in practice (and most definitely the shift in Church affiliation) as a denial of the religious heritage of their parents and community founders. I also discussed the eternal implications of this denial as a retroactive heretical contamination and doubt of the dissenters' obligation to reject the Nikon's reforms. Forefathers in faith are clearly influential; their opinions and memory were often called upon during the American Old Believer microschisms. Could they forgive the institution that killed and scattered their ancestors and tried to squash their faith? Fr. Simon's answer to the question, "Do we have an obligation to our fore-fathers since the schism?" links several of these issues:

> The prime obligation we have is to Jesus Christ. Nevertheless we are the heirs of our forefathers but a good question is, who is your forefather? It is always in our books, Adam, our forefather. Abraham is my forefather. Isaiah is my forefather and so on. Avvakum was my forefather and my grandfather was. A lot of people are concerned that our immediate forefathers who died without the fullness of the Church are lost. They had what they could have. They did not know other than which they knew. They shall be judged upon that and I have no doubt in my mind that they will not be condemned by the Lord if they are worthy of the kingdom of heaven. The fact that this particular time in history we're able to establish the full rites of the Church isn't a statement that our forefathers will be condemned. Our prime

[310] "Sunday of the Holy Forefathers"; 27th Sunday after Pentecost, I observed December 30, 2012.

obligation is Christ and I don't see how we let our forefathers down. (RSG 7, October 27, 1982, 7)

In his arguments for the priesthood, Fr. Simon stressed the primacy of scripture and continuity with early Fathers of the Church over the *pamiats*, an "uncritical and uncritical collective memory" of their forefathers. They should look to the law, he continued, not to recollections like "my father said it was this way and his father said it was this way and this is the way it was" (RSG 3, September 22, 1982, 4, citing Billington [1966] 1970, 62). Humphrey (2014) identified this type of authority as an area of discrepancy between ORRO groups, "each of which upheld its own truth (known as *predani*, the truths handed down" (Humphrey 2014, 218). Yet, the forefathers' knowledge is not all oral. Demkova (2009) gives a comprehensive review of the important works of the founding fathers of Old Belief and the historiography of compilations' versions and usages, which were repeatedly "broken up for use by new authors, that is, Old Believers who interpreted the problems of the modern world through the prism of Old Belief tradition" (226)

Fr. Smolakov made a distinction in the line of Redfield's (1956) categorization of Great and little traditions when describing their kissing of the cross on great holidays as "...just a custom, set up by the Church Ordinance, and it is quite different from a Sacrament" (*PC* 12, 1966, Q9). Authority was institutionalized, structured—"official." Conversely, bezpopovtsy's defense stressed their fidelity to more recent ancestors and spiritual leaders. This authority was local, personally remembered, and community based. Both sides in Erie called on Fr. Smolakov's memory to posthumously claim his position on the priesthood question. Fr. Simon argued that Fr. Smolakov doubted the ROCOR's intentions, but not that they lacked grace (RSG 8, November 10, 1982, 1) and the bezpopovtsy declared that their nastavnik had outright refused to be tricked into false ecumenism with their persecutors (From all true Russian Orthodox Old Believers of the Pomortsi Faith, Fall 1982).

Fr. Smolakov used oral folk stories several times (16) in his *SSW* to illustrate a message (See Appendix 2). Stories were used to explain their practices, for example, why they must always wear a cross around their next (merchants once found a body by the side of the road and knew to

bury it because he was wearing a cross, *SSW*#416, March 13, 1966).[311] Other times, he used stories to elaborate that week's Gospel reading (God versus mammon and the three men who met unhappy ends after finding gold, SSW#672, June 27, 1971) or Holy day (even birds rest on the Annunciation of Mary, SSW#73, April 7, 1957). The oral histories of Russian immigrants in Nikolaevsk were considered important enough to record and translate (Silva 2009, Appendix 5). Their stories of struggle serve as points of pride and examples of moral fortitude, as records of a changing material culture, and as parallels to the Christian narrative of persecution and suffering.

It is these more recent sufferings that made institutional change an affront to their parents' memories. Fr. Simon well recognized that loyalty to their forebearers was an emotional obstacle to the CN's reconciliation with the Church. In a letter to Bishop Gregory, he stated that his position paper to ROCOR was "...for all intents and purposes is written for any and all Old Orthodox who desire to return to the fullness of the Church and need an argument for how they may do so without 'betraying' their forefathers. You must understand that there is a haunting fear among Old Orthodox that such a move is a betrayal of all that their 'forefathers died for'" (September 8, 1982). Nikolaevsk bezpopovtsy were also led by the memories and wisdom of the generations before them, who had been aware of the BK hierarchy, and who had rejected it as illegitimate (pers. comm.).

The faith of their forefathers was raised several times in during the priesthood debates. The two key issues were 1. Personal loyalty to their parents and grandparents and fear for the state of their souls (Chapter Four) and 2. Relative authoritative levels of the question-answerers. The following section expands on the second issue to look at their more recent forefathers (like Fr. Smolakov) and contemporary spiritual leaders and question-answerers.

6.1.4. Spiritual Fathers...and Mothers

The historically important role of spiritual fathers in Russian Orthodoxy was "immortalized by Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy" (Agadjanian 2011, 21) and evidenced by the nation's enduringly popular spiritual work, *The Way of the Pilgrim* (1881). It tells the story of one man's spiritual and literal journey as a *strannik* (wanderer) and his conversations with his *starets*, or elder with

[311] I recall hearing another story of angels and demons debating whose body and soul a wayfaring stranger belonged to, he was not wearing his cross therefore the angels did not recognize him as one of their own; also told in the wonderfully evocative documentary *Old Believers* (Ševčíková 2005).

charismatic authority (as opposed to Weber's dichotomous typology's "priested authority" of apostolic succession) (Weber 1946, 245-252; Pokrovsky 2001, 8-9; Paert 2010; Agadjanian 2011, 20). One ORRO group (if scattered individuals could be called such) are named *Stranniki* (Beguny), and like the pilgrim they too left their homes to wander taking only the Gospel with them (Paert 2010, 136). The relative power of the starets and priest (or nastavnik) is ripe question for further analysis, and indeed, the conflict between the "white clergy" (those ordained) and "black clergy" (monks and startsy) has been pointed to as an aspect of the ROC schism (Zenkovsky 1957; RSG 4, September 29; Michels 1991, 557, 1999).

Like the Stranniki, the illustration of the *starets* (for example, that which Dostoevsky provides in *Karamazov*)[312] and ascetic hermits (for example, famous story of the isolated family "discovered" by geologists in 1978 having fled to Siberia in the 1920s, Peskov 1992), has been associated with old belief, but both are pre-schism Russian traditions. The bezpopovtsy arguably have greater need of charismatic leaders, with only the texts to rely on for decision-making and institutional authority. In this way the priestless state can be compared to "...the rise of charismatic authority as a compensatory response to the crisis of the institutional religious authority during the Soviet period" (Agadjanian 2011, 20). In connection to this lack of priests and communal rites of the Church, Old Belief also became associated with the ancient, ascetic, individualistic, mystic, *Hesychasm* (from Greek 'hesychia', or 'stillness') the practice of "divine quietness," also associated with ceaseless (1 Thess 5:17) repetition of the Jesus Prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Have mercy on me a sinner[313]

The Jesus Prayer echoes the Proschaneeye ("God be merciful to me a sinner..."). Both are prayers of repentance and pleas for God's mercy or grace. One of the most important roles of lay

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[312] Dostoevsky devoted the fifth chapter to the history of startsy. The character in the novel is a monk, although they may be laymen, and the endnote of my edition describes the starets as, "one extremely rigorous in self-denial, an ascetic, a guru, a man of particularly high spiritual authority." It also notes that Rasputin called himself such ([1880] 1994, 978).

[313] Paert (2010) discusses book at length, several other mentions in relation to mystic or hesychasm) (134-8, 215-7). Although the prayer may offer some substitute for those unable to attend services, Fr. Smolakov clarified that it not enough to baptize according to the Jesus Prayer, *"Hospode Esoose Hreeste..."* (*PC* 7, 1959, Q8).

religious authorities like the startsy is the sacrament of confession. In Eastern Orthodoxy there is an ancient system of spiritual guidance (*dukhovnichestvo*),

> ...a network of intense relationships between "spiritual children" (*dukhovnye chada*) and the spiritual father (*dukhovnik*). This pattern, nourished by some of the fundamental images and symbols of the Christian tradition in general, took on a special form and importance in the Russian Orthodox tradition...This relationship of "father and children" still remains a normal, ubiquitous, pattern in today's Church, and is based upon guidance or obedience (*poslushanie*), linked to confession and penitence (*pokaianie*) and approval or disapproval (shown in giving or not giving blessing, *blagoslovenie*), and can be more or less unquestioning (and thus authoritarian). (Agadjanian 2011, 21)

In other words, the spiritual father plays a similar role as a priest or nastavnik in hearing confession and determining whether one has (or has retained, after penance) the state of grace necessary to participate in common worship. The vitality and influence of this role is naturally increased for the priestless. Fr. Smolakov used the language of "Spiritual children" and "Spiritual fathers" when discussion confession (*PC* 11, 1965, Q2). Early religious leaders (Joseph Orloff and Stephan Peganoff) in Erie before the Church of the Nativity had a full-time nastavnik would have been starets who surely heard confessions, if not regularly then at least as individuals approached death. A spiritual father is not necessarily an individual's priest or nastavnik. There can be overlap, especially when there are few men sufficiently educated and available to take the post or when nastavnik-ship and lay/presbytery authority was a temporary, shared position. Because there is no hierarchy and "few sister churches" in the U.S., nastavniki hold a high degree of authority and control over community decisions (Robson 1985, 72). And their charisma, or lack thereof, was instrumentally effective in individuals' decisions whether or not to follow (or even consider) Fr. Simon's and Fr. Kondraty's move to priesthood (pers. comm.; Gay 1988, 57).

The congregational and regional sobory are also opportunities for other starets, staritsa (female elders), and religious authorities to be leading voices in the community. The Pomortsy conferences showed that a good deal was left up to the discretion of individual nastavniki and congregations, such as penances (*PC* 4, 1956, Q4), ritual participation of shaved men (*PC* 2, 1954, Q8; *PC* 5, 1957, Q3), practice of holding candles (*PC* 3, 1955, Q3; *PC* 4, 1956, Q1), and water temperature at baptism (*PC* 9, 1961, Q2). For other important decisions, a council of elders would be convened, for example to determine whether a shaved man may be buried with blessing (*PC 12,* 1966, Q2). The conferences also pointed to the existence of some conflict between the startsy and nastavniki forms of bezpopovtsy authority (which Humphrey 2014, 220 also noted), for

example, when a Millville nastavnik refused the creation of an Elders' Committee (Fr. Smolakov said he had "no authority" on this "local issue," *PC* 12,1966, Q3).

The generally agreed upon traditional qualifications for a nastavnik is a moral, literate man educated in the complex calendar rubric and order of services. He is preferably married, as a man may not marry after becoming a nastavnik, and at least 33 (Holdeman 74n83, from interview with Suwalki and Pogorzelec Old Believers; Robson 1985, 72-6; pers. comm.). "There was no set rule for picking a man to be a spiritual leader of a church; the only real requirement was that he be able to understand and follow the rubric of the services. There were no seminaries, no hierarchy to help make the decision" (Robson 1985, 186n4). The term startsy has been used synonymously with 'elders' or the sobor of elders (for example, Scheffel 1991, 83, uses term *stariki* for the "church officials" elected by informal sobor of congregants). Practically, the startsy were the leader pool from which nastavniki, temporary or long-term, were chosen from.

As Robson also noted, "unfortunately, each time a nastavnik has been picked, there has been dissent somewhere" (Robson 1985, 186n4). But as discussed in Chapter Two, Old Believers had a long history of informal services in homes, therefore a refusal to accept a chosen leader did not consequentially place one outside of spiritual practice. Those who led services in their homes for others were essentially spiritual fathers, or alternative nastavniki, who heard confessions and even held services and performed other rites. For example, services were held at the Lawrence Farm after the CYS dispute (more in following section; Dolan 1991) and several families began holding services at a home very close to CN (349 2nd Street, see Map 5) because "they didn't like Smolakov, they said he wasn't the kind of Russian they were" (Judy, pers. comm., June 14, 2013). Anita was married at the 2nd street home-molenna in 1949 because her intended was outside the faith (she could not recall by whom), but stated of the presence of the secondary leader that "there was always squabbling" (May 23, 2013).

For his part, Fr. Smolakov urged forgiveness, and that advised that personal issues with priests should be resolved and not prevent confession (*PC* 8, 1960, Q2), and that "in order to maintain peace and good accord in the parish, all its members should have confession with the priest ordained in the parish, but it is not forbidden to have another Spiritual father for confession,

if there are some good reasons" (*PC* 11, 1965, Q2, also *PC* 9, 1961, Q16).[314] Given the moral and education requirements to be a nastavnik, and since "they are not a true clergy member, he may perform no more rites of a service than any other layman" (Robson 1985, 75-6), the startsy are potential replacements and competitors to local congregational authorities.

Ambiguous authority structures (especially when combined with a lack of a defined sacred space) are common grounds of the critical portrayal of the sectarianism and fragility of bezpopovtsy group-making.

> The Old Believers show a remarkable weakness in their church organization, caused mainly by the ambiguous position of their priests. In the Greek church, ordination is a sacrament and can be performed only by a bishop...Others either wrangle about their priests, or do not recognize any...Yet scattered as they [first Pennsylvanian Old Believers] are these people have only one prayer house (in Essen), and one priest—a peasant, quite like any member of his flock, without education, although undeniably a good, sober man. (Sokoloff [1914] 1974, 93)

For the bezpopovtsy, leadership is *chosen*, whereas a priest is assigned to a congregation by a bishop. In hierarchical and ecumenical Orthodoxy there is a well-defined and regimented hierarchical power structure that is outside the congregation—the hands conferring the apostolic succession in the ordainment ceremony were not their own. Choices create opportunities for disagreements.

Schisms reveal a break in the power structure (Kokosalakis 1971; Wilson 1971, 11, 16-17; Agadjanian 2011, 20). Even if both new congregations are formally under the same denomination, the authoritative line has forked. Charismatic leaders were often involved in congregational schisms though out Old Believer history (Humphrey 2014, 220). Personal issues with the leadership, or the individual who advances a shift or reform, often affects individuals' reception of an innovation (Iwaniec 1981; Zuckerman 1999; Rogers 2009). Who the "messenger" was matters. For example, one man, "close to the [Nikolaevsk] village" said of their microschism that "'It really was a personality situation...If it had been anyone else [selected as priest], the others may not have rebelled," as people found him "too aggressive, too dogmatic, and refused to follow him" (Gay, *HN*, May 16, 1985). Elsewhere, the same journalist estimated that about two/thirds found Fr.

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[314] This issue of choosing someone other than the "priest" to hear confession "for reasons of their own" was addressed at a Pomortsy Conference and Fr. Smolakov warned against unforgiveness, citing Nomocanon (rule 123) that stated that feuding parties should not enter the church" for his prayer is discredited and regarded as sin and curse" (*PC* 8, 1960, Q2, citing Nomocanon, rule 123).

Fefelov "too adamant" after his ordination in Romania (Gay 1988, 57). I suspect, however, that people had committed opinions about the state of the Church well before anyone raised the priesthood question, and that leaders' personalities and/or charisma affected the circumstances and fallout, but not the reasoning, of the split.

Given the patriarchal breakdown of religious knowledge and authority outlined above I must make conscientious recognition of Old Believer women's contribution to my research. Much of my data, though it be the writings of men, was loaned to me by women and I am most grateful to them.[315] One cannot miss the dominance of the male in Christianity—male Savior, Our Father, and a majority of male clerics and hierarchs.[316] It would be a stretch to say that as a woman I "moved in the women's circles" during fieldwork, as I moved within no common circle besides the work-days/home-nights routine of life punctuated by the liturgical cycle that brought us together. That is to say, the cycle of believers in the world. But I did interact more with women.

This is partly due to simple demographics. Erie's bezpopovtsy church was attended almost exclusively by elderly women. Women laity generally outweighed participating men in nearly every service of every congregation. I have not dedicated much time to gender in this dissertation. The implications of one's embodiment in Old Believer life and in Christianity are far too numerous to be explored here. But it is incumbent on me to stress the importance of women in the preservation of Old Rite knowledge and practice which is all too easily overshadowed.

The record of Erie's priesthood debate, for example the dialogue between Fr. Simon and Albert Yokoff (RSG 9 and 10; see Appendix 4), reads as a he said-he said. Yet 48% of the RSG participants were women; their voices are muted in the record of fathers. All the question-answerers are fathers. Fr. Simon remembers that one of his most vocal critics was a woman, although she was not nominated to sit on the RSG. And Barbara recounted with a hint of pride in

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[315]Lola, in particular, provided me with most of the *SSW*'s and other pedagogic materials and calendar essays written by Fr. Smolakov, as well as letters and meeting minutes concerning the establishment of the Church of the Holy Trinity. Anita also was kind enough to share her family's genealogy, and collection of some *SSW*'s and newspaper articles.

[316] Many Protestant denominations allow female clerics, but males continue to hold the majority of positions. While numbers are on the rise, in 2012-2016 females accounted for only 20% of clergy in the U.S. (up from 6% between 1976-1980) (Schleifer and Miller 2017, 388). Eastern Orthodox churches remain exclusively male in leadership. Maya Mayblin's work (2017, 2019) with women Roman Catholic priests (who are not accepted by Rome) explores the gendered dimensions of grace, apostolic succession, and dissent.

her tone that she was the "thorn in his side" during the debates (pers. comm., November 25, 2012).

Staritsa is not a position of spiritual authority reserved for Old Believers who lack priests. is not a position of spiritual authority reserved for Old Believers who lack priests. Meehan-Waters (1991) conducted a survey of a fourteen-volume compilation of eighteenth and nineteenth century hagiographies and life stories of inspiring blagochestyi (pious, righteous) individuals and recorded that 17% were female (38). Although she does not mention whether they also heard confessions, she recounts the lives of two such women whose spiritual advice was widely sought. Agadjanian also noted that female as well as male elders were "crucial" to the maintenance and transmission of religious knowledge during in the Soviet period (2011, 20). Paert has several works on gender in Old Belief and on influential female Old Believers and their writings (2001, 2003, 2010, 2014). As I discuss in Chapter Seven, the women have been increasingly relied on for spiritual guidance, congregational functioning, and as cantors as congregations struggle to find qualified and willing male religious leaders. Now, from religious authorities and question-answerers I turn to the key questions of ORRO determinations of co-religiosity.

6.2. Pravoslavnye and Heresy

To reimagine Old Believer ethnohistory from its key questions laid bare by schism, I must return to an elemental theoretical problem of Christian dualism that has impacted the both the anthropological study of religion and the historical portrayal of Old Believers: What is the relationship between rite (practice) and dogma (belief)? Are they 'Old Believers' or 'Old Ritualists'? This section explores how the presumed qualitative difference between ritual and belief, the former of which can bear some variation, the latter Absolute and unchangeable, is primary to understanding the ROC schism, contemporary Old Belief, and the accusations of heresy that define boundaries of ORRO co-religiosity. In the following subsection, I examine this line of inquiry in a brief analysis of a more recent (mid 1990s) North American bezpopovtsy microschism over the sign of the cross. To a group often reduced to this single aspect of ritual (and the presence of facial hair), this genuflection dispute uniquely demonstrates the intertwined concepts of heresy, orthopraxy, and group identity.

Fr. Simon began the RSG lectures by distinguishing between the Western idea of orthodoxy as belief-focused, and the Russian term 'pravoslavnye', which is equally worship-focused:

> The question to ask ourselves in the very beginning is: what is Orthodoxy? What are Orthodox Christians? An Orthodox Christian is one who believes that he is rightly glorifying. He is doing the glorification of God in the right manner. An Orthodox Christian also believes he is following the unbroken chain of the Apostles. (RSG 1, August 25, 1982, 2)

The tight relationship between worship and faith is not unique to Orthodoxy, or the phrase *lex orandi, lex credendi* (the rule of prayer is the rule of belief) would not exist. Old Believers' common conflation of orthodoxy, orthopraxy, and continuity was echoed in a congregant's question to Fr. Yokoff:

> Congregant: *One of the other things along with heresy we tried to define what is true Orthodoxy. And we said that true Orthodoxy are those that accept the teachings of the Bible, Christ, the Seven Ecumenical Councils and the Holy Fathers. Do you think that is a complete definition of what Orthodoxy is?*
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> Fr. Yokoff: *Yes. Orthodoxy is an American word. We never referred to ourselves as Orthodox. We called it Holy but Orthodox, I don't know. Our old timers never even heard that word.* (RSG 9, November 17, 1982, 7)

'Unchanged' appeared in the American Old Believers' archive and conversations as a defining (and proud) aspect of their faith. Conversely, change was equated with heresy. "Because the Old-Believers believed that externals in themselves expressed the content of the faith, they saw *any change as heretical*" (Meyendorff 1991:28, emphasis added).

'Heresy' (wrong teachings, errors of *dogma*) was the keyword and the proverbial straw of the ROC schism. Heresy is the ultimate SDB. To an Old Believer, it is also a co-religiosity deal-breaker since canon law precludes prayer with heretics. But *were* Nikon's reforms heretical? The answer to this question determines whether the ROC lost Grace. It determines whether the first Old Believers were not only right to—but obliged to (*AC* 15)—separate from official Orthodoxy. And as Fr. Simon stressed to the RSG, it determines whether the Erie Church of the Nativity could join ROCOR and restore full rites. Two of the earliest, and enduringly influential, defenders of the Old Rite, Archpriest Neronov and Deacon Feodor, named the reforms heresies and the reformers

heretics (P. Meyendorff 1991, 28).[317] This was a given, historical fact held by Old Believers of all stripes for centuries.

Nevertheless, the pro-ROCOR faction in Erie fell into this classic binary whereby only issues of dogma could be considered heretical and subject to justified excommunications or schisms. Fr. Simon is one of many who have stated that "Old Ritualist" is more accurate than "Old Believer" (RSG 5, October 6, 1982, 1). In brief, if Patriarch Nikon merely made errors in orthopraxic reforms, although undeniably enforced too violently, then the hierarchy did not fall into heresy and vanish from the Earth. This issue is paramount to the overlapping ecclesiology and eschatology worldviews of bezpopovtsy groups discussed further below, a perception the Nikolaevsk popovtsy revisited and revised leading up to their unification with the Belaya Krinitsa.

In Chapter Four, the concept of heretical contamination affected Russian Orthodox constructions of co-religiosity long before the ROC schism. This influenced Nikon's dissenters' reception of the Greek texts the Patriarch had used to translate and standardize the CS liturgy.

> The Russians, we have seen, equated liturgical practice with dogma. Difference in ritual could only be explained as errors on one side or the other. Thus it was evident, for the Russians, that the Greeks with their different liturgical practices, were heretics (P. Meyendorff 1991, 222-3).

This same Russian tendency 'to confuse' ritual and dogma similarly affected Nikon, a Josephite proponent of ritualistic uniformity (Figure 5). He justified his ruthless insistence on RO Christians' sole use of the new texts and ritual forms on the Acts of the Council of Constantinople (1593), despite the Greek Orthodox Church's insistence that the Church "require unity only in matters of faith, and not in rubrical details" (P. Meyendorff 1991, 220-221). Meyendorff, clearly, considered the ROC schism to be a matter of muddled ritual and dogma; this is the historical text Fr. Simon recommended I study.

Fr. Simon designed his narrative of ORRO history to logically conclude with Erie's Church of the Nativity joining ROCOR (See Figure 8). Half of the study sessions argued that Nikon's

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[317] Archpriest Neronov 1654 letter, and Deacon Fedor's 1666 petition, are two of the most known and read Old Rite polemicians to this day. They especially critiqued Arsenios the Greek (P Meyendorff 1991: 28, 101-8, 224).

reforms were ritualistic, rather than dogmatic, and therefore not heretical.[318] This declaration contradicted centuries of bezpopovtsy polemics; it was a new narrative. Fr. Simon's conclusions were foredrawn; he had personally decided to become priested (Chapter Five). His motivation likely influenced his source choices, the "overall thrust of the study," and he certainly "mobilize[d] its results *in the service* of [his] belief, and this intention (more or less 'apologetic') provoke[d] a certain number of distortions in research itself, simply because the intended goal modifie[d] the process leading historians to it" (de Certeau [1975] 1988, 138-9). In other words, the RSG may be more accurately called a polemic than history. The RSG's last meeting was a historical summary and point by point dismissal of Fr. Yokoff's pro-bezpopovtsy argument; Fr. Simon got the last word on the heresy question.

Figure 13: For and Against Unification with ROCOR (CN n.d., RSG Summary)

Against	For
Apostolic Succession lost forever.	Christ promised Church would withstand even gates of hell.
Russian Orthodox Church- heretical.	Reforms were ritual not dogma. No heresy.
Russian Orthodox Church westernized.	Russian Orthodox Church underwent influence of west. Now extremely Orthodox.
Russian Orthodox Church different than us.	Russian Orthodox Church in all areas of the faith as strict as we are.
Russian Orthodox Church wants to capture us.	Russian Orthodox Church now finds Old Rite precious part of old Russia that would be of benefit in the Church. Furthermore, entire Church history reveals correctness of different rites.
Betrayal of Forefathers.	Victory for Forefathers.
This will be a change of religion.	This is a restoration of what we were and lost.
Sacraments necessary but Christ will understand our failure to perform them- emergency.	Christ told us and all the Fathers interpreted absolute necessity of sacramental life.
Radical change in our services.	Restoration of Liturgy and sacraments.

[318] RSG3 that reforms "not necessarily sensible," but not heresy (September 22, 1982, 3); RSG4 provided a breakdown of the rituals Nikon changed (September 29, 1982, 6-7); RSG6 discussed St. Basil's definition of heresy, view of schism and schismatics (October 20, 1982); and RSG 10 summarized Nikon's reforms and argued that the New Rite practices were similarly ancient—different, but not heretical (December 1, 1982).

Then, the Erie RSG was asked "Restoration of the Full Rites of the Church: Is it possible?"[319] and was charged with forming a studied recommendation to the congregation. The majority recommended becoming popovtsy (See Figure 9).

The bezpopovtsy "against" column presents a different history, one that disinherits the ROC as heretical, announces the Church as dead, and rails against change to their religion. Fr. Yokoff (See Appendix 4) and my bezpopovtsy interlocutors in Erie and Nikolaevsk alike took the heretical nature of Nikon's reforms as a given, historical fact. Any change *now* was not only heretical, but a betrayal of their forefathers and rejection of their identity as preservers of the Old Rite. To the most rigid bezpopovtsy, any change is a SDB and CDB. In the words of one Pomortsy Conference "delegate," "We won't be Old believers any more, if we start changing the Rules, for which our fathers died during the persecutions of our Old faith" (*PC* 3, 1955, Q2).

For his part, Fr. Smolakov adamantly defended the Old Rite in the language of heresy and dogma—arguing that they are not a sect, not raskol'niki, because they made no change to dogma. They cannot be heretics, defined as "a follower of the wrong teaching," because, "they just struggled <u>for their Old, unchanged faith</u>" (*SSW*#311, May 26, 1963; owner underlined). Two decades later, the bezpopovtsy in Erie did equate Fr. Simon's proposed unification with ROCOR as a change in religion, not ritual. They protested that, "He has forsaken the creeds, dogmas and traditions of the Pomortsi Faith and in his heart accepted the faith of the Niconian Orthodoxy" (anon., September 1982). Time and again there is a confluence of threats of change (to any aspect of religiosity) and heresy and Old Believer group-making.

The story of hard Yesses and Nos that determine co-religiosity does not resonate with all types of Christianity, not all perceive the pearly gates so narrowly (Mt 7:13-14; Mk 10:24) in Chapter 7. And as I discussed in Chapter Four, the conception that Grace (and subsequently, Paradise) may be forever lost is not found in all Christianities. This is the story of Christians who both expect ecclesiastical 'Oneness' in New Testament language (Ephesians 4, 6; 1 Cor 12) <u>and</u> equate belonging with correctness in the vein of the early fifteenth century Josephites (Figure 5). This Christianity guards the bride of Christ, his Church, through exclusion. ORRO is a prime subject for the exploration of the correlation between co-religiosity and dogma in ecumenical

[319] N.d. in Fr. Simon's Restoration folder, outline of the RSG meetings. I suspect it to be a handout from the 10th and last RSG, in the form of a summery outline which ends with 'against' and 'for' columns.

decision-making because the overlapping, dualistic borderlines of social and theological belonging are so severe. The case-study I present below of the North American Chasovennye bezpopovtsy's "Double-crossers" controversy demonstrates the persistent salience of ritual uniformity, heresy, and its impact on co-religiosity. It warrants future study.

6.2.1. "Double-crossers" in Minnesota and Alberta

My knowledge of the recent (c. 2008-9) conflict that began in Minnesota and spread to Alberta and Oregon is admittedly cursory. A power-struggle between the nastavnik and the cantor was a part of the story I was told. Without speaking to those who now practice two forms of making the sign of the cross on their body, I cannot summarize their dogmatic argument. What is clear is that genuflection practices were once again at the center of an ORRO intrareligious conflict.

