

Dr Julia Gorbaniuk
Institute of Studies on the Family, Catholic University of Lublin

Dr Oleg Gorbaniuk
Institute of Psychology, Catholic University of Lublin

The implications of Ukrainization of liturgy for religious identity of Catholics of Latin rite in Ukraine

Introduction

Although the Soviet constitution guaranteed free exercise of creed, during the communist period religion in the USSR was persecuted. Churches were ruined or turned into storehouses or other buildings of public use. From the late 1980s the Autocephalous Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church has experienced a revival. Furthermore, a movement for Church protection has spread over all Ukrainian districts. The services were held again in churches and catechists along with other teachers were to compensate for the insufficient number of clergy.

Religious literature became more available, including publications in Ukrainian which in the early 1990s were mostly imported from abroad. Religion was also popularised by missionary activity carried out mainly by the Protestant and other Churches. In consequence, religious knowledge among children and school youth has been increasing. Although officially this activity was very limited, nevertheless thanks to the clergymen its scope was significantly extended.

In 2004 there were 28,626 religious communities in Ukraine representing over 100 Churches, creeds and religious movements¹. 97% of these communities stem from Christianity. The number of communities is rapidly growing by more than 1,000 a year. Beside the Orthodox and Catholic Churches – traditional denominations in Ukraine – several Protestant denominations (almost non-existent in this area till the beginning of the 20th century) now gain in popularity in the society which during the communist period was largely deprived of religious life. This process is particularly apparent in south-eastern section of Ukraine where the sphere of influence of the Catholic Church (of Eastern and Latin rite alike) is rather limited.

It should be noted that in 1991 in Ukraine were only 30 denominations. Such denominations as Swedish Lutheran-Evangelical Church, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormons), the Church of Christ, the Methodist Church, the National Ukrainian Church, the Buddhist Temples and others were unknown in Ukraine at that time. At the same time some religions with extremely small number of adherents appeared (totalling merely from 1 to 14 communities).

Today the following Churches aggregate the largest number of communities: the Orthodox Church (the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kiev Patriarchate, and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church), the Greek-Catholic Church, the Baptist Church, the Pentecostal Church, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, the Jehovah's Witnesses. The Roman-Catholic Church ranks 9th with 863 communities² and an estimated 760,000 believers³.

¹ Data drawn from the Ukrainian government's Committee on Religious Affairs (as of January 1, 2004). The Internet address <http://www.risu.org.ua>

² *ibid*

³ *Annuario Pontificio*, 2004, Libreria Editrice Vaticana

Till the 1990s Polish followers constituted the mainstay of the Roman Catholic Church in Ukraine. Thanks to them the Church survived the years of persecutions. On the other hand Polish national minority, deprived of any institutional support and schooling in Polish⁴, preserved national identity owing to the Catholic Church and the exercise of faith in Polish language. In the early 1990s Ukrainian as the language of liturgy started to be introduced into the churches, mainly by priests coming from Poland⁵. This paper examines the attitude of the faithful toward this process and analyses its implications for national and religious identity of the Roman Catholics and for their relations with other religions.

The method

The research tools and the sample characteristics

The research was conducted using a questionnaire survey inquiring about national and religious identity of Catholics of Latin rite. Data obtained from this sociological survey were used to formulate a sociological opinion on the formation of national and religious identity of Catholics of Latin rite. The opinion was based on previously devised questionnaire containing about 100 questions.

A random sample of 62 parishes has been taken from the list of all parishes in Ukraine. The selection of parishes was made according to the number of faithful and the proportion of Roman Catholics in all 4 dioceses where Catholics of Polish origin were found, namely the dioceses of Lviv, Lutsk, Kamyanets and Zhytomyr. The parishes included in the research made up over 10% of the total number of parishes in these dioceses. The sample included persons over 12 years of age of Roman Catholic or other denominations who attended Catholic services in the parish church. The sample totalled 1,300 persons.

The research procedure and scope

The research was conducted in Summer and Autumn 2000 in randomly selected parishes from the area extending from Novoye Misto and Borinya in the west (10 kilometres from Polish border), Kirovograd in the east, Ovruch in the north (12 kilometres from Belorussian border) and Chechelnyk in the south.

The survey was carried out by 3 inquirers (including two authors of the paper). All of them were of Polish nationality, born and grown up in Ukraine, with equally good command of both Ukrainian and Polish.

