

**OP# 276 Circuit Riders to the Slavs and Greeks: Missionary Priests
and the Establishment of the Russian Orthodox
Church in the American West, 1890-1910
by Brigit Farley**

In 1795, ten years before the Lewis and Clark expedition reached the Pacific, Russian Orthodox missionaries arrived on the territory of present-day Alaska. These religious pioneers left a legacy of Orthodox faith, as well as churches, chapels, schools, and hospitals across the western American hemisphere prior to the sale of the territory to the United States. By contrast, little is known about the church's activities in the lower forty-eight states and western Canada. The peripatetic missionaries who founded the first Orthodox parishes in Oregon, Washington, Montana, and Alberta, Canada, documented the church's progress in the American west. The written records they left, including reports to superiors, letters, ledgers, and diaries, provide a rare glimpse into the lives of Slavic and Greek Orthodox immigrants in the region. They also offer valuable insight into what the Russian church hoped to accomplish in its north American mission at the turn of the last century.

Foundations of the Western Mission, 1893-1905

Following the sale of Alaska to the United States in 1867, the Russian church moved its north American headquarters to San Francisco, where it was to remain until 1904. From there Russian Orthodoxy began a steady expansion north and east through the efforts of Fr. Sebastian Dabovich. Born Jovan (John) Dabovich in San Francisco to Serbian immigrants from Hercegovina, Fr. Dabovich was tonsured a monk in August 1892, thereby joining the "black clergy" of the Russian Orthodox church.¹ Shortly afterward, he set forth his objectives in a letter to Bishop Nicholas (Ziorov), the

primate of the North American and Aleutian diocese in the Russian Orthodox Church. After reporting the presence of some 1,500 Orthodox believers residing in California, Oregon, and the then-territory of Washington, Fr. Dabovich asked that he be assigned to minister to them. After his request was granted, Fr. Dabovich set out to visit these believers, eventually covering over 3,000 miles.² He found poor, alienated Slavic immigrants of many nationalities who had come under the influence of Protestant Evangelical churches, yet welcomed the chance to rejoin the church of their youth.³ In some locales lacking both churches and clergy, he met faithful Orthodox believers who told him that they feared losing their religion. The priest also found many Uniates, who belonged to a faith born of a 16th-century compromise between Orthodox clergy and their Catholic rulers in East Central Europe. While they called themselves Orthodox, the monk wrote, they had developed what he termed questionable practices resulting from their prolonged exposure to Uniate clergy and the Roman Catholic aspects of the Uniate faith. As the Uniate church was a major source of concern to the Orthodox church leadership, their missionaries in the new world were directed to convince this group to abandon their centuries-old heresy and return to their mother Orthodox church.

In the following year, 1893, Fr. Dabovich was hard at work establishing permanent places of worship for the believers he had met on his trip. In Oregon, he decided that Portland was the best site for a chapel.⁴ While he regretted that there were few Orthodox in the city itself, the location was ideal for believers living nearby.⁵ For ex-

ample, a contingent of Greek fishermen had settled along the Columbia river and in the port city of Astoria. Moreover, a wealthy Greek had indicated his willingness to donate a parcel of suitable land in a desirable part of Portland.⁶

The picture looked brighter in Seattle, where the construction of a small church was already underway in 1893.⁷ The Seattle church, which would be named for St. Spiridon, "promises to be the center of a lively parish," Fr. Dabovich noted.⁸ In part, this was due to the dedication and enthusiasm of a core group of parishioners, but the word "center" was equally important. Already the priest had discovered Orthodox people living in the surrounding communities of Tacoma, Gig Harbor, Carbondale, Wilkeson, and Victoria, British Columbia.⁹ There was potential for further growth in the city as well. "Upon the opening of the Trans-Siberian line," wrote a correspondent for the *Russian-American Orthodox Messenger* newspaper in 1897, "trade will continue to pass through San Francisco, but even more so through Seattle, so that there will be more Russian people there than anywhere else in America."¹⁰

Fr. Dabovich's efforts were crowned with success by the fall of 1895. August saw the completion of the Portland chapel, named for the Holy Trinity, and the Seattle church recorded its inaugural service on November 19.¹¹

Meanwhile, Fr. Dabovich had made contact with groups of Serbian Orthodox in California, the largest of which had settled in the northern California town of Jackson. These believers had already begun building a church of their own: the Church of St. Sava, named for the most famous of Serbian saints.¹² Fr. Dabovich had identified additional Serbian enclaves in Angel's Camp, Fresno, Visalia, and

Hanford, California, as well as Bisbee, Arizona, by 1895.¹³ The presiding bishop of the north American and Aleutian diocese, Nicholas (Ziorov), saluted the work of the Serbian-American missionary during a Serbian gathering in San Francisco in January 1894, declaring that Fr. Dabovich had done much to educate California Serbs about their church history and culture¹⁴ Fr. Dabovich had done so well among them, in fact, that in late 1896 he received permission to begin a special ministry among the Serbs in Russian Orthodoxy's western mission.

Following Fr. Dabovich's assignment to the Serbs, Frs. Amvrosii Vretta and a young reader from southern Russia, Vladimir Aleksandrov, began work at St. Spiridon's in Seattle.¹⁵ They would be instrumental in the expansion of Orthodoxy to the north and east. Acknowledging a growing Slavic presence in Montana, Fr. Vretta made the first-ever visit there by a Russian Orthodox priest in the spring of 1896.¹⁶ He began in Anaconda, where he administered the sacraments of marriage and chrismation to several Serbian Orthodox believers.¹⁷ The priest moved on to Butte, where he learned of an Orthodox miner named Mike Gamble, who wished to see a priest in order to receive Communion. Fr. Vretta finally located Gamble after a long climb up the side of a mountain, during which he had only the assistance of dogs and a sled for his baggage. After his meeting with the miner, he reported, he managed to convince two Uniates to accept union with the Orthodox church.¹⁸

Fr. Vretta made his way back to Seattle in mid-June 1896, stopping briefly in the small settlement of Wilkeson, where a group of Uniates had converted to form an Orthodox community in 1896 among the immigrant miners there.¹⁹ This conversion

led to occasional trouble between nearby Uniate clergy and the Wilkeson Orthodox believers.²⁰ At the conclusion of his account of the Montana trip, Fr. Vretta noted that his young assistant, Aleksandrov, was teaching singing and prayers to the children of St. Spiridon's parish.

Ordained a priest in 1898, Fr. Aleksandrov was himself quite busy in the mission. In 1901 he learned of new Slavic communities in the central Washington mining settlements of Roslyn and Cle Elum and visited parishioners there. The upper Kittitas valley had become a magnet for Slavic immigrants owing to the discovery of high quality coal and the planned construction of a railroad between Cle Elum and Roslyn.²¹ Often identified simply as "Austrians" in the census since they had arrived from the multinational Austro-Hungarian empire, these Slavs became an important source of unskilled labor in the area. In turn-of-the-century Roslyn, for example, Slavs numbered 210 out of a total population of 823 persons.²² The presence of this group guaranteed that the priests would be making regular visits there.