Fr. Smolakov explained the dogmatic significance of the "old Christian way" of making the sign of the cross with two fingers, which represents the duality of Christ. He also noted the importance of touching the right shoulder before the left, but without outright condemning the Roman Catholics' (who touch the left shoulder first) or the Nikonians' "new way of blessing" (*PC* 5, 1957, Q2).[320] Two elder men in Alaska on the other hand clearly considered different forms of making the sign heretical (pers. comm. 2013). It was the first thing demonstrated to me after my first Old Believer service in Nikolaevsk's Church of St. Nicholas in 2007. The cross is a ubiquitous part of everyday life, from the physical cross on a necklace that the Old Believers wear at all times to the sign frequently performed on their body to punctuate common prayers, to mark their entrance into "Christian homes," and to protect themselves from evil.[321]

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[320] The Holy Trinity was not on the cross. This discussion links to the Filioque clause and the precedence and timing of the Holy Spirit, therefore this is clearly a dogmatic issue. The depiction of God the Father and the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove on crosses contradicts the dogma of Christ's sole suffering on the Cross. However, the First All Russian Conference of Pomortsy Old Believers in 1909 declared that they "'...should not have any hostility against brothers in faith who, according to an old custom, accept the crosses with the letters I.N.C.I. and with the Images of God the Father and the Holy Spirit'" (*PC* 11, 1965, Q1).

[321] (*SSW*#416, March 13, 1966; *SSW*#511, March 24, 1968; *SSW*#537, October 6, 1968; *SSW*#672, June 27, 1970; observed)

Icons and the sign of the cross are key examples of the indivisibility of ritual and belief, and the confluence of the concrete and abstract.[322] Fred Kniss (1996) argued that "concrete symbolic objects and practices" like the sign are more likely to cause schisms "intense, all or nothing battles" and schisms while "abstract ideas and symbols" are more likely to be mobilized by both sides, and "more easily divisible (and thus exchangeable in a compromise solution)" (9, 12).[323] I take issue with the assumption that abstract and concrete symbols are divisible. Although Kniss describes these abstract-concrete poles as a continuum, quantifying schisms' causes falls back on the common anthropological dichotomy of belief and ritual (7-9). In my understanding of American Old Believers' recent schisms there is no compromise on the abstracts of Church or Christology.

The sign of the cross made on the body, like the icon of the Bogoroditsa of Kazan that saved that city from Polish (1612), Swedish (1709), and Napoleonic invaders (1812), holds its power from the concrete object's semiotic likeness to the holiness of the abstract subject. As Fr. Simon explained my first service at the Church of the Nativity (November 4, 2012), the apostle Luke was the first icon painter, Mary was his first subject, who said, upon seeing his work, said "whoever looks upon this painting, I am with." Fr. Smolakov also recounted this story to his congregation, quoting Mary thusly, "'My grace will be with this Icon,'" the "Joy of All Sorrowful" (*SSW*#481, August 13, 1967). The abstract and concrete merge in mysterious (known to God alone) ways. Icons are a perfect example of this confluence, as they are "painted by men and by God" (*SSW*#354, July 5, 1964).[324]

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[322] For more on ikons, Orthodoxy's imagistic mode of religiosity, and materiality of faith, see Kenna 1985; Naumescu 2007, 2010; Hann 2014; Carroll 2015.

[323] Kniss adapted cultural resources management theories of new social movements to schisms to conduct a quantitative analysis of 207 Mennonite intrareligious conflicts. He argued that "concrete cultural resources" were almost three times as likely to end in schism than abstract cultural resources.

[324] This Icon is venerated on two fixed holy days (NS) November 4 (Deliverance from Polish invasion, 1612, carried out in battle) and July 21 (Its location found underground the city after a small girl's vision in 1579) (*SSW*#124, July 6, 1958; *SSW*#354, July 5, 1964). Fr. Simon stressed that they are not worshipping the icon itself, but venerating and remembering those painted. That Sunday School class focused on Markides chapter on ikons in The *Mountain of Silence* (2001, 67-77); we studied several chapters from this text. I saw the same ikon (also known as *Kahzanskaya Vladimirskaya*) commemorated during the Nikolaevsk Popovtsy's service (July 21, 2013). Fr. Nikola removed their copy from its place in the vestibule, above the outer door, and carried it up to the front for communal veneration.

During schisms, there is a bifurcation of lines of legitimacy which separates groups on separate trajectories of historical continuity. For most Old Believers, legitimacy and authenticity has a strict cut-off date of 1666—the year adherents to the Old Rite were officially anathematized. While texts and icons reprinted or reproduced after this date are acceptable (Scheffel 1991, 143; Robson 1995, 77), they must be faithful copies of pre-Nikonian holy works to maintain the true likeness of the original holy persons and Word (Kenna 1985, 354). Fr. Smolakov also stated that "correct Images" must also be "painted by our Old Orthodox painters" (*PC* 7, 1959, Q3); this is another manifestation of the principle of heretical contamination. Newer icons, of course, depict 'newer' rites.[325] And the saints depicted, if canonized after 166, are not saints to the Old Believers.[326] Alaska was first colonized and missionized by Russia, and Orthodoxy maintains its presence in the state. A store in the tourist destination of Homer, some 25 miles from Nikolaevsk, sells Russian books and icons. But in Anna's, a sweet lady with a calming, grandmotherly presence, told me, "those aren't the right ones." This is always the case, she elaborated, if the saints are shown crossing themselves differently, i.e. "not in the right way" (pers. comm., July 15, 2013). It is this aspect of iconographic authenticity, the depiction of the sign of the cross, which recently split the priestless congregations in Minnesota and Alberta.

I was told two different versions of this new microschism, which began in Minnesota around 2008. Fr. Nikola's version is admittedly further removed, as he has not been co-religious with these priestless congregations since his popovtsy conversion in 1990. He explained that the problem stemmed from pre-schism (in other words, 'authentic'), Mother of God icons that Old Believers everywhere had always revered. These icons show baby Jesus making the sign of the cross in an "incorrect" manner. Some even repainted his fingers to conform with the two-fingered method of forming the sign that is a practice shared by all ORRO Christians.[327] Fr. Nikola spoke of the issue as solely a matter of iconographic style, and an unreasonable one in his mind. "We

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[325] Again, I must note that the three-fingered cross was used elsewhere in the Orthodox world long before Patriarch Nikon enforced its use in Russia.

[326] Erie Church of the Nativity concedes that the Russian Orthodox Church, with which it is now affiliated, has retained Grace despite the schism. In theory, saints canonized after 1667 are accepted, although their icons would not likely be found in their churches or homes.

[327] This is against 'the rules' that forbid repainting or otherwise restoring icons ("a deadly sin" to do so, Iwaniec 1981, 24).

always had these icons, and venerated them, what is the problem now?" he asked rhetorically (pers. comm., August 22, 2013).

Ironically, Fr. Nikola lamented that people on opposite sides of the current icon dispute are no longer on speaking terms, and that the quarrel spread to Alberta, and was currently dividing congregations in Oregon. He assumed that it was an issue for the Nikolaevsk bezpopovtsy too, but I have been assured by the village's priestless that "the heresy" had not infiltrated the Alaskan congregations. Fr. Nikola's lack of knowledge about the current religiosity of his priestless neighbors illustrates the social division within the small village. He, clearly, is not on speaking terms with the bezpopovtsy in his own community.

An Alaskan priestless elder, Boris, was able to provide greater insight into the dispute. Until this most recent microschism the priestless congregations of Alaska, Oregon, Minnesota, and Alberta were co-religious. Now, he calls them "double-crossers." I am still kicking myself for not asking whether the pun was intended. He confirmed that certain Mother of God icons that depict the Jesus making the sign of the cross in a slightly different—still two fingered, but not quite right—way were at the center of the conflict (i.e., the "precipitating factor," Wilson 1971, 4). Then, a faction of the congregation began, modeling what their icons pictured, to bless others in this form. They still use the same manner as all Old Believers to make the form of the cross on themselves, but when the nastavnik or cantor blesses the congregation or another individual, they now hold their fingers in the method pictured in these icons—hence, double-crossers. Icons, here, can be seen an additional source of 'textual' authority and a source of question-answerers. The bezpopovtsy congregants' divergent interpretations of these sources turned out to be a CBD.

I asked Boris if people in their hearts were truly praying to Jesus, but made the sign 'wrong', were they punished or risking their salvation? "They're doomed," he told me flat out. It matters not if they make the sign with godly intentions; they are in fact making the sign of the devil. I asked the question to probe classic themes of Old Believer historicity, which describes the Old Rite as an inextricable entanglement of orthodoxy and orthopraxy. Icons are the most tangible example of the mystical union of form and matter, and an especially weighty one for the bezpopovtsy who have no access to the divine through the Eucharist. Beyond presumptions of grace and salvation, the dispute was socially devastating in the here and now. One man told me he had not spoken to two of his siblings in three years for their heresy of double-crossing.

There are now two priestless churches in Alberta, where the majority became double-crossers. This group is considered heretical by the Nikolaevsk bezpopovtsy, and as such contact with this group is an offense of pomieschanie, a socially transmitted heretical contamination, met with socio-ritualistic exclusions discussed in Chapters Three and Four. One woman, who was planning on visiting her relatives in Alberta, expected to be banished to the vestibule with outsiders and other temporarily shunned (or menstruating) individuals for mixing with the non-co-religious. She expected to have "a few weeks" of extra bows and recitations of the Proschaneeye (See Appendix 4) after each service during her period of penance. At home, she would need to use the poganyi (or unclean) dishes reserved for non-co-religious guests. I would need to use these too if I ate there. "No offence," she added (pers. comm.).

Whether different forms of making the sign of the cross is heresy was one of the main issues of the ROC schism. It is no wonder that a change in this ritual ruptured American Old Believers' co-religiosity. Crucifixion is the center of the Confession of Orthodox Faith and Christology, in other words, an essential dogmatic fact and not a 'mere' ritual form. To the first Old Believers, Patriarch Nikon's alteration of the sign was one of many heresies that led to the ROC's fall from grace. Below, I explore the question of the death of the Church that separates the bezpopovtsy from the popovtsy, and its implications on ORRO Christians' perspectives of the state of the world, and their place in it.

6.3. Church Death and the Devil: Historicizing the Priesthood Question

The priesthood question is the first in a long line of divisive issues for Old Believers. An ORRO group's answer to this question determines their ecclesiastical structure, the rites they may practice, and more importantly, has a major role in how they perceive their place in Christian (and world) history. Nikon's dissenters' concerns for the state of the Church and their relationship to it logically followed their rejection of his textual and liturgical reforms. If the Nikon's reforms were alterations were 'only' external changes to ritualistic form, then ORRO was simply yet another variant of equally saving Orthodox practice. If the reforms were heretical, the original Old Believers were right to reject them at any cost; and the costs were great: death, repression, and the loss of sacraments. Furthermore, if the reforms were heretical, the ROC lost its holy mandate in committing itself to incorrect forms of worship and persecuting the truly Orthodox. The priestless and priested agreed that this is indeed what had happened—the ROC had fallen to heresy. But they

disagreed what happened to the Church, as an institution or as a theological concept of the united body of Christians, in the aftermath of schism.

The Erie popovtsy revised their understanding of theo-history of the Church when they reconsidered these questions and changed their answers to argue that the reforms did not contradict dogma and therefore ROC maintained apostolic succession (AS) (Figure 8). The Nikolaevsk popovtsy did not change their answers about the heretical nature of the reforms or the ROC's state of grace. Instead, they came to accept that while the Church had been long lost, it was revived by the conversion of Bishop Ambrosi in 1846 and the foundation of the Belaya Krinitsa (BK) hierarchy. All four sides leaned on the knowledge of the same question-answerers, but their interpretations, prioritization of types of authority (although I believe they would agree that scripture comes first), and emphasized canon and verses differed.

In the bezpopovtsy narrative of the ROC schism, the reforms were heretical, the dissenters had the canonical obligation to remove themselves from the Church (AC 10, 45), which lost grace and AS. As I detail in Chapter Two, the Pomortsy (Erie) had always held this view, while the Chasovennye (Nikolaevsk) had once been beglopopovtsy (accepting converted Nikonian-ordained priests), but had been de facto priestless due to lack of leaders and then largely theologically priestless for several generations. The spiritual father of the Erie congregation, Fr. Smolakov,[328] apparently did not doubt this narrative of the Church history or their own group's position as the keepers of an ancient, pure, unchanged Orthodox faith. His explanations of which practices the Pomortsy do, and do not have, frequently referenced the loss of AS and their forefathers' persecution at the hands of the Russian Church and State that extinguished the holy, authoritative line of pre-Nikonian ordained priests and bishops.[329] For example, "as we do not have such priests,

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[328] See Appendix 2. My coding shows that I was expecting but did not find many mentions of priesthood or schism. The weeklies were more scriptural in nature, being sermons and explanations of readings and holy days according to the liturgical calendar. Fr. Smolakov's thoughts on these questions (and anathema reversals) can be found in his calendar essays (1973, 1975, 1976).

[329] *SSW*#311, May 26, 1963; *PC* 2, 1954, Q5 provides background on the Pomortsy and Q9 on why they do not celebrate the Eucharist; *PC* 4, 1956, Q8 on salvation without all 7 sacraments; *PC* 6, 1958, Q20 clarifies which response to give when blessed with censer; *PC* 7, 1959, Q17 explains that they do not kneel when they pray because that is mode of genuflection only used for special prayers which require a priest; and *PC* 10, 1963, Q2 what sacraments left to Old Orthodoxy and Q6 on why they have censors, but not Eucharist.

for our Apostolic Succession was interrupted during the persecutions of our Old faith, we many not perform the service of Liturgy, respectively, we may not minister the Communion. This is not our fault, and we have to accept the deprivation of this holy Mystery" (*PC* 2, 1954, Q9). The Erie bezpopovtsy stressed their spiritual father's teachings: "They tried to persuade Father Smolakov to join, but he flatly told them that we could never be under their rule" (From all true Russian Orthodox Old Believers of the Pomortsi Faith, Fall 1982). Fr. Larry said the same thing as a matter of fact, "they killed our bishop and we lost apostolic succession during the persecutions" (pers. comm., April 28, 2013; also Delia's notes).

Fr. Simon's main argument kept coming round to this one Gospel verse: Mt 16:18 "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.[330] The Church simply cannot die, he argued, as surely as God does not break promises. To the RSG, Fr. Simon explained how the narrative of the lost priesthood grew after the dissenters' anathematization, "there began to be a growing feeling more and more that the dominant Church has become separate. The feeling that one does not belong any longer, but one is separate from the Church. There is also this aspect on the consideration that the Church is dead. One woman suggested, for example that the priesthood had been taken up into heaven, that it no longer existed on earth..." (RSG 5, October 6, 1982, 2). As I discuss more below, ecclesiology and eschatology often go hand and hand in Old Believer theo-history, for a bezpopovtsy person could look at the same verse and come to a different conclusion—'we know that the Church as died therefore it must be the End times.'

In the following RSG (#6), Fr. Simon leaned on Church Fathers like St. Syprian of Carthage to say that Christian unity (who is included in this socio-religious entity is, of course, variously construed) is from God and that the Church cannot be defiled. He also called upon St. Ignatius' definition of Church as bishopric, or the construction of the body of Christian worshipers as a hierarchical structure. The bezpopovtsy for centuries considered the institutionalized Church

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[330] Greek Peter=*Petros*, Rock=*petra,* pun works for Aramaic equivalent Kephas. Jesus made this promise to (Simon)-Peter, it is only found in Matthew, and it and Matthew 18:17 are they only Gospel uses of the word 'church' (Gk. *ekklesia*); Heb Sheol the shadowy realm for all dead generally equates to Hades, some interpretations of this verse 'gates of Hades' means the power of death (which Christ defeated in the days between his crucifixion and resurrection) (NOAB 1770n).

lost, not the local body of true believers' ability to commune with God in prayer, or global body of righteous Christians known to God alone.

Congregant: In our study also we read in the Scriptures where Christ tells us that hell will never prevail over the Church and the Church will never die. If Christ says the Church will never die are you saying that we believe the Church has died?

Fr. Yokoff: *Just be careful how you analyze because the Church is you yourself. And don't forget, he said you are the temple of the Holy Spirit. That church of [sic] any other church will never be holy until a person goes in there and makes it holy.*

Congregant: I don't mean the building, I mean the capital C Church, the Church as it was handed down, bishop, priest, deacon, laymen, that Church. But Christ says the Church will never die, how do we and who do we have to believe? Do we believe what Christ tells us?

Fr. Yokoff: *We are the Church. the church is nothing but a building. Always be careful what you call the Orthodox Church. We are called Orthodox because the lawyer says you are Orthodox. We should have never accepted that but because our people were illiterate in terms of American language and American understanding. Actually on the original forms we call ourselves Catholic. The attorney did this but that's the version I heard from our Nikon [Fr. Pancerev].*[331] *Our church will never die as long as we stick to it. And recognize that we were the persecuted ones, we were the ones deprived of holy communion. We're not saying that we don't want it, we're aware we can't have it."* (RSG 9, November 17, 1982, 8)

Bezpopovtsy also cite biblical verses in support of their point of view and locally constructed ecclesiological system ('congregationalism' for lack of better word, although his term has Protestant connotations). The Book of Acts describes when the Holy Spirit descended on the first Christians gathered in wait for their promised "comforter," who gave them the power to preach, baptize, and spread the Word. Fr. Smolakov wrote that, on this day, Pentecost, "The Christian Church had its beginning...Through them, the holy Christ's faith came also to us, and celebrating this holiday, we celebrate the beginning of our salvation, for there is no salvation without the Church of Jesus Christ" (*SSW*#669, June 6, 1971). There appears to be some confusion in Fr. Yokoff's and the Congregant's conversation above, are they talking about the church or Church? I believe Fr. Yokoff is speaking of both. Their church is the Church, the body of true believers in communion with God, the Catholic—universal collective of God's people, now scattered, that will not die as long as they are faithful to it.

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[331] Fr. Yokoff is presumably speaking of the lawyer who helped them draft the Church of the Nativity's Charter with the city of Erie.

The hierarchy and apostolic succession (and attendant rites) may be lost, but the Church remains as long as they keep *faithfully* practicing. The Church was reconstituted out of necessity, so that leaders were chosen by the congregation and authorized by presbyterial succession, the laying on of hands from one spiritual leader to the next, and decisions were made by councils of elders and congregational (or inter-congregational in regions with several enclaves) sobory.

Figure 14: Popovtsy and Bezpopovtsy Constructions of 'Church'

Popovtsy	Bezpopovtsy
Church as institution	Church in local churches
Apostolic Succession	Presbyterial Succession
Ecumenical councils	Local sobory, committees of elders
Bishop assigns priest	Congregation chooses nastavnik

"Let us be true sons and daughters of our Christian Old Orthodox Church, and let us keep our faith unchanged 'til the end of the world, when the Lord Christ shall come again to this world and judge all nations and all people. Woe to us, if he will find us unfaithful!" (*SSW*#669, June 6, 1971, owner underlined). They are not 'raskol'niki', they remain unchanged, they remain the Church—not its radical offshoot in the Troeltschian sense (*PC* 10, 1963, Q4; *SSW*#311, May 26, 1963; RSG 9, November 17, 1982, 6, 8, 10; see Appendix 4). Old Believer identity, as internally fractured as it is, has universally centered on the idea that they were "keepers of the Old unchanged Greek Orthodox faith" (*PC* 1, 1953, Q4). The popovtsy factions' revision of the priesthood question flew in the face of the theo-historical narrative the bezpopovtsy told themselves about themselves—that they were the remnant of God's Church on Earth and holding on "'til the End."

The Council of Moscow (1666-7) that anathematized the Old Believers also rejected the prevalent idea held by Russians at the time that Moscow was the Third, and Last, Rome, the holdout of Truth on Earth (Zernov [1937] 1942). Fr. Smolakov summarized this prophesy of Russian exceptionalism:

> Thus the holy Orthodox faith, brought to Greece by the holy Apostles, found a new land and a new people and moved northward. With God's provision, it was done in time to save the faith, for after several centuries, all the Eastern Christian lands, including the empire of Greece, were taken by the Mussulmans and lost their independence. The Christian churches were destroyed, the people were oppressed, the faith lost its original purity and saintliness, being subordinated either to the Turks or the Latins. Only in Russia, it was preserved pure and unchanged until the 17th century. (*SSW*#244, July 9, 1961; similar *PC* 7, 1959, Q19)

He did not comment one state of the Church and its "original purity and saintliness" after the seventeenth century. What had happened was perhaps a given. The Erie and Nikolaevsk popovtsy questioned this given, reexamined the scripture, and concluded that the Church was not lost. It could not be lost. The American bezpopovtsy remain unshaken and "unchanged," as stalwart defenders of another formulation of Church, "for where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them" (Mt. 18:20). The Nikolaevsk bezpopovtsy did not leave a record of their examination of the question, for by accounts, the vast majority immediately rejected the possibility that a legitimate hierarchy existed. But their interviews with the prodding anthropologists who have found their way into their enclaves provide much clarification on the connection between the state of the Church and the state of the world in ORRO theo-history.

6.4. Is this the End? Eschatological Timelines

One August evening in Nikolaevsk, after I put T.J. to bed and left him with my host, Annitta, I hurried over to a nearby bezpopovtsy elder man named Boris' house for a rare semi-formal interview. I have so few direct quotes; I did not risk even asking those who were reticent and wary to speak to me if I could record their voices. This one I made sure to jot down:

"It's coming; pretty soon here."

"What?"

"The torture."[332]

Boris was referring to the time of Tribulation, before the Second Coming of Jesus, when all[333] people suffer and are morally sorted. Later in the conversation, Boris told me that there was, "Not much [time] left. Prophesy all fulfilled now." "Prophesy" refers to more than the Revelations of John. It encompasses, for example, the idea that Moscow was to be the last 'Rome', or center of the Christian world before the 'End of Days'. It included more recent conspiracies and interpretations of current events read with an apocalyptic lens. Old Believers are a textual community not only because of their veneration of scriptures and other ancient texts, but because of the circulation of ORRO polemics and other writings between communities and their

[332] Pers. comm., August 26, 2013

[333] There is no "Rapture" in Orthodoxy.

importance in their religious life and perspectives (Crummey 2011, 176-7; Demkova 2009). For example, contemporary Siberian Old Believers' reference eighteenth century Russian eschatological writings (which in turn cite biblical scripture and writings of the Church Fathers) in their interpretation of technological innovations (Lyubimova 2009). History is more than what has already happened, it is a part of a divine calculation of the progression of humanity's time on Earth and the End has already been written.

Boris showed me his printed copies of certain websites, which I was told not to cite. I can say little with much specificity: (then) President Obama has '666' tattooed on his head, the Masons control the world, and that there was nothing in the nightly news report to make him uncertain about the near proximity of the Lord's return. While Boris may be at the extreme end of the Antichrist paranoia spectrum, he is by no means alone in these belief amongst his fellow Old Believers. Christianity at its root is dualistic, the world is against the Spirit and will of God. The purity and segregation measures utilized by Old Believers in enclaves reinforces their social orientation as outsiders and group identity as beleaguered keepers of the faith (Chapter Three). The bezpopovtsy narrative of the ROC schism increases these tendencies, for without the Church, God's advocate and administration on Earth is absent; humanity lacks rule; the decision-making device of ecumenical councils which ensure the Church's consensus with the Holy Spirit that guides it was lost; and precarity reigns.

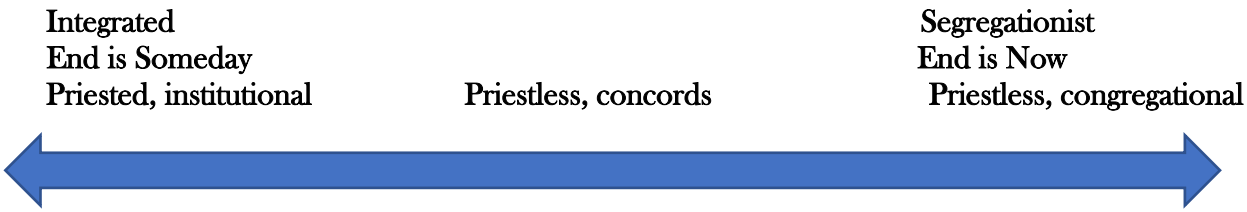
Eschatology was demonstratively on the minds of the first individuals who rejected Nikon's reforms. The three fingered sign of the cross was interpreted as a trick to lure Christians into worshipping the devil (pers. comm., Cherniavsky 1966). Many imminently expected the after the Council of 1666-7 excommunicated Old Rite practitioners to the extent that upwards of twenty thousand individuals perished in wholesale self-immolation in churches under real or imagined threats from the tsarist (in league with the Antichrist, or the Antichrist himself) forces (T. Robbins 2000). The correlation between Old Believer immolations, apocalypticism, and persecution is well argued elsewhere (Lupinin 1984, 123-5, 185; T. Robbins 2000; Paert 2003, 42), was studied by the RSG in their mission to understand the history of Old Belief (RSG 2, September 8, 1982, 5, RSG 5, October 6, 2-3), and even finds its way into a Mussorgsky opera (*Khovanshchina*; Bourdeaux 1966, 31).

The succeeding centuries of Old Believers' struggle for freedom of worship became evidentiary support for their eschatological worldview wherein the external spiritual forces of the

devil and Antichrist were involved in the ROC schism and persecution of "true Orthodoxy."[334] The Third Rome ecclesiological (and nationalistic) narrative that posited the ROC as the possessor of the truest form of worship and unadulterated dogma, helped fuel the ROC schism, and perpetuated the Old Believers' identity as preservers of pravoslavnye has always had an eschatological element. Hosking (1997) summarizes this ideology as "...an attachment to the idea of *Rus'* as a sacred land, 'Holy Russia', the only place where Christianity was professed and practiced in its integrity as Christ had intended" (214). What was left of holiness on Earth after the fall of the ROC? Is it the End? These questions were points of divergence within ORRO group-making in the seventeenth century, and again in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as apocalypticism waned, allowing "...all but an implacable few to devise ways of compromising with this life and even a state run by the Antichrist" (Hosking 1997, 214). There were always factions who refused to compromise, causing breakdowns in co-religiosity (for example, over marriage or pray for the tsar; Chapter Two).

ORRO groups with a greater degree of pessimism about the state of the world also had a more fatalistic view of the state of the Church; in other words, one's place on the priesthood spectrum often overlaps with their eschatological expectations.

Figure 15: Overlapping Ecclesiology and Eschatology



This pattern is not supported by the Pomortsy's relative silence on the end of the world in the annual conferences between 1953-1966. Further analysis is needed to determine the degree to which ecclesiology and eschatology overlap, the above figure merely represents the general trend. Perhaps the Pomortsy's relatively structured 'concord' (soglasiye) and larger centers of leadership in Riga, Vilnius, and Moscow affected their perspectives concerning institutional Church loss. The pre-microschism Erie nastavniki appear to have been far more interested in the individual souls of their congregants, all of which would be judged sooner or later. Most of the *SSW* references to the

[334] Phrase used several times in RSG 9, November 17, 1982.

Second Coming and The End were concerned with individual salvation.[335] The imminence of the End has faded in Erie, and with it the urgency of puritanical segregationism. On the other hand, the populations in eastern Siberia where Nikolaevsk's founders once lived were the "implacable few."

One's own end may occur at any time, the necessity of remaining in a state of grace is of paramount importance to Old Believers (and certainly other puritanical or apocalyptically-minded Christian groups). The End is always nigh, at least in the personal sense. Or as Fr. Larry once joked, "your shirt is close but death is closer."[336] Life is short and you need to die right. Either way, Judgment is coming, you better be clean. But the dangers and possibilities of sullying one's state are dramatically multiplied by the decree to which the world at large, its people and objects, are believed to be pollutants under the Antichrists' dominion. Daily reification of purity boundaries reduces with integration, not just into new a socio-environment, but "the world" at large. The importance of the enclave is increased by the level to which the rest of society is deemed generally polluting and/or nefariously ruled by the Antichrist.

The focus on individual salvation and worthiness of that reward remained a constant focus of Fr. Simon's sermons and course. I only recall one mention of eschatological themes and prophesies, in the Adult Sunday School class after Pope Benedict XVI abdicated,[337] and a young man asked about St. Malachy's "list of popes." I must have nodded or said that I have read about this prophecy. "Amber, you've heard of this?" Fr. Simon asked me. I laughed as I admitted that I had knowing that I had found it at the fine scholarly source of *somewhere online.*[338] The idea was

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[335] (*SSW*#15, November 6, 1955; *SSW*#17, January 7, 1956; *SSW*#24, March 11, 1956; *SSW*#153, February 8, 1959; *SSW*#214, November 27, 1960; *SSW*#370,December 31, 1964; *SSW*#402, October31, 1965; *SSW*#620, May 31, 1970; *SSW*#672, June 27, 1970; *SSW*#753, April 15, 1973)

[336] He said it was an old Russian joke, except they do not say 'death' for that is sacrilege, but 'your return to God,' because there is no death for Christians (March 23, 2013), as he elaborated the following week in our discussion of Christ's defeat of death, and "harrowing hell" in the days between his crucifixion and resurrection (March 31, 2013). The phrase was also used to stress importance of confession ("but we MUST REMEMBER, we are all going to DIE" (PC, September 2, 1984, 6-7).