Each interview lasted from 20 to 90 minutes and was held either in Polish or Ukrainian language, depending on preferences and abilities of the respondents.

The results

The problem of the liturgy language, as outlined in the introduction, has been identified in 63% of parishes nationwide. The problem arises in the following cases:

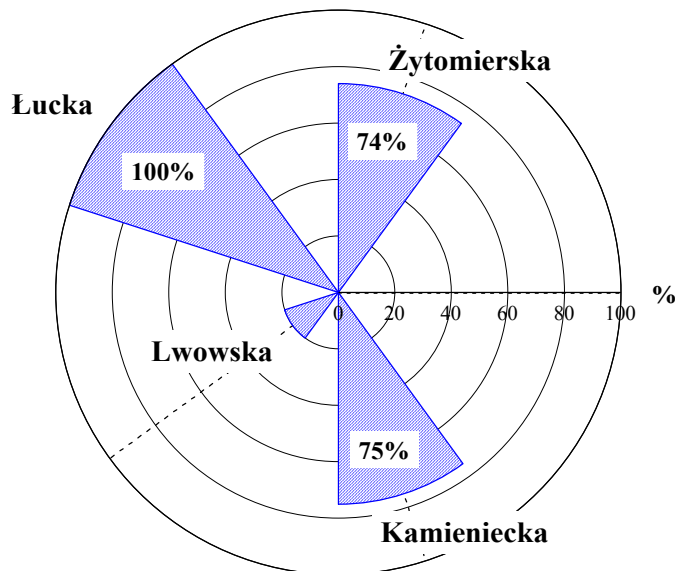
1. If there is a divergence between the linguistic option of the parishioners and the language preferred by the parish priest

⁴ two Polish schools in Lviv were of local importance

⁵ R. Dzwonkowski, *Od Kościoła polskiego do Kościoła Polaków w krajach byłego ZSSR*, „Przegląd Wschodni”, 1998, no V, v. 2(18), pp. 281-297; R. Dzwonkowski, *Mniejszości narodowe a ewangelizacja*, Lublin 2004, pp. 25-34,

2. If the language of liturgy is a source of contention among the parishioners themselves (e.g. between young and old generations)
3. If some parishioners are not able to fully participate in services because the language used does not fit their religious feelings.

Figure 1. Geographical range of language problem

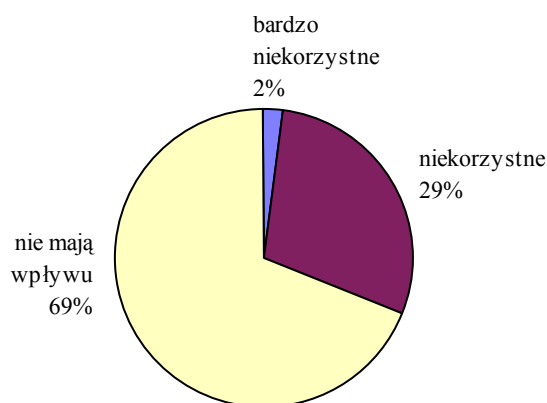


- diocese of Lutsk
- diocese of Zhytomyr
- diocese of Lviv
- diocese of Kamyanets

Figure 1 shows that the situation varies widely from one diocese to another. In the diocese of Lviv the language problem is the least apparent as it occurs only in 20% of parishes. Apart from the diocese of Lutsk, where conflicts between priest and parishioners were revealed in all parishes selected for the research, the diocese of Zhytomyr (74% of parishes) and Kamyanets (75% of parishes) are most touched by the language problem.

Introduction of a new language of liturgy means a dramatic change that inevitably affects both national and religious identity. Figure 2 shows that in 31% of parishes change of liturgy language produced some negative consequences for the religious life of the communities concerned. In these parishes people were extremely attached to Polish language of liturgy in which they were able to say a prayer and to find their faith adequately. The adoption of the Ukrainian language has disturbed their internal harmony, sense of security and comfort. This group of parishes includes also those where some, more or less serious, linguistic conflicts arose between the parishioners and the parish priest, among the parishioners themselves or between different generations.