The Seattle missionaries marked an important milestone in the history of the mission when they brought Russian Orthodoxy to western Canada in 1898. During his 1892 visit to the Seattle area, Fr. Dabovich noted a contingent of Orthodox believers in Vancouver, British Columbia.²³ Meanwhile, a group of Ruthene Uniate immigrants farther northeast had written to the north American bishop, Nicholas (Ziorov), asking him to accept them into the Orthodox faith. Fr. Aleksandrov and a colleague at St. Spiridon's, Fr. Dmitrii Kamenev, accordingly made an exploratory visit to Alberta in September 1897.²⁴ The trip proved difficult, since the communities

where these immigrants had settled—Limestone Lake and Rabbit Hills—were difficult to reach from Edmonton, the largest city in the region. Large families were living in generally poor circumstances, although the priests reported optimism among the residents because land was cheap and plentiful.²⁵ The priests found considerable interest in the Orthodox church on their visits with families, so they promised another visit soon.

Fathers Aleksandrov and Kamenev made a memorable return journey to Canada in the spring of 1898.²⁶ Their first stop was New Westminster, British Columbia, where a contingent of Greek Orthodox believers had somehow learned of their plans and requested a visit. When the priests arrived, they discovered that they had to cross the Fraser river to reach the Greeks in question, where upon a Chinese boatman appeared and offered to ferry them across for two dollars. The three set off across the swift water and had nearly reached the shore when the small craft suddenly capsized in the wake of a passing steamship. The missionaries surfaced to discover that the water only reached their necks, so they gathered themselves and waded ashore. Chagrined at the loss of his boat downstream, the Chinese guide levied a two-dollar surcharge, declaring that if not for the priests, he would still have the craft. Amused at this bit of mercenary logic, Father Aleksandrov noted wryly, "I think he must be a Methodist."²⁷

Having met with the Greeks, the priests departed for Edmonton, the administrative center of the province of Alberta, Canada. Upon their arrival, they proceeded on horseback twenty miles farther south, to the small community of Rabbit Hills, where several Orthodox and Uniate families had settled. The priests gathered the believ-

ers for services on May 14; the next day, some 200 families converged from miles around to renounce the Uniate faith and reunite with Orthodoxy. Following a solemn ceremony of reunion, the priests headed northeast for the community of Limestone Lake.²⁸ There they observed a red-letter day, a first for Orthodoxy in Canada—the laying of the cornerstone for a parish church, to be named the Church of the Life-Giving Trinity.²⁹ Frs. Aleksandrov and Kamenev began the festivities with regular services, then oversaw the formal protocol for the laying of the cornerstone. At the moment the heavy stone was moved into place, all assembled could read the engraving: "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, this first Orthodox church in Canada, the Church of the Life-Giving Trinity, was founded in the summer of 1898, on the fourth of June, during the reign of Nicholas II, Tsar of all the Russias and Queen Alexandra Victoria of Great Britain."³⁰

The next spring, the Seattle missionaries made a return visit to the Canadian faithful. As on their previous foray into rugged territory, this trip had its moments of drama. At the outset, Fr. Aleksandrov and Fr. Kamenev had encountered delays from heavy rains that rendered their intended route impassable. During the second part of their journey, they found themselves obliged to drive a coach and pair themselves, over unfamiliar territory, because they could not afford the services of a coachman.³¹ On the way back to Edmonton sometime later, the missionaries experienced more hardship when their train suddenly derailed from a bridge and plunged into Black Mud creek. "A horrible catastrophe," Fr. Aleksandrov remembered. Many passengers suffered serious injuries,

including a carload of Galician immigrants, two of whom lost the use of their legs.³² The missionaries counted themselves fortunate to escape with bruises, their car having come to a teetering halt, suspended precariously between tracks and creek. Overcoming these obstacles, Frs. Aleksandrov and Kamenev had helped to establish Russian Orthodoxy in western Canada by 1899. A year later, in 1900, Limestone Lake parishioners welcomed Fr. Iakov Kochinskii, the first full-time priest assigned to the area.³³

About once a year, the missionaries visited Montana, where the Orthodox population was growing. At the time of his first visit, Fr. Aleksandrov wrote, he found 200 Serbs and a handful of Greeks in Butte, and 50 Serbs in Anaconda. By 1902, Butte had nearly 400 Serbs, 40 Greeks and not a few Ruthenes, while over 100 Serbs lived in Anaconda. In Butte, a Serbian Orthodox brotherhood had formed, and parishioners had acquired land for an Orthodox cemetery.³⁴ By 1906, they had constructed a church. On December 16, 1906, Bishop Nicholas's successor, Tikhon (Bellavin), consecrated Holy Trinity parish.³⁵ With the arrival of Fr. Jacob Odzic as Holy Trinity's first full-time priest, Orthodoxy had arrived in Montana, as it had already done in Oregon, Washington, California, and western Canada.

Fr. Michael Andreades and the Western Mission, 1905–06.

Despite the successes they had achieved at St. Spiridon's, both Fr. Aleksandrov and Fr. Vretta encountered personal problems that resulted in their departure from the Seattle mission in the first years of the 20th century.³⁶

Fr. Michael Andreades replaced them and began serving as pastor of St. Spiridon's in June 1905.³⁷ Fr. Andreades's tenure at St. Spiridon's

was eventful for many reasons, not least because he left behind fragments of a diary describing something of his routine in an ordinary year. Only scattered letters and official documents survive Frs. Dabovich, Vretta, and Aleksandrov, but they were able to demonstrate how the church was established in the west. Through his diary, Fr. Andreades takes readers beyond a narration of events. In notes recording part of his activities for a typical year, 1905-1906, he introduces the Russian church's objectives for its mission in America and gives vivid witness to the missionaries' attempts to meet them.

By the time Fr. Andreades arrived at St. Spiridon's in June 1905, that church had become a thriving, prosperous parish. In fact, the Russian church had designated it the headquarters of the Oregon/Washington/Montana mission. When he came to Seattle, therefore, Fr. Andreades became a circuit rider like his predecessors, charged primarily with bringing the church and its sacraments to the faithful wherever they lived.³⁸ This meant that he was responsible not only for regular services at St. Spiridon's, but also for pastoral visits to communities whose residents lived too far from Seattle to attend regular services there. As already noted, the communities of Aberdeen, Black Diamond, Renton, Carbondale, Gig Harbor, and Tacoma, Washington and Victoria, British Columbia, all had significant Orthodox populations in 1905. In addition, the Seattle priests served the Greek, Slavic, and Syrian parishioners at Holy Trinity Chapel in Portland. In 1905-06, Fr. Andreades was in Seattle on the first and third Sunday, while the second Sunday was dedicated to Wilkeson, Washington, which had parishioners and sufficient means to help finance a small church by 1902. Visits to Port-

land, Roslyn, and the other communities rounded out the schedule in the fourth week.

Wherever they went on their circuits, Fr. Andreades and his colleagues conducted Divine Liturgy, administered the sacraments, officiated at baptisms, weddings, and funerals, and performed other tasks as needed. Although they followed a regular schedule, the hours and routine were anything but predictable, as this excerpt makes clear.