[337] Catholic News Service, February 11, 2013, provides English translation of Pope Benedict's speech, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5_271es-StQ

[338] Jean le Mée (2013) gives a good summary along with the list of popes here: http://www.lemeestudies.com/jean/article-MalachyProphecy.html

taken with many grains of salt by those in the class and the discussion shifted to focus on the Pope's duties and right to abdicate (February 17, 2013).

Many seventeenth century Old Believers, not just the bezpopovtsy, were convinced that the End was nigh. For this reason, they fled to forests and monasteries, eschewed all worldliness and materiality, lived ascetic lives, and preached complete chastity (Conybeare [1921] 1981; Crummey 1970, Paert 2003). When the Second Coming did not occur, the concept of the Antichrist was extended to the world at large—time works differently for God, perhaps he delayed to allow more time for the preservation of souls (*SSW*#107, January 5, 1958; *SSW*#655, February 21, 1971). A part of this idea of delay and extension of the Antichrist's era is the concept that the time set by Revelations 11-13 for his rule (seven years, three and a half in Great Tribulation) is working on mysterious God-time: "but of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Mt. 24:36; Robson 1992, 1995; Paert 2003, 31-3; Gur'ianova 2009; Naumescu 2016, 316). This extended eschatological timeline mirrors broader Christian social and metaphysical dualistic imaginary of the Church (or those of the Spirit) versus the satanic world (those of the flesh, Eph 5, Gal 5). In this way, 'modernity,' which began with the ROC schism and Peter the Great's subsequent reign, is the era of the Antichrist. In the same way that AS and Church legitimacy has a cut-off date of 1666, so too does the Christian era; an anno anti-Domini rather than anno Domini, if you will.

Old Believers across the centuries and spectrums of church organization and apocalyptic expectations share the same goal (salvation) and same earthly struggle to find a righteous way to live in a fallen world by selectively adapting to a modern (if not evil, then certainly suspect) age without compromising their souls.

> The bezpopovtsy have gone a 300 year history trying to adapt. After the schism the basic position of the Old Believers is that the Church is ended, the world must prepare for the last day to come. After that doesn't happen, then the old believers living in society must try to pick up the pieces and say we must be as legitimate as we can. We will begin to start to have baptism, confession and marriage and have justification for this. Old believers have different opinions on this. (RSG 3, September 22, 1982, 7)

As I demonstrated in previous chapters, this adaptation process bred schism after the schism as Old Believers strove to maintain the Old Rite in an ever-changing modern world without conceding essential elements of their faith. Without the institutional question-answerers, and without the right to convene Old Rite sobory (except brief period between 1905-1917), the preservation of the faith has largely been left to congregational decision-making and increasing

reliance on pamiats and the knowledge of their elders. Rather than a conflict or shift between charismatic and priested powers (Weber 1946, 245-252), factions in the course of a schism utilize both authoritative modes. Ruptures in co-religiosity occur when (charismatic) nastavniki's and startsy's interpretations of (priested, institutional) scripture, canon, and Fathers diverged on essential matters. All are trying to "be as legitimate as we can" (RSG 3, September 22, 1982, 7) in their search for grace.

6.5. Becoming Old (and aging gracefully)

A universal of ORRO religiosity is the focus on "unchanging" continuity; they are *Old*. The paradox of its many internal breaks and many deviations from pre-Nikonian ROC practice is not left unsaid. It is what was stolen from them, lost, and killed—the priesthood, the Church, the sacraments. The loss (or death) of the Church and its authoritarian, sanctifying, and legitimizing power necessitated arguably far greater changes than those instituted by Nikon. Subdivision is recurrent in the Old Believers' efforts to keep the faith unchanging in world that is theologically opposed to the Spirit they were charged to "live by" (Eph 5, Gal 5). They must be constantly updating their selective modernity to be not of the world, but survive it and pass with grace into the next.

The multiple variants of non-co-religious Old Believer groupings boils down to divergent theo-historical narratives on the state of the Church (the priesthood question), the state of the world (place on eschatological timeline), and distinct selective modernities and social dualities forged to navigate these contested states. The Erie and Nikolaevsk popovtsy reversed their answers to the priesthood question, and so changed their group identity, the Church they belonged to, their rites and prayers, and their sociological, historical, and eschatological worldview. The bezpopovtsy, on the other hand, retained their narrative suffering and martyrdom in fallen (and possibly Antichrist ruled) world where the hierarchical Church and the eucharistic gift (among other rites) were "destroyed in the persecutions of our faith by the Niconians" (*PC* 7, 1959, Q17; similar lines in *PC* 2, 1954, Q5; *PC* 4, 1956, Q8; *PC* 6, 1958, Q20; *PC* 10, 1963, Q2).

Throughout the history of Old Belief, the concept of grace (e.g., Did the ROC lose it? How in the world may we be and still obtain it?) has played a leading role in group-making and group-breaking between ORRO groups and a guiding principle of Old Believers' social relationships with non-co-religious Others. For the popovtsy, the Church institution holds the power of sanctification, and the authority to determine what is a SDB. When the bezpopovtsy were

forced to err on the side of caution in an antagonistic world without a security net, their groups recurrently divided over issues too-readily classified by historians and popovtsy polemicists alike as "little" traditions or "only ritual" (e.g., RSG 3, September 22, 1982). The popovtsy and bezpopovtsy differ on how to seek grace, and on how it may be sacramentally accessed and protected within their given ecclesiological systems, but all groups share the same goal to live "Orthodox and saving" lives.

An Erie bezpopovtsy newsletter written shortly after the microschism demonstrates the intertwined concepts of continuity, and Pomortsy group identity and history.

> We can only imagine the millions of voices that have sung this hymn in our Slavonic church tones. The same in every Pomortsi Old Believer Church since it was written for us. So everything old as our fathers before us died for many not have been too bad. The following (anonymous) message may help to strengthen our faith to keep that which is old. 'It is always a new wonder how people can so easily reject that which is called old, old truths, old principles, old concepts, old slogans. Nothing is bad because it is old and nothing is always good because it is new. Whatever has been so relevant as to outlast the ages deserves more than a hasty rejection. Look at the rubbish heaps of new ideas painfully discarded and stacked higher and higher before you remove the ancient landmarks. Those markers don't stand without purpose. Though we call ageless truths old, actually they are younger than youth. That which defies time can never age, and will never change.[339]

What can "never change," the "ageless truths," are unalterable dogma. In other words, who they are and how they practice as Old Believers is intimately tied to their understanding of the unalterable essentials of their ancient faith. In the following conclusion chapter, I discuss how co-religiosity breaks when a group cannot find consensus on the categorization of the unchangeable. Contemporary American Old Believers, bezpopovtsy and popovtsy alike, are all selectively modern, and selectively old, whose groups are united by shared perspectives of what may never change and what must change so that they, and their children, may continue to keep the faith.

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[339] AOB, January 29, 1983. This newsletter also contained meeting times, contact information, social news, and begins explaining the hymn which will be sung that night, composed by St. John of Damascus (676-749), and sung over 1000 years.

Chapter 7
Conclusion: The Transcendental Growing Pains of Church Change and Choice

> *So, 'what shall you give in exchange for your soul?' And so, in the final analysis he tells us, that we must recognize that we must make the choice of following Him. Make no mistake about it. Our society, our culture, is fading away from the traditional Christianity of generations, of centuries. There's no question about that in every possible way. And we can look at it and say, 'well, the times are changing. The times are evolving.' But Christ doesn't change. The Church doesn't change. We are not to change. We are to follow what the Church has always given us to do. And what it has given us to do is to deny ourselves, to take up our crosses, to follow Christ, and to dedicate ourselves to Christ. And I encourage you and urge you: don't play at being a Christian.*
> —Fr. Simon, *Sermon, April 7, 2013*[340]

To rephrase Bob Dylan,[341] and Fr. Simon's implied critique to this 'modern' anthem, the times have always been a changin'. Most change appears gradual; it is difficult to track its evolution or pinpoint primary causes and instigators. But in this chapter, and dissertation more broadly, I have sought to determine how groups concertedly trying *not* to change do, nevertheless, change, nevertheless. A micro/schism is a radical event; it is a culmination of debates over contentious categorizations (e.g., us/them, orthodox/heterodox), variant theo-histories (i.e., the Church died; Moscow was the Third and Last Rome; ORRO carries on 'true' Church), and theological dissension that forces redefinition of the boundaries of co-religiosity; it is a civil war where brothers and sisters may find themselves on opposite sides of an ideological Mason-Dixon Line. It impels declarative statements concerning dogma and group identity. It is also a choice. All congregants in Nikolaevsk and Erie were compelled to choose between two variant paths of Old Rite continuity (although for some, the choice was to opt out). Their microschisms are not stories of dueling tradition and novelty, but multiple narratives of selective modernity and multiple paths of traditional continuity.

It is uncomfortable being a research opportunist— these divisive moments that highlight challenging decisions, contradictions, and alterations otherwise camouflaged by steady, day-to-day

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[340] Father Simon quoted one of the service's gospel readings (Mark 8:34-9:1) on April 7, 2013, which was the movable Holy Day of the Veneration of the Cross (third Sunday of Paschal Lent) as well as the fixed Holy Day of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, which celebrates Gabriel's message, and Mary's acceptance, of her role as Godbearer (Luke 1:26-39). 'He' refers either to Jesus Christ whom Mark quotes, or to the author of the *Gospel Commentary*, traditionally ascribed to be St. John of Chrysostom (*GC* 89-103).

[341] Bob Dylan, lyrics, *The Times They are a Changin'*, 1964

accumulation are socially devastating. The anthropology of Christianity can benefit from this tension, for the moments in which the messy boundaries of us/them and heresies/orthodoxies are redrawn during the selection and debate processes leading up to schism reveal the essential matters of a group's faith. ORRO schisms mark changes in specific practices (e.g., accepting priestless marriage), but more significantly, they illustrate what Old Believers consider to be unchangeable (i.e., God's will and dogma, that which transcends time and place) and how to best maintain continuity with these fundamentals. Recurrent points of dissension (e.g., the priesthood question) are especially important to their variant definitions of Old Belief, its theo-history, and their identity as Old Believers.

The selective modernity process of choosing between aspects of continuity and change to best maintain ORRO in their present place in time and space broke the American Old Believer congregations. Their microschisms were byproducts of their contradictory determinations of '*what is changeable?*' Which aspects of modernity may be accommodated (e.g., occupational pressures to shave beards)? What are the Absolute, unalterable aspects of Old Rite religiosity (and Old Believers' identity as its preservers)? Are there any salvation deal-breakers or limits to God's grace? In this final chapter, I contextualize the Erie and Nikolaevsk congregants' answers to these difficult questions (and others explored in Chapters Four through Six) within the broader historical dynamics, co-religiosity decision-making, and interrelationships of Christian Churches. The Old Believers are not the only Christians who struggle with transcendental growing pains—the motivation to live by their convictions about divine, pre-eternal absolutes and/or religious law in the face of the everchanging circumstances of passing time.

I first approach concerns over the applicability of transcendental truths and religious absolutes to menial existence through the moral medium of choice. Contemporary variations of Old Rite religiosity are the result of centuries of divergent, intersecting, and crisscrossed paths, unions, and divisions, taken during believers' reluctant journeys of selective modernity. 'Modernity' is a catch-all term to oppose the equally viscous 'Tradition', the former valorizes novelty, the latter continuity, the former the future, the latter the past. To further explore the choices related to this broad, dichotomous temporal orientation, I discuss disputes over competing usages of one's time and conflicting religious (liturgical calendar, Sabbath) and secular (workdays/weekends) time frames. Then, I offer a counter narrative of 'the conservative Old Believer fighting the progressive forces of outside society' by looking to the stories of converts who

have *chosen* Old Ritualism or Eastern Orthodoxy precisely for its historical continuity and traditions. The co-religious are not merely those who were 'born and raised' in the same denomination, but those who have chosen to worship with others who share not only their dogmatic beliefs, but also similar selective modernity viewpoints concerning contemporary Christian life within a given theo-historical perspective.

"The Church doesn't change," Fr. Simon declared. In this statement he is not denying the passage of two millennia, or the works of the Fathers like John Chrysostom written after 33 CE whose *Gospel Commentary* (*GC*) is read every Sunday, or the much later conversion of Muscovy and subsequent development of Russian Christianity's unique form and language of worship. Instead, he distinguishes between essentials and particulars, only the latter are subject to [acceptable] change. The distinction between essential v. particular is pinned on a determination of the unalterable, the fundamentals, the Capital, the indivisible Holy (Douglas 1966, 62-7) elements of the faith, and what I perhaps too cheekily call the 'salvation deal-breakers'. Categorical dissension, when the group begins to be divided as to what is essential and what is particular, is a common co-religiosity deal-breaker. It was a CBD when the New and Old Ritualists were not in consensus about the essentiality (matter of dogma) or particularity (matter of ritual form) of the spelling of Isus, number of fingers used to make the sign of the cross, and translation of the Creed. Beyond the question 'what is changeable?' there is the question 'what must change so that we may continue?' I explore this through three issues: English translations of Church Slavonic; debate within Orthodoxy over adoption of the "New Style" Gregorian calendar; and the leadership role of women and institutions due to waning congregational numbers and lack of religious leaders.

To conclude this chapter, and dissertation, I return to the unanimous duality of Old Believer group-making and broader processes of defining Christian co-religiosity, the union of people with shared dogma and rites through the exclusion of non-co-religious others. Throughout the history of Christianity, change (for example of ritual process, language, leadership, or Church membership) is negotiated through the dual processes of schisms and sobory; divisions and unifications redefine co-religious oneness and the parameters of sobornost'. In the case of bezpopovtsy subdivisions, we can see how change spurs further change through radicalization and polarization, or how schism breeds schism. Adaptations to religious practice can also be slow and accumulating, drawing distinct selective modernity and ORRO continuity paths further away from one another over time.

Finally, I switch tracks to speak about Universality, the Church's goal of 'oneness' (Ephesians 4, 6; 1 Cor 12), an ideal which remains untouched in spite of all of the fractures to Christ's earthly body. Religious change happens in dramatic ruptures as well as through the buildup of everyday decisions over 'small' particulars, such as whether one individual may receive burial prayers despite a perceived moral failure. Social dynamics of who belong and who can participate in common worship or receive rites (CDB) also shift along the group's collective journey of determining religious continuity. A religious schism reveals overlapping social and religious dualities in the process of determining 'what is an acceptable accommodation and what is essential and absolute?' In the aftermath of intrareligious rupture, the redrawn boundaries of belief and belonging create more harmonious unions along a shared vision of contemporary lived Christianity.

7.1. Choices: Modernity, Time, and the Pre-eternal God

Anthropologically, the prioritization of choice over outside forces and impediments to continuity in discussions of socio-religious change marks a ('modern') theoretical shift towards the individual agency (Keane 1996, 2007, 4-5). Theologically, choice, or rather free will, is a basic element of many Christian soteriologies and everyday moralities. Fr. Simon stressed this in his sermon (above epigraph): Christians are not to play a roll, they must make a choice to follow Christ, and they are meant to conscientiously resist the forces of change in our time. Grace alone may be sufficient for salvation (2 Cor 12:9), but the genesis and continuous theme of ORRO historical group-making and breaking has been the ease with which grace may be lost through the choices one makes on points of ritual practice and on the adaptation of religious principles to day-to-day life. Further interdisciplinary research is needed on schisms to allow the anthropologist to observe how change occurs and is meticulously selected and the theologist to explain why certain decisions and choices result in rupture.

Making choices and *having* choices caused change in Erie and Nikolaevsk. The necessity for puritanical exclusionism (Chapter Three) and the use of emergency situation canonical loopholes for conducting sacraments without priests came into question as greater freedom from persecution and for religious observation was assured through immigration and the Anathema Reversals. Old Believers in Eastern Europe faced similar upheavals and readjustments in the aftermath of the Soviet period (see Rogers 2009, 269-301; Zigon 2011). The choice for change and

the change in having a choice of defining unity differently ironically created additional divides within an already fractured diaspora. Humphrey (2014) astutely connected the Trans-Baikal Old Believers' perceptions of forceable change (from the State and/or from the forces of the Antichrist at hand since the ROC schism), their active decisiveness in times of uncertainty, and schisms with the Hegelian notion that there is no history without freedom of choices to move the pendulum of change forward (219). This section explores the intersections of choice and change in the lives of American Old Believers through the themes of modernity, temporality, and conversion.

The elasticity of 'modernism' as a conceptual framework presents a challenge for definition but an opportunity for exploring its dynamic with the equally flexible notions of traditionalism, conservativism, fundamentalism, or anti-modernism commonly used to describe American Old Believers' perceptions of and interactions with outside society and 'Others' (Chapter Three). In this dissertation, I have analyzed the Erie and Nikolaevsk congregations' negotiation of change and continuity by looking at the large choices—the ruptures. Now, I turn to the smaller day-to-day and individual choices which mark personal deliberations of selective modernity. Olshan (1994) argued that if the mark of modernity is self-awareness and conscious choice as opposed to uncritical following of fate and tradition, then the Old Order Amish are modern, for they "selectively adapt to forces of modernity" (185-9).[342] This is another point where greater theological engagement would be a boon to the anthropology of Christianity, which must reconcile its own theoretical legacies of dichotomous understanding (e.g., sacred/profane) with the convictions and conceptual categories of its subjects. If choice is modern then so were the Old Testament prophets (Jos 24:15; Dt 30:19), Jesus (Spirit and flesh Mt 26:41; choosing to follow Christ Mk 8:34), and Aquinas (*Summa Theologica* [c. 1265-1274] 1999, 192-230) for doctrines of free will have always been a part of Christianity.

The difficulty and controversy surrounding the American Old Believers' selective modernity choices are exemplified by a Church of the Nativity conflict that occurred in the 1930s over individuals' use of their leisure time. It is a moral choice to choose to come to church on Saturday night when there are more gratifying options. Robbins (2007b, 2009) explores this

[342] It is interesting that Calvinism, the branch of Christianity most often tied to modernization in the Weberian model (Weber 1946, 302-322; Berger 1971), possesses the soteriology (predestination) the least predicated on individual choice.

connection between freedom of choice and morality. What is defined as a choice is always a moral one; individuals have the responsibility to choose correctly. Decisions that are made with less of a choice or limited individual agency indicates the structural or fundamental moral code and social obligations. American Old Believers' perceptions of the less relative choices, in other words the ones that will be met with censure or shunning, have shifted over time (for example, women cutting their hair) as congregations continuously reorient their understanding of the essential, unchangeable, deal-breakers.

The use of one's time is a personal choice. A relative one, as it perhaps felt like there was less of a choice in an enclave when all your neighbors would ask you why you were not in service or when one's congregation was the only society one had, and that in secret and set against a persecuting State and hostile social scene. The American setting presented them with more choices—less persecution gave greater freedom of choice. Zuckerman (1999) made a similar argument about the relative levels of societal fear (of persecution and antisemitism), freedom of choice, mandatory nature of belonging and connection to one's enclave, necessity for self-sufficiency, and safety between Jewish communities in Russia and those in the U.S. He suggested that the lessening of external pressures lends a 'chance' for internal conflicts to arise (233).

The absence of persecution is a source of guilt about one's selfish decisions and falls to temptation, and the suffering of forefathers' is a present reminder to congregants to make the 'right' choice. The Church of Nativity's congregants were reminded of this contrast of relative freedom between their lives and those of their persecuted ancestors and brethren in the not-to-far distance past. One of the monthly CN newsletters I read while I was in Erie critiqued their own apathy and lack of dedication in comparison to past ORRO devotees in its introduction to an article (that it reprinted) about a "catacomb Pascha [Easter]" that:

> ...was written some time ago, when Russia was still under the Communist Regime. While we all enjoy the many comforts of freedom and being able to attend Divine Services whenever we choose, many of us fail to recognize the great gift of Orthodoxy that has been preserved for us through the ages. How many of us left Divine Services at PASCHA early...or didn't even bother to attend at all? Read on and see to what lengths people went to experience for a moment that which we disregard so carelessly. (CN, May 2012)

American Old Believers' ethnohistorical narratives of the persecution of their ancestors' and the migrations and struggles faced by their parents and grandparents remain powerful motivations to 'make the right choices' to keep the faith under far less antagonistic circumstances.

The last subsection discusses how selective modernity is a thoughtful process of decision-making that is also undertaken by non-Old Believers. In particular, I will expand on the personal reasoning of converts to Eastern Orthodoxy. Aside from those who convert to marry an Old Believer spouse there are those who have freely chosen to embrace the transcendental struggle and the rigorous demands of a time-consuming religious practice and exacting standards of everyday morality of a faith losing its natal members. The movement of history may necessitate freedom of choice (Humphrey 2014, following Hegel), but of course not all changes march forward or there would not be anti-modernities, reactionaries, or antitheses. On the individual level, choice of Church belonging reflects one's chosen path of selective modernity that best matches their own perspective on how to live as 'good' Christians.

The process of co-religiosity and selective modernity decision-making explored in this dissertation focus on American Old Believers' choices to counter the anthropological narrative of forced acculturation and to reflect general Christian theological themes of free will and good works through which a Christian may hope to earn salvation. Dualities and polarizations, like those explored in Chapter Three and Four, present believers with choices. Chapter Five is about the choices which broke apart two congregations. Particularities of how the two congregations split and what they split over represent the most important aspects of a group's identity, as guided by variations in historical and theological interpretations (Chapter Four and Six). The choice of schism realigns a Church's or congregation's disintegrating unanimity along dueling factions' divergent paths of selective modernity. To be in the world but not of the world is a tightrope tied between opposite poles; slips and falls have deadly consequences.

7.1.1. Selective Modernity

I am drawing on the flexibility of the term modernity precisely because it is a 'moving target,' a never-fulfilled, always transitioning and everchanging concept and unobtainable goal post. 'Modernity' valorizes change, novelty, plurality, and individuality. The concept is the ideological antonym to tradition, and the eternal-no, *pre-eternal*-God and way of life prescribed for his followers (FS, CN sermon, April 7, 2013; Appendix 2). In this way, 'the modern' as the trajectory imagined to be opposed to Church tradition has not changed since the ROC schism. And so, Peter the Great, the modernizer, the Westernizer, remains the eternal enemy of Old Belief and key to its ethnohistorical narrative (RSG 4, September 29, 1982; pers. comm.). The accommodations and marks of acculturation sketched by ethnographers (e.g., Smithson 1977) are the casualties of the

daily battles Old Believers have fought against the modern. I discuss them here as selections or decisions, but the results are similar despite the attributed agency. Change happens.

The fact that flesh/Spirit, material/spiritual, progressive/conservative, worldly/transcendent, natural/cultural dichotomies miss the hybridity of contemporary life is not novel. Berman ([1982] 2010) argued that such theoretical dichotomies minimize the ways in which modern life remains an "interfusion of its material and spiritual forces," and a "unity of modern self and modern environment" (Berman ([1982] 2010, 131-2; c.f. Latour 1993). Anthropological studies of 'traditionalist' enclaves have also recognized continuity and change as a spectrum. For example, Kraybill (1994) argued in his work with Amish communities that there are no societies that are either progressively modern or conservatively non-modern, but rather each have "degrees of modernity" (24). Yet polarized concepts remain an important paradigm of understanding religious communities like those of the Amish and Old Believers first of all, because they use the dualistic categories themselves (Chapters Two and Three) and second of all, their own ethnohistorical narrative and group identity is wrapped up in the idea of not-changing and being as minimally, selectively modern as possible (Chapters Five and Six).

I have quoted numerous examples throughout this dissertation of Old Believers' dualistic categorizations of material and social life and worldviews that distinguish the modern world from a godly life of spiritual devotion. This overlapping metaphysical and social dualism is represented in their categorization of people as mirskie (worldly) and nimirskie (unworldly). Elsewhere, the 'modern' stands for the present and its challenges that thwart Old Believers' continuity with past traditions and with God's will for their lives. For example, Fr. Smolakov wrote of the opposition between the "modern scientists" "in these times" that are leading people away from God. He perceived a shift in where people place their faith and from whom they get their answers to life's many questions (*SSW*#576, July 20, 1969; elsewhere, "contemporary scientists," *SSW*#655, February 21, 1971). He also described "our modern life" and its many temptations (*SSW*#356, August 2, 1964; *SSW*#402, October 31, 1965) as a generational shift away from Christian life:

> The young generation is taught by the surrounding society to drink, to smoke, to use drugs, to despise chastity and other virtues, so that they may lose entirely their Christian shape and morale...The older generations, being brought up still in the fear of God, could preserve their faith and morale, and the devil therefore chooses to work with the young ones, where the resistance is lesser and the victory is easier for him. Therefore he puts his snares on the road used by youngsters. Movies and televisions, books and the atheistic propaganda under the cover of the naturalists' and philosophers' researches [SIC], all these are the agencies of the

> devil to defeat God and to erase His name and meaning from the hearts of our young generations. And to crown this satanic work, even some modern, perverse clergymen start doubting God's existence, as we can read in the newspapers and magazines, and are ready to bury the 'dead God.' (*SSW*511, March 24, 1968)

The battle of good and evil, God and the devil, is framed here as a particular problem of 'the youth today', but it is as old as, well, Genesis. The proliferation of other choices, or temptations, combined with the shift in knowledge away from the Church and towards 'modern scientists' and 'naturalists' research have merely exacerbated the challenge. This perceived conflict is why some segregationist enclaves' control and/or chose a de-selection of public education as means of limiting this clash of authorities as I described in Chapter Three (see Sabey 1969; Hostetler and Huntington 1971; Hostetler 1972; Jaffe 1990; Huntington 1994).

Ecclesiology aside, the priesthood question is so divisive because Old Believers' perspectives on the state of the Church are intimately tied to ORRO subgroups' identities. Like the Amish, Old Believers have been characterized as an anachronism, a "people of the past" (Olshan 1994, 195; e.g., Fortier 1970). Olshan critiqued this depiction, for 'closed' and 'conservative' enclaves also make the choice to change and adapt to survive (i.e., to transmit religious knowledge and active practice to their children). "If the Amish can no longer be dismissed as an anachronism, the living representation of an earlier cultural stage, then they arguably become a potential model for other contemporary groups. It is not necessary to repudiate reason or modernity to advocate a way of life that neither passively clings to tradition nor is antithetical to the essence of modernity as defined here" as era led by self-conscious choices (195). I argue that schisms are likely to occur when consensus cannot be reached concerning changes considered to be matters of a group's dogma and identity. This certainly happened in Erie and Nikolaevsk when the popovtsy faction rewrote their community's theo-historical narrative that had framed their priestless existence as a right and necessary change in the wake of the ROC schism.

I would like to contrast modernity's elevation of the individual over 'community' and 'tradition' when it comes to moral choice with similar characterizations (respectively) of Western Christianity in comparison to Eastern Orthodoxy (for example, Tönnies et al. 1974). The connection between modernity and individuality and associated secularization which removed religion to the private sphere is one of Weber's (also, Mauss 1938) most lasting influences on conceptions of modernity as well as on the anthropology of Christianity subfield (Hann 2012). Yet Christian theology's interest in the individual pre-dates Protestantism. Dumont (1985; following

Troeltsch [1911] 1960; predictably focused on Calvinism) argued that (rather than modernity making Christianity more individualistic) modern conceptions of individualism have their foundation in early Christian teachings regarding humanity's relationship with God and Christian dualistic tension between inner and outer worlds, self and society, absolute truths and individual realities.

The dialogue between Zigon (2007) and Robbins (2004, 2007b, 2009) concerning the shift from (socially obligated) "morality of reproduction" to (individual choice) "morality of freedom" demonstrates the theoretical overlap of community/individual and tradition/modernity concepts. While the Church and its knowledge comes from continuous connection to the scripture, councils, and early Fathers, "the modern subject...seeks to act as its own source of authority" (Keane 2006, 316). Discussions of the individual are largely relegated to Protestant studies (again, following Weber; Robbins 2004; Keane 2007). Handman (2014a) goes against grain to stress that the crucial moral role of Lutheran social groups in Papua New Guinea were prioritized even at the expense of the subject.

Anthropologists who study Eastern Orthodoxy Christianity warn against falling into this easy generalization of modern-self and traditional-community motivations beyond people's actions and choices (Agadjanian and Rousselet 2005; Rogers 2009, 51). We must strike a balance between describing how our interlocutors utilize such dichotomies to describe their worlds while observing the nuances between too easily generalizable conceptual pairs. For example, the Amish are not without choice and bound to tradition, rather their choices prioritize, *Gelassenheit,* or submitting and yielding to higher authority and subordinating the individual to community, which "...sharply distinguishes their culture from modern ways" and contemporary focus on individual rights and freedoms (Kraybill 1994b, 31).

The link between individuality and modernity was not lost on Fr. Smolakov in his plea to youth to respect and honor their mothers:

> And especially, in these modern times, and in this progressive land, where 'independence' is proclaimed as the highest standard of perfection for every individual...But you, my children, say that you have to be independent, and that obedience to parents is a rather old-fashioned principle, which this not necessary in these times....But you should know, dear children, that there are many old-fashioned things you cannot abandon or live without them. Eating, for example... (*SSW*#309, May12, 1963)

Independence, autonomy, and individuality are not sufficient to sustain life. It sounds like a joke, to say that eating is old fashioned, but I do not know if the nastavnik had a sense of humor. But his point is clear, one needs to eat and sleep, and there are necessities in life that remain no matter what 'these modern times' declares old-fashioned. Selective modernity is a function of meeting the necessities of life in the 'progressive' present whilst conserving the unchanging necessities of eternal life (Spirit and prayer-filled life).