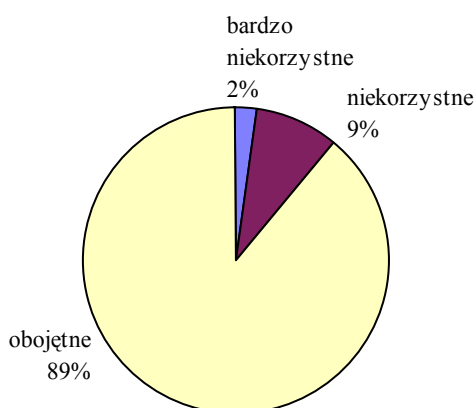
Figure 2. Consequences of the introduction of the Ukrainian language of liturgy for the religious life of parishioners



negative
 very negative
 no influence

The changes had negative implications for the religiousness of some parishioners who either were not able anymore to participate normally in services or completely drifted away from the practice of their faith. It should be noted that negative effects appeared only among those people who had high level of religious education in Polish before to the changes took place. For such persons the changes turned out to be the most distressing and hard to accept. On the other hand, persons of low level of religiousness and the youth under the age of 25 were hardly affected by the changes because their religious attitude was not formed completely. Not much attached to the Polish language (which develops in time and depends on the level of religious education) such persons could easily adapt to using the Ukrainian language in church. Nevertheless this issue should depend on conscious decision of parents according to their religious and national feelings and preferences.

Figure 3. Consequences of the introduction of the Ukrainian language of liturgy for mutual relations between the Catholic and the Orthodox Church



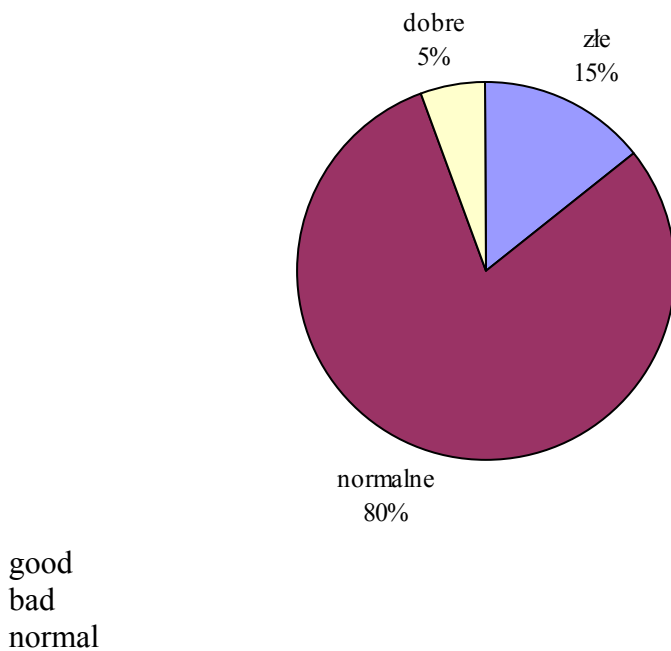
negative
 very negative
 neutral

Apart from the consequences for religiousness, the introduction of the Ukrainian language of liturgy in 11% of cases led to deterioration of Catholic-Orthodox relationships (fig. 3). This refers only to the diocese of Kamyanets. In western Ukraine (particularly in the districts of Lviv

and Ivano-Frankovsk) the attitude of priests is much more prudent in this respect, which results from the presumption that it would be of no effect to attract Ukrainians to the Roman Catholic Church as it clashes with Ukrainian national tradition. Conversion to Roman Catholic faith is strongly disapproved and considered as an act of treachery. Furthermore, the priests in this part of Ukraine usually do not call in question the national identity of Poles living there, which is often the case in the area east of the Zbruch River.

In Central Ukraine where religiousness had been widely undermined under the pressure of official atheism and the Polish-Ukrainian relationships were relatively good, the situation is much less clear compared to the areas west of the Zbruch River. The adoption of the Ukrainian liturgical language meant that the Roman Catholic Church became competitive to the Orthodox Church. It is highly symptomatic that some Orthodox priests addressing their parishioners voice unfavourable feelings toward the Roman Catholic Church. It gives rise to prejudices against Catholics which were non-existent hitherto. This artificial polarisation is intended to minimise the probability of conversion. As a consequence the attitude of the Orthodox toward the Catholics is gradually deteriorating which is proved by such incidents as separation of children at school according to religious affiliation, preventing Catholics from assisting at marriage or baptism ceremonies held in Orthodox churches, etc. In more than 15% of parishes the Catholic-Orthodox relationships were rated as bad and the change of the liturgy language was indicated as a cause.