October 23, 1905. Went to Wilkeson today. Almost all Orthodox families from the surrounding area attended service, at which my homily concerned finding God's blessing even in our most mundane daily activities. Immediately afterwards, I received word that I was needed in Gig Harbor to administer Holy Communion and hear the confession of a 70-year-old Croat from Hercegovina, who was dying. No trains run in Wilkeson on Sundays, so I decided to go to Tacoma on horseback and catch a motorboat from there to Gig Harbor. However, I found I couldn't afford the horse—they wanted \$20 for it—so I had to go on foot, through a dense wood in a driving rain, to Buckley, 6.5 miles away. During the walk, I slipped and fell in the mud twice, at one point tearing my cassock. Fortunately, one of the Orthodox families came to my rescue. They took me in, washed my clothes, mended my cassock, and fed me supper. I managed to get to Tacoma by train later that night, and from there I caught a boat to Gig Harbor, where I arrived precisely at midnight.

The sick man summoned me immediately to his bedside, where about thirty close family

members kept a vigil. I heard his confession and gave him Holy Communion, after which we spoke for a long while. He faced death bravely and with hope, as all good Christians must.

The old man is married to an Indian woman, whom Archimandrite Sebastian³⁹ baptized during his service in this mission. He has a large family; nearly thirty members were present. They are a very religious group. They live their faith and often come to Seattle for services. The old man is considered the founder of Gig Harbor and is well known among local residents. I returned to Seattle the next day, not feeling particularly well.⁴⁰

Fr. Andreades' accounts of circuit travel underscore an unusual charge the church had made to its American missionaries. In contrast to Protestant and Catholic missionaries in the northwest, Orthodox missionaries did not seek converts among non-Orthodox populations. This represented a departure from previous church policy in Alaska, where Russian Orthodoxy's north American headquarters was located in the 18th and 19th centuries. At that time, Russian missionaries divided their time between serving Russian colonists and proselytizing among the native Eskimos and Aleuts. A number of schools and churches survive as proof of these endeavors. After the U.S. purchase of the Alaska territory in 1867, however, the church moved to California and redefined its mission for the "lower forty-eight." From that time, Russian Orthodox missionaries concentrated their efforts on communities where Orthodox people had already settled. In 1896, church leaders declared this approach official in the pages of the church's journal, *Tserkovnyia Viedomosti*.⁴¹

Missionaries in the west followed this directive faithfully. On one of their trips to western Canada, Frs.

Aleksandrov and Kamenev blundered onto the territory of an Indian reservation and found themselves face to face with a group of curious tribal elders. Although they were cordially received, the priests' account of the incident makes no mention of attempts to interest the Indians in the Orthodox church. The Orthodox visitors proved far more interested in the inroads well-financed Jesuit and Dominican missionaries stood to make among Orthodox immigrants in the area.⁴²

Fr. Andreades took his predecessors' example to heart, as he demonstrated in a meeting with Orthodox immigrants in Victoria, British Columbia. In town for a baptism, the priest was surprised to encounter a group of Greeks who had no religious affiliation:

September 18, 1905. Today, I traveled to Victoria, British Columbia, for the baptism of three newborns. I conducted services in the home of Mr. Gungranis, who had constructed a small chapel for the occasion. He is quite religious, but there is another man in the household, a 70-year-old, who has no religion.

When I arrived there, I discovered that there were some Greeks living in the community who do not believe in anything and had never had their children baptized. I refer particularly to Mr. Bancroft, Mr. Vasilatos, and others. Imagine, Greek atheists! I never knew there could be such a thing. I called on all of them, and they received me pleasantly, but when I broached the subject of religion, they bristled and told me in no uncertain terms to cease and desist. Of course, I did not press the matter; I merely suggested

that they come to services, so that they could at least hear their native language and learn something of what was so important to their fathers and grandfathers. They promised they would come, and so they did. I conducted Sunday services in Greek at 10 am in the Gungranis household. After the Gospel, I said a few words. Some fifty people attended, including several Americans and one Creole woman. At the end of the service, I baptized the three newborns, sons of Messrs. Gungranis, Mitros, and Panagionas. That same day, I visited Mr. Vasilatos and urged him to give up the burden of sin he had been carrying and baptize his children. With the help of several parishioners, Messrs. Mitros, Gungranis, and others, we managed to prevail upon him and found some godparents for the baptism. That evening, the community gathered at the Vasilatos home and I baptized his three children (the oldest is six), taking care to explain the significance of the sacraments and the responsibilities of the godparents to the godchildren.

The Bancrofts, an uncle and his nephews, still refused my entreaties, but I hope to convince them that the children should be baptized by my next visit...⁴³

The priest was doubtless grateful for the chance to acquaint these Greeks with the faith of their forefathers and friends. But these meetings represented the limits of his efforts to proclaim the faith; he showed little evidence of contacts outside his regular circuit. In his correspondence as well as his diary, he indicates that his attention was focused on Orthodox believers already living in the northwest.

Church leaders did not specify the reasons for the missionaries' limited focus, but the great variety of nationalities within the Orthodox communities surely helps to account for it. By 1900, the Russian church had become a multinational institution in the United States. As noted, it had previously served Russian colonists and native peoples as a missionary church in Alaska. After transferring church headquarters to the United States, Russian Orthodox leaders found that their constituency was overwhelmingly non-Russian—Greeks, Serbs, Ruthenes, Poles, and Syrians. Although there existed autocephalous Greek, Serbian, and Syrian Orthodox churches in the 19th century, the Russian church was the only officially established Orthodox church in the United States at the turn of the century. Russian Orthodox missionaries thus found themselves in the anomalous position of serving Orthodox believers from nearly everywhere except Russia.

The church leadership in America attempted to accommodate large concentrations of national groups where it could. As a Serbian-American and founder of the first Serbian-majority parishes in the west, Fr. Sebastian Dabovich was summoned to Chicago in 1904 to head a new Serbian division within the Russian Orthodox church.⁴⁴ He joined forces in this new responsibility with Fr. Raphael Hawaweeny of Brooklyn, who had agreed to create a Russian Orthodox parish exclusively for the large Syrian Orthodox community on the east coast.⁴⁵ Elsewhere, parishes with a patchwork quilt of nationalities, such as St. Spiridon's in Seattle, coped as best they could with the help of the missionaries assigned to them.⁴⁶

Fr. Andreades proved better qualified than most for ministering to a multi-ethnic flock. Having grown up in

a Phanariot Greek family in Constantinople, he had left home to study for the priesthood in St. Petersburg. When he came to America, therefore, he spoke fluent Russian as well as Greek. He found this ability a great asset in his work around the northwest. At St. Spiridon's, he was able to convince alienated Greek parishioners to return to church thanks to his ability to conduct services in their language; his predecessor, Fr. Aleksandrov, had only a rudimentary knowledge of Greek. If he did not speak perfect Ruthene or Serbian, moreover, he could make himself understood to members of these groups since those languages have a common structure with Russian. When he visited Aberdeen, Washington, for a baptism, Fr. Andreades put his linguistic prowess to maximum advantage in his meetings with Russians, Poles, Greeks, and Serbs there

August 21, 1905. On Saturday, I went to Aberdeen for the baptism of the Russian immigrant Stefan Khomchik's son. I arrived late at night and spent the night at the hotel, since no one met me at the railroad station, in spite of promises to the contrary.