Anthropology must address both the socio-environmental pressures and the theological perspectives of our interlocutors in our analyses of religious change; the modern world is not only filled with options; temptations have proliferated. Fr. Smolakov described the difficult choices of worldly (elsewhere calls 'modern') life through scriptural imagery of the rocky road to salvation:

> But His grace may come upon us only if we prove our readiness to receive it through our conversion from the daily subjection to the worldly things to the Godly matters, like faith, Church, Christian virtues. As long as we live, we are given the choice between these two opposite attractions: between the entire worldliness and life in the world in the limits of the Christian doctrine. If we make a wrong choice, we shall pay with an eternal misfortune for it in the life to come. But the correct choice is rewarded by an endless life in joy and happiness. How can we find the right way to this happiness? According to our Lord Jesus' teaching, only by walking a hard and narrow path, strewn with the stones of self-denial and abstinence. The wide and smooth road of self-satisfaction should lead us to our condemnation. (SSW#381, March 21, 1965)

We cannot talk about daily decisions or major intrareligious ruptures without recognition of individuals' considerations of the eternal consequences of their actions. Nor can we talk about how religion shapes peoples' lives from how they choose to use their time to their social relationships without theological engagement (Lemons 2018a; Robbins 2020).

One Sunday afternoon, a Pentecostal family member told me a story that struck me as illustrative of a major difference between Church (collective) liturgical cycles and congregational (subject to individual religious leader's discretion) Spirit-led sermons. It was not about a big event, just an everyday nuisance. Early that morning, before service, her Pastor drove to the airport to pick up his wife on her way home from a home-schooling convention only to have to turn around and repeat the hour long drive when her flight was cancelled. "Needless to say," she proceeded to say, "his sermon today was on patience and keeping your cool." That same Sunday, Old Calendarist Eastern Orthodox congregations around the world, including the four non-co-religious groups in this study, heard readings from the Gospels of John (20:19:31, in Matins), Matthew (14:22-34), and Luke (4:22-30); and the epistles James (5:10-20) and 1 Corinthians (3:9-17); and

the 4th century sermon on the Matthew reading (*GC* 339-350); and commemorated the Prophet Elijah (among others).[343]

'The message', or sermon, exists within the regimented, theo-historical cycle of Christ's birth, teachings, and resurrection, the annual repetition of which keeps Orthodox Christians in constant remembrance. Their remembrance of Christ's sacrifice is furthermore imprinted on their daily lives through fasting every Wednesday (day betrayed) and Friday (day crucified). Old Believers' (and many Orthodox Christians') use of the Julian calendar (13 days behind the Gregorian) sets the cycle of their religious life apart from most their compatriots (more next section). Therefore, Western Christian Churches that follow a liturgical cycle of readings would be remembering separate events and taught separate lessons on any given Sunday. Below, I describe Old Believers' broader temporal duality between spiritual time (during ritual services, prayer, and times of fasting) and secular time as an example of their everyday selective modernity (or rather, selective temporality) choices.

7.1.2. There's Only One Saturday Night a Week

Selective modernity also characterizes the small decisions American Old Believers make on a daily basis. Their choices on use of time are one concrete avenue to explore this process, and a particularly informative one for how one chooses to spend their Saturday night illustrates the multiple temporalities (Lester 2003; Jaffe on intersections of sacred and school time, 1990, 120-125; Naumescu 2016 on secular young life and prayerful and ascetic old life) and living dualism of a people striving to be 'in the world but not off the world'. In the latter half of Fr. Pancerev's pastorship (CN's first nastavnik, 1923-1946), his enforcement of purity concepts caused a number of interpersonal problems resulting in the loss of individual and even whole families' attendance (some temporarily, others permanently). The conservatism of Fr. Pancerev framed Erie Old Believers' discussion of the Community of Young Staroobriadcy (Young *Old Ritualists,* CYS) conflicts. He is remembered and described as "forceful, strong and domineering" as a leader

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[343] August 2nd (NS)/July 20th (OS) is the fixed Holy Day for the Holy Glorious Prophet Elijah. In 2013, the year of my fieldwork, the closure of a Nikolaevsk popovtsy woman's business for this Holy Day gave me the chance for an interview during T.J.'s nap time. The 9th Sunday after Pentecost (a moveable feast) in 2013 fell on August 25th/August 12 during the fixed fast for the Dormition of the Most Holy Godbearer (August 14-28 NS). In 2015, it was also the 9th Sunday after Pentecost. http://www.holytrinityorthodox.com/calendar

(Robson 1985, 76). His efforts to exclude the evils of surrounding society and pollutants also excluded those who failed to keep American life at bay (pomieschanie, Chapter Three) or were otherwise losing the fight against temptation. Robson (1985) and Holdeman (2002) characterize the dispute as a generational conflict caused by the rapid shift and growth of the urban enclave and a large young adult population of second and third generation American Old Believers who do not see eye to eye with their 'elders'.

The CYS was chartered in 1928 as a club for the urban enclave's many young adults to socialize outside of church services (Court of Common Pleas of Erie County, PA, Charter Book 8, 737-740). While it may have begun in an effort to better band together Old Believers and even prevent the evils of exogamy (Dolan 1991, 54), it was not long before the place for co-religionists to attend fish fries, drink beer (after prohibition was repealed in 1933, of course), dance, and later bowl (at a larger location opened in late 1940-early 1950s on 145/155 E. Second St.) became at odds with Fr. Pancerev and other elders (Robson 1998, 5; LM, pers. comm., May 28, 2013; AR, May 23, 2013; WO, pers. comm., June 10, 2013). In 1928, the club opened over "Sam's" Economical Grocery Store at 264 E. Second St., just adjacent to the Church of the Nativity with its windows opened to relieve parishioners from the stifling summer heat within (See Map 5). The windows of the club were opened for the same reason. When the club refused Fr. Pancerev's request that they close during church services (including every Saturday night) to prevent the disruption of prayers by the club "blasting polka" (LM, pers. comm., May 28, 2013), the stern religious leader began to banish club members. Others had already left, taking their families with them. Some individuals returned years or decades later, others never did (Holdeman 2002, 72, 75-6; Dolan 1991, 54).

Priesthood was not the only major dispute that broke the community, the CYS conflict can rightly be called the first schism in Erie (as Holdeman 2002, 76 does), as these banished and disgruntled ex-members of the Church of the Nativity held separate services and established a separate cemetery. The exclusionary methods of leaving and/or expelling those who do not uphold congregational standards (e.g., of attendance, of dress, of everyday mores concerning degrees of worldliness) is a common feature of ORRO maintenance of congregational sobornost'. It is important to stress that individuals also chose to leave; there were other instances of people praying at home rather than attending services because of conflicts with this very strict, controlling nastavnik (AR, pers. comm., May 23, 2013). There were other circumstances in the Erie enclave's

history, for example, over contentions with the congregation's choice of nastavnik (Holdeman 2002, 103-4), where a number of people began to pray elsewhere (again, temporarily, or for good).

Sava Legenzoff (Sam Lee) could be called a "spiritual father" of those who either chose to, or where forced, out of the Church of the Nativity.[344] He had voluntarily left in 1934, as "...he must have held a more practical viewpoint toward second-generation Russians whose lives were colored undeniably by American styles, values and modern conveniences including cars, telephones, radios and more oddities to the immigrants. Receptiveness to change brought him to the breaking point with Rev. Pancerev's view that the Church was no sanctuary for those who frequented the Club" (Dolan 1991, 58). He opened his home (at that point a farm outside of Erie) to others who were "alienated or humiliated" and "ostracized," and conducted regular and holiday services and performing baptisms, weddings, and hearing confessions (Dolan 1991, 58-9). "Families which were related by blood and marriage and which had shared a common history for well over a century (if not two) were now divided, not by dogma as had been the case in Europe as the religion adjusted and adapted to changing needs, times, and pressures, but by how the religious was being prioritized in the lives of its adherents" (Holdeman 2002, 77). In other words, the CN congregation was divided over the generic 'how in the world' one may be while remaining blagochestyi and morally worthy to participate in common worship question that has plagued Old Believers for centuries (2.1.3., Figure 11).

The crux of the CYS crisis was Fr. Pancerev's denial of burial rites to those who frequented the club on weekends within the Church's Eaoaun Bohoslov (*Ioan* on Charter, St. John the Apostle) cemetery. The institution of a separate cemetery formalized tensions into a lasting rift. Sam legally incorporated a congregation, the Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of Eoaun Zlatoust (John Chrysostom) and listed his home address as its base. Sam, as minister, along with 25 male former CN members of founded the congregation whose stated purpose in their petition for non-profit status (granted by Erie Common Pleas Court, April 25, 1938) was to provide burial ground for deceased congregants, which was purchased a month later (Dolan 1991, 59-60). Although the

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[344]Before the fourth U.S. Old Believer Church in Millville, NY, St. Nicholas, was founded in 1937, he even traveled to Brooklyn to perform services for people there. He had long helped Fr. Makidonski serve Old Believers in scattered coal villages (Dolan 1991; Holdeman 2002, 76). While he may never have been an official nastavnik (having received presbyterial succession), he was certainly a "spiritual father" to many (more on this Chapter Six).

cemetery has since reverted to the care of the Church of the Nativity (in the late 90s, William O., pers. comm., June 10, 2013), its founders already buried within, the CYS break was more than a temporary spat. Fr. Pancerev's successor, Fr. Yokoff (nastavnik, 1946-1952), refused to hold burial and grave-side prayers at the CYS cemetery (Robson 1985, 87-8). When I visited the CYS on its current location far outside the old enclave (E. 38th Street), I was able to speak with an elderly gentleman who currently ran the club and whose uncle had been one of its last living founders, William O. He could not remember the last time someone had been buried in the CYS cemetery, although there were some elders with plots waiting for them beside their late spouses (WO, pers. comm., June 10, 2013).

A microschism is in part a question of critical mass. It is debatable whether the CYS dispute can be classified as a microschism, despite the fact that the issue led to the dis-engagement of many Erie Old Believers and a new cemetery was formed. A new church was never built, however, Sava's home may be considered a second (albeit short-lived) congregation. But it was possible to be both a member of CYS and the CN. In fact, full membership ('outsiders' may obtain "social membership") in the former was constrained to born and practicing Staroobriadcy.[345] "As long as you were not at CYS on Saturdays or Holy Days it was okay," Larry remembered (LM, pers. comm., May 28, 2013). Yet the conflict over the use of church member's time, particular whether they were dancing (and/or drinking) and listening to music at the nearby club instead of attending vespers, did lead CN members to begin worshipping elsewhere. As the popovtsy are particularly keen to recall, congregational disputes that led to the voluntary removal of a dissident faction from either church membership or participation were not uncommon.

Again, there is a pattern in the Church of the Nativity's history where those who were not happy with the nastavnik choice would temporarily 'leave the church' and pray at home (ostensibly) until such a time (months or years) as the new leader proved himself acceptable to the discontented. In this case, after Fr. Pancerev's passing (and "it is said that Nicon died of a broken

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[345] When I visited the CYS, William was in the process of filling out their liquor license, so he was able to recall off the top of his head how many full members (48) and social members (1115) belonged to the club. You need to be a member to drink alcohol (he joked that I could not have a beer with my shockingly inexpensive meal, we laughed about whether or not 11am was a bit early for that anyway). You also must be a member to bowl, they are quite busy in the winter, when the leagues play, which may help explain the high number of social members (WO, pers. comm., June 10, 2013).

heart over the turmoil," LM, pers. comm., May 28, 2013; also, Holdeman 2002, 102), others who had fallen out from membership from banishment or more generalized dislike of his leadership began trickling back (Holdeman 2002, 103-4).

> Some religious fence-mending was in order when pastorship of the Church of the Nativity passed to Rev. Albert Yokoff in 1946 and to Rev. Vladimir Smolakov in 1952. The faithful who'd turned to Sava Legenzoff drifted back to the Church including his own family. While the church made no attempt to modernize nor did the Club shut its doors, mutual acceptance of sorts was reached and the CYS members returned to the fold. (Dolan 1991:64-5)

In other words, by the next decade the Erie enclave settled for congregants' variant levels of participation and 'modernization' (apparently meaning here, the individual's choice to spend weekend outside of church). But the conflict between completing uses of people's time is still a problem of lived Christianity nowadays, as was clear from Fr. Simon's juxtaposition of their present struggle to get people in the church for services with the "living saints" of early Christianity who had "no separation from church and their society" and who "gave their lives to the church" (CN, Adult Sunday School, January 27, 2013)

As with other shifts in co-religiosity deal-breakers over the years, CYS membership has not impact on one's ritual participation, or burial. Currently, missing vespers bars one from taking the Eucharist at the Church of the Nativity, but not from praying with the congregation on Sunday. As Fr. Simon explained to us one Adult Sunday School class, it is not a sin to watch TV on a Saturday night (providing you first went to vespers), but if you are preparing your soul for communion and you chance upon "something lude" it will negatively impact you, draw you away from God as you are preparing and purifying your soul to receive holy Communion (February 10, 2013). This small choice of how to spend one's Saturday night reflects the Spirit/flesh duality and generic transcendental challenge that characterizes salvation religions' goals imposition of everyday moral rectitude (here, we can compare temptations with Buddhists' and Jains' denial of worldly desires, e.g., Laidlaw 1995) for eternal reward (whether in Heaven or in release from samsara).

There is a fourth choice an individual may make when they find themselves on the outs with their nastavnik in addition to conducting prayers at home, starting a new congregation, or becoming inactive in the faith. They can join a different Church. This a was less of viable option for Old Believers in the 1930s and 1940s who were committed to ORRO but unwelcome at or discontented with their congregation—there were only four Pomortsy churches in the U.S. To make matters more difficult, one's current nastavnik had to vouch for your state of grace by "written consent" before you could join another congregation in prayer (*PC* 4, 1956, Q13). In the

1960s suddenly there were many Old Believer villages, and within 10 more years, communities in Oregon, Alaska, and Alberta. I discussed in Chapter Three how the Turchane moved to be near the Oregoni Old Believers after finding their desired degree of separation from the world to be much higher than that of the Pomortsy enclave in New Jersey where they originally settled. Shortly after this move, two Turchane young men (aged 18 and 19) moved back to New Jersey, specifically to reject the time constraints caused by the need to spend all Saturday evening and most of Sunday in church. They just wanted to go to a movie (Bigart, *New York Times,* April 27, 1966). In a sense, they 'converted' to a new ORRO group because of similar perspectives on how to manage the temporal duality of their exacting faith. Below, I briefly discuss the individual rupture of conversion (Robbins 2007a) as a means in which a person may find a congregation better suited to their own selective modernity perspectives.

7.1.3. Converts and the "Many Mansions"

The right of individual choice and 'freedom of conscience' is not a modern notion. The basic concept of free will, which pins salvation to a person's choice to believe in and follow Christ by living their life in accordance with God's will and moral law, is not a novel doctrine of contemporary Christianity. Aquinas in part rooted his body/soul understanding of human nature, and our species' difference from other animals' more determined courses of action, on the duality of basic natural instinct (and habits), and reasoned judgment and volition ([c. 1265-1274] 1999, 192-230). His conviction that the acting principle of "free choice" was a gift of grace does not lesson one's personal "elective power" (204-8). After two millennia, contemporary Christians also have many choices about which interpretation and variant of accordant path or personal requirements (whether already assured by Jesus' sacrifice, or through grace alone, or whether a very narrow way, or indeed whether outcomes are predestined and uninfluenced by human efforts), leads to salvation and a heavenly reward.

In Fr. Smolakov's assessment, salvation can only be reached "...by walking a hard and narrow path, strewn with the stones of self-denial and abstinence" (*SSW*#381, March 21,1965). Elsewhere, he more specifically quotes this verse, "...wide is the gate and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate and narrow is the way, which leadeth into life and few there be that find it" (Mt 7:13-14) to encourage his congregants to keep their own "minority," "hard to keep" faith "unchanged" (*SSW*#257, November 19, 1961, emphasis original). He acknowledged to his parishioners in Erie that the path

laid out by their faith, the fasting and the Saturday services, was not easy, but he implored them to make the right, and hard, choices; he also lamented that their path was becoming increasingly difficult for young American Old Believers to embrace (above, *SSW*#511, March 24, 1968). This is the common trajectory in ethnographies of 'traditionalist' or 'anti-modern' enclaves, my own included, that focus on their fight against the small accommodations and selections to contemporary life threaten to lead one away from the narrow path. But before continuing along this narrative and discussion of how selective modernity has played out for such groups on the issues of translating prayers into English and use of the Gregorian calendar, it is important to recognize that people also *choose* to convert to ORRO and other Eastern Orthodox Churches despite the hard, narrow path.

Old Belief is a worthwhile subject for the anthropological study of the intersections of social belonging and doctrines of salvation because the lines Old Believers have drawn between non-co-religious churches are particularly severe, in fact damning, if crossed. In Chapters Three and Four I detailed the ways in which social duality practices were contingent on convictions about heretical contamination. The strictest practices belong to those with the most exclusive (or 'narrow') point of view that holds that their church and their way is the only path to salvation (See Figure 5). More inclusive understandings of Christian salvation draw on a passage in the Gospel of John where, after washing the eleven disciples' feet,[346] Jesus told them: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And wither I go yet know, and the way yet know" (John 14:1-4, KJV). Again, the doubt of the Apostle Thomas had a clarifying role when he responded that he does not know where or the way, leading Jesus to answer, "...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:5-6).[347] He followed with a set of requirements for securing a place ("the way") in our Father's house (Heaven; foremost being the belief in Jesus' relationship to the Father, John 14:11-12) that is shockingly lenient by ORRO standards.

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[346] The verses here follow Jesus' prophesy of his betrayal, identification of Judas as the betrayer, and Judas' exit from the seder, hence 11 rather than 12 (John 13).

[347] John 14:1-11 is one of the scriptural readings for the day following the Holy Ascension (moveable feast).

I feel particularly remiss in not asking Barbara (Erie, bezpopovtsy) directly about the grace of Other Churches, but the divine components of co-religiosity struck me late in the research process. It is too easy to color ORRO as an all-or-nothing, pravoslavnye or heresy, soteriological formulation. And I did in fact hear some of my interlocutors profess the distribution of heavenly mansions in such black and white terms. Yet I heard more deny their right to judge. And while Barbara certainly had firm opinions about Erie's 'new' popovtsy church, she once checked me when I responded to kind and soft-spoken Eugenia's question about my own background or Christian affiliation. Eugenia was careful not to offend me before giving her opinion about women in the priesthood. My tone must have slipped into snarkiness or a lingering touch of teenage misery when I recounted my experience of Pentecostal services after my parents' conversion. I declared that, "You can't imagine a more different church!" This refrain had been important to my efforts to convince myself that I would be an unbiased observer of *this* type of Christianity despite my former hard feelings about 6+ hours of church a week. She reminded me that that was good for some people. "Yes, you're right," I immediately corrected myself, shamed. "I know my parents have found such joy in it." And I remembered that that joy was also a grace.

The interpretation of "many mansions" as multiple paths to the same end, or the many nations now able to claim elect status and covenant with God (i.e., opening salvation up to the Gentiles, Acts 10, 15; Romans 9), fits neatly within what can loosely be termed 'modern morality's' high estimation of pluralism and individualism. [348] The interpretation of these verses as supporting the inclusive and multiple ways to heaven is also distinctly un-Orthodox, which posits a correct belief by definition. I have already recounted several ways in ORRO thought in which people may lose grace through their actions (for example, dying and cutting one's hair) despite belief in Jesus' divinity. Multiple creeds and practices have been declared heretical and damned by Christian Others; Martin Luther found 95 debatable points on one issue in one Church alone.

ORRO practices, and ecclesiological and soteriological exclusivity does not find widespread appeal, for, "Old Believers, generally believing that they are the last members of the true faith left on earth, insist on rigorous standards for membership. Quite understandably there are few

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[348] For more on this verse and topic see, Cox (1988) *Many Mansions: A Christian's Encounter with Other Faiths*; Cornille (2002) *Many Mansions?: Multiple Religious Belonging and Christian Identity*; and Carmody and Carmody (1990) *The Republic of Many Mansions: Foundations of American Religious Thought.*

converts" (Morris 1991, 313). Nevertheless, the multiplicity of choices of paths to Christian salvation also leaves people free to choose strict, 'closed' moral systems like that of the Old Believers. The previous generation saw some previously Roman Catholic converts join their conservative faith in disillusioned reaction to the Second Vatican Council or Vatican II (namely, one of Church of Nativity's priests). In Fr. Simon's opinion, Vatican II had made the Roman Catholic Church more "left leaning," which caused some of its conservative members to seek out more "right leaning," or "traditionalist" Orthodox Churches (Sunday School, February 17, 2013 and March 24, 2013).

While the majority of those who have converted to join the Old Rite congregations that I visited did so to marry their partner,[349] a few members of the popovtsy Church of the Nativity came alone. Those who choose to convert to Orthodoxy for reasons other than marriage counteracts the unilinear view of selective modernity as a concession of tradition to contemporary life. In other words, some people select anti-modernity, for example those who rejected the "Revised Julian Calendar" (more on this below) and "left the Metropolitan [OCA] and, desiring to remain faithful to Orthodox Tradition free of any modernism, they united themselves to the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia" (Bishop Gregory Grabbe, 2006 [1983], 14). *Becoming Orthodox: A Journey to the Ancient Christian Faith* (Gillquist 1992) recounts the establishment of Saint Barnabas Orthodox Church by a group of formerly evangelical Christians who joined the Antiochian Patriarchate in 1987. They 'discovered' the Eastern Orthodox Church in their search for the most authentic form of Christianity, one modeled after the earliest, New Testament era, Christian groups.[350] Their history echoes many of Fr. Simon's declarations to me that anyone who read the works of the Fathers of the Church or seriously studied the history of the early Church would see the 'correctness' and authenticity of Orthodoxy.

There was a guest speaker, Casey, from an OCA seminary in Ohio one Adult Sunday School class at Erie's Church of the Nativity. Fr. Simon asked him how he came to be Orthodox

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[349] For example, church records show one man's baptism two days before his marriage into a founding Erie enclave family (an Orloff; CNMB 9, 74; CNMB 7). Morris (1991) noted that those in these marriages, "after the initial proper appearances are made" find it difficult to remain practicing in the faith (313).

[350] http://www.stbarnabasoc.org/about-us/our-history/ gives synopsis of their foundation as an Orthodox church. http://www.stbarnabasoc.org/for-visitors/for-evangelicals/ is one of the church's webpages, entitled "For Evangelicals", is essentially a FAQ on Orthodoxy (Accessed Sept. 6, 2016).

despite his RCC upbringing; he wondered about the younger generation, who did not have the same spur of disillusionment after Vatican II that led some Roman Catholics to Orthodoxy. "It's always a convert..." the woman seated in the row ahead of me grumbled to the (presumably natal Old Believer) woman beside her; it was a comment I always wondered at, but it seemed indelicate to probe. The commenter's maiden name can be found in the earliest church documents. How many converts had spoken to the class? Did she disparage his presence or that there were not sons from their congregation also attending seminaries?

Casey's story also stuck with me because it mirrored Fr. Simon's conviction that anyone who studied the history of the early Christianity could plainly see the authenticity of Eastern Orthodox worship. It was not so much disillusionment (the push), the young seminarian said, but an attraction (the pull) to Orthodox traditions. While attending a Roman Catholic university a priest gave him "The Fathers." He mentioned not specific theologian, this broad and still mysterious category of knowledge was still new to me (no one ever talked about "the Fathers" in my parents' church). Fr. Simon agreed that also led him to seek priesthood. As Casey continued his studies he found himself incorporating elements of Orthodox prayer and practices into his daily life (e.g. fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays) and worship. And then one day, although he did not think that people really just woke up one day and decided to change, he experienced an internal, intrareligious rupture. He realized he could not be part Orthodox, Orthodoxy must be lived, all or nothing, and so he converted (CN Adult Sunday School, March 24, 2013).

Stephen, who joined the church as a young man, agreed that many converts come to Russian Orthodoxy through a historical study of authenticity Christianity although he described his own narrative differently. He was in the process of 'church shopping', and was attracted to the tradition, ambience, music, and most of all the prayer-focused nature of Orthodox worship. It surprised me that he first began attending regularly during Great Lent. It is an incredibly physically demanding, time-consuming, and introspective period, not for the faint of heart. Or for those with bad backs, with all the kneeling and long periods of standing required. But for Stephen, that is where he found the 'authentic'. Not because of a perceived continuity with the Apostles' form of worship or Church Fathers' canons, but because it matched his interpretation of scripture (especially in Psalms) of an approach to the divine that he connected with (pers. comm., May 31, 2013).

The anthropology of Christianity would be well served by a greater understanding of the reasons why people choose to convert to 'traditional' ethno-religious branches of Christianity like ORRO with a primarily ascribed membership base. This research would be relevant to existing conversations within the subfield about the individual ruptures of conversion (e.g., Keane 1996; Robbins 2007a; Barker 2014) and concerning wider trends about the rejection of modernity, or 'the West', which finds its extreme in fears of 'radicalization'. Furthermore, any additional step we may take away from the preponderant and misguided (or, at very least, too broadly applied) influence of teleological secularization of the modern age (Cannell 2010, 86-9) may add to the growing literature dedicated to the resurgence of Orthodoxy in the post-Soviet states (e.g., Steinberg and Wanner 2008; Zigon 2011).

While Old Believers do not evangelize or seek converts, Fr. Simon made the connection between the necessity of translating prayers and finding greater ecumenical relationships with the needs of those who might wish to convert to marry their ORRO fiancé(e) as well as those of his existing congregants. He wondered, 'Who is going to convert if they cannot understand the services?' and 'Who would give up Communion to join their church, if not priested?' (FS, pers. comm., March 27, 2013). As I discuss in the following section, some changes are selected for continuity's sake. From personal choices such as one's use of time and branch of Christianity to adhere to, I move on now to larger scale (congregational or institutional), contentious, accommodation choices concerning language, calendars, and leadership.

7.2. Mutatis Mutandis? The Utmost Necessary and Necessary Evils

To borrow a legal phrase, 'mutatis mutandis' refers to the necessary changes made to account for contextual details or situation (e.g., names, dates, locations) which leave the crucial matters (e.g., the contract's stipulations) unaltered. American Old Believers' schisms may be described as conflicts over the identification and selection of necessary changes. For the most part, this dissertation has traced disputes over what *can* change and what are the essential matters that *cannot* change. Now, I address the question 'what *must* change?' The process of selective modernity cannot be boiled down to the traditionalists' fight and resistance against adaptive forces as if each concession were a blow to their efforts to maintain continuity. Often it is the case that an

alteration has been embraced for the sake of continuity.[351] Concerns about the survival of religious transmission (keeping kids in the faith) and individuals in their pews on Sunday are also continuity-focused. The issues of the vernacularization of services, the search for legitimate leaders, and the Julian v. Gregorian calendar disputes exemplify this aspect of selective modernity.

Orthodox theologian, John Meyendorff, spoke of this un/changeability challenge through the paradigm of "living Tradition," wherein external details may alter to fit time and circumstance, but the essential aspects of Truth remain untouched. This distinction mirrors the t/Tradition dichotomy well-known to anthropologists of religion.

> Thus for us to be 'traditional' implies an imitation of the Fathers in their creative work of discernment. Like them we must be dedicated to the task of saving human beings from error, and not just maintaining abstract propositional truths. We must imitate their constant effort to understand their contemporaries and to use words and concepts which could truly reach the minds of the listeners. True tradition is always a living tradition. It changes while remaining the same. It changes because it faces different situations, not because its essential content is modified. This content is not an abstract proposition; it is the Living Christ Himself, who said, 'I am the Truth'. (Meyendorff 1978, 8)

In the previous chapters I attempted to trace the history of ORRO through its essential matters and questions, while keeping in mind that variant paths of Old Rite continuity use the same (mutually agreed upon 'authentic') past, scriptures, and memories, and have the same goals. Now, I would like to turn my attention from Old Believers' disputes over their idea of the "utmost necessary," (*PC* 4, 1960, Q8), unchangeable Truths to the "necessary evils" chosen to preserve practice and transmission of this Truth. In other words, I want to remember the 'living' as well as the Tradition and recognize that my interviewees also (not just an anthropological obsession as concerns ethno-religious enclaves) expressed fears about congregational death.