Figure 4. Relationships between the Catholics and other religions



The Catholic faith devoid of national associations became inevitably similar to the Orthodox religion. This is regarded by traditional Ukrainian religions as a serious threat that may potentially lead to the competition for the faithful. In the following cases, however, the problem does not appear:

1. in the areas where, in the opinion of the Ukrainians, the stereotypical identification of the Roman Catholicism with Polish nationality is unquestionable
2. in predominantly Polish localities without an Orthodox church
3. in big cities with a large number of atheist and different sects where conflicts between religions make no sense

4. in localities with a very weak Catholic parish where the introduction of the Ukrainian language could worsen rather than improve its position
5. where clashes between religions exist for other reasons irrespective of the liturgy language.

Figure 5. Consequences of the introduction of the Ukrainian language of liturgy for relations between different generations

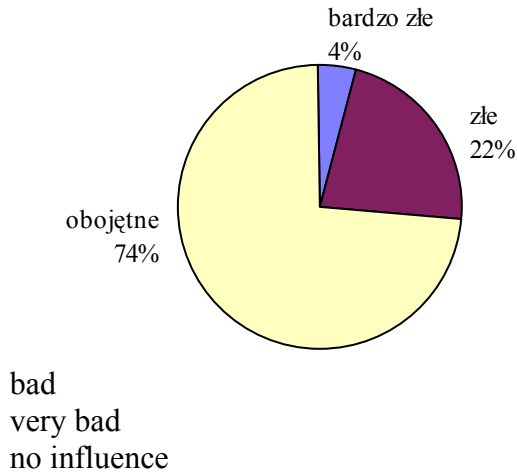


Figure 5 shows that the introduction of the Ukrainian language of liturgy resulted in deterioration of relations between old and young generations. With a view to gain supporters for the cause of the Ukrainian language, the clergymen address directly the youth ignoring the old generation which generally rejects changes. The Ukrainian language is praised as modern and patriotic whereas Polish is disregarded as strange, incomprehensible, antiquated and useless for later generations.

Such attitude implies that the presence of the old generation in the church is often considered as an unavoidable burden and the whole activity is oriented toward children and young generation, with the use of Ukrainian language as a principle. Some priests openly express the opinion that ‘the parish will not function normally until the old generation fades away’⁶. According to respondents, the old generation, deprived of any functions and sometimes humiliated, is denied any influence on the parish. They are often forced to adopt new forms of behaviour in church that replace rituals established from time immemorial.

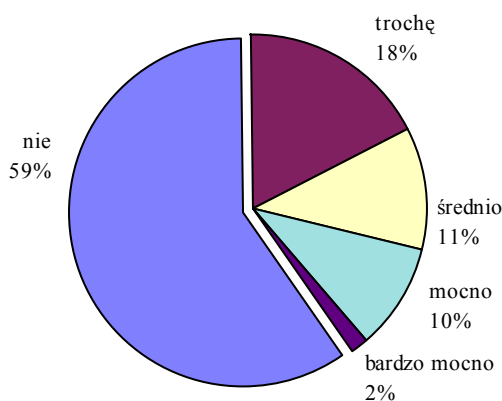
With no respect for the old people, religious and cultural values can not be handed down to succeeding generations which leads to disorientation of young people destitute of ideals. Such disdainful approach to the old generation was found only among young priests, most frequently in the diocese of Kamyanets (35%), to a lesser extent in the diocese of Zhytomyr (24%) and sporadically also in the diocese of Lviv (1 parish).

It is worth noting though, that many priests have introduced the Ukrainian language of liturgy without engendering conflicts between different generations of parishioners. Although the young people prefer Ukrainian, they are able to understand and accept the desire of the old people to say a prayer in Polish. The solution of the problem depends largely on the priest, his level of culture, experience and age.

Figure 6 shows that the image of the Roman Catholic Church has changed during the last 10 years in 41% of parishes, whereas in 12% of parishes the changes were of great magnitude.