In the morning, Khomchik came to the hotel and we went to visit all the Orthodox to urge them to attend the baptism at Khomchik's house. Two of Khomchik's brothers live in Aberdeen. Their wives are fanatical Catholics—Poles—and they are heavily influenced by their mothers. But the Khomchik brothers and their sister are fanatical Orthodox and strongly support their religion. They insisted that Stefan's son be baptized in the Orthodox church. Besides the people mentioned above, there are up to 40 Greeks in Aberdeen, working at the wood

pulp factory. I visited them all, and their joy at seeing a priest in their midst who speaks their native language was something to behold. Most of them have not spoken Greek with anyone outside their immediate circle for ten years or more; they have become almost completely Americanized. They implored me to return for Easter services, and I of course promised I would. God willing, I will be able to keep that promise. By 10 o'clock, all Orthodox in the neighborhood, including several Poles, had arrived at the Khomchik home. I served Matins, since I could not prepare properly to conduct the regular liturgy. In any case, no one there could sing. After Matins, I baptized Khomchik's son. We spent the rest of the day visiting with various parishioners. A Serb, Mr. Berberovich, came to see me and asked me to send him an icon, which I did upon my return to Seattle.⁴⁷

Despite Fr. Andreades's abilities and commitment, the demands of serving a multi-ethnic flock certainly left him and his colleagues little time for people outside their regular schedule.⁴⁸ On this day-long visit alone, the priest had dealings with three different groups in three different languages.

Besides attending to their highly diverse believers, Fr. Andreades and his colleagues had a special and particular responsibility on their travels: reuniting Slavic Uniate members of the immigrant communities with what the priests believed to be the true church. Uniates constituted a special concern of the Russian Orthodox church in north America and around the world. Sometimes called "Byzantine rite" or "Greek" Catholics, most of these believers had come from contemporary

Poland, the Slovak Republic, Hungary, Moldova, and Ukraine. Most of their lands had once belonged to Russia, where Orthodoxy was the state religion. After the 16th century, however, these regions entered the jurisdiction of Catholic states such as Poland and Austria. Aware of the difficulties faced by Orthodox believers in a Catholic country, some Orthodox bishops had agreed in the 1596 Union of Brest to a pragmatic compromise. They consented to recognize the supremacy of the Pope in exchange for the right to retain the Orthodox liturgy and certain Orthodox traditions, such as conducting services in the local language rather than Latin and staffing the parishes with married clergy.

Uniates' orientation was thus both Orthodox and Roman Catholic. They believed themselves to be Orthodox, because they had always had the day-to-day essentials of Orthodoxy: clergy had been permitted to marry and celebrate the liturgy in the local language, as did traditional Orthodox priests. The more controversial theological points of the Union of Brest, such as the affirmation of Papal supremacy, tended to escape the unsophisticated believers of rural Austria-Hungary. But the Russian Orthodox church, Orthodoxy's lone standard-bearer following the fall of the Byzantine empire to the Islamic Ottoman Turks in 1453, viewed the Uniates as heretics.⁴⁹ They, or at least their leaders, had deviated from the true faith in their compromises with the Roman church. In the neutral lands outside central Europe, particularly in the immigrant haven of the United States, Russian Orthodox leaders perceived an opportunity to reclaim these wayward believers from the Uniate churches and clergy. Fr. Andreades and his colleagues were therefore entreated to root out the heresy wherever they

encountered it and reunite wayward Uniates with the mother church.⁵⁰

In the American west, Uniate immigrants from Bukovina, Galicia, and other regions of Austria-Hungary had settled in the mining towns of Wilkeson and Roslyn, Washington, and several small agricultural areas around Edmonton, Alberta. They typically lived quietly, if not always amicably, with their traditional Orthodox neighbors, so they were not difficult for the priests to locate. Fr. Andreades' predecessors, Frs. Aleksandrov and Vretta, enjoyed considerable success in convincing Uniate believers to abandon their heresy, presiding over many services of reunion in their tenure at St. Spiridon's. Fr. Andreades, in turn, was dedicated to the campaign for reunion with Orthodoxy, as he makes clear in his description of a meeting in Roslyn in early 1906:

March 1906. Last night, I returned from Roslyn-Cle Elum, where I conducted the Great Wednesday service and gave the sacrament to about 25 Ruthenes, Serbs, and Montenegrins. In addition, three Ruthene Uniates united with the Orthodox church: Mikhail Iatsko, Vasili Shvab and his wife, Agafia. I baptized their daughter, Mariia, and administered the sacrament of chrismation to their older children, Iosif, Georgii, and Anna. In Roslyn, there are about 100 Uniates living among our Orthodox parishioners. In the company of Mr. Andrew Gerbitom, I visited some of them and invited them to attend our service at the Gambol household. They attended with their wives and children. Before the service, I explained briefly what the Orthodox church is about, how our services and beliefs differ from the Roman Catholics' and how the Uniate

church came to be. Finally, I urged them to unite with us. If they do, they can establish an Orthodox brotherhood and build their own church eventually, so as to avoid having to depend on the caprices of the fanatical Polish priest who occasionally turns up in the area. Many joined us for the service, and some declared their willingness to rejoin the Mother church. However, I had to ask them to delay for a few days, because I had to run to catch the train to return to Seattle for Great Thursday. Also, I did not want their decision to come in haste, and I hoped that they would speak with other Uniates in the meantime.

When I return after Easter, God willing, they will be delivered from the Uniate yoke.⁵¹

Not all of Fr. Andreades's fellow priests took such care with Uniate sensibilities. Many of them condemned both Uniate believers and their clergy in distinctly unpriestly language, e.g. "deceivers," "liars," "fanatics," in the pages of the *American Russian Orthodox Messenger*.⁵² Although he, too, evinced a negative attitude toward these believers in his diary and correspondence, Fr. Andreades seemed to chart a more temperate course in practice. He avoided harsh judgments and hasty conversions, urging careful consideration rather than an immediate union with what he believed to be the true church.⁵³

In addition to the above-mentioned responsibilities, Fr. Andreades and his fellow missionaries were instructed to "extend brotherly help to the needy" in the communities for which they were responsible.⁵⁴ The definition of "help" varied greatly, as did that of "needy." Sometimes they functioned as a court of last resort; in

June 1903, Bishop Tikhon (Bellavin) received a letter from a Washington state prison inmate named John Brown, who hoped that the bishop could contact his Russian relatives in America. Brown, whose name had been anglicized, wanted to hire a lawyer capable of getting him a new trial based on additional facts that had come to light. Bishop Tikhon was the only person who had the authority and the language capability to help with Brown's difficulties. Fr. Andreades spent a good part of the summer of 1905 assisting the parishioners in the Portland, Oregon Holy Trinity parish. On one occasion, he was helping to investigate the shady behavior of a parishioner there

August 27, 1905. I traveled back to Portland today for the wedding of the daughter of a Mr. Darovish, a Syrian. When I arrived at Darovish's home, he asked me to conduct the regularly scheduled service there, since he had misplaced the key to the chapel, and the chapel was far away. Fr. Aleksandrov held services in this house several times for this reason.

Several days prior to my trip, some parishioners found out about my invitation from Darovish and asked me via telegram to come to the chapel instead for services. I told Darovish when I arrived that I wished to go to the chapel, because his house was on the outskirts of town and was in any case too small to accommodate everyone. Besides, anyone may come to the chapel; some people may not wish to come to a private residence. He became angry and insisted that the service be held at his house. Not wanting to make an enemy of him, I relented and

let as many people as possible know about the place and time for the service.

I conducted the service in Greek, since the parish there is largely Greek and Syrian. When I finished, I proceeded with the marriage rite for Darovich's daughter and then said a few words to the assembled.