The majority of the Church of the Nativity congregation (Figure 9) considered that the changes it made to its services, namely English use and joining an ecumenical institution, were necessary to the Old Rite's survival in Erie (RSG 5, October 6, 1982, 5-6). While grieving for their former fellow co-religionists, the Erie popovtsy perhaps feel justified in their decisions when they

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[351] To give a material example, Carroll (2015) made a similar argument in his critique of the term 'authenticity' in relation to an ikonographer's work, whose sense of continuity was not based on her use of traditional pigment sources, but the ability of her work to convey the saint's presence and qualities to contemporary and future (i.e., literal continuity through the selection of lasting materials) viewers (200-3; c.f. maintenance and construction of roadside crosses in Quebec, Kaell 2017).

look at the bezpopovtsy Church of the Holy Trinity's diminished numbers. How else were they going to keep their youth who did not understand Church Slavonic (CS)? The bezpopovtsy, of course, find this self-fulfilling prophesy to be flawed: their numbers would not be diminished if there had not been a microschism. All four congregations have made some concessions to the necessities of daily life, yet to different degrees. For example, most have delayed the start time of Sunday morning service, an adaptation made in hopes of increasing attendance.[352]

A mutatis mutandis 'accommodation' may be described as a compromise between continuity and change. In selectively adapting, or not, each side of a schism is trying to be "as legitimate as can."[353] 'Continuity' and 'authenticity' may be fraught, imprecise, contentious concepts, but these notions remain critical components of Old Believers' determination of pravoslavnye that is so deeply rooted to their group identity and theo-historical narrative. Not changing has become the standard of the 'Old', 'authentic', and 'legitimate'. Fr. Yokoff was directly asked during the RSG, "Is there something in our religion that says if you change or attempt to change or try to veer away from our beliefs, that you cannot be forgiven for that?" In other words, is change a salvation deal-breaker? "You can't be forgiven, no" he answered (RSG 9, November 17, 1982, 9). In the following discussions concerning the language, calendar, and leadership debates with ORRO, I will shift focus to explore how change may be made for the sake of continuity.[354]

7.2.1. Dead Languages and Living Christians/The Unchangeable and Untranslatable (and unfortunately unknown) Church Slavonic

Earlier in this dissertation I discussed American Old Believers' desires to maintain their knowledge of Church Slavonic (CS; Chapter Three) and the part that the shift to English services played in the Erie microschism (Chapter Five). I return to the vernacularization debate because it is a clear instance of change to ORRO practice and accommodation to their current socio-environmental setting (i.e., "Americanization" and language death, see Holdeman 2002). In other words, prayer in English is a selective modernity issue and represents a key moment of ortho-

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[352] Nikolaevsk bezpopovtsy, 5am; Erie bezpopovtsy 8am; Nikolaevsk popovtsy, 8am; Erie popovtsy, 8:15am.

[353] Fr. Simon used this phrase to describe how Old Believer groups variously adapted, "living in society," and adjusting rites to priestless existence after the world did not end immediately following the ROC schism (RSG 3, September 22, 1982, 7).

[354] Olshan similarly argued that the Amish select technologies and other innovations conscientiously in order to best "enhance survival" (1994, 194).

defining (i.e., What is absolutely essential? What is unchangeable?) and group-defining (What is an Old Believer if not one who preserves, unchanged, the rites of the pre-Nikonian ROC?) dissension. The following section re-explores the debates over prayer in English to illustrate the variant ways Old Believers define their group in relation to their ritual practices, history, and selection of acceptable accommodations.

Four years before the Erie microschism over priesthood the Church of the Nativity's congregation voted to start conducting services in English. This is simply unheard of for Old Believers, and perhaps an unthinkable move to their grandparents. Or as Robson simply stated, "a church conscious of 'keeping the old ways' was unlikely to change the church language" (Robson 1985, 111). Even a movement in the 1930s in the U.S.S.R. failed to switch from CS to modern Russian (Sidorov 2001, 46, 70n6). Suffice to say that CS is a foundational element of Russian Orthodoxy. It could be argued that brothers and Eastern Orthodox Saints, Cyril (826-869) and Methodius (815-885), were pro-vernacularization (or at very least, pro-translation); more than once they defended their creation of a script to translate the Gospels for speakers of Slavic languages out of Hebrew, Latin, and Greek texts. This was 500 years before the first English or German Bible.[355] This innovation cannot be subtracted from the storyline of Russian peoples' conversion to Christianity.

Their alphabet is the basis of both contemporary Russian (i.e., Cyrillic alphabet) and Church Slavonic scripts. But translation is not the same as vernacularization, the latter indicates a shift to the 'common tongue,' the language of everyday speech. Conversely, Old Believers consider CS to be a sacred language, a *lingua sacra*, given by God to Cyril and Methodius explicitly for the Russians (this was Fr. Yokoff's argument RSG 9, November 17, 1982, 11;Robson 1985, 113; Scheffel 1991, 22-3). Vernacularization can be tied to Old Believers' conceptualizations of the 'modern', because it is a change or adaptation of previous ritual life, and it is a move from sacred language (one used only in church and for prayer) to a secular (everyday common speech) one. Furthermore, the motivations to translate prayers were driven by the desire to increase *individual* understanding. I discuss each of these selective modernity aspects of the CS/English debate in turn to demonstrate the great importance of language to ORRO theology and identity.

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[355]As East/West issue, compare to the switch from Latin which happened much later; the Orthodox church was always more decentralized than the RCC (Robson 1985, 115)

In consideration of the fact that 'minor' translation (e.g., removal of 'true' from description of Holy Spirit in the Creed) and transliteration (e.g., of the name of Jesus from 'Isus' to 'Iisus') reforms in the mid-seventeenth century were among those alterations perceived heretical by the original Old Believers, the complete translation of services was a radical modification of Old Rite practices. "The changes in the traditional 'text' of Orthodoxy—its spoken and written signs—were seen by the [first] Old Believers as destroying its very purpose, namely the ability and necessity of believers to communicate with God and each other as Christians" (Scheffel 1991, 43-44). Preservation of the unalterable nature of Slavonic, especially *znammeny* chant, a renowned and complex system of unified tonal singing, has long been a defining aspect of the Old Rite. The pro-CS Erie Old Believers' criticisms of the English translations mirrored the original Old Believers' rejection of Nikon's texts and condemnations of his (Greek, contemporary rather than older) sources and translators. Conversely, the pro-English side posited that their new ecumenical relationship with ROCOR opened the doors to translations of "great accuracy" which would help ensure their congregation's survival (Robson 1985, 115-6).

It can be argued that the Church of the Nativity instituted a far larger linguistic change than the detested Patriarch Nikon had. Nikon was not a proponent of vernacularization. He was fixing what he believed to be mistakes and inconsistencies in Russia's religious texts; he did not propose that CS be exchanged for everyday Russian. The Erie congregations' switch to English prayers exasperated a growing selective modernity congregational divide over which elements of Old Belief can be adapted, and which elements are sacred, essential, and unchangeable, that continued to widen until the community's complete rupture over the priesthood question. Robson (1994) summarized both the CS/English and priesthood conflicts as debates over change and continuity, "this tension between maintenance of tradition at all costs versus the adaptation of Old Believer life to American circumstances would come to define the Erie Pomortsy quandary over the possibility of recovering an Old Ritualist priesthood" (133).

Former-nastavnik (1946-52), Albert Yokoff, argued for the sole use of Church Slavonic in prayer while presenting his defense of the bezpopovtsy Old Rite and anti-unification stance to the RSG. Erie's priesthood debates in 1982 highlighted the persisting controversy of the shift to English—the last eight questions to Fr. Yokoff concerned the matter. For example, Fr. Simon asked Fr. Yokoff whether the services in English were "old rite," as he believed them to be. Fr. Yokoff responded, "*No, because you changed the language. That language was made to worship God.*

That language was not made for any communications, nothing else but for worship (RSG 9, November 17, 1982, 11). Bezpopovtsy are of course aware that their Slavonic holy books are also translations of older texts. But, in Barbara's (Erie, bezpopovtsy) point of view, the "feeling" as well as the "meaning" of prayers were lost with translation (pers. comm., June 6, 2013). She described (with detail of the different tones and notations of CS chants) that the sonic quality and essential character of Old Rite prayers and chants cannot be replicated in English (November 25, 2012).

The overlap between those who supported English and unification (the popovtsy) and those who rejected both innovations (the bezpopovtsy) remained clear during my fieldwork 30 years later. The latter's arguments to me mirrored Fr. Yokoff's to the RSG: CS is a tongue that was a divinely inspired, God-given creation for the worship of God. It was specifically made for prayer and divine-human communication; it is not used for daily conversation; it has no curse words; it is separate from the world and therefore a holy, essential, ORRO practice that should not be subject to translation. Rather, American Old Believers should strive harder to learn it.[356] CS is a (sacred) linguistic system categorically and practically separate from (profane) quotidian existence; it is a language in this world but not of this world.

It is hard to discuss the topic of individuality (especially as it relates to modernity) without falling into the Eastern Christianity=collective and traditional vs. Western Christianity= individualist and modern trap that has too long characterized Orthodoxy (Sidorov 2001, 44; Volkov 2005, 228-9; Agadjanian and Rousselet 2010; Hann 2012). This dichotomy is especially apparent because Protestantism (following Martin Luther) is historically linked to vernacularization of the Bible and the theological concept of sola scriptura, wherein any person with access to scripture could work out for themselves right from wrong and potentially find grace. This association does not hold true for the Anabaptists, who use High German in church and Low German dialect for everyday speech. English has no high version.

All language is shared, or collective, but CS is arguably especially so as it was created solely for the Church by drawing together disparate Slavic dialects (but primarily Bulgarian) (Gasparov 2001, 1-3; Lunt 2001, 2-4). The unity that is to be found in prayer during holy service to the Lord is ingrained in the phonemes and morphemes of Slavonic. The mix of different Slavic tongues

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[356] Barbara, pers. comm., November 25, 2012, June 6, 2013; RSG 9, November 17, 1982, 11-12; see also Robson 1994, 133; Fr. Simon, thirteen years earlier had made a similar argument *CN,* 1969, 3.

brought people together in common prayer linguistically represents Orthodox theological emphasis on the collectivity of the Church and sobornost' (Lupinin 1984, 93n27, 127; Sidorov 2001, 44).

Aside from the issue of individual understanding, the CS language barrier prevented many Erie Old Believers' basic participation. Anita (popovtsy) joked that she welcomed translated prayers because at least she would know what she was confessing to (pers. comm., May 23, 2013). The pro-CS side do not categorically reject English translations of their texts. Today, the Bezpopovtsy confer with the English King James Version of the Bible, as well as English translations of their own holy books and prayers (See Image 7). The vestibule of the priested Nikolaevsk church has the first edition of the Old Orthodox Prayer Book published in Erie in 1984. They do not oppose to translation projects for personal edification, only against the use of such texts as service readings. Fr. Yokoff did not condemn the translation of the texts into English for private study, but he did reject prayers in a "dirty language" (RSG 9, November 17, 1982, 11). And shortly after the Erie microschism, Fr. Yokoff told the four convening bezpopovtsy groups that "we" were working on translations of words, services, and prayers (*PC*, September 7, 1984, 7).[357] Furthermore, I noted use of English in the Nikolaevsk popovtsy and Erie bezpopovtsy churches, but only for sermons and explanations, not for scriptural readings and other liturgical elements. Fr. Larry (nastavnik, Erie) stressed several times in his sermons the importance of understanding their weekly scriptural readings. Another conversation we had on ancient texts and knowledge turned into a question of religious linguistic competence. "That's what's wrong over there..." ("over there," "them" or "Front Street" were synonyms for the popovtsy Church), in his estimation, is that they lost religious understanding by losing CS (FL, pers. comm., February 10, 2013, and March 31, 2013).

The translation of CS into English for church use was a radical change, but many Erie popovtsy argue that it was a necessary one. Several Erie elders told me that despite Fr. Smolakov's instructive efforts that allowed them to follow along and participate in services, they often failed to comprehend what they were reading (pers. comm.). One middle-aged popovtsy woman I spoke with grew up in the church and remembered when it was all Slavonic, and she could understand

[357] Also says that he 'turns out' a calendar every year and will henceforth mark September 1st and 2nd as "a historical event, thereafter, you will remember what was accomplished and said at this event.".

nothing. She spoke vaguely of the split, 'we had a break in the '80s, when we were restored to the full rites, they [the bezpopovtsy] still do it all in Slavonic. I think they're all old-timers.' I had to admit they were all elderly. I responded to the question about whether their children and grandchildren regularly attended in the negative— in yet another moment of betrayal. She sympathized with the difficulty of keeping children in the church. She doubted young Erie Old Believers at either church knew Slavonic, and the services are long and hard enough without that challenge. Personally, she felt much better after the switch, the services are still long (often longer in fact, because the parts that must be read by a priest are omitted from bezpopovtsy services), but at least one knew what was going on (pers. comm., April 27, 2013).

In another conversation, this time with a couple of elderly bezpopovtsy women, I admitted that I got more out of a recent service because Lola had provided me with the list of the Bible readings and my English version handy. It was an evening service on Great Thursday, a Vigil for Good Friday, which lasted two and a half hours, in which the events of the Last Supper, betrayal, and crucifixion are recounted. In between the twelve Gospel readings,[358] a task shared by Fr. Larry, Lola, and Eugenia, the Great Kanon prayers are sung while the congregation holds lit candles, which are blown out for each scriptural reading. I confessed that it was nice being able to follow along for once. Well, 'nice' is the not the right world for so sorrowful a service, I added. They agreed, but argued how much more meaningful and expressive of Christ's Passion was portrayed in CS. There simply were not good enough translations to relate it, or the unpoetic English falls short ("So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth" (Mt 27:59), in recounting the moment when they took him down from the cross and wrapped his broken body in linen, as they still do when one of their own passes. Their eyes filled with tears at the remembrance; there was certainly no lack of understanding/signification (May 2-3, 2013).

The need for second generation Old Believers, who knew neither Russian nor CS, to understand the services and doctrine of their church was the primary argument of the pro-English side (Robson 1985, 114). The switch to English was also encouraged due to the hope of retaining younger American Old Believers in church (116). Indeed, as Robson explains elsewhere, in the decade preceding the switch to English only the "barest essentials" of CS were taught, indicating

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[358] 1] John 13:31-18:1; 2] John 18:1-28; 3] Mt 26:57-75; 4] John 18:28-19:16; 5] Mt 27:3-32; 6] Mark 15:16-32; 7] Mt 27:33-54; 8] Luke 23:32-49; 9] John 19:25-37; 10] Mark 15:42-47; 11] John 19:38-42; and 12] Mt 27:62-66.

that the decreased transmission of religious knowledge and participation (i.e., growing apathy, Chapter Three) of second and third generation American Old Believers (Robson 1994, 132). Ultimately, they were arguing that making the faith comprehensible is the best way to keep the faith in a new context, with a new membership that identifies as American, not Russian (or Russian-American at most) (Robson 1994, 132-3).

Besides practical reasons, Father Simon could not see how changing an already translated holy text for another translation made it any less valuable. "As I've said before," he explained one Adult Sunday School class, "if we're going to read it in a language we don't understand, we should read it in Greek" (January 27, 2013). CS is not absent from contemporary Church of the Nativity services. Holdeman (2002) estimated that 20% of their services were still in Slavonic (117). From my experience, much of the Slavonic used, other than by the choir, is for the most common prayers like the Creed that are chanted in both languages. I suspect that which is most essential is the least subject to change, but this claim would require a linguist's more expert analysis.

In Alaska, Fr. Nikola (Nikolaevsk, popovtsy) felt that the "writing is on the wall" for CS in the services at his church as well (pers. comm., August 18, 2013). Similar to Holdeman's (2002) description of Russian language death in Erie, the children are beginning to prefer English amongst themselves (86n95; pers. comm.). In the Alaskan villages a majority of the school-aged children are Russophones, yet the schools do not have adequate funding for Russian-language courses (especially higher level studies), perceived by the budget-makers as expendable electives. The K-12 school in Nikolaevsk has had its Russian language instruction time cut to a session of 20minutes/day for the all of k-5 (ages ~5-11) students (NF, pers. comm., August 1, 2013). It is almost certain that the next generation of Alaskan and Oregonian Old Believers will not have Russian as their primary language. One Nikolaevsk parent told me that he and his wife along with their friends were trying to keep the "English at school and Russian at home" divide practiced by their own parent's generation (GH, pers. comm., July 8, 2013).

The loss of spoken Russian only aggravates the already difficult task of CS instruction. Russian, like any spoken language, changes over the course of a millennium. CS, on the other hand, has been resolutely unchanged for centuries. Even a fluent Russian speaker would have difficulty making out much of a popovtsy liturgy or bezpopovtsy molebin. They would also struggle attempting to read the holy texts aloud to participate, as CS script also differs from modern Russian Cyrillic (Robson 1985, 110). Given these challenges, English has been (and may continue

to be) embraced as a language of the church for the sake of religious continuity, without which many Old Believers would be unable to participate, let alone understand, their prayers.

In one of my "Old Rite" Google Alerts that now contain only information about the Latin Mass (LM, discussed below), I became aware of a blog entry whose title encapsulated Erie Old Believers' CS/English debate: "The liturgy should move the faithful away from the world, not secularize the Church."[359] There are numerous parallels between the movement to preserve the LM and the ROC schism; the most generalizable is underlying dualism between the sacred and profane (or, Spirit/flesh, other-worldly/worldly) encapsulated by the key term of the article (*Entweltlichung*) or 'deworldification' (from a 2011 speech of Pope Benedict XVI). The counter argument would suggest that anti-worldliness becomes increasingly difficult over time and may result in a rite or group too separated from the world to survive here (like the celibate groups discussed in Chapter Two), too far from contemporary practitioners' lives and linguistic skillsets to transmit religious knowledge to the next generation. It is for these concerns that a change as drastic as an English Old Rite was adopted in Erie, but on the calendar issue discussed below, the four congregations appeared united in their stance to preserve the "Old Style" (Julian).

7.2.2. Traditionalist Catholics and Old Calendarists

One day I stumbled across a "traditional Catholic" website and discussion forum at fisheaters.com; its anti-modernity rhetoric against the "spirt of movement and change" and detailed list of Vatican II's heretical errors was strikingly familiar.[360] Similar sites, like the Byzantine Forum,[361] where people simultaneously search for answers and debate dogma and correct practices (and raise more questions) are immensely valuable sources for the anthropology of religion (Lövheim 2007; del Pinea, Loustau, and Norget 2022). Researchers, devotees, and 'church shoppers', alike can explore the vast plurality—a virtual global enclave—of Christian expressions. While the Julian v. Gregorian calendar debates between ROCOR (Julian) and OCA (Gregorian) came up in the course of fieldwork, at these forums where I found multiple points of comparison

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[359] Written by a Thomistic theologian (Ph.D.), liturgical scholar, and choral composer, Peter Kwasniewski, September 22, 2020, https://www.lifesitenews.com/blogs/the-liturgy-should-move-the-faithful-away-from-the-world-not-secularize-the-church/

[360] https://www.fisheaters.com/traditionalcatholicism101.html

[361] https://www.byzcath.org/forums/ubbthreads.php?ubb=cfrm

between the selective modernity of ORRO and other branches of Christianity. The schism over the Greek Orthodox Church's (GOC) adoption of the Gregorian calendar in 1923 and the RCC's liturgical shifts away from their own "Old Rite" (the Tridentine Mass, Roman Rite, or Latin Mass) are especially apt arenas of future study to explore a wider range of perspectives to threats of accommodation pressures and change. In short, the 'Old Ritualism' that exists outside of Russian Orthodoxy.

In the course of writing this thesis, my Google alerts for "Old Rite" became almost entirely about debates concerning the use of the RCC's Latin Mass (henceforth, LM).[362] These alerts increased exponentially after Pope Francis' *Traditionis Custodes*, (*TC, Guardians of the Tradition*) which further limited (and necessitated bishop's approval for) the use of the pre-1970 liturgy. Interestingly enough, the TC was created "in order to promote the concord and unity of the Church."[363] The LM issue is comparable to the ROC schism on several points: 1] Some traditionalist Catholics rejected the liturgical changes of Vatican II altogether; 2] There is the question of 'what is changeable?' without altering their sanctity and essence of religious rites; 3] The purpose of the adaptations of services as regards length and language is debated (Kwasniewski 2020); 4]. *How* different Christian groups' express and act upon intrareligious disagreements may differ between those who leave their church, creating the schism which separates former co-religionists, and those who voice their discontent and disagreement while remaining one with their Church (Mayblin 2019, 143-6, on RC women priests);[364] and 5]. Numerous questions arise about the critical differences between Eastern Orthodox and RC ecclesiology if the TC does not result in schism as to the ways in which the latter better accommodates plurality and orthopraxic variation. The deal-breakers, heresies, and boundaries of co-religiosity that are perceived by a congregation or Church to warrant a schism are likely fluctuate greatly by denomination, I posit that perceptions of grace are a key variable, but further comparative work is required.

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[362] Such as, https://exlaodicea.wordpress.com/2013/09/24/why-pope-francis-should-celebrate-the-old-rite/.

[363] https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/motu_proprio/documents/20210716-motu-proprio-traditionis-custodes.html

[364] For example, while stating their support for the current pope and Church in Rome, the creator of Fish Eaters website states, "I believe that this nebulous "spirit of Vatican II" spoken of by people who are always pushing for change is an evil "spirit" that has damaged the human element of the Church to such a degree that many parishes are almost unrecognizable as Catholic ones." https://www.fisheaters.com/contact.html

The schisms that occurred within the Greek Orthodox Church over its adoption of the Gregorian calendar is another area of future comparative research on intrareligious disputes. The importance of retaining the Julian calendar was discussed by both Fr. Larry and Fr. Simon as a conflict between Church tradition and accommodation. One of the major 'religious' reasons why the Gregorian calendar was unacceptable for liturgical life was the fact that at times, 'Western Easter' fell before Passover, in contradiction of Canon (AC 7; Council of Nicaea, Canon 7; Council of Antioch Canon 1) and the Gospels (Mt 26, Mk 14, Luke 13, John 13) narrative that describes the Last Supper falling on the first day of Passover.[365] Other holy days and periods, in particular the Apostles' Lent, other days of veneration fell at the 'wrong' times (e.g., preaching a sermon on resurrection for St. George during Holy Week) (Bishop Gregory Grabbe, 1983).

Adaptation of the "New Style" Gregorian calendar is an example of selective modernity not only because it is newer, but because there is a pressure and motivation to change an aspect of Orthodox religious life to make it more in line with contemporary 'ways of the world'. As long as the American Old Believers keep the Julian calendar, they remain temporally distinct and the sacred cycle of Christ's birth and resurrection also remain within a space a part from the domains of Santa and the Easter Bunny (CHT Newsletter, March and April 2012). Interestingly, several questions were raised on the issue of English translations of prayers during the Pomortsy Conferences (1953-1966), but none about the Gregorian or Julian calendars.[366] I found two articles within the Church of the Nativity foyer which addressed the *Modernist Papal Calendar* (Archbishop Seraphim 2003) and *The Betrayal of Orthodoxy Through the Calendar* (Bishop Gregory Grabbe, 2006 [1983]) written after OCA's adoption of a "Revised Julian Calendar" in 1982.[367] Bishop Grabbe repeatedly described the calendar debate as one between "the modernists"

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[365] Fr. Dresco of OCA's Diocese of New England discusses the nuances (equinox, fixed full moon of 14 Nissan, astronomical full moon) of these Canon laws, advocating for a shift to the Gregorian system of Paschal calculation, May 1991 https://www.dneoca.org/articles/dateofpascha0593.html.

[366] There were two questions about the days in which it was prohibited to have a wedding (holidays, during Lenten periods including Wednesdays and Fridays) when music, dancing, drinking, and of course, marital relations, would be inappropriate (*PC* 5, 1957, Q12, which said yes to Sundays unless Monday was holiday; *PC* 11, 1965, Q8, which said no to Sundays).

[367] The revised Julian was an attempt to keep canonical laws concerning Lents and Pascha while shifting other holy days towards the Gregorian calendar.

(18), "under the influence of the spirit of modernism" (19) versus those "faithful to Tradition" (19) and canon law. The schisms within the GOC over the issue are far too complex to review here,[368] but several key points of comparison stand out between ORRO and Greek Old Calendarists: 1] The dissenters immediately split into several "Genuine" hierarchical lines; 2] The grace of the mainstream GOC was a point of contention between dissenters; 3] Like Belaya Krinitsa's foundation, there was dispute about the institution of a hierarchy wherein only one (not two) bishops consecrated another bishop; and 4] The narrative of changing the essential.

Old Believers and Old Calendarists are similar in the fact that each branch of Christianity envisioned a line in the sand between themselves and Others of their faith who selected to alter an aspect of religious life they believe to be essential, fundamental, and unchangeable.[369] Whether or not proponents of the LM also create a new branch of Christianity, and why, should be explored further in order for the anthropology of Christianity to have a better grasp of the variety of modes and means of theological dissent. In short, selective modernity whereby elements of change or accommodation are carefully chosen, and others rejected, exists outside of Old Believer or acculturation-wary immigrant communities or ethno-religious enclaves.

7.2.3. Dying Off: Selections of Survival

American Old Believers are not alone in struggle against declining church membership and involvement, yet there are elements of Eastern Orthodoxy that are an additional challenge to work into the day-to-day lives of its practitioners. When you celebrate Christmas on January 7, and your place of employment is only closed on December 25, you are impeded from attending Nativity mass. When you do not understand the liturgical language of your church, you are impeded from

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[368] https://cnewa.org/eastern-christian-churches/orthodox-church/orthodox-churches-of-irregular-status/the-old-calendar-orthodox-churches/ provides a comprehensive review, and hyperlinks, of the variant Greek Old Calendarists and others, like the Old Calendarist Bulgarian Orthodox Churches (https://bulgarian-orthodox-church.org/index-en.htm).

[369] The familiar dichotomy between essentials and particulars is not unique to Christianity. Zuckerman's (1999) analysis of a conservative synagogue's schism and fierce debates over the proposals to alter the language of certain prayers also revealed a co-religiosity deal-breaker. One of the main issues in their microschism was the Reconstructionist faction's desire to retranslate an important prayer, the Aleynu, to make it gender neutral and alter a line about Jews being the chosen people. The Conservative faction argued that this was a change in content led by the desire to adapt Judaism to the needs and perspectives of contemporary life and political sentiments that denied the history and "eternal truth" of God-given revelation at Mt. Sinai (Zuckerman 1999, 115-127, 142-7).

transmitting religious knowledge to your children, and perhaps, from personally embracing the faith. 'Facilitation' may be a better framework than 'accommodation' to account for the ways in which Churches adjust to increase congregational participation. Before I move on to more universalized questions of ecclesiology, the schism process, and the complexity of Christian denominationalisms' overlaps of dogma and belonging, I want to reflect on the popovtsy factions' desires for ecumenism as a selection of survival.

American bezpopovtsy are suffering from a lack of nastavniki. This is not a new problem. A qualified (over 33,[370] male, judged in "good standing," and CS literate) and willing candidate could not be found in Erie back in 1952. Fr. Smolakov, who unlike the second and third generation Erie Old Believers whose families were primarily from northeast Poland, was a recent immigrant from Riga, Latvia and recruited from the Millville, New Jersey parish. A group of men from the Erie parish convinced him to visit their church with the prospect of assuming leadership. He initially declined the nastavnik-ship (after some congregational debate) because of differences between Millville and Erie's manners of singing;[371] but eventually agreed in November (Robson 1985, 89; Holdeman 2002, 104, 106-7).[372] The American Pomortsy's difficulty finding a nastavnik may account for the fact that Fr. Simon was accepted despite his young age (29), and why his threat to resign was taken so seriously (5.2.1).

When the Pomortsy held a conference shortly after Erie's microschism their struggle to find new leaders was one of their central concerns (*PC*, 1984). At that time, the nastavnik of the Millville congregation, Rev. Maxim Konstantianoff, was 91yo; Detroit's Rev. Teodor Federow had been found abroad (Suwalki); and Marianna was already without a nastavnik. Thirty years later, the

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[370] (Holdeman 2002, 74n83). Yet a "spiritual father" should be at least 40 years old (PC 9, 1961,Q16).

[371] Unfortunately, neither source was more specific on these divergences. Perhaps those interviewed at later date simply did not know the minutia of Slavonic pronunciation. Neither Robson or Holdeman says how or whether Smolakov and/or the community altered or compromised on singing practices. Fr. Smolakov answered a conference question about differences in singing by explaining that they all have same texts, and differences are matter of individuals' "voices and ability" (*PC* 8, 1960, Q1). Again, this is an example of a difficulty for the Old Believer diaspora attempting to form a united community (where a single detail of practice may affect co-religiosity) with individuals from different backgrounds.

[372] He immediately got to work with baptisms, as many young children during Fr. Yokoff's leadership or the inter-nastavnik period had yet to receive the sacrament (Robson 1985, 89). The first baptism within the metrical book begun by Fr. Smolakov took place on November 29, 1952 (CNMB 7).

subject came up frequently during my time at the Church of the Holy Trinity. Fr. Larry, then aged 98, dismissed the congregation with a running joke about seeing us next Sunday, God willing. He traveled three hours to Marianna for funerals and high Holy Days. Pomortsy abroad have the same challenge, and both sides hoped to reestablish ecumenical relationships with their co-religionists across the sea in the post-Soviet era. In 1991, three Pomortsy visitors from Latvia came to visit the four American Pomortsy congregations. Maxim Pashinin, who fortunately "spoke a bit of English" said that "'The first aim (of the trip to the U.S.) is to tell Old Believers about our church, that Old Believers are not dead, that we have possibility to grow and we want to help our people here.' Pashinin said, 'we wanted to have contacts. Our church was divided, and we wanted to keep it together'"[373] (Herschell, *Observer—Reporter,* April 26, 1991, C5). Some CHT members hoped these communications, visits, and togetherness with co-religionists abroad would lead them to their next nastavnik (pers. comms.)