⁶ another example of such attitude is provided by a priest who displayed on the church door a note reading in Ukrainian ‘Do not grind your teeth’ (parish no 47)

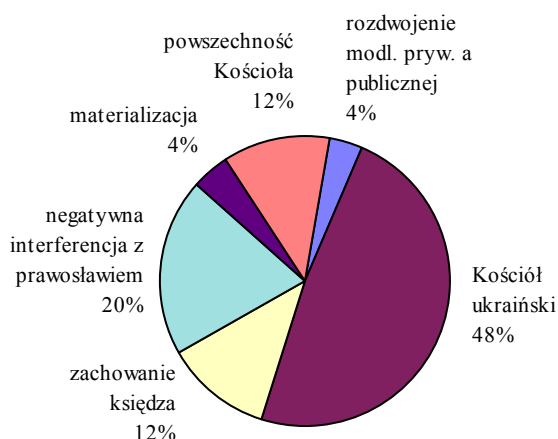
Figure 6. Consequences of the introduction of the Ukrainian language of liturgy for change in the image of the Roman Catholic Church



great change
 significant change
 moderate change
 little change
 no change

Figure 7 shows how the respondents saw the character of the changes.

Figure 7. Character of changes in the image of the Catholic Church

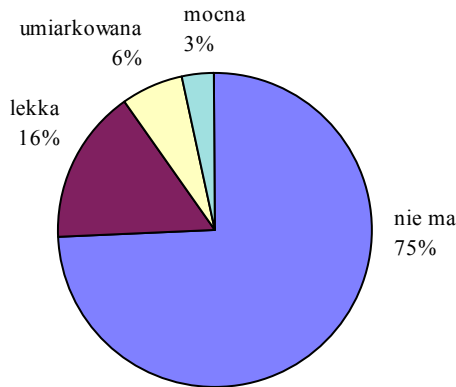


Ukrainization of the Church
 dissociation of personal and public prayer
 universalization of the church
 materialism
 negative interference with the Orthodox Church
 changes in priest's behaviour

Most often the respondents indicated that the change consisted in transformation of 'Polish Church' into a 'Ukrainian' (48%) or a universal one (12%) in which nationality is of no importance. 20% of respondents pointed to a negative interference of the image of the Roman Catholic Church with that of the Orthodox Church, which means that the sense of distinctness has disappeared. Some respondents indicated discordance between the prayer language used in church and at home. According to some others the church ceased to be a place serving spiritual needs; it concentrates instead on material reality (gifts, humanitarian assistance, income from the

churchgoers, etc.). In 12% of parishes changing image of the Church resulted from changing image of the priest whose behaviour was disapproved by parishioners (emotional unsteadiness, suspicions about love affairs, improper behaviour near the church).

Figure 8. Degree of religious disorientation



little
 moderate
 high
 no disorientation

Changing image of the Church may potentially, but not necessarily, lead to religious disorientation. In 75% of parishes such situation did not occur (figure 8). People of Central Ukraine turned out to be more susceptible to religious disorientation than those from western Ukraine. This phenomenon appeared to the greatest extent in the diocese of Kamyanets which results from the manner in which the new liturgy language was introduced and how the parishioners understood the change. As a matter of fact, usually the change of language was implemented without providing a reliable explanation of causes and objectives of the reform. Nevertheless, only in 9% of parishes religious disorientation occurred on a larger scale. In 16% of parishes it was rather misinterpretation of the intentions of the changes.

The prospects of Roman Catholic Church in Ukraine are somewhat better than the prospects of Polish national element. West of the Zbruch River the development of Catholicism is closely related to the preservation of Polishness, much less so in eastern section of the country. This results from the massive and rapid Ukrainization of the Roman Catholic Church. In western Ukraine it takes place only in Volhynia and some parishes of the Lviv diocese. The most fundamental conclusion emerging from this investigation is that the hasty, arbitrary and inconsiderate adoption of Ukrainian as the language of liturgy and religious education was inexpedient. Not only it did not solve any problems, but it jeopardised the chance of concurrent development of Polishness and Catholicism as it was before 1990.

Discussion of the results

Elimination of Polish elements from the ecclesiastic life not only affects the national identity of Polish faithful but also has implications for religious identity of the Catholics who suffer a loss of the most perceptible and pervasive trait of their denominational distinctness. Loyalty to the Polish liturgical language, Polish traditions and rituals manifested national background of the Catholics in Ukraine. A sense of distinctness constitutes a fundamental need of members of any

group⁷. Elimination of the Polish language shattered the orderly perception of outer world among the Catholics. It also had effect on the perception of Catholics by other people. Some paradoxical situations arise when people considered by the Ukrainian environment as Poles declare themselves as Ukrainians of Catholic faith.