At the regular service, we collected \$10.30, which Mr. Darovich quickly pocketed, so as to add it—or so he said—to the money already collected and earmarked for repairs of the chapel. I told him he had no right to keep the money in his possession. If he wished to collect funds on his own for repairs to the chapel, he could do so among the Syrians, but he could not hold on to funds belonging to the Seattle mission...Mr. Darovich, however, stubbornly insisted on having his own way. He claimed that Fr. Dabovich and Fr. Aleksandrov had authorized him to look after the chapel and that he was only acting on their instructions. Taking stock of his stubbornness and lies, I returned to Seattle determined to appoint at my first opportunity a *starosta*, or elder, who would put the needs of the chapel and fellow worshippers ahead of his own. This task became all the more urgent after I learned that no one in the Eparchy—not Fr. Dabovich, nor Father Alexander or anyone else—had given him the authority he claimed.⁵⁵

Fr. Andreades was as good as his word; not only was Mr. Darovich demoted, he had disappeared altogether by the time of the priest's next visit. This development left Fr. Andreades free to attend to another

important task. As Fr. Dabovich had done years before in California and Washington, Fr. Andreades launched a fund-raising campaign to repair the denuded, forlorn-looking chapel in Portland.

September 3, 1905. Traveled to Portland for the funeral of Mr. Dinaris, who had drowned. The entire Orthodox community attended the funeral, during which I said a few words appropriate to the occasion. After returning from the cemetery, I asked everyone to come to Mr. Suraia's house. During our meeting, I asked each person to make a great effort to raise the necessary funds to put the chapel in working order. I wrote an appeal to the Greeks in two copies and gave them to Messrs. Suraia and Marand for the collection of donations. The lists were immediately covered with signatures from those attending, and some \$60 was collected. Suraia and Marand promised to visit those who were off working and collect enough money to do the comprehensive repair that is so urgently required. I surely hope that they can manage it. There are holes in the walls, the iconostasis is made of cardboard with only one icon, and there are no chalices or altar plates of any kind. It is a depressing atmosphere in which to worship.⁵⁶

By February of the following year, 1906, the campaign had made some progress: thirty more dollars had accumulated, for a total of \$90. Fr. Andreades noted that this would not suffice, because at least \$200 was required to do all that was necessary to complete the repair. For the time being, he wrote, "we will content ourselves with making sure that the roof does

not leak, and meanwhile see about collecting more funds."⁵⁷

Fr. Andreades's priorities in his "extension of brotherly help" focused on external matters, i.e., irregularities in the collection and improvement of physical facilities within the various communities. Some of his fellow priests in Imperial Russia felt that his efforts would be better directed elsewhere. By the turn of the century, some of them, such as Archimandrite Mikhail of St. Petersburg, had publicly declared that the clergy should concern itself with more than conducting services and improving facilities: priests should help with the material condition of their parishioners.⁵⁸ These clerics were responding to the new legions of urban poor lured to the cities by the prospect of employment in new industrial enterprises.

Fr. Andreades demonstrated an awareness of the desperate straits in which his own immigrant parishioners around the northwest often found themselves. For example, he notes in his diary that the above-mentioned fund-raising campaign came to a sudden standstill after Easter 1906, because most of the parishioners had suddenly departed the city, leaving just 30 Greeks and 3 Syrians.⁵⁹ Such sudden disappearances were not unusual; immigrants went where the jobs were and when the work shut down, parishioners would leave for a time, sometimes never to return. Yet the priest did not evince concern for their welfare on that occasion, nor did he upon a sudden exodus of parishioners from the Wilkeson, Washington parish in 1906. In his regular report to the bishop, he reported only his difficulties in renting out the well-appointed church building there. He explained ruefully that there were no takers, even for the rock-bottom rent of \$4 per month.⁶⁰

Of course, it can be said in the missionaries' defense that their work in faraway America tended to isolate them from controversies among their brethren in Imperial Russia. Even if they had been encouraged to alleviate the poverty within their parishes, it is not certain that all concerned would have had the means with which to do so. Unlike priests in the Russian empire, who often received no subsidies from the church, American missionaries received a salary, but paid most expenses, including housing, travel and even some parish improvements, themselves.⁶¹ Moreover, in some parishes, parishioners had formed church-based fraternal organizations, some of which attempted to assist those fallen on hard times. Nonetheless, since the St. Spiridon parish numbered among the most prosperous in the United States, with a core group of well-off, contributing parishioners, Fr. Andreades might have broadened his definition of "brotherly help" to include measures for those among his parishioners hardest hit by the vicissitudes of immigrant life.⁶²

The Circuit Riders' Legacy

The lives of Fr. Andreades and his fellow missionaries were not easy; the road they traveled placed great demands on their stamina and perseverance as well as their physical health. However, the written records of their experiences make their efforts worthwhile, because those records shed new light on the Russian Orthodox Church and its varied constituencies in the American west. The missionaries testify to the existence of a church many people associate exclusively with the eastern United States. Their accounts of circuit travel help to establish where Orthodox people lived and whence they had come. The vast majority of the missionaries' parishio-

ners came from southeastern and central Europe.⁶³ They generally lived in small communities within 50 to 100 miles of Seattle or Portland, working in occupations that would have been familiar to their grandfathers: fishing, mining, woodcutting, and farming.

In recounting the challenges of serving predominantly non-Russian Orthodox, the missionaries demonstrate that the Russian Orthodox church in the United States was Russian in name only. As the only official representative of Orthodoxy in turn-of-the-century America, it served predominantly believers who would have attended Serbian, Greek, Syrian, or other Orthodox churches in their respective homelands. Fr. Andreades and his colleagues reinforce this point constantly in reports, letters, and diaries. The overwhelming majority—Ruthenes, Serbs, Poles, Croats, and Greeks—came from Austria-Hungary and the independent states of Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece.⁶⁴ It may surprise those who equate “Slav” with “Russian” that Russians were numerically insignificant in the west in 1905, “just here and there,” as a priest visiting St. Spiridon’s put it.⁶⁵ Only the 1917 revolution and its attendant upheavals would result in substantial numbers of Russian émigrés in the western states.

Finally, the missionaries’ experiences here underscore the contradictory character of the Russian Orthodox mission in the United States. Unlike their predecessors in Alaska and their Protestant and Catholic contemporaries, Russian Orthodox missionaries declined the opportunity to proclaim and propagate their faith along the new frontiers of the United States. In their fixation on a centuries-old schism from the old country—the Uniate

church and its adherents—they appeared to reject the possibilities inherent in attracting the peoples of the new world. Moreover, confronted with evidence of poverty among their immigrant populations, the missionaries seemed to interpret their charge to “extend brotherly help” to the needy in terms of repairs to their chapels and churches—an approach more reminiscent of the old Russian church than of its more recent practices.