American Old Believers' management of education, both in terms of limiting or negotiating with their state's public school system and their efforts to transmit religious knowledge to their children, is a well-worn theme in the anthropological study of the survival mechanisms of religious enclaves (3.3.1.; e.g., Huntington 1994). In order to argue how ecumenism was considered to be an additional survival mechanism concerning religious education, I must review the expansive knowledge required of Old Believer religious leaders. A nastavnik need not only be able to read aloud pre-determined liturgical texts in Church Slavonic, but also the complex diacritical notations (See Image 6), and they must know each of the eight *glas* (voices or tones) in which to chant the day's given prayers and songs and when each is used, and a plethora of details such as baptismal, marriage, and burial restrictions before performing these utmost necessary bezpopovtsy rites. They must also have the time, and no great concern for outside occupation given the limited means of small congregations to support a full time nastavnik, to be 'on call' for the spiritual needs of their congregation. Beyond basic CS literacy, they must also know which texts to read on which date following a complex 532-year cyclical rubric (FL, pers. comm.).

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[373] He was also able to give some demographics of the Old Believers in the Baltics (he did not specify whether all Pomortsy): 65 churches in Latvia, of which is own in Riga was the largest with 25,000 members, 50 in Lithuania, and 10 in Estonia.

Time is complicated; nastavniki also lead their congregations by informing them on which days movable feasts fall, when Lents occur, and on which days to abstain from oil, dairy, fish, and/or meat. Fr. Smolakov published a yearly calendar in Erie, with an instructional essay appended to each (Robson 1985, 93; Robson 1998, 6; Holdeman 2002, 106); Lola graciously allowed me to copy her collection. Currently, the popovtsy churches in Alaska and Erie both have a detailed, self-published[374] calendar available for purchase; Erie's bezpopovtsy had a rudimentary calendar attached to their monthly congregational newsletter; I did not observe a similar item in Alaska's bezpopovtsy molenna. Fr. Larry emphasized to me several times the complexity of the rubric when lamenting his congregation's challenge finding a nastavnik to replace him (pers. comms.).

The leadership drought was explicitly discussed during the RSG as one of the benefits of joining ROCOR during the RSG, for "we are in America, a dying breed...what happens if our children do not live in Erie, Millville, Marianna, or Detroit...we have nothing, no organization, no publications, no monasteries, no seminaries, no convents, what opportunity do we have to survive in the future?" (RSG 8, November 10, 1982, 6). A relationship with ROCOR would provide all that, and co-religious churches (although in the New Rite) where one could still attend a service. They could not access the same ecumenical support in the U.S.S.R. at that time, and the Churches there had their own struggles with "dying" and finding co-religious harmony:

> They have something called the Supreme Old Believer council of Vilna, Riga, and Moscow and it puts out a calendar and a few other things for all these old believer groups who exist in Latvia, Lithuania, and the Soviet Union. None of these groups will pray with each other, even though all old believers use the old rite as it was done before the reforms where introduced...The old believers wherever they are, are dying. It is a simple fact. There are no great centers anymore there are pockets of old believers, but the old believers have ceased to be a great number of people...We are in great peril. We continually talk like we have a great healthy situation but it is one where our future is very, very questionable that we can even survive. Where Detroit does not have a priest right now and nobody wants to take it, how long can you go on with that type of situation. Old believers cannot go long without all of the things necessary because if you lose one generation of young people, where will you pick them up? You don't have people running down the street to become old believers. (RSG 5, October 20, 1982, 5-6)

In Fr. Simon's perspective, their leadership crisis was an issue of survival, and seminaries like that

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[374] The calendars I purchased at the Nikolaevsk General Store in 2007 and 2013 were published by Rev. Paul Fefelov in Oregon (a co-religionist, shared family name of Nikolaevsk's first BK priest).

at Jordanville were a life-saving benefit of ecumenical relations with ROCOR.

The American bezpopovtsy have also made selective changes that may be termed 'modern', although it was described to me more as a "necessary evil" than as a shift in their perspective on the canonical or traditional acceptability of women religious leaders (Barbara and Eugenia, pers. comm, June 6, 2013). Although the practice of a nastavnik blessing and authorizing a "trusted old woman to perform baptismal and funeral services" was accepted in the early nineteenth century among the Pomortsy in Poland (Iwaniec 1981, 12), the issue of women reading scripture during services was debated at the twelfth annual Pomortsy Conference:

> Question: *May a woman read the Apostolic Epistles in the church?*
>
> Answer, Rev. D. E.: *Nowadays, when the interest to religion and to the Church became unpopular, and not only the parents do not come to church to pray, but even their children are not urged to attend the church services, we often are forced to look for the help of women to perform the necessary church services, though the rules do not permit women to talk or to teach in church. But we do this because of emergency, as it is said: 'Because of emergency, the laws get altered sometimes.*
>
> Rev. M. interfered with the answer, and said: *You know all, what kind of human the women are, and what is their female nature? Once a month, they are not allowed even to enter the church: how do you want them to read the Apostolic Epistles, which are the second important after the Gospel? No, the woman must not read the Apostles' Book.* (*PC* 12, 1966, Q6)

Clearly, this is another contentious issue of selective modernity with a similar pattern of question: 'What ritual adaptations are made forgivable by necessity?'

Again, American Old Believers' anxiety about the limits of God's grace in matters of deviations to pravoslavnye was a constant theme of my time with each congregation. I observed and historically found the perimeters of mutatis mutandis to be the frequent boundary lines of belonging. The woman who led the remaining few of the Detroit congregation was not called a nastavnik. In aging communities, it is not uncommon for women to be the only available Church Slavonic readers, as was the case among the Erie bezpopovtsy where 75% (6/8) of the regular congregants were older women. There was also a woman reader at the Nikolaevsk bezpopovtsy molenna. A similar "feminization and geriatricization" of Old Believer religious leadership in the Urals existed in the late Soviet period, which would have been "unthinkable" the previous century (Rogers 2009, 173-177). A microschism in this area in the post-Soviet period, also over the priesthood question and the emergence of a Belaya Krinitsa congregation, has caused a reverse in the important, heightened role of spiritual mothers, and a "masculinization" of church leadership

has subsequently developed (Rogers 2008, 116, 143-4).

There is no easy way to update this because the expression "dying off" is literal. It is an expression they used themselves, but nonetheless excruciation to write. The same conference that saw the debate over women reading scripture in services also confronted the realization that their community was aging. A delegate from Detroit expressed their concern, "I was present at the church service here [Marianna] and saw that there were only old readers and singers in the church choir. May I ask, why don't you have any young readers and singers, and what will you do, when the old ones shall die?" The record continues bluntly, "There was no answer to this question" (PC 12, 1966, Q12). Nikolaevsk's bezpopovtsy church also has very few regular practitioners, and one congregant suspected that when their current nastavnik and (female) elder reader were gone that the rest of the Nikolaevsk bezpopovtsy will either become popovtsy or move to one of the Kachemak Bay villages. In this case, the Nikolaevsk bezpopovtsy have thousands of co-religionists throughout North America.

I had the chance to swing through Erie in the summer of 2021, on my way home to Montréal from burying my grandfather, James R. Welch, in Kentucky. As 'luck' would have it, it was a Sunday. As the early morning wore on, and no one else arrived for service at the Church of the Holy Trinity, I grew increasingly sorrowful (to the point that I was very near tears when I briefly spoke to Fr. Simon after catching his sermon; he was kind as always). Covid restrictions were no longer in force, but perhaps the elderly congregation took extra precautions I reasoned to myself. Fr. Larry passed in 2019, but the remaining members of the church were all very knowledgeable and capable. I received no response from the letter I left in the mailbox. Barbara's number no longer worked. Simply put, the bezpopovtsy Pomortsy congregations are no longer 'vibrant' or demographically viable.[375] I grieved for the beautiful, warm, and glowing space that stood empty that Sunday morning.

For Fr. Simon and other popovtsy, unification with ROCOR was in part a survivalist tactic. And to see his congregation together in prayer, still in their post-Paschal whites, was a healing sight. And to see the wonderful centennial monument in honor of the hardworking individuals who struggle to found the Old Rite in a New Land gave material witness to their strength and legacy.

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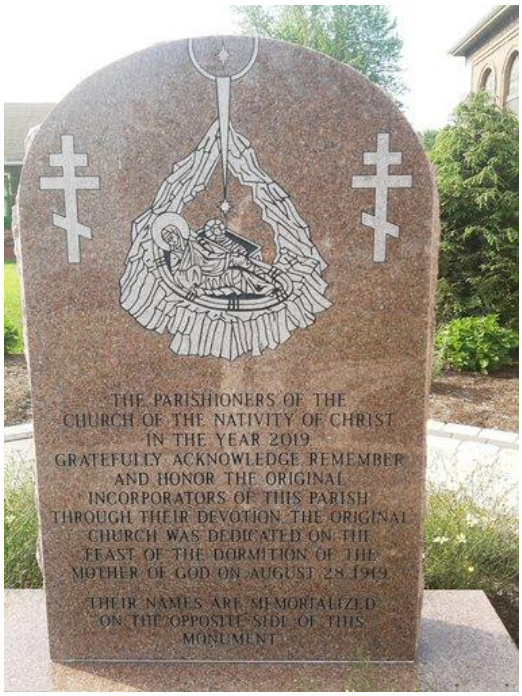
[375] Excepting Pascha and one baptism (for a couple who lived farther away with no local congregation in which to teach their child), I never saw a family in attendance.

Image 15: Church of the Nativity Centennial Monument



At the same time, the two-sidedness of this research meant I could still sense his opponents asking, 'What if what survives lacks the sanctifying power of God's grace?' 'What does having the Eucharist mean if it is not salutary and "doesn't count?"' 'What good is continuity if what you are seeking to continue is corrupted?' And I know they would also argue that the microschism tore apart the "community," that ephemeral sense of social wholeness; it effectively chased people away (physically, to private practice, or to complete ambivalence); it disrupted the transmission of religious knowledge to the next generation. The popovtsy would say the wholeness of the Church, its full rites, and a hope for the future has been restored. I paid my respects at the cemetery before leaving town and struggled with the fact that this is a dispute I cannot resolve, or neatly conclude, although I may hope to faithfully record it.

Schism and non-co-religiosity between Christian Churches may be appear to be dogmatic hair splitting, yet Christian morality requires action. The Church's survival requires action.

> But it is the spirit of the world that's destroying us. It's destroying our lives and it's destroying our souls. And we must recognize that we cannot sit calm to that spirit, we can only save ourselves through a life of prayer and fasting. It's the only way. Our Lord told us it's the only way. But we play, we play with our religious lives. We play with the idea that we can pop in on a Sunday morning and can have a little bit of religion and it's going to be okay and then we wonder why our children disappear when they're teenagers. Because they learn to play with religion...It's only through prayer and fasting that we can save our souls. And only through

> prayer and fasting we can save the holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. Without it it's going to die. It's going to die without a spirit of prayer and fasting, from all of us. And it can't just be a few of us. It has to be all of us to commit ourselves to this church, to every aspect of the life of the church. To its prayer and its fasting, to its social obligations, to its charitable obligations. That's what Christianity is all about. (FS, CN sermon, Palm Sunday, April 28, 2013)

Through sobory, schisms, and the delicate processes of selective modernity Old Believers take action and make choices to "save the holy Catholic and Apostolic Church" by aligning its members under like-minded paths to the salvation of their souls from the "spirit of the world."

7.3. Schisms and Sobory: The Simultaneity of Unification and Division

What I remember of my first fieldwork experience in Erie in July of 2012 is the annual summer picnic held by the bezpopovtsy Pomortsy. For years the picnic had been held to coincide with Fr. Larry's birthday, he was turning 98 that year, and very kind (as was everyone) about my wild, about-to-walk, nine-month-old. I did not get into any in depth conversations chasing him around in the park, but I received permission to return. Now, looking over my written notes an embarrassingly long amount of time later, I see that first, I attended service at the popovtsy Church of the Nativity (with two other mothers and their small children in the soundproofed vestibule), heard a sermon about the true meaning of the Church being 'one', and had a conversation about the microschism. A popovtsy woman described her experience of the RSG meetings, "my stomach ached with nerves for three days before and had a headache for three days after" (pers. comm., July 22, 2012).

Later in the fieldwork process I learned that the annual Pomortsy picnics gather together not only individuals from the Erie congregation, but also those from the Marianna (Pennsylvania), Millville (New Jersey), and Detroit (Michigan) communities, and that today's social event was a were relic of the annual Pomortsy sobory (councils) where the four congregations gathered to ensure their continued co-religiosity and sobornost'. Several people remembered these yearly conferences as shouting matches, as if those proudly in-the-know were competing for a 'Most Righteous' trophy. The last Pomortsy conference was held in 1984, nine months after the majority (75%) of the Church of the Nativity's congregation voted to join ROCOR. Attendees decided that henceforth the annual get-togethers would be social only (PC, 1984). They had had enough of debate and conflict.

The simultaneity of union and division in ORRO group-making is clearly observable in the relationship between sobory and schism. Councils come together to cement the conciliarity and consensus of dogma and practice between congregants on the local scale and between congregations (or Churches, in cases of the 'Universal' councils of the early Church) on the ecumenical scale. Councils, like schisms, are times of dogmatic-definition and reaffirmation of the parameters of co-religious belonging. For example, when bishops and hierarchs of the Christian world convened at Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381) and formed a consensus on the definition of Christian faith in form of the Creed (or, Confession of Orthodox Faith). And like schisms, sobory sometimes result in the exclusion of those who do not conform to the consensus—as the Arius and his followers were in the fourth century. In the first section below, I present a review of this dissertation's chapters as an exposition of the dual processes of conciliarity and exclusion to suggest that more harmonious (and in sobornost') unions are formed in the aftermath of a congregation or Church's reification of their defined boundaries of belief and belonging.

Crummey (2011) described Chasovennye small community councils in Siberia held from the early eighteenth century to present day as places where "central" questions of the "utmost seriousness" as well as minute details of daily life were debated. Often, the sobory revealed "irreconcilable differences" and "contributed to the frequent schism for which Old Belief has been notorious" (103). In my analysis of the *Review of the Twelve Annual [Pomortsy] Conferences* (Smolakov, 1953-1966; Appendix 3), I also noted many congregational differences that did not result in schism. The four congregations disputed forms of singing (*PC* 8, 1960, Q1), start time of services (*PC* 8, 1960, Q12), and how to do Remission Prayer (Proschaneeye; 8, 1960, Q13) without breaking. Sometimes, the Pomortsy nastavniki and their congregants 'agreed to disagree' and decided an issue was not a co-religiosity deal-breaker. For example, on questions of holding candles at funerals (whether they should, and how to ensure state of grace of participants), there was no collective agreement on the practice, but the decision that "the holding of candles was up to discretion of the priest and parish, [was] acceptable to everybody" (*PC* 4, 1956, Q1). A larger survey of the elements of ORRO that do and do not affect co-religiosity would enhance the anthropological study of contemporary Old Believers' understanding of their faith in the modern world.

I have discussed how religious change occurs through big ruptures as well as through smaller, day-to-day conscientious choices. Next, I look at the effect of compounded change and

accumulated differences that have increasingly differentiated bezpopovtsy groups from the practices of the New Rite ROC, the popovtsy, and the pre-Nikonian liturgy their forebearers sought to preserve.

I approach the question of change in ORRO Christian practices, group-making, and group-breaking by focusing on specific choices collectively debated by the Erie and Nikolaevsk congregations. I describe the complex nature of change and continuity through the concept of selective modernity, wherein a religious body carefully and conscientiously chooses which elements of their practice may be adapted to current circumstances (e.g., delaying start time of services) and which elements and perspectives are absolutely unchangeable, fundamental dogma, and/or SDBs (for example, the duality represented in the sign of the cross). I argue that categorical disagreements on what matters are CDB, and that these moments of dogma-encoding set each faction on a separate (hopefully more internally unanimous) path of ORRO continuity. To qualify the generalized dichotomy of change and continuity I have also argued that ORRO groups also carefully select of elements to change may be made in the hopes of better ensuring the transmission of religious knowledge and participation in the next generation (e.g., prayer in English). The four congregations with whom I conducted fieldwork are united in their desire for ORRO continuity and divided on how this may be done.

I conclude this chapter with a return to the question I asked in this dissertation's preface: Is Christianity theologically determined to be a multifarious unity? Throughout my work I have described many perspectives held by Old Belief that appear to create unity through division and the ways in which their social dualities mirror their theological ones. In Chapter Two, I reviewed Old Believers' history of schisms and conceptualization of the humanity as divided between those of this world and those not of this world. In Chapter Three, I discussed American Old Believers' measures of social segregation along pure/impure and sacred/profane dichotomies that has been the primary focus of previous ethnographies of their enclaves in the U.S. (e.g., Scheffel 1991). In Chapter Four, I suggested that theological perspectives of grace and heretical contamination contextualize practices of exclusion and determinations of co-religiosity in the social and ritual lives of ORRO Christians. And in Chapters Five and Six, I outlined the theo-historical (especially ecclesiological), ritual, canonical, and scriptural debates that have routinely divided Old Believers throughout the centuries. These are the utmost necessary elements of ORRO Christianity revealed

by schism and daily separations; if a group cannot find consensus on these matters, they cannot be 'one'.

I have demonstrated the internal variation of the complex diasporic group collectively known as 'Old Believers.' And finally in conclusion, I feel it necessary to stress again, that 'oneness', conciliarity, sobornost', and unity of Christianity (whether congregation or hierarchy) remains the ideal of ORRO ecclesiology. Non-co-religious ORRO groups are not sects, but many Churches, like the "many mansions," variously configured brides of Christ in search of union with his grace. Unfortunately, while the Christian unity St. Paul preached (e.g., 1 Cor 1, 12) is a lasting positive force in the Christian imaginary that Fr. Simon preached about in my first and most recent service (July 22, 2012 and June 13, 2021), Hegel's characterization of "the rise of sects [as] inevitable" as individual interpretations (and factions) and reasoned decisions diverge from Church positive authority of defined dogma and given moral laws certainly has historical credence ([1795] 2011, 142-5).

A later philosopher of history, Shmuel Eisenstadt, made a different argument about the tendency of ruptures within institutions of axial faiths which posit a transcendental universal truth that is categorically separate, and above, from the everyday, mundane world in which people must live and learn to seek it. "These tensions are first the result of problems inherent in the institutionalization of Axial visions ---- e.g., the implementation of economic and power structures. These tensions are rooted in the internal structure of Axial visions --- most notably in the tension in between their inclusivist universalistic claims and their exclusivist tendency, rendering their institutionalization potentially destructive" (Eisenstadt 2011, 201). In other words, the trouble with universals is that they are all or nothing. But to end on a slightly more hopeful note, while this tension may wreak havoc on Earth, inclusivity in the mystical Church is not decided here

7.3.1. Summary of Chapters: Reifying Selves and Others through Conciliarity and Exclusion

The great variety of Christian practices, dogmas, and worldviews are highlighted in the moments of history which expose people's deliberate processes of group-making (unifications, solidifying ecumenical relations and consensus through councils) and group-breaking (schisms, reifying co-religious boundaries). Clear dogmatic definitions, like the Creed composed at the councils of Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381), help create a unanimous, harmonious Church sobornost', or conciliarity, between co-religious congregations of the same denomination. In other words, councils define 'what we believe.' A simultaneous component of this process is the

exclusion of heretics (those with "bad teachings") with divergent theological definitions—the non-co-religious.

Divergence does not always end in schism, or always include accusations of heresy, individuals and families sometimes join other Churches that better align with their own convictions and selective modernities. For example, the Turchane moved to Oregon from New Jersey finding themselves more allied with the social and ritual practices of the Chasovennye than the Pomortsy (2.3.3.).

This section presents a summary review of each chapter's exposition the unanimous duality of group-definition and Other-exclusion of Old Believers' determinations of the essential components of their faith (without which they would cease to be the true Orthodox Church) and the vital requirements for salvation that were exposed at times of internal conflict and schism.

In Chapter Two, I demonstrated that the priesthood question which split the Erie and Nikolaevsk bezpopovtsy congregations cannot be causally reduced to socio-environmental factors such as immigration, Americanization, or suburbanization. Old Believers' centuries long debate about the state of the Church and apostolic succession after what they perceived to be the fall of the ROC is one of many theological disputes over how to best maintain ORRO continuity in the face of ever-changing contemporary circumstances. These conundrums have caused numerous schisms. Conversely, there were cases of unifications and ecumenism when two formerly non-co-religious groups' separate paths of ORRO continuity merged. For example, the Fedoseevtsy and Pomortsy over time resolved their dispute over if and how to conduct the sacrament of marriage without priests. The 1901 and 1906 councils in Vilna which united these two bezpopovtsy concords (Iwaniec 1981, 15) is comparable to the unification of the Erie Church of the Nativity with ROCOR and Nikolaevsk Church of St. Nicholas with the Bela Krinitsa.

In all these cases, unification was made possible by a shift in congregation(s)' answer to the generic transcendental tension question: How much worldliness or adaptation is acceptable without diminishing the sanctity of one's Christian life on Earth and salvation hereafter. Unifications between concords and congregations mark a shift in groups' theo-historical narrative, although this will come at the loss of those whose perspectives remain the same. The more conservative Fedoseevtsy (compared to Pomortsy) reversed its prohibition on new marriages; those who did not accept the council's resolution and those groups who continued to reject marriage

altogether eventually died out or subsequent generations' found union the Pomortsy or other ORRO groups (Stricker 1990, 32-3).

On one level, this was a reevaluation of the legitimacy of a particular sacrament. On the next level, new marriages (accepting novozheny) signal a dismissal of asceticism and the conviction that new children should not be brought into a world about to suffer Armageddon. Similarly, the Erie and Nikolaevsk popovtsy reinterpreted specific canon laws and scriptural verses. On the next level, they rewrote the ecclesiological narrative and the foundations of their own group's identity and practices when they reversed their forefathers' beliefs in the death of the Church (and in Erie, questioned the heresy of Nikon's reforms). In each of the Fedoseevtsy/Pomortsy, Pomortsy/ROCOR, Chasovennye/Belaya Krinitsa cases, the factions' interpretation of an essential matter of ORRO Christianity (whether how practiced in church or lived at home) were incompatible and therefore schism was unavoidable.

In Chapter Three, I illustrated the theological perspectives which undergird American Old Believers' social dualities. The processes of separation of the pravoslavnye Khristianiki from the poganyi Others are especially apparent in the physically segregated and more socially isolated Alaskan villages, as are the number of personal infractions (shaving, cutting hair, dating outsiders) that can cause one to lose their good standing in the community, and temporarily lose their right to participate in common worship. But while these exclusionary measures and prohibitions have largely waned in Erie, the CN archive suggests a similar emphasis on distinctions between the world of flesh and the world of Spirit (See Appendix 2). And, crucially, where it 'matters'—the protection of sobornost' within the sanctuary where the group seeks to commune as one with God—ritual participation remains the exclusive privilege of those the congregation recognizes as 'one' in faith (the co-religious). Furthermore, an individual must also be 'one' in their spiritual preparation (state of grace; recent confession) to join in prayer or receive the Eucharist. Similar to the exclusion of heretics on the ecumenical level, a congregation or its nastavnik or priest assesses an individual's moral status. Those found wanting are barred from participation.

In Chapter Four, I shifted from anthropological discussions of purity as the line of division between those who can practice (ritually and/or socially) to grace, a divine marker of social duality. Most of my Old Believer interlocutors acknowledged that an individuals' final reception of grace in the form of redemption is unknown for God builds the wall between the saved and doomed. Few individuals seemed adamant that there was only one way, one pravoslavnye, or one Church that

may lead to salvation. Schisms happen for many reasons, but an action or heretical teaching thought to be a salvation deal-breaker by one faction and not another is an inevitable co-religiosity deal-breaker. Simply, schisms show what matters and what matters most is salvation; it is both the uniting essence of "what makes one a Christian" (Meyendorff 1996, 4). I suspect it is the dividing essence as well. Christians are by no means united on soteriological perspectives. Throughout ORRO history, the presumed limits of God's mercy towards heretics, the unconfessed, the shaved, the mirskie and poganyi, has served as means of qualifying and socially differentiating Others. Furthermore, from the initial popovtsy/bezpopovtsy division in the seventeenth century to the microschisms in Erie and Nikolaevsk, divergent perspectives about the state of grace on Earth (how earned, how stringently protected, if and how ruled by the Antichrist) and the state of grace of the Church (institution divinely authorized by apostolic succession to distribute God's grace through the sacraments) has been a frequent co-religiosity deal-breaker.

In Chapter Five, I demonstrated the Erie and Nikolaevsk churches' simultaneous process of union (of the popovtsy faction with a hierarchy) and schism (within former bezpopovtsy communities) in 1983. In Erie, conciliar decisions in the form of the RSG played a major role in the Church of the Nativity's unification with ROCOR. This of course, was not accomplished without the rejection of congregants who retained their theo-historical narrative of Church loss in the wake of the ROC schism. The Nikolaevsk popovtsy similarly came to union with the Belaya Krinitsa hierarchy by reevaluating their former ecclesiological convictions, which came with a quick and tragic breakdown of social and co-religiosity relationships with the resolute bezpopovtsy in Alaska (and Oregon). Both enclaves suffered a long and tense rebuilding process and continue to experience the emotional effects of the dispute. Yet all four congregations in the process of reifying the lines between heresy and dogma (Kurtz 1986, 7), and between acceptable accommodation and unchangeable essentials, founded more harmonious unions with like-minded co-religionists who better share their interpretations of Old Belief.

The overlap of belief and belonging is perhaps most apparent in the historical debates presented in Chapter Six. In light of the Old Believers' big questions (did the Church survive the fall of the ROC? Were Nikon's reforms heretical? Are we living in the age of the Antichrist?) it is no wonder that divergent answers resulted in numerous intrareligious ruptures over the centuries. Variant ecclesiological and eschatological narratives preclude co-religiosity. Simply, a bezpopovtsy person could not belong to a Church they believe to be inauthentic and illegitimate. The Erie and

Nikolaevsk microschisms were moments of ethnohistorical and theological introspection that speak to what matters most to each factions' broader perspectives about what it means to be an Orthodox Christian today. When congregational consensus and sobornost' regarding these theo-historical questions foundational to ORRO Christianity deviated, it was necessary to exclude divergent narratives through schism and reconstitute the boundaries of membership anew. Each faction in essence agreed about one thing, the value of ORRO continuity, they simply disagreed how best to do so.

The present chapter discusses how Old Believers' choices in times of schism and sobory demonstrate the ways in which Christian unity, broadly speaking in sense of the universal Church and global collective of self-identified Christians, is conscientiously constructed. In part, this construction is definition in negation; the bezpopovtsy are not priested. I do not argue that the Erie and Nikolaevsk bezpopovtsy are the 'keepers' of the faith because they practice as their parents did or that the popovtsy are the keepers because they hold full liturgies and other rites of the Church. All four congregations maintain ORRO continuity and all four have (selectively) changed from the manner in which pre-Nikonian Russian Orthodox Christians once worshipped. Below, I address how certain changes (e.g., presbyterian models of leadership) accumulated over time to increasingly differentiate the popovtsy and bezpopovtsy's expressions of ORRO continuity. All can reasonably argue that the essentials have not changed, or that they have only changed what absolutely needed to change to ensure any generational continuity. On many of these points the congregations agree in principle but not in application, such as the need to pray and fast, or the need to exclude Outsiders from common prayer. The points of differentiation highlight the complexities and multiplicity of selective continuity.

7.3.2. Becoming Bezpopovtsy: Radicalization and Polarization Feedback Loops

A schism is a clear point of fission when a co-religious unit ruptures into two distinct paths. Religious change is not always sudden and momentous, other times it is slow and accumulative. All paths of ORRO continuity and selective modernity, the 'progressive' and the 'conservative' factions alike, experience change. How each path evolves separately throughout time (a topic of potential interest for theorists of social change, philosophers of history, and social evolutionists alike) is outside the scope of this work. My purpose in this subsection is to introduce how schism initiates former co-religionists' distinct trajectories of selective modernity that grow increasingly dissimilar as each new group gradually adapts to its current circumstances. The bezpopovtsy's history illustrates

how the us/them, pravoslavnye/heretics polarizations created during the ROC schism and subsequent microschisms can create feedback loops of further 'radicalization', leading certain paths of ORRO continuity ironically further and further away from the rites of the pre-Nikonian ROC.

Old Believers' more recent schisms over long-standing theological debates like the priesthood question do not neatly fit into the conservative/progressive dichotomy of religious conflict and social change.[376] The priested and priestless alike are attempting to conserve ORRO Christianity. Yet there are examples of congregational schism that have led each faction to be further polarized along their own dichotomies (e.g., mirskie/nimirskie) as branches each evolve in opposite directions having excised the more 'traditional' or 'modernist' members from their unions. Zuckerman (1999) observed this tendency after a microschism of a Conservative (i.e., 'moderate') Jewish congregation in Oregon, the side that had accepted adaptations concerning gender and translated prayers founded a Reconstructionist synagogue (i.e., more liberal or progressive) and the conservative faction who rejected these changes became more conservative a founded an Orthodox synagogue (209).[377]

We can look at the history of Russian Orthodox Church's schism in this light, as the Old Believers are not merely holders of the pre-Nikonian rites, but preservers of beards and babushkas. Similarly, the ROC also continued to change having lost many members most committed to the asceticism and monastic ideas of Muscovite Russian Orthodoxy; the Russian State continued its "brutal and hasty westernization of the country in the eighteenth century" (Zernov 1963, 7). The paradox (and tragedy in the perspective of the bezpopovtsy who mourn their loss of Church and the rites that must be performed by a priest) of the ROC schism is that the Old Believers were forced to alter their services to an arguably greater degree than Nikon's

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[376] Wuthnow 1988; Hunter 1991; also, Zuckerman's (1999) use of these theorists and the orthodoxy/progressivism "impulses" to analyze a synagogue's microschism (42-4, 144).