Tendency to ignore differences between Poles and Ukrainians or between religions may lead to effects contrary to the intentions as people tend to emphasise the distinctness of their group. This is a strategy aiming to compensate for insufficiency of distinguishing traits and to find justification in the face of defeat⁸. It follows that with increasing differentiation between groups, the members of each group are less anxious about their social identity⁹. Greater differentiation between groups reduces the heterogeneity within a particular group which eventually brings about an improvement in relations between the groups. Attempts at artificial 'fraternisation' of e.g. Catholics and Orthodox made by some priests may only spoil relationships between these communities that co-exist peacefully being conscious of existing differences.

Although there are some doctrinal differences between denominations in Ukraine, nevertheless they have always been of minor importance for the majority of both Catholic and Orthodox believers¹⁰. On the other hand both communities have deep awareness of cultural differences, the most visible of which was the Polish language. Using the terminology borrowed from Jarymowicz¹¹ the relation defined by the opposition 'we – the others', which is substantial for the social self-identity, has been undermined. In 49% of localities east of the Zbruch River the image of the Catholic Church has changed which led in turn to religious disorientation in 30% of parishes. The denominational situation became unclear as the 'Ukrainized' Roman Catholic Church supervenes in addition to the existing traditional Ukrainian Churches: the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kiev Patriarchate, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church and the Greek-Catholic Church. The distinctions between religions became obliterated whereas for psychological reasons it is of great importance for group members to be able to discern themselves from the others¹². Thanks to the Polish language of liturgy Polish Catholics did not experience any threat of rivalry of other denominations and vice versa. The following questions asked by some of the respondents during the interviews demonstrate the fear that arose among the Catholics: 'Are they still the same or after replacing the Polish language of liturgy by the „Orthodox” one they ceased to be Catholics?', 'Is this a step toward unification of religions, as the year 2000 was proclaimed the year of reconciliation?', 'Are they going to be incorporated to the Orthodox Church and will celebrate only Orthodox feasts?'. It shows that an average Catholic got lost in this situation and have to rely entirely on the priests who 'know better how things should stand' and 'would never propose anything wrong'.

The issues describe above constitute but a part of the problem as seen at the macro-scale. This appears even more complicated at the personal level, in case of persons unable to repeat loudly

⁷ Branscombe, N.R., Ellemers, N., Spears, R., Doosje, B. (1999). The context and content of social identity threat (in:) Ellemers, N., Spears, R., Doosje, B (ed.), *Social identity*, p. 35-58. Bodmin: Blackwell Publishers.

⁸ Lalonde, R.N. (1992). The dynamics of group differentiation in the face of defeat. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 18, 336-342.

⁹ Lemaine, G., "Social Differentiation and Social Originality," *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 4, 1974, pp. 17-52. see Giles, M.W., and Evans A.S.. 1990. Social Distance: Ingroup Integration and Perceived External Threat. *The Western Journal of Black Studies* 14(1), 30-35.

¹⁰ Mańkowski, A.E. (1991). Uwagi do artykułu Romana Dzwonkowskiego SAC, 'Starania o rejestrację parafii i kościołów w Mukarowie Podleśnym i Słobkowcach na Ukrainie w latach 1963-1990'. *Przegląd Wschodni*, 4(1), p. 858-869

¹¹ Jarymowicz M. (1992). Tożsamość jako efekt rozpoznawania siebie wśród swoich i obcych, w: P. Boski, M. Jarymowicz, H. Malewska-Peyre (ed) *Tożsamość a odmiennosc kulturowa*, p. 213-275. Warszawa; Wydawnictwo Instytutu Psychologii PAN.

¹² Bransbombe et al., *ibid*

Ukrainian words of prayer. Instead they silently say the prayer in Polish because for them prayer in different language alters its sense and meaning.

Catholics are profoundly concerned about changes in ecclesiastic terminology. It refers especially to such terms as: church (kościół→cerkva), priest (ksiądz→otec), mass (msza→mesa), confirmation (bierzmowanie→myropomazannia), rosary (rózaniec→rozarij). Particularly fierce opposition is voiced against translation of saints' names.