On the other hand, the Orthodox missionaries displayed exemplary commitment and energy in embracing a responsibility they had perhaps not anticipated when embarking on their missionary careers. When they found themselves ministering to the non-Russian Orthodox believers on their circuits, they were assisting Russian Orthodoxy in an important transition from missionary institution to immigrant church. Seeking out converts to the faith could not, after all, be the highest priority where there were legions of needy Orthodox immigrants from many countries. Perhaps the best measure of the missionaries’ efforts here is the success they enjoyed in helping the church refocus its mission in the early 20th century. St. Spiridon’s church in Seattle, Wilkeson’s Holy Trinity parish, and St. Nicholas church in Portland, all of which were founded and nurtured by Fr. Andreades and his fellow missionaries, remain vibrant, active, multi-ethnic centers of Orthodoxy after a century of revolution, division, and schism in the church. The parishes—and the letters, reports, and diary entries—represent the best evidence of the missionaries’ largely unheralded dedication to the cause of Orthodoxy and its singular presence in the United States nearly a century ago.



*Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church, Wilkeson, Washington.
Photo: Photographs Department, Oregon Historical Society.*



*Father Michael
Andreadis, 1905-07.
Russian Orthodox
Priest, St. Nicholas &
Holy Trinity. Photo:
Photographs Depart-
ment, Oregon Histori-
cal Society.*

Endnotes

1. There are two classifications of clergy in the Orthodox church. The white clergy, who may marry, are typically parish priests. The black, or monastic, clergy must remain celibate. From the ranks of the black clergy come the highest-ranking members of the church hierarchy, i.e., bishops, metropolitans, and patriarchs. For more information, consult Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (London: Penguin Books, 1993), 290-291.
2. Dabovich-Bishop Nicholas (San Francisco), November 17, 1892, *Alaskan-Russian Church Archives* (hereafter ARCA), *Records of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America-Diocese of Alaska* (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, 1984), container D511/13, reel 520.
3. *Ibid.*
4. There is evidence of Orthodox activity in Portland predating Fr. Dabovich's journey. Church records show that Fr. Vladimir Vechtomov had visited the Lavrentii Chernov family in the fall of 1881 in order to anoint and bury Nataliia Chernov. Vechtomov-Bishop Nestor (San Francisco), October 14, 1881, ARCA, D511/513, reel 320.
5. Dabovich-Bishop Nicholas (Portland), November 6, 1893, ARCA, B6, reel 10.
6. Dabovich-Bishop Nicholas (Portland), November 17, 1893, ARCA, B6, reel 10. No one mentions the reason for which the church was named for St. Spiridon, but it is likely the name honored by a high percentage of Greeks and other immigrants from southeastern Europe in the new parish.
7. Information about St. Spiridon's parish today is available on its web page (www.oca.org/OCA/pim/index).
8. St. Spiridon lived in the 4th century in the town of Tremithus, which is located on the island of Cyprus. A contemporary of the Byzantine Emperor Constantine I, he became bishop of Tremithus, in which capacity he demonstrated the ability to perform miracles; he is said to have cured Emperor Constantine of a serious illness with the touch of his hand. For more details, see *Zhitiia sviatykh na russkoi iazyke*, vol. 4 (Moskva: Izd-vo Vvedenskoi Optimoi Pustyni, 1993): 330-350. See also Alan E. Mack, ed., *St. Spiridon's Cathedral: A Century in Seattle 1895-1995* (Seattle, 1995), 62-63.
9. Dabovich-Bishop Nicholas (San Francisco), November 17, 1892, ARCA, D511/513, reel 320.
10. "Puteshestvie Ego Preosviashchenstva, Preosviashchennieishago Nikolaia, Episkopa Aleutskago i Aliaskago po Aliaske," *American-Russian Orthodox Messenger*, September 1, 1897, pp. 24-25.
11. Brief histories of both parishes are available via their web pages. Address: www.oca.org/PIM/index. In addition, there is the St. Spiridon 100th anniversary commemorative album, edited by Alan E. Mack (see note 8), and a brief article on the Portland parish in *Iubileinyi Sbornik v pamiat' 150-letii Russkoi Pravoslavnoi tserkvi v severnoi Amerike*, vol.2 (New York, 1945): 139-42.
12. The construction of the Church of St. Sava, founder of the autocephalous

Serbian Orthodox church and its first archbishop in 1219, was completed in late 1894. On December 4 of that year, Bishop Nicholas (Ziorov) consecrated the new church. The report on the service described the church, built with the help of collections from Russian churches as well as Serbian parishioner contributions, as "spacious and graceful," with a bell tower and a light blue roof. Fr. Sebastian Dabovich was on hand to assist the bishop in the consecration. "Sobshcheniia iz zagranitsy, iz severnoi Ameriki," *Tserkovnyiia Viednosti* 8 (1895): 54-55.

13. Orthodox churches were eventually built in Angel's Camp (St. Basil of Ostrog), Fresno (St. Peter the Apostle) and Bisbee (St. Stefan Nemanja). Pictures of all three churches, though as yet no background information, can be found in the Directory section of the Serbian Diocese of Western America web page (www.smfa.com).

14. The bishop's topic on this occasion concerned the contributions of St. Sava to Serbian Orthodoxy and culture. "Father Sebastian, your brother in flesh and spirit, has already acquainted you with the life and work of St. Sava," the bishop said approvingly. *Tridat' riede i tri poslania Preosviashchennieishago Nikolaia Episkopa Aleutskago i Aliaskinskago* (New York, 1896), p. 56.

15. Mr. Vladimir Aleksandrov came to St. Spiridon's in 1896, shortly after his arrival in America, with the intent to become a missionary. He began his service at St. Spiridon's as the choir director, also serving as a reader prior to his ordination to the priesthood at the church in 1898. Aleksandrov's oath of allegiance to Tsar Nicholas II, which was apparently required of all who aspired to the priesthood, remains in ARCA, B1/2, reel 7.

16. Father Dabovich noted this fact in a letter to Bishop Nicholas in the summer of 1896. Dabovich-Bishop Nicholas (Jackson), undated, August 1896, ARCA, B5/6, reel 10.

17. Vretta-Bishop Nicholas (Seattle), May 8, 1896, ARCA, D467/469, reel 297. Chrismation is the equivalent in the Orthodox faith of the Roman Catholic sacrament of confirmation.

18. Fr. Sebastian Dabovich visited Butte the following year, becoming the first priest to conduct formal services there on the feast day of the Dormition of the Mother of God in August 1897, with 31 Serbs in attendance. For this reason, Fr. Dabovich, not Fr. Vretta, is considered the founder of the Holy Trinity Parish. *Holy Trinity Serbian Orthodox Church 1897-1997* (Butte, 1997), 8-9.

19. "Sobshcheniia iz zagranitsy," *Tserkovnyiia Viednosti* 15 (1902): 1635. In 1896, there was a chapel in Wilkeson, which was soon replaced by a church which Bishop Tikhon (Bellavin) dedicated in 1902. Despite early Uniate-Orthodox trouble and continuing difficulties with alcohol abuse in the early years, Holy Trinity—now Holy Trinity/Holy Resurrection—remains an active Orthodox parish today. A brief history of the church, as well as a profile of its current membership, is available on the church web page (www.oaa.org/PIM/index.html).

20. Some Uniate priests did not take kindly to defections among their believers and resorted to questionable tactics to prevent them. One Orthodox missionary reported, "So as to fish more easily in troubled waters, Uniate priests tell believers that it would be better for them to go to a Jewish synagogue than to an Orthodox church, for 'we do not believe in the Virgin Mary.'" The gullible readily accept

this. Several times Uniates have happened upon our church, looked with wonder at the icon of the Mother of God and then naively asked the Orthodox worshippers, 'so you do believe in the Blessed Virgin?'" "Pervye shagi pravoslavnago missionera v sievnoi Amerike," *Tserkovnyia Viednosti* 15 (1902): 1499.