[377] For a longitudinal look at the process of compounded difference and polarization of former co-religionists after a rupture we can look to Yoder's (1991) work with American Amish groups, which found schisms were turning points that allowed faction each to go in their "preferred direction more quickly," and they continued to evolve apart with time. "The great-grandchildren of those who said no to the overturns of modernity today read by lantern light [Old Order Amish], farm with horses and shun high school. The great-grandchildren of the progressives [Mennonites] have for many practical purposes merged with the mainstream of American life" (14-15).

reforms imposed upon them.

Subsequent adaptations accepted by some bezpopovtsy groups (for example, the controversy over prayer for the tsar discussed in Chapter Two), led to further radicalization of those who rejected that concession. The socio-historical context of persecution exacerbated their alienation and segregation from what they perceived to be the modern, Antichrist-ruled world. The Beguny and other groups on the farthest pole of the priesthood spectrum (See Figure 1) radicalized their forms of Russian Orthodoxy to a larger scale than Nikon had (Lupinin 179-180). For example, the reading of sacred texts came to serve a much higher role and centrality in bezpopovtsy services (Chapter Six, RSG 2, September 8, 1982, 5). More generally, the bezpopovtsy lost the Old Rite liturgy they were fighting to keep and were forced to adapt the "utmost necessary" sacraments they believed to be canonically acceptable to perform without priests (baptism, marriage, and confession, that's 3 of 7; *PC* 4, 1960, Q8). Their groups split further over if and how they could legitimize these sacraments. The bezpopovtsy agreed that the other four sacraments were forever lost (Ordination, Unction, Extreme Unction, Eucharist)—a 'radical' change.

The Old Believers, priested and priestless alike, reaffirmed their commitment to the puritanical ideals of the Zealots of Piety movement and its extension of pollution taboos and careful exclusion of potential heretical contaminants. They also continued to embrace the ideology of the Third Rome through which they identified themselves as preservers of the true authentic Church they considered abandoned by mainstream Russian Orthodoxy. The bezpopovtsy continued to evolve further along this path of minimally selective modernity, for in the absence of a higher authority to determine and morally enforce the moral community's distance from heretical others, the bezpopovtsy must err on the side of caution, or 'super-correctness' to guarantee the covenant with God is kept (Morris 1981, 113, 129). Scheffel (1991) calls this the "sacramental deprivation hypothesis" and presents a historical argument that purity maintenance was stressed to fill the vacuum left by the missing priesthood. They do not have access to the ritualized commitment to the congregational community and the profession of like-faith and like-state of grace that is enacted in the Eucharist (1991, 204-5). In other words, they do not have Communion as a marker of Church belonging so rituals like the Remission Prayer (Proschaneeye) mark the distinction between outsiders and those out of good standing in the vestibule, and pravoslavnye Christians in the nave, help ensure congregational sobornost'.

More recently, this divergence in selective modernity paths can be seen in the aftermath of the Nikolaevsk microschism. The congregational break socially changed the composition of the village as many bezpopovtsy members physically moved to the villages of their co-religionists on Kachemak Bay. "Nikolaevsk has lost part of its conservative element, leaving behind a more liberal population. It isn't unusual to see Old Believers having a hamburger at McDonald's in Homer, or young women without their scarves, or young men [with] their belts worn inside their shirts and out of public eye" (Gay 1988, 58). Another news article also recounted that the "conservative Old Believers are fleeing" and directly linked social segregationism to the lack of a priesthood:

> One group continues to worship in the old ways, paying strict attention to the rules that govern their faith. The other has a priest, capable of interpreting God's word and offering them absolution for their sins. Activities that used to be forbidden—eating in a restaurant, watching television—are now allowed. Chappell, *ADN*, May 1, 1988

Today, the bezpopovtsy congregation is greatly diminished to the point that one elder projected that it would eventually dissolve as its members continue to move to communities in Oregon, Alberta, and elsewhere in Alaska with have similar theological and social views (and similar selective modernities) (B., pers. comm., Aug. 26, 2013).

The Nikolaevsk popovtsy changed more elements of their forebearers' practices than the (very large issue) of their re-answering the priesthood question and rewriting the theo-historical narrative of Old Belief. Dennis Fefelov, son of the first priest of Nikolaevsk, described the diminished need for puritanical boundaries after they found the priesthood. For centuries the priestless have been in an "emergency situation" operating under limited rites. The reign of the Antichrist is an emergency state and therefore they accessed the canonical contingencies in place for cases of imminent death or emergency when a priest cannot be present to perform a baptism or confession. They place their hope in God's grace and forgiveness for the fact that a bezpopovtsy person is baptized, married, and buried by a lay person and never takes communion. But in their lives, they enact numerous other puritanical measures to ensure individual souls' states of grace (or purity) are prepared for Judgment Day. Dennis as well as Nikolaevsk's current priest, Fr. Nikola, tried to explain to me how the set of "dog dishes" was unnecessary now that they had access to the full rites and a greater community of believers to sustain it as the pure body of Christ on Earth.

An additional component of the bezpopovtsy's increasing radicalization or compounded change away from ROC and popovtsy liturgical practices over time is the fact that since the seventeenth century they have lacked the ecumenical structures and councils that help regulate co-

religiosity between congregations, dogmatic definitions, and decisions concerning current selective modernity challenges. There were a few notable bezpopovtsy councils (e.g., Pomortsy in Vilnius 1906), but these were few and far between as their assemblies (and Old Rite practice) was largely prohibited until the Edict of Toleration (1905). And without the Church writ-large, there could be no new canons to help interpret Orthodoxy for the current age (see Meyendorff's *Living Tradition* chapter on finding Truth through conciliar consensus that adapts without changing essentials 1978, 45-62). The bezpopovtsy groups with the least number of ecumenical relations, councils, and networks who lived as relatively isolated congregations like the Turchane, Sinziantsy, and Harbintsy populations who immigrated to Oregon in the mid-1960s were enclaves of dogmatic decision-making.

If ecumenism manages intrareligious debates and uncertainties about transcendental growing pains of practicing the 'Old Faith' in the 'New World' then you would expect to see less ruptures in institutional, hierarchical Churches as well as fewer microschisms because decision-making authority lies above the local level. I interpret this to be one meaning the phrase "schism breeds schism" (La Civita 2007; pers. comm.). Or, as the new priested deacon of Nikolaevsk told a local reporter in 1985 "you can no longer say, 'come on priest, leave with us and the hell with the rest.' The priest can't leave the church, they'd have to take him with him" (Gay, *HN,* May 16, 1985, 11; I was told something similar in an interview, FN, pers. comm., August 22, 2013). But this is a critique of the ecumenicists or the priested who have come to think of their ex-co-religious priestless acquaintances as little better than the Protestants—not only because they are led by individual or independent lay teachers, but because nothing is keeping them to those teachers. Anyone can just read the same prayers at home if there is a disagreement with the nastavnik, as happened in Erie during its CYS selective modernity conflict discussed above (7.1.2.).

The defining processes of schism do not stop at the decision to split as each new congregation needs to encode its reified boundaries of belief, practice, and belonging. The aftermath of schism solidifies each fractions' decisions, and the position which distinguished them from their former fellow congregants. The minority factions had to rebuild their physical churches as well, a process that involved numerous meetings and exchanges, a new church Charter and bylaws or find more informal consensus among the elder leaders in the church (5.3.).

Another interpretation of "schism breeds schism" reflects the sensitive, essential elements of a faith that are intimately tied with a group's dogmatic identity and therefore subject to increased

protection. After rupture, two new groups are glued together, but the cracks present weak points of potential division along previously identified co-religiosity deal-breakers. The sign of the cross is one such element. Fr. Simon gave this example to me when recounting an image from his childhood of a church member who would pound his two fingers on his body when making the sign of the cross. He later perceived this image as representative of the adamant but misplaced sentiment of the most stubbornly orthopraxic who could accept no deviation to the ORRO practices through which they defined themselves. It is no wonder that the double-crosser controversy caused microschisms amongst the West Coast bezpopovtsy (6.2.1.).

Fr. Smolakov's response to the ROC's anathema reversal acknowledged that the passage of time apart from one another accumulated differences between the New and Old Rite Russian Orthodoxies, "But we must declare, too, that no reunion is possible for them any more, as it is not possible for the Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches, and to the Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches, for each Church has gone too far away from one another, being separated for the long centuries. Let us stay in our Old faith, my dear Old Orthodox Christians..." (1973, 34). Fr. Smolakov did not live to see Erie's microschism. I cannot know whether he would agree with me that all four American Old Believer congregations discussed in this dissertation have "stay[ed] in [their] Old faith." What I do know, is that he preached that this judgment is in the hands of God (e.g., *PC* 6, 1958, Q10) who will decide who belongs to his Church, united in his grace.

7.3.3. The Once and Future Universal Church

'Sect' is not a term I heard in the field, except when individuals argued that they were not a sect, and that they were not raskol'niki. Rather, bezpopovtsy Fr. Evanoff stressed that their church was in fact "Catholic;" they belong to the universal Christian Church. Old Believers are, simply, Christians. Religious enclaves are often associated with 'sectarianism' or 'denominationalism' that lean on the Weberian definitions predicated on Protestant theology unsuitable for analyses of Eastern Orthodoxy.[378]

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[378] For one, Eastern Orthodoxy is not centralized like the Roman Church (the institutional opposite to Tönnies et al. understanding of sect), but an organizational ecumenical body comprised of co-equal, yet independent bishops' Sees (autocephaly) in conciliar union under the Holy Spirit. Lupinin noted that the Third Rome prophesy is in contradiction of this ecclesiology; this predates the ROC schism (1984, 138).

> If one wishes to make a conceptual distinction between a sect and a church, a sect is not an institution (Anstadt) like a church, but a community of the religiously qualified. All the members of the sect are called to salvation; only a community comprised in this way – which also existed as an *invisible* church in the thought of Luther, Calvin, and Augustine- passes over into the visible church...the *ecclesia pura*- a community consisting only of those members whose mode of conduct and life style do not carry public signs of heavenly disfavor, but proclaim the glory of God. The churches, in contrast, permit their light to shine on the just and the unjust alike... (Tönnies et al. 1973, 141-2)

The distinction made between sect and church, particularly where it applies to principles of purity, appears to be a well-matched term for segregationalist enclaves, except for the crucial point that Old Believer ecclesiology is universalistic. This is a study of small group factioning and the disputes that break co-religiosity, but I must stress that priestless and priested ORRO ecclesiology and understanding of the Church is that of a global enclave of scattered 'true' Christian communities. And priestless and priested Old Believers alike could arguably be called "communit[ies] of the religiously qualified."

Erie's RSG also considered the visible/invisible Church dichotomy in its consideration of unification with ROCOR, as Fr. Simon explained:

> The nature of the Church: The Unity of the Church is preserved in the Episcopate (the hierarchy) for the bishop is the bond of unity which links the entire Church together in time and space. In time he is the visible sign of continuity. Every part of the Church is governed by the bishop whose descent goes back to Christ and the original twelve [Apostles]. In space, the bishop is the visible sign of fellowship, every member of the Church is linked with every other by means of the bishop...Christ is visible and invisible, the visible head is the bishop...The bishop must work for the good of the Church and must always be in agreement with her. The authority of the bishop depends on the Church and he is to be obeyed when he speaks according to her mind. If he teaches contrary to the Church he is to be contradicted. (RSG 6, October 20, 1982, 6)

The popovtsy in Erie and Nikolaevsk reversed the ecclesiological narrative of their forebearers that held that the visible Church, or at least its institutionalization, was lost; this created an untenably divisive situation.

The bezpopovtsy position is that the visible, institutional Church, with a human bishop, could no longer exist after the fall of the ROC and that unification with a hierarchy was impossible; they could not follow a bishop into heresy, he must be "contradicted." The visible Church changed in structure, as Fr. Yokoff argued to the RSG (6.3.): "We are the Church" (RSG 9, November 17, 1982, Q20); "the Church in you yourself...you are the temple of the Holy Spirit" (Q19); "we only have one pastor now and that is Christ himself" (Q32); and "we depend on God that He is our

only bishop and He could feed us during the famine" (Q3). The invisible Church united by believers' relationship to God and reception of his grace remained. The key difference of bezpopovtsy ecclesiology is that the Church has been removed from this world that now exists at the end of the eschatological timeline (famine being an apocalyptic sign Rev 6:7). This makes it all the more necessary for the bezpopovtsy to also strive to remove themselves spiritually from this world (See Figure 15).

American popovtsy also utilize the language of sectarianism to critique what they view to be the bezpopovtsy's propensity towards factioning without the institutional, hierarchical ecumenism to manage their intrareligious disputes (wrapped up by the phrase "schism breeds schism"). For example, one Erie popovtsy member described their admittedly vague knowledge of the Alaskan and Oregonian communities as being is over-focused on purity and custom to the point of "cultishness" and mimicked traditional academic definitions of exclusionary sectarianism. The popovtsy moreover liken the bezpopovtsy to Protestant social formations, where the individual congregational or sectarian impulse is at least practiced (though not necessarily taught) over the ecumenical, universalist spirit of the one true and apostolic and Catholic Church.

Yet the distinction between the levels of social duality, anti-modernity, and 'closedness' of the Erie and Nikolaevsk enclaves does not translate into a sectarian or congregational ecclesiology. Bezpopovtsy (and de facto bezpopovtsy) groups throughout the centuries and in many regions have continued to search for and come to the priesthood (Robson 1994; Rogers 2009; Crummey 2011, 118). Groups have also merged to become one Church (2.2.1.; 2.3.3.). Rather, Erie and Nikolaevsk Old Believers reformulated (popovtsy) or re-confirmed (bezpopovtsy) their understanding of the Church as a theo-historical entity and as a present, organizational force of God's grace on earth. Old Believers' recurrent schisms and unions over the priesthood question and shifting ecclesiologies are moments of realignment of their perspectives about the contemporary state of the world. Their selective modernities represent what they consider to be the best pathways of preserving the Old Rite under present circumstances in alignment with these perspectives.

I agree with Humphrey's position that rigid orthopraxy (and fears of what I refer to as 'heretical contamination'), messianism (i.e., Third Rome), "willingness of martyrs to struggle for it" (216), and "absoluteness of the concepts of good and evil" (221) are all theological elements of Old Belief that make it subject to frequent schism (and criticisms of sectarianism). In other words, Old

Believers' propensity for subdivision and need to simultaneously reaffirm the boundaries of co-religiosity, dogma, and relationship to 'the world' is theological rather than socially circumstantial.

> In short, the Trans-Baikal Old Believers never merged into a single hierarchy with a unified practice. From the eighteenth century up to the present, they have endlessly played out the potentiality of the situation, splintering by choice, and creating new groups ("sects" *tolk* and "concordances" *soglasiye*). Their capacity for division was at the heart of social practice, such that there was no Old Believer village in Trans-Baikalia that did not contain several sects (Vasil'yeva 2009:60–64). New groups were created by charismatic pastors, each convinced that current society had "fallen away" from the ideal and that their own version of the rites was the most worthy way of serving God. (Humphrey 2014, 220)

They must continuously adapt to new contexts and challenges, which recurrently fuels a propensity to faction, but their desire to seek unworldly wooden sanctuaries, to aim for an ascetic life of the Spirit, to be constantly impelled by transcendental motivations is inherent to their faith. Social contexts may explain "why now?" of schisms, but they do not explain "why?" For those answers we must turn to ORRO theology.

I wish to amend the characterization of ORRO as a sectarian, "schism breeds schism," (and related correlation to charismatic forms of leadership theorized as less stable than priestly forms, Wilson 1971, 11) conceptualization of the Church. Old Believers would not describe their ecclesiology in such a manner (in fact, it is an insult to do so; pers. comm.) and this perspective ignores the many ecumenical relationships and unifications forged between Old Believer groups in the past. The terms 'sect' and 'schism-ers' (raskol'niki) are offensive to Old Believers for several reasons: 1] Conviction that salvation comes through the Church and its rites, which pass along the grace of God here on earth. This is why anathemas are not only a socio-ritual exclusion from practice, but a curse and condemnation; 2] The historical fact that they were not the ones who altered the Church, and their excommunication forced their supposed sectarianism; 3] They never abandoned their desire for an ecumenical, institutional hierarchy; and 4] To break Christian unity, without being compelled and obliged to remove oneself from heretics a condemnable offense (AC 31) against the divine love and grace binds local congregations into a global enclave of the 'Bride of Christ' (Eph 5:25-7; Rev 19, 21). The Apostle Paul preached for the oneness of the earliest Christian communities united under the Spirit and condemned dissension (Eph 6; 2 Cor 12).

The Holy Spirit and theological conceptualizations of love that inspired the early writing of

Hegel ([1797-8] 1948)[379] and Peirce ([1893] 1992, 353-371) alike are critical (and divine) components of ecclesiology and Christian group-making that warrant further anthropological study. The influential scholar of sectarianism, Richard Niebuhr, described schism as a failure of Christian ethics, which are founded on a unity of love ([1929] 1954, 4-6; also, Rochford Jr. 1989, 175). Failure does not negate principle; it rather proves the opposite. An action or non-action is generally considered 'wrong' and a failure if it does not meet a certain ethical standard. But schism would be a necessary evil if it were to prevent other failures such as heresy. Other times, a schism or conflict occurs not because of dogmatic differences or how essential matters of a group's faith are understood, but due to incompatible visions of how to keep continuity with the unchangeable. For example, in the dispute in Erie over the shift to English services both sides agreed that maintaining Old Rite prayer was essential (5.1.1.), they disagreed over how best to do so.

Representatives in Constantinople promoting the adoption of the Gregorian calendar saw the shift as a "...voluntary rapprochement between the two Christian words, the East and the West, devoid of coercion, in the celebration of the Great Christian Feasts."[380] On the other hand, in the opinion of Archbishop Gregory and other resolute Old Calendarists the Greek Orthodox Church committed a "violation of unity," a "sin against Orthodoxy," and an "uncanonical" "betrayal of Orthodoxy" (1983] 2006, 21-22). He argued that false ecumenism (i.e., co-religiosity with heretics) is also a heresy that leads the institutional Church to lose canonicity and individuals to lose grace:

> Ecumenism is the mother of all heresies, which seeks to unite within itself all heresies, all religions, under the auspices of so-called "love", overlooking their doctrinal errors. It rejects the Orthodox Creed, which professes One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, by confessing a new creed, which accepts all religions, all creeds, all ideas, all gods, as leading to salvation...to those who knowingly have communion with these aforementioned heretics or who advocate, disseminate, or defend their new heresy of ecumenism under the pretext of brotherly love or the supposed unification of separated Christians, ANATHEMA. [Anathema means a complete cutting off from God and separation from the Church and consignment to the devil.][381]

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[379] In Knox' editorial notes on Hegel's *Love* (fragments), summarizes his argument that Christianity adapted Judaic perceptions of the relationship between God the master and the world the servant, and "only in Christ's religion of love is the relation truly conceived as a union in love" (Knox 304n5).

[380] Quoted in Gregory ([1983] 2006), 21), he gives no citation.

[381] Archbishop Gregory 2005 https://www.trueorthodoxy.org/polemics/heretics_world_orthodoxy.shtml

Fortunately, warring hierarchs do not have the final say on what may be a salvation deal-breaker (Eph 2:8-9; 2 Cor 12:9), but heresy is an incontrovertible co-religiosity deal-breaker for priested and priestless alike.

There is a school of Orthodox theological thought (i.e., eucharistic ecclesiology) concerning the role of the Eucharist in the ecclesiological construction of individual's belonging to the universal Church that is sadly beyond the scope of this work but central to the Erie and Nikolaevsk popovtsy's desire to unify with an established hierarchy (Zizioulas 1985, Ware 2011). The anthropology of Christianity can engage in theological discussions with eucharistic ecclesiology by observing the ways in which social dualities of belonging/not-belonging (external othering) and state of grace/out of grace (internal othering) is marked by participation. Who did not line up for Communion, and why? What about those who ate breakfast before the liturgy or had sex after vespers? Who smoked cigarettes, cut their hair (women), shaved (men), or coveted their neighbor's wife since their last confession? The priestless and priested alike exclude those who do not dogmatically or morally (as perceived by religious leader or congregation) conform to the standards set for unity and/or common worship with a given religious body. The bezpopovtsy could argue that the popovtsy are equally exclusionary (and perhaps as prone to schism); they too are a visible 'ecclesia pura' that excludes those of other confessions and those not 'spiritually prepared' to commune. Furthermore, not all Orthodox Churches (for example, the Greek and the Russian and Old and New Calendarist Churches of several nations, 7.2.2.) are in communion with one another (RSG 8, November 10, 1982, 3; Kormina and Naumescu 2020).

Seidler and Meyer (1989) proposed that ecumenism, councils, and an embrace of diversity within the Church can be perceived as an "adaptive mechanism" to account for the problems and changing ideologies of "modern life" and a strategy to survive the increasing diversity of social worlds the nimirskie must live within (but not of) (12-21). Schism is socially tragic, but perhaps a similarly useful adaptive mechanism. I am wary to call it a failure of Christian purpose, as St. Paul (e.g., Eph 6) or Niebuhr ([1929] 1954, 4-6) have done. As Fr. Smolakov once explained about the Great Schism (1054), rupture may serve continuity; a schism may save the Church.

> It is very important to all of us to know this development in the Church history, which put an end to the One Faith and One Baptism's doctrine of St. Paul [Eph 4:1-6]. And the most sacred duty of ours is to keep our unchanged Old Orthodox faith, the true heir of the Christ's original faith, established not by men, but by God; the faith which cannot be altered to the convenience of men; the faith which is hard to keep, but which crowns its faithful keepers with ever-lasting

> life and joy for all their hardships and burdens endured in this temporary life. (SSW#257, November 19, 1961)

For many Old Believers, living Christianity is a constant selection process between hell and a hard place. And it is not supposed to be easy. But this is not a point of view all Christians share. Schism may create greater unity by reformulating a local church congregation better united in its mission and able to find internal consensus, and more harmonious in its selectively modernity and conceptualization of how to live as good Christians today.

Recently (June 13, 2021), I had the chance to visit Erie, where I caught a very timely sermon. After years of writing about schism, and even more years reading about pollution laws as forms of socio-ritual boundaries and survival mechanisms, I had shifted my focus to grace. It was the Sunday before Pentecost, the last Sunday of Paschal season and the women still wore white scarves and many men had on white rubashkas. This date in the liturgical calendar also happens to be the "Sunday of the 318 Holy and God-Bearing Fathers" (GC 231-240) that commemorates the First Ecumenical Council at Nicaea (325). Fr. Simon's sermon spoke on the history of the Church, the Creed, the expulsion of Arius, and the importance of conciliarity. All this felt reassuring at the time that I had not completely overshot the mark. But above all, he stressed his desire that his congregants keep their states of grace and not let their souls purified from Lenten prayerful conscientiousness, like their white robes bright with Paschal joy and spiritual commitment, become sullied as they return to the grimy realities of day-to-day life. And after all I had written on schism, and how schism draws lines of belonging between the presumably "Orthodox and saved" and the Others, and I was again reminded of the universality that unites Christians of many mansions. Or in theologian John Meyendorff's words, that commonality which "makes one a Christian"—the belief in salvation (1996, 4).

For many of the schisms and microschisms discussed above, the question of who may hope to gain salvation is as often a like of division as it is of union between ORRO groups. But accusations of heresy aside, many with whom I spoke were not so quick to equate heresy, and broken communion, with damnation. Years earlier, Fr. Simon explained the difference between the schism of Churches and the potential eternal consequences of dogmatic divergence (a point on which he found himself in disagreement with the BK in Oregon, 4.1.) .

> When heresy is introduced, when teaching that are outside of the dogma of the Church, that there is a break and you are not a member of the 'One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.' I would say to you that those who have teachings in the[ir] Church that do not coincide with the historical universal teachings of the Church are outside the Church. I think fundamentalists

> are *outside* of the Church. I think that Episcopalians are *outside* of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. I think that the Roman Catholics are *outside* of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. However, that doesn't mean, and I would *never* say that it means, they are not going to go to heaven, that they're going to go to hell. I would never say that, and I wouldn't want it. Any Christian who *wants* anyone to go to hell, even Hitler, how can you say that you want someone to go to hell? So, I would never make that guess and say whether they have grace. I would say they are outside of the Church, and if they're not part of the Church as we know the Church to be, then we're not in communion. That's what the Church always did. It broke off communion. It doesn't come along and say the Catholics are all going to hell. It's saying, 'you've introduced some teachings outside of the Church.' (Jan 2, 2013)

As Keane (2007) suggested, it may be theoretically useful to dichotomize heaven and hell, priestly and charismatic powers, and the co-religious and non-co-religious, but can there ever be Others when there is always a possibility that one may be saved (285-6)? The universal union is in the future, the hereafter, the celestial, and it is not determined by human hierarchs or believers.

I am resistant to end this account so crudely, or to reduce Christianity to individuals' efforts to gain everlasting salvation. It is not possible for me to systematically analyze people's daily thought processes or the intentionality of their actions. I do not have the Book of Life's tally of deeds. Instead, I attempted to analyze how two American Old Believer congregations split over dogmatic issues, the legitimization of divergent paths of Orthodox continuity, and yes, their fundamental hope for saving grace. Beyond the question of which world (sacred or profane) or timeline (modern now or authentic then) one chooses to live in, the articulated realization in times of schism is the fact that one is, in fact, attempting to inhabit both. The shifts in categorial division between overlapping saved and doomed, clean and unclean, orthodox and heretical, good and evil, dichotomies and in-group particularities of practice reveal the tensions of the in-between; schisms are the clarification process. The process may be necessary for people to find ways to live and worship as one, but I was told that the mystery of the Church is less trivial.

Once, I mistakenly referred to a regular congregant's husband (who does not attend) as 'Catholic' rather than Roman Catholic to Fr. Larry and our conversation took an immediate turn (they often took many turns). He repeated a lesson he preached on before, 'to be Catholic just means living the Golden Rule. Everyone is wrong to make other names. We're all just Catholic/Christian. It's lived. When you leave this life and pass on to the Lord you will stand for your judgment before Jesus Christ. And that is the one thing they [the Trinity] will care about and that they will ask about—did you live the Golden Rule? When we go to receive our crowns, this is

what will be asked' (FL, pers. comm., March 31, 2013). There is always hope, in the words I heard repeated many, many times each service, *Hospode, pomelooy*, Lord, have mercy.

Appendix 1
Interview Guides

Erie Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Basic Demographics:

Full name: Baptismal and Birth certificate differ?

Date and Place of Birth:

If married, what is your spouse's name?

If married female, what was your maiden name?

If Children, what are their names and ages?

Do your children live in this area? If one(s) have moved, where to and why?

Have any converted to another faith? Have their spouses converted to the Old Rite to be married in the church?

Have your grandchildren been baptized in the church?

What is/was your profession? Where do you work and for how long have you worked there?

Family Locations:
How long have you lived in the Erie area?

If born here: Were your parents born in Erie? If not, where?

Have you ever lived elsewhere?

If not born here: When did you move to Erie?

What was your/your parents' motivation to move here? Or if grandparents, why do you think they chose Erie?

Did they visit before moving here? Or did they have family that lived here before them?

Do you know where your mother's family came from overseas?

What was your mother's maiden name?

Do you know where your father's family came from overseas? Where?

What other family members do you have in this area?

Do you have siblings that moved away, if so, where?

What about other family members, cousins etc. have many stayed in this area? Do you see/talk to/keep up with many of them?

Do any of your family members belong to the church in Millville, NJ or Marianna?

Have you done much traveling? To visit family or otherwise? Where have you gone?

Family History/growing up:
Can you tell me a little about growing up in the church? Like were your parents very strict about attending all the services and fasts?

Did you grow up speaking Russian in your home or English?

Did you participate in Jeff Holdeman's study?

What do you think the hardest part about belonging to an Orthodox church is for a kid?

What was the best thing about growing up in a big church community like yours?

My original interview guide had a lot of questions about school, as going to school with Americans who don't understand Orthodox holidays, or fasting, or other restrictions has been an issue for the Old Believers out west, did you have any issues growing up as an Old Believer in the American school system?

Any prejudice about being "Russian"?

How did your school deal with Orthodox children needing to be absent on Holy Days?

Were any kids homeschooled when you were growing up?

As a teenager, were your parents open to you dating non-Old Believers?

Did you have a TV in your house growing up? Or, were there any things like tv, music or movies that your parents didn't let you listen to or watch?

Did they have any prohibitions against tobacco or coffee, or anything else you remember being off-limits or poganyi?

Did you go to Sunday School or Russian School?

When was it held?

For what ages did you go?

What did you learn there?

Who taught the class?

Who taught you Slavonic?

Spousal Information:
How old were you when you were married?
How old was your husband?

What does/did your spouse do for a living?

Is your spouse from the Erie area? If not, where from?

How did you meet your spouse?

How long did you know him/her before you were married?

If knew from community, how long did you date before married?

If not from the community, how did your parents feel about you marrying a non-Old Believer?

If your spouse had to convert, can you explain that process to me?

Split/Church History:

I'm very curious to learn about the split, from both points of view...what can you tell me about it or what do you really want to make sure I understand about what happened in the early 80's?

~Were you attending church regularly at this time?

If I understand correctly, the switch to the use of English occurred before the switch to priesthood, can you explain this process to me?

Did you reject or argue against the use of English at that time?

Can you explain why it's so necessary to keep the use of Slavonic?

Bezpopovtsy: Has Father Larry or someone else run Slavonic or other Sunday School classes for children and members of the Holy Trinity? When do you think the last one was?
Popovtsy: I know the choir has been learning some Slavonic, and the notetaking to maintain the znemany chants, do you remember any other Slavonic classes since priesthood was restored?

I have a list of those who participated in the study group, are any of them your family members?

Do any of them, or their children, attend your church?

Were your parents still alive at this time? If so, how did they react, if not, how do you think they would have reacted?

Do you have any family members that attend the **popovtsy/bezpopovtsy** church?

Are you still in touch with them?

Are you friendly with anyone from the **Front Street/3rd Street** church?

Bezpopovtsy: Can you explain your own choice to remain bezpopovtsy?
Is there something about the change that upset you the most, whether the connection with ROCOR or believing that the priesthood was lost irrevocably?
Popovtsy: Can you explain your own choice to become popovtsy?
What were your thoughts and feelings on ROCOR's reunification with the MP?
Is there anything you miss about the way services used to be done?

Besides having priests, and the use of English, what do you think are the biggest differences between the two churches?

You know of the Old Believers in Oregon and Alaska? Have you ever visited?
Has anyone considered looking west for a new nastavnik?

I am curious about the notion of grace, or who has salvation. Do you think Christians that practice differently, not just the priested church on **Front/3rd Street,** but Protestants and Roman Catholics, will be saved?

Convert Interview Guide

Converted to Marry

How old were you when you converted?

Did you attend a catechism class? Please explain (how long, who taught, what it focused on)

Were you raised in a particular denomination? Which?

If no, how did you spiritually identify yourself at that time?

Did you attend another church regularly prior to conversion? If not, did you attend regularly with your parents?

At the time of your conversion, did you feel there was something lacking in your former church/faith/congregational life?

How much would you say you knew about Eastern Orthodoxy, Russian or otherwise, prior to meeting your spouse?

How would you explain your adjustment process to the new church? Was it hard to understand services? Whether felt welcomed? Miss things about previous spiritual life/community?

How would you describe your present participation in the church?

Was conversion presented to you as a requirement to marry? (By spouse or spouses' parents?)

Converted Independently

How old were you when you converted to Orthodoxy?

Were you married at the time? Did your spouse also convert?

How long after first becoming acquainted with Russian Orthodoxy did you convert?

Did you attend a catechism class? Please explain (how long, who taught, what it focused on)

Can you explain how you were first introduced to Russian Orthodoxy? If already generally aware of Eastern Orthodoxy, what drew you to explore it more?

Were you raised in a particular denomination? Which?

If no, how did you spiritually identify yourself at that time?

Did you attend another church regularly prior to conversion? If not, did you attend regularly with your parents?

At the time of your conversion, did you feel there was something lacking in your former church/faith/congregational life?

What specifically drew you to the Old Rite form of Russian Orthodoxy?

How would you explain your adjustment process to the new church? Was it hard to understand services? Whether felt welcomed? Miss things about previous spiritual life/community?

Appendix 2
Fr. Smolakov's "Sunday School Weeklies" (*SSW*)

YEAR	ISSUE #, DATE	ISSUE #, DATE	ISSUE#, DATE	ISSUE #, DATE	ISSUE #, DATE
1955 JULY-DEC.	#5 July 31	#6 Aug. 14	#10 Sept. 18	#12 Oct. 16	#15 Nov. 06
1956	#17 Jan. 07	#24 March 11	#37 July 15	#38 Aug. 05	#56 Dec. 09
1957	#63 Jan. 27	#73 April 07	#82 June 16	#94 Sept. 29	#101 Nov. 24
1958	#107 Jan. 05	#116 March 23	#121 April 27	#124 July 06	#144 Dec. 07
1959	#150 Jan. 18	#153 Feb. 08	#174 July 05	#190 Nov. 29	#192 Dec. 13
1960	#196 Jan. 07	#206 Sept. 25	#211 Nov. 06	#212 Nov. 13	#214 Nov. 27
1961	#235 April 23	#237 May 07	#244 July 09	#255 Oct. 29	#256 Nov. 12
1962	#263 Jan. 07	#280 June 24	#284 Aug. 05	#289 Sept. 23	#292 Oct. 14
1963	#309 May 12	#311 May 26	#315 July 14	#322 Sept. 22	#328 Nov. 17
1964	#349 May 17	#354 July 05	#356 Aug. 02	#366 Dec. 06	#370 Dec. 31
1965	#377 Feb. 21	#381 March 21	#400 Oct. 10	#402 Oct. 31	#406 Dec. 12
1966	#412 Feb. 06	#416 March 13	#425 May 15	#426 May 22	#436 Aug. 28
1967	#481 Aug. 13	#485 Sept. 17	#489 Oct. 15	#491 Oct. 29	#492 Nov. 05
1968	#505 Feb. 11	#508 March 03	#511 March 24	#537 Oct. 06	#545 Dec. 01
1969	#552 Jan. 19	#563 Apr. 06	#576 July 20	#578 Aug. 03	#598 Dec. 28
1970	#608 March 08	#620 May 31	#627 July 26	#632 Sept. 06	#642 Nov. 22
1971	#655 Feb. 21	#669 June 06	#672 June 27	#682 Sept. 05	#686 Oct. 10
1972	#713 Apr. 16	#719 May 28	#728 Aug. 13	#733 Oct. 08	#735 Oct. 22
1973 JAN.-JUNE	#748 March 11	#753 Apr. 15	#756 May 06	#757 May 13	#760 June 03

Notes on selection:
1. Using, random.org/integers, I typed issue range for year (e.g., 1957 issues 60-106) and generate 5 random numbers.
2. Hit search again if 5 selected integers came up with two of the same number.
3. If random number selected an issue missing from my records, I would select the next issue. For example, if missing issue selected issue 16, I would use issue 17. This occurred 9 times.
4. In this same example, if issue 17 already selected as a random integer or also missing, I selected the issue before the originally given integer, 15. In the two cases where I could not use the following issue, the previous one was also missing or already selected. In these cases, I took the closest issue I have to that originally randomly selected. This happened twice (for 1966 used issue 425 for chosen 427 and for 1968 used issue 508 for chosen 510).

Number of discrete SSW issues in any given subject listed in parentheses.

A. Material Culture (0)
- A1 Beards (1)
- A2 Dress (2)
- A3 Female Specific (1)

B. Rites/Practice (36)
- B1 2/3 (0)
- B2 Cross (6)
- B3 Icons (11)
- B4 Against New (1)
- B5. Stress proper manner, must be done right, rite instruction (1)
- B6. Lent/fasting (38)
- B7. Moral Acts, good deeds, charity (43)

C. OCS/English Issue (6)
- C1. Contains Slavonic (42)

D. Dualism (26)
- D1. Good/Evil, God/Satan (19)
- D2. Clean/Dirty (24)
- D3. World/ Eternal, God (34)

E. Having Grace/ Salvation (57)
- E1. Having (1)
- E2. Lacking (0)
- E3. Judgment (52)

F. Forefathers/Previous Old Believers (0)
- F1 Their Salvation (0)
- F2 Persecution (3)
- F3 Migrations (0)

G. Priesthood (0)

G1 Gone/lost (1)
G2 Potential reconciliation (0)
G3 ROC (0)
G4 BK (0)

H. Politics (7)
H1 Past (15)
H2 More recent in Europe (2)
H3 American (2)

I. Schism (0)
I1 Great Schism (2)
I2 1667 (3)
I3 Within ORRO (0)

J. External threats and temptations (15)
J1 Exogamy (2)
J2. Satan (21)

K. Internal Problems (0)
K1 Divides, disputes, disunity (1)
K2 Low attendance (9)
K3 Apathy, people not caring, low interest (4)
K4 Losing children (12)

L. Unity (6)
L1 Sobornost'/ideal (0)
L2 Councils (23)

M. Time (9)
M1 Julian/Gregorian, calendar issues (7)
M2 Saint/holiday specific (72)
M3 "Modern" (9)
M4 Golden past, pre-Petrine (1)
M5 Eschatology (17)
M6 Time for God vs. Taken from God (9)

N. From Books (1)
N1 Canon (3)
N2 Scripture, general (3)
Old Testament (54)
New Testament (37)
Gospel (70)
N3 History (5)
N4 Song (23)
N5 Other (39)

O. God's active role in lives (12)
    O1. Miracles (48)
    O2. Angels (35)
    O3. Saints as God's workers, God's aims in action (5)
    O4. God's Love (10)

P. Social News (6)
    P1. Birthdays (0)
    P2. Deaths (12)
    P3. Ladies or men's group (7)
    P4. Events (10)
    P5. Service, confession times (49)

Q. Oral histories, folk stories and proverbs (16)

Appendix 3
Table of U.S. Pomortsy Conference Question Issues (1955-1966)

Issue	Category in Fr. Smolakov's "General Index"[1]	Number of Conference Question Reference Points[2]	Total
Practices (Sacraments)	➢ Baptism ➢ Confession ➢ Communion ➢ Funerals ➢ Marriage ➢ Memorial Services ➢ Sacraments ➢ Weddings	2 11 2 8 3 6 2 4	38
Co-religiosity and "Outsiders"	➢ Avvakum ➢ Conferences ➢ Converts ➢ Directory of Churches ➢ Fornicators ➢ Idle & Straying Christians ➢ Old Believers ➢ Outsiders ➢ Pomortsi ➢ Religion [other books?] ➢ Sunday School [attend others?] ➢ Transfer of the Parishioners ➢ Word of God [other books?] ➢ Universal Council	1 4 3 1 1 1 3 10 1 1 1 1 1 1	30
Care and Treatment of Body	➢ Autopsies ➢ Bath ➢ Beard ➢ Clothing ➢ Rings (Jewelry) ➢ Shaving	1 1 1 4 3 12	22

Issue	Category in Fr. Smolakov's "General Index"[1]	Number of Conference Question Reference Points[2]	Total
Practices (Other)	➢ Circumcision ➢ Day [time fasts begin] ➢ Food[3] ➢ Kneeling ➢ Lents ➢ Prayer & Praying ➢ Sign of the Cross ➢ Singing, Church ➢ Standing in the Church	1 1 2 1 5 5 [3 on English] 1 2 2	20
Materials Items of Worship	➢ Candles ➢ Cross ➢ Icons ➢ *Kadello* (censer) ➢ *Kooteeya* (honeyed grain at memorials) ➢ Rosary	3 6 2 5 1 1	18
Hierarchy and Church Social Orders	➢ Black Sprits (priest's clothing) ➢ Elders Committee ➢ Laymen ➢ Monks ➢ Priests ➢ Women Readers	1 2 1 1 9 1	15
Home and Daily Life	➢ Children ➢ Divorces ➢ Dogs ➢ Godparents ➢ Obscene Words ➢ Smoking	2 1 1 2 2 2	10

Issue	Category in Fr. Smolakov's "General Index"[1]	Number of Conference Question Reference Points[2]	Total
Specific Prayers and Holy Days	➢ Anniversary [church] ➢ Beginning Prayer ➢ Beheading St. John ➢ Holidays ➢ Remission Prayer	1 1 1 1 4	8
Meanings/Interpretations[4]	➢ Barren Women ➢ Domes (Cupolas) ➢ Jesus Christ ➢ Name of our Religion ➢ One Thing Needed (Gospel story)	1 1 2 1 1	7
Confronting Change	➢ Church Services [language and timing] ➢ Scholarships [to promote religious education] ➢ Translation	3 1 3	7
Other	➢ Accommodation [of priests at conferences] ➢ Dues, Church ➢ History of the Old Orthodox Church ➢ Loudspeak[ers] ➢ Meals in the Church ➢ Space Flights	1 1 1 1 3 1	8

Notes: [1]To minimize confusion over topical overlap within any given Issue (column 1), and to prevent researcher bias, each category (column 2) is labeled exactly how it is in Fr. Smolakov's "General Index" to his *Review of the Twelve Annual [Pomortsy] Conferences.* Fr. Smolakov's categories were treated as discrete units, and the questions listed under each were not subdivided or counted under multiple "Issues." For example, under the "Children" category, Fr. Smolakov enumerated two questions: "1. Teaching of God's laws to the children, 2. Taking to an outsiders' Sunday School." I did not add the second question or its reference point to my "Co-religiosity and

Outsiders" Issue, despite its overlap with similar questions in Fr. Smolakov's "Outsiders" and "Sunday School" categories. For clarification and to note places of significant overlap, as in the case of questions of English use, my notes are bracketed. [2] Fr. Smolakov enumerated questions within each category, some of which had more than one conference question reference point (e.g., 7-9th indicates the seventh question of the 9th Annual Conference). I counted each distinct conference question reference point within Fr. Smolakov's categories to prevent overcounting questions in cases where a conference question reference point was given more than once in any given category, and to account for multiple reference points given for particular questions. For example, Fr. Smolakov's "Confession" category had ten questions and eleven distinct reference points, I recorded eleven the above table. [3] "Food" category placed in Practices, rather than in Home and Daily Life, because the questions pertain to blessing of food in churches at Easter, and prohibited foods. [4] I am wary of replicating a false dichotomy between practices and meaning, or rites and beliefs, in my categorizations. Many questions within other categories make use of terms "meaning" or "why," for example "Rosary" category question within the "Material items of worship" Issue asks about the "use and meaning of the Rosary" and the "Beheading of St. John the Baptist" category within the "Specific Prayers and Holy Days" Issue asks, "The meaning of the holiday." The categories placed in this Issue do not neatly fall into other categories.

Conference Years:
First 1953; Second 1954; Third 1955; Fourth 1956; Fifth 1957; Six 1958; Seventh 1959; Eighth 1960; Nineth 1961; Tenth 1963; Eleventh 1965; Twelfth 1966

Appendix 4
Common Prayers

Prayer to Jesus ("Jesus Prayer" of Hesychasm):

Should be said after Beginning Prayers, when praying at home. See Pokrovsky (2001, 18) for discussion of the prayer and its place in Hesychasm and *The Way of a Pilgrim.*

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me, the sinner (Smolakov n.d., 37).

Psalm 50 ('Eastern', use of Greek Septuagint translation of OT)/51 ('Western', use of Hebrew):

Believed composed by King David, after he was confronted by the prophet Nathan about his affair with Bathsheba and the death of her husband, Uriah, as "...a reminder that all humans, even the most revered, must ask God for forgiveness" (*NOAB* 815-6).

Recited in Morning and Evening Prayers, Matins, and the Third Hour (*OOBP* 2001, 4-5, 25-26, 64-5, 79-80)

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy; and according to the multitude of Thy compassions blot out my transgression. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know mine iniquity, and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee only have I sinned and done this evil before Thee, that Thou mightiest be justified in Thy words, and prevail when Thou art judged. For behold, I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins did my mother bear me. For behold, Thou hast loved truth; the hidden and secret things of Thy wisdom hast Thou made manifest unto me. Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be made clean; Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow. Thou shalt make me to hear joy and gladness; the bones that be humbled, they shall rejoice. Turn Thy face away from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and with Thy governing Spirit establish me. I shall teach transgressors Thy ways, and the ungodly shall turn back unto Thee. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation; my tongue shall rejoice in Thy righteousness. O Lord, Thou shalt open my lips, and my mouth shall declare Thy praise. For if Thou hadst desired sacrifice, I had given it; with

whole-burnt offerings Thou shalt not be pleased. A sacrifice unto God is a broken spirit; a heart that is broken and humbled God will not despise. Do good, O Lord, in Thy good pleasure unto Sion, and let the walls of Jerusalem be builded. Then shalt Thou be pleased with a sacrifice of righteousness, with oblation and whole-burnt offerings. Then shall they offer a bullock upon Thine altar. (KJV)

Proschaneeye:

Start of "Entrance Bows" in Morning Prayers: "*God be merciful to me a sinner. Bow. Thou has created me; Lord, have mercy on me. Bow. I have sinned immeasurably; Lord, forgive me. Some say: have mercy and forgive me a sinner. Bow*" (OOPB 1)

As written in Nikolaevsk, popovtsy *Old Believers Prayer Book:* "*God be merciful to me a sinner. Cross and bow to waist. Thou hast created me; Lord, have mercy on me. Cross and bow to the waist. I have sinned immeasurably; Lord, have mercy and forgive me a sinner. Cross and bow to waist.*" Also notes when bow should be to floor (Fefelov 2000, 1).

Fr. Smolakov explained an additional use of the Proschaneeye to offer up a "direct confession" (i.e., without a priest, nastavnik, starets, or even layperson of your faith present). "The Direct Confession. If you have a very important reason to have a confession immediately, and there is no priest, not any other person of your religion, then you many confess your sins directly to God, introducing your confession with the following prayers: God, be merciful to me, a sinner/ bow to the ground/ God, cleanse my sins, and have mercy on me/ low bow/ Thou hast created me, Lord, have mercy on me/ a low bow/ I have sinned very much, Lord, forgive me/ a low bow/ Lord, accept me, confessing to Thee, and have mercy on me/ a low bow, i. e. to the gr./" (Smolakov 1961 *Prayer book for Servicemen and Students*, 86-7). The direct confession was also discussed during the Pomortsy Conferences, "in case of emergency" (imminent death); this is called "The Hermit's Confession," the preamble of which is "Now I am confessing, Lord, not to man, but to Thee, Thyself, my Lord Jesus Christ. And these are my sins:..." (*PC* 8, 1960, Q5).

Conferences addressed this prayer five times: 1] On variation of bows during prayer (*PC* 2, 1954, Q3; *PC* 8, 1960, Q13); 2] On saying prayer in narthex (vestibule) (*PC* 12, 1966, Q1; *PC* 9,

1961, Q8); and 3] On its purpose: "The Remission Prayer represents a short confession of our daily sins, committed since the last Common prayer in the church. It is needed as our purification from the sins, before we join the Common prayer. Are supposed to pray Proschaneeye every time when we feel that we have violated the God's laws and the rules of the Church" (*PC* 3, 1955, Q4).

Said in vestibule because first it would interfere with service, and "...Also a thought of blame of the tardy may enter into the mind of the early comers. Therefore there is an old custom to pray the Remission Prayer in the anteroom. Another reason is that the newcomer has to cleanse himself by the Prayer before his entering into the main part of the church and joining the other praying people. This is also the main meaning of Proschaneeye" (*PC* 9, 1961, Q8).

More recently (CHT Newsletter, January/February 2012), the name of the prayer is spelled differently, but a similar explanation is given. "To proshchatsa is asking forgiveness for our 'Mirskiri' [worldly] living—in other words, the World's (mirskiri) unclean deeds. We do not have to proshchatsa before EVERY service. During Pas-ha [Easter] we do not proshchatsa. And if you attended the night before the next morning's services you can also abstain."

Appendix *5*
Questions Addressed During the Restoration Study Group

This is a list of the direct questions asked and answered during the Restoration Study Group meetings. There were undoubtedly many more interactive questions and debates left unrecorded.

RSG 6, October 20, 1982

Did the Old Believers still have bishops to consecrate other bishops after the schism?

RSG 7, October 27, 1982:
RSG 7 was entitled, "Questions and Answers" (Oct. 27, 1982), and the minutes resemble an FAQ list. The short preamble asks that the RSG group members continue to attend "...to fulfill our obligation to the rest of the congregation so we can answer their questions to the best of our abilities." The previous meeting (RSG 6, Oct. 20, 1982) was also entitled, "Questions and Answers," yet consists of Fr. Simon's summary of the history and ecclesiological narrative discussed in the first five meetings. The preamble states that: "The purpose of the committee from this point on is to get some questions of where we have been and to help clarify some of the issues we may not be too clear on. Once all the questions have been asked and answered, we as a committee, will have to formalize our position." It is unclear how many questions originated from the congregation at large.

1. What are the actual sacraments of the old rite as existed before the schism?
2. What would the old rite mean in terms of services?
3. Are lay people allowed into the sanctuary?
4. Would services be longer by re-establishing the entire old rite?
5. If we were to go back would we be becoming as the old ritualists originally were?
   Are the people in the Russian Orthodox Church abroad who are old ritualists doing these things now?
6. When were the books written that you refer to about the old rite and the services?
7. Were they usually verbatim or were they interpretations of the writers?
8. Are the books you are speaking of been the books we have used in the Church all these years?
9. If we decided to reunite with the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, would we be the only group of Old Believers that have become a part of the fullness of the Church?
   If we were, would we be changing from being what we are to being like they are now?
10. Who put out the decree? [referring to anathema reversal]
11. How important is the Eucharist and are all the sacraments really necessary?
12. Who made the distinction between life-necessary sacraments and those which are not?
13. Given the conditions of our church now, should we be studying this?
14. Do we have an obligation to our fore-fathers since the schism?
15. Is it ok to pray with popovtsy old believers and other Orthodox?
16. What are the differences between the Eastern and Western Rites?
17. Why have 300 years passed so far without a solution?

RSG 9, November 17, 1982
Fr. Yokoff presented his position opposing unification with ROCOR position, after which the RSG

(and presumably Fr. Simon) asked him 48 questions. The table below presents the main themes and number of individual questions asked on each, and the question number for correspondence with in text citations and to note topical overlaps.

TOPIC	NUMBER OF TIMES ADDRESSED	QUESTION NUMBERS
The heretical contamination of outsiders	20	Q: 3, 10, 14, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 47
Fr. Yokoff's Sources and Interpretations	19	Q: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 21, 25, 30, 31, 33, 34, 46, 47
Translating Church Slavonic	11	Q: 2, 8, 38, 40, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48
Change as heresy	8	Q: 11, 14, 26, 31, 40, 41, 42, 48
The nature of heresy	7	Q: 10, 11, 13, 14, 29, 30, 35
Loss of Church, apostolic succession and/or priests	7	Q: 3, 19, 20, 24, 25, 32, 36
Loss of Eucharist and other sacraments	6	Q: 3, 4, 9, 20, 31, 32
Anathema Reversals and Forgiveness	4	Q: 15, 16, 17, 18

Glossary

7 Ecumenical Councils: The councils preceding the Great Schism of 1054, which are accepted as canon by both Eastern and Western branches of Christianity.

1st First Council of Nicaea (325)
2nd First Council of Constantinople (381)
3rd First Council of Ephesus (431)
4th Chalcedon (451)
5th Second Council of Constantinople (553)
6th Third Council of Constantinople (680-1)
7th Second Council of Nicaea (787)

Terms:

A note on transliteration: As several footnotes throughout the dissertation indicate, there are multiple transliteration options for Old Believer groups and key terms. My choices were led first by local sources, and where these diverged (as they frequently do), for consistency with other forms (for example, 'tsy' over 'tsi' for plural subjective adjectives, or 'y' over 'i' for plural form).

Anathema: A curse and excommunication from the Church

Apostolic succession: This is the evangelical mandate which Jesus gave to the Apostle Peter and was passed through the Sacrament of Ordination to subsequent priests

Apostate: One has left the Church or renounced their faith; committed apostasy

Bania: Steam bath

Beglopopovtsy: Fugitive priested, those who accept converted New Rite priests

Beguny: Those without residences; runners, wanderers; often used interchangeably with 'Stranniki'

Bezbrachie/Bezbrachniki: celibacy/those who are celibate

Bezpopovtsy: Priestless Old Believers

Blagochestyi: Righteous, pious, devout

Blagovernyi: Right believing, right worshipping

Brakobory: Priestless groups who opposed marriage

Chasovennye: Beglopopovtsy group who became de facto priestless; groups in Western North America

Co-religious: "In communion" or "in fellowship," congregations and individuals who mutually agree to belong to same denomination or church based on shared rites and beliefs; those who can worship with one another

Economia: flexibility and leniency; from Greek *oikonomia*; pastoral economia refers to pastor/priest's discretion in attending to personal cases

Edinoverie: The "One Faith" Church, created in early 1800s to allow practice of Old Rite under auspices of Russian Orthodox Church

Edinovertsy: Those who belong to the Edinoverie "One Faith" Church

Edinoglassie: One voice, distinctive form of Old Rite chants; monophonic, all sing same part at once

Glas: Tone, or voice; there are eight major tones or keys of singing in Slavonic chanting

Harbintsy: Groups who fled eastern Siberia into Manchurian region of China, named for city Harbin

Heresy: Wrong teaching; the opposite of dogma; heterodoxy

Hesychasm: From Greek 'hesychia' for stillness; divine quietness; mystical practice of uninterrupted, contemplative prayer, often associated the "Jesus Prayer"

Ispravlennye: Corrected, as in corrected priests, who have converted from New to Old Rite

Kanoni: Canons, part of the Orthodox services and readings

Krestnoye zhamenie: Sign of the cross

Khristianiki: Christians

Krootki: Singing notations and accents on Church Slavonic chants

Microschism: Congregational divisions

Mirskie: Those if this world, the worldly

Molebin: A service of giving thanks, or supplicatory prayers, that can be done without priests that has been adapted by bezpopovtsy in addition to readings timed by liturgical calendar of holy days in lieu of full liturgy

Molenna: Chapel, where the priestless pray as 'church' is a (priested) consecrated building

Nastavnik(i): Teacher(s), bezpopovtsy pastor or reverend

Nimirskie: Those not of this world, the unworldly

Novozheny: Newly married; those married after the schism by fugitive priests, or later, by a priestless sacrament of marriage

Ortho: Right

Obmirshcheniye: Making worldly, secularization

Pamiats: Traditional knowledge passed down orally and by practice; memory

Paneheeda: Memorials prayers for the dead

Poganyi: Unclean

Podruchnik/i: Literally meaning "under hand," the podruchnik is a cloth placed on ground when one performs full prostrations. The intention is to keep the hand that makes the Sign of the Cross clean.

Poluraskolniki: Crypto-Old Believers, those who appeared to belong to mainstream ROC, but used Old Rite.

Pomieschanie: "Mixing up"; unnecessary or excessive contact with outsiders/non-co-religious; a punishable offense

Pomortsy: "From the Sea," the bezpopovtsy Old Believers who descended from dissenters in the White Sea region and Solovetsky Monastery, and later centered in the Baltic Sea region.

Popovtsy: Priested Old Believers

Pravoslavnye: orthodoxy, right faith and right praise or worship, a concept which combines dogma and practice

Prosphora: Loaves of bread from which the body of Christ will be selected for the Eucharist

Psalter: Book which contains the Psalms, devotional songs, and prayers specific to saints' and holy days dependent on liturgical calendar. Nikon's 1653 edition caused dissent.

Raskol'niki: Schism-ers, an insult; commonly used term for Old Believers in Russia until Edict of Toleration (1905)

Sarafan: Traditional dress worn by Old Believers in western North America; adapted from old 'peasant' dress; empire waist, to ankles, with long-sleeved blouse beneath

Sashmura: Brimless bonnet-like head scarf worn by married women in daily life; fuller scarves that drape over this and shoulders are worn to church

Sgovor: Betrothal, contract marriage; adapted by bezpopovtsy into marriage rite

Sinziantsy: Group which fled south central Russia or western Siberia into the north-western most province of China (Xinjiang)

Sluzhebnik: A Euchology, the text that details the ritual procedure of the liturgy services which contains the Sacrament of the Eucharist. Nikon's 1655 edition caused dissent

Sobor/y: Council/s

Sobornost': Conciliarity, togetherness, oneness of C/church body

Soglasiye: Concord; loosely centralized (or multiple centers) collectives of congregations in co-religious unison; a bezpopovtsy denomination for lack of better term.

Starets: (m) Spiritual father; startsy (pl)

Staritsa: (f) Spiritual mother

Staroobriad'tsi: Old Ritualists

Staroveri: Old Believers

Starozheny: Old married, those who were married before Patriarch Nikon's reforms.

Stranniki: Wanderers, fugitives

Svad'ba: Wedding celebration

Talichka: Dress adapted from sarafan, worn by those in Turkey, considered more informal and not worn to church/molenna

Turchane: Those who left present-day Romania and regions around Danube to settle in Turkey

Vechnia: Vespers

Venchanie: Church wedding ceremony, the rite

Vol'nost': Autonomy, freedom, liberty

References:

Acronyms:

AOB: Association of Old Believers

CHT: Church of Holy Trinity (Erie, bezpopovtsy)

CN: Church of the Nativity (Erie, popovtsy)

CNMB: Church of the Nativity Metrical Books

ED: Erie Directory

GC: Gospel Commentary

NOAB: New Oxford Annotated Bible

OOPB: Old Orthodox Prayer Book (Erie, popovtsy)

ORD: Oxford Russian Dictionary

NSBP: Nikolaevsk School Bilingual Program

SSW: Sunday School Weeklies (Erie)

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