21. John G. Shideler, *Coal Towns in the Cascades: A Centennial History of Roslyn and Cle Elum, Washington* (Spokane: Melior Publications, 1986), 60-61.

22. Ibid.

23. Dabovich-Bishop Nicholas (San Francisco), November 17, 1892, *ARCA*, D511/513, reel 320.

24. "Pravoslavie v Kanade," *American-Russian Orthodox Messenger*, September 1, 1897, p. 26.

25. Ibid., p. 27.

26. "Poiezdka v Kanadu. Iz raporta Seatl'skogo prichta k Ego Preosviashchenstvu," *American Russian Orthodox Messenger*, June 1, 1898, p. 602.

27. Ibid., p. 604

28. On modern maps, Limestone Lake appears as Wostok, or sometimes Stary Wostok.

29. Bishop Tikhon consecrated this church in August 1901, during a visit to western Canada. "Sobshcheniia iz zagranitsy, iz sievnoi Ameriki," *Tserkovnyia Viednosti* 14 (1901): 1557. It continues to serve Alberta Orthodox today, albeit on a limited basis. Sunday Divine Liturgy is currently being held once a month. The Trinity church's web page can be accessed through the Orthodox Church of America's online Directory of Parishes, Institutions and Monasteries (www.oca.org/pim/index).

30. "Poiezdka v Kanadu," pp. 619-620.

31. The primitive conditions in which missionaries often found themselves in the new world seldom failed to impress observers. In a 1995 profile of Bishop Tikhon (Bellavin), who for a time was Fr. Aleksandrov and Kamenev's superior, Nikolai Novikov underscored the difficulties of traveling to the faithful on the American continent. "In America," he wrote, "Bishop Tikhon visited the most far-flung outposts, using whatever means of transport available: he would travel by steamship or rowboat, on horseback or even on foot. Parishioners thought it was a miracle to see him in person, all the more so in that he personally baptized, married, and buried members of their communities." Nikolai Novikov, "Pochetnyi grazhdanin Ameriki i Iaroslavl'ia: Novye fakty k biografii sviatitel'ia Tikhona," *Russkaia Amerika* 4 (1995): 7.

32. Aleksandrov-Bishop Nicholas (Seattle), July 3, 1899, *ARCA*, D467/69, reel 297.

33. "Sobshcheniia iz zagranitsy," *Tserkovnyia Viednosti* 14 (1901):1557.

34. In a 1991 interview, Butte Holy Trinity parishioner William Petrovich noted that some 10,000 Serbs had been buried in that cemetery since the early 1890s. William Petrovich, interview by Fr. Dusan Koprivica, October 10, 1991, Tape recording. Butte/Silver Bow Archives, Butte, Montana.

35. Lawrence F. Small, ed., *Religion in Montana: Pathways to the Present*, vol. 2 (Helena, Montana: SkyHouse Publishers, 1995): 168. A newer incarnation of Holy Trinity Church continues to serve Serbian Orthodox in Butte today. The original structure was replaced by a new church building in 1965. In 1997, the parish celebrated its centennial, which was also the centennial of Serbian Orthodoxy in Montana.

36. Fr. Vretta had financial problems that made it necessary for him to return to Russia, where he soon died; Fr. Aleksandrov suffered a series of tragedies in 1904-5, including the destruction of his home by fire and the death of his young son Nicholas, after which he requested a transfer to an east coast parish to avoid painful memories associated with Seattle. Fr. Aleksandrov's ordeals are described in Captain V.M. Iakubovskii, "Iz zhizni Seattl'skoi Pravoslavnoi Missii," *American-Russian Orthodox Messenger*, February 15, 1904, pp. 68-69.

37. Fr. Andreades seems to have been the only priest at St. Spiridon for much of 1905; there usually were at least two priests assigned there. In 1906, a young reader named Tikhomirov arrived to take some of the burden from Fr. Andreades, making it easier for him to travel his circuit of churches.

38. In 1896, the Holy Synod's official publication, *Tserkovnyia Viedomosti*, identified the goals of the church's representatives abroad as follows: "Conducting services, delivering homilies, teaching and administering the sacraments to parishioners near and far, brotherly help to the needy and the teaching of children. These are the main goals of our missionaries. Their efforts should be devoted to the support and strengthening of Orthodoxy where it exists now. Thereafter, sincerity and love dictate that they show love and attention for non-Orthodox seeking reunion with the church." "O Pravoslavnoi Missii v Amerike," *Tserkovnyia Viedomosti* 9 (1896): 1030.

39. Reference is to Fr. Sebastian Dabovich, who had been elevated to the rank of Archimandrite in 1904, upon his move to Chicago.

40. "Iz missionerskago dnevnika sviashchennika goroda Seattle, M. Andreades," *American-Russian Orthodox Messenger*, April 15, 1906, p. 137.

41. "O Pravoslavnoi missii v Amerike," *Tserkovnyia Viedomosti* 9 (1896): 1030. According to the statement of missionary objectives in this article, missionaries were to "be devoted to the support and strengthening of Orthodoxy where it exists now."

42. Aleksandrov (Seattle)-Bishop Nicholas, July 3, 1900, *ARCA*, D467-69, reel 297.

43. "Iz missionerskago dnevnika sviashchennika goroda Seattle," *American-Russian Orthodox Messenger*, April 1, 1906, pp. 136-37.

44. Those interested in this Serbian division should consult Fr. Dabovich's February 1907 letter to Bishop Tikhon. Dabovich-Bishop Tikhon (Chicago), February 19, 1907, *ARCA*, D442-45, reel 83.

45. Bishop Rafael organized Syrians into what would become St. Nicholas Cathedral in Brooklyn and oversaw the publication of an Arabic-language service book for the benefit of Syrians around the country. There is a brief biographical sketch of Bishop Rafael in Constance J. Tarasar, ed., *Orthodox America. Development of the*

Orthodox Church in America 1794-1976 (Syosset, New York: Orthodox Church of America, Department of History and Archives), p. 95.

46. Seldom was the multinational character of St. Spiridon's more in evidence than during the Easter vigil service of April 1902. The service was conducted in three languages: Greek, Russian, and English. As midnight approached, "the entire parish, Syrians, Russians, Slavs, Creoles, Greeks and Americans, all with candles, moved toward the priest so as to light their candles from the candle the priest was holding," so as to be able to greet Sunday and the resurrection in the proper way. "Prazhnik Paskhi v g. Seattle," *American-Russian Orthodox Messenger*, May 15, 1902, p. 204.

47. "Iz missionerskago dnevnika sviashchennika goroda Seattle, M. Andreades," *American-Russian Orthodox Messenger*, April 1, 1906, p. 134.

48. Occasionally, Americans managed to attract the priests' attention long enough to declare their intent to join the Orthodox church. A veteran of the Civil War, William Goskin, contacted Bishop Tikhon in the late 1890s asking to be received into the church. He had been reading about the church for many years, Goskin explained, and had decided to convert after discovering the existence of Holy Trinity Cathedral in his home state of California. Fr. Sebastian Dabovich performed the service of baptism for Goskin on December 12, 1900. "I am happy beyond words," the old man said afterward, "that the Lord showed me the truth and allowed me to become a member of the Holy Apostolic Church." *American-Russian Orthodox Messenger*, January 1, 1900, pp. 15-16.

49. The Orthodox church had been conquered by Muslim invaders nearly everywhere except Russia by the end of the year 1453 and would not emerge from its captivity for several centuries. Therefore the Russian Orthodox church viewed itself as the defender of the faith and took seriously its responsibility to deal severely with any perceived heresies. One need only look at the harsh treatment meted out to the so-called "Old Believers," those who refused to acknowledge Patriarch Nikon's controversial church reform of the mid-17th century.

50. A measure of the importance both missionaries and their superiors attached to this task is the detailed listings printed in the *American-Russian Orthodox Messenger* of Uniate conversions to Orthodoxy. The following listing of reunions, over which Fr. Aleksandrov presided, appeared in February of 1902.

"Fr. Vladimir Aleksandrov united the following individuals with Orthodoxy in the year 1901.

From among Uniates: In Wilkeson, Washington, Mikhail Polianskii, 26, his wife Maria, 22, their son, Mikhail, 1; Dmitrii Mitrishin, 26, his wife Anna, 17 (from Roman Catholicism); Ioann Rak, 35, his wife Iulianna, 32, their son Ioann, 1; Petr Gotsko, 24, Iurii Gotsko, 21, Luk Goroshchak, 30, Vasili Mitiashin, 27, Maria Timus, 23, Ana Timus, 27.

In the city of Cle Elum, Washington: Solomon Gamba', 23, Pavel Pelik, 41, Filimon Simonchak, 33, Ivan Varga, 28, Mikhail Sabol', 26, his wife Anna, 25, their children Maria, 7, and Mikhail, 3; Lazarii Gamba', 26, Mikhail Opalka, 38 (from Roman Catholicism); Vasili Gamba', 27, Daniil Gavriiliak, 37, his wife Anna, 35, their children Andrei, 6, Nikolai, 5, Mikhail, 3 and Ioann, 2.

In the city of Victoria, British Columbia: Mrs. Kappa Al'foros (from Protestantism).

In the city of Seattle, Washington: Miss M. Kanta-George, 23 (from Roman Catholicism).

The following individuals left Roman Catholicism for union with the Orthodox faith at Holy Trinity parish in Wostok (Canadian mission) between November 1, 1901 and January 1, 1902: Ekaterina Gavrilova Bilao, 20, Pavel Petrov Gemchuk, 24, his wife Anna, 21, their sons Ioann, 20, Vasilii, 6; Tatiana Iosifova Stuporik, 32." *American-Russian Orthodox Messenger*, February 15, 1902, pp. 94-95.

51. "Iz missionerskago dnevnika sviachennika goroda Seattle," *American-Russian Orthodox Messenger*, April 15, 1906, p. 161.

52. Witness some representative titles of articles concerning Uniates in the *American-Russian Orthodox Messenger*: "Down with Uniates" (July 15, 1909, p. 249) "Lies, Evil, Slander—the three foundations of the Uniate Church in America" (February 15, 1908, p. 69); "The Uniate Faith on its Deathbed" (February 1, 1908).

53. Two St. Spiridon priests, Frs. Aleksandrov and Kamenev, both of whom preceded Fr. Andreades, described the ceremony of reunion as performed in western Canada in June 1898. Those seeking reunion assembled in an open field, because there was as yet no church building. They passed under an Orthodox cross and received a sprinkling of holy water. Women received crosses as a remembrance of the ceremony, while men were given icons and books. At the end of the service, all those newly reunited with Orthodoxy wrote a formal request to the north American bishop, Nicholas, that they be accepted into the church. "Poiezdka v Kanadu," *American-Russian Orthodox Messenger*, June 1, 1898, p. 602.

54. "O Pravoslavnoi Missii v Amerike," *Tserkovnyia Viedomosti* 9 (1896): 1030.

55. "Iz missionerskago dnevnika sviashchennika goroda Seattle," *American-Russian Orthodox Messenger*, April 1, 1906, pp. 134-35.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 135.

57. *Ibid.*

58. For further information, see Gregory Freeze, "Going to the Intelligentsia: The Church and its Urban Mission in Post-Reform Russia," in Edith W. Clowes, Samuel D. Kassow and James L. West, eds., *Between Tsar and People: Educated Society and the Quest for Public Identity in Late Imperial Russia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 215-232. Freeze identifies Fr. Georgii S. Petrov and Archimandrite Mikhail (Semenov) as leaders in the campaign to involve the church in ameliorating the condition of the urban poor.

59. *Ibid.*

60. "Iz missionerskago dnevnika sviashchennika goroda Seattle, M. Andreades," *American-Russian Orthodox Messenger*, April 1, 1906, p. 136.

61. According to the Holy Synod, missionary priests in America received up to 1,800 rubles per year. These higher salaries disappeared quickly, however, since churches tended to receive very little in the way of contributions from parishioners struggling to keep body and soul together in an expensive new country.

62. It should be noted that this had begun to change by 1905, at least in church

communities on the east coast, where the church was headquartered after its move from San Francisco to New York in 1904. In his capacity as a founder of the Orthodox Mutual Aid society, Fr. Alexander Khotovitskii, one of the pioneers of the Russian church in the eastern United States, became an enthusiastic backer of the first Russian Emigrant House in New York. The house was to become a center for Russian newcomers from Russia proper and Austria-Hungary, a clearinghouse for information about finding work, housing and other essentials of life in America, and also a means for Russians to locate wayward relatives in the new country.

Noteworthy in this regard also is the Russian Orthodox Christian Immigrant Society of North America. Founded in 1908, the society, which had offices in New York and Washington, assisted needy immigrants with food, clothing, and shelter as needed.

63. This dynamic generally held true throughout the United States before 1917. The Holy Synod published the following breakdown of nationalities in north America served by the Russian Orthodox Church as of 1901: 725 Russians, 2,448 Galicians, 4,450 Ruthenes, 1,420 Serbs and South Slavs, 541 Greeks, 3,596 Arabs, 2,234 Creoles, 2,121 Indians, 3,767 Aleuts, 8,750 Eskimos, 77 others. "Sobshcheniia iz-za granitsei," *Tserkovnyiia Viedomosti* 14 (1901): 289.

64. Typically, the official United States census identified anyone who came from Austria-Hungary as "Austrian," whether he was German, Hungarian, Polish, Slovak, Romanian or any other nationality included within the borders of the Hapsburg monarchy. Fr. Andreades' diary indicates exactly who lived where, e.g. Ruthenes and Serbs in Roslyn, Croats and Poles in Black Diamond, and so forth.

65. "Po shtatam i Aliaske," *American-Russian Orthodox Messenger*, October 10, 1910, p. 301.

66. For up-to-date information on St. Spiridon's and St. Nicholas churches today, consult the articles and books mentioned previously in this text. Despite early struggles with alcoholism and Orthodox-Uniate conflict, the Wilkeson parish has proven to be one of the most resilient in the United States. It has recently changed its name to Holy Trinity/Holy Resurrection and moved to Tacoma, where the numbers of Orthodox are currently high and growing, but it has been a fixture of Orthodox church life in the northwest since its founding in the 1890s. See the church's web page via the Orthodox Church of America's online Directory of Parishes, Institutions and Monasteries (www.oca.org/PIM/index.html).