It should be noted that in both Ukrainian and Russian vocabulary there are distinct words for 'priest' and 'Orthodox priest', 'church' and 'Orthodox church' so it is needless to eliminate the words of Polish origin. It leads to cognitive dissonance exhibited by the following typical statement: 'I have always attended the church. And now? Shall I go to the *cerkev* (Orthodox church)? They turned the church into the *cerkev*!'. In some cases disorientation of the faithful is expressed in almost satirical form e.g. 'We used to be Catholic and we had a Catholic priest. Now we are neither Catholic nor Orthodox. We are Capuchins' (parish no 47 west of the Zbruch River, ministered by Capuchins).

In some other parishes elderly persons, despite enormous difficulties, endeavoured to learn Ukrainian prayers because they were convinced by their priests that Polish are not valid anymore and should be replaced by Ukrainian ones. To some believers it meant a treachery of their forefathers' creed. It must be stated that the changes were often introduced by means of manipulation and abuse e.g. by justifying the reform by Pope's directives.

Throughout centuries Polish language helped preserving cultural distinctness and identity of the Roman Catholic Church in Ukraine. Before 1990 Polish Catholics were very sensitive to any deviations from the faith inherited from former generations. It resulted in a very conservative attitude in respect of religious rite among Polish population living in localities that boast uninterrupted religious tradition. It was a method of adaptation to perilous and unstable circumstances employed by the community intent upon preserving religious and national values.

It seems that the far-reaching and swift changes affecting cultural and national aspects of ecclesiastic life disagree with the fundamental mission the Catholic Church based on respecting rights of the faithful to self-identification within the Church. The clergy takes advantage here of a very specific characteristic of Poles living in ex-Soviet countries, particularly in Ukraine, which consists in entrusting their churchmen with unconditional confidence. Otherwise such reform of liturgical language would never come to fruition.

The reform is usually explained in terms of universal character of the Catholic Church, which constitutes one of its major principles. According to this logic Polish language used in the liturgy and sermons prevents people of other nationality from active church attendance. Theoretically rightful, this reasoning produces a situation in which the majority of churchgoers are deprived of the liturgical language that is intelligible to them. The supreme irony is that it bears upon those who pride themselves on steady loyalty and support for the Church in times of hardship.

To understand this anxiety one should, first of all, examine its psychological causes. As it was already stated, groups tend to differ from others, especially those that are too similar, which actually is the case of Ukrainians and Poles in Ukraine. Ukrainization of the Catholic Church and openness to Ukrainians represent a threat of changing in ethnic composition of the Church. This factor is of particular concern for those who give great attention to their Polish and Catholic self-identity. Others, for whom ethnic and religious affiliation is of lesser importance, are more inclined to accept the new conception of parish development.

With the elimination of Polish liturgical language in the Catholic Church of Latin rite in Ukraine, Polish national identity of the believers will tend to disappear. Furthermore, the religious identity – traditionally closely associated with the national one – will be disturbed as well. Eventually it may foster conversions to other religions, especially in the long-term perspective, as the succeeding generations will be not inhibited by the sense of ethnic affiliation.

The above discussion covers but a part of negative consequences that may follow the reform. In this connection a number of questions should be posed concerning potential problems that are likely to arise:

Does the Roman Catholic Church represent a cultural alternative for Ukrainian national identity?

- What denomination is most favourable for development of Ukrainian patriotism: the Greek Catholic/Orthodox or the Roman Catholic Church?
- To what extent the Orthodox and Greek Catholic hierarchies feel menaced by Ukrainization of the Roman Catholic Church?
- What effects does it have for the pastoral practice?
- To what extent the feeling of danger is shared by the faithful of these denominations?
- How the Ukrainization of the Roman Catholic Church is perceived by the Orthodox and the Greek Catholics?
- Do they see it as a peril and how does it influence their religious and national identity?
- In what way will the Ukrainization affect the long-term development of religiosity?
- What effects will it have for religious education of young generation?
- It is widely known that the Roman Catholic Church in Ukraine was able to survive mainly owing to older generation that took the responsibility of transmitting religious values to their children. Now a linguistic barrier appears as the old generation does not know the Ukrainian language of liturgy and prayer. Is the clergy able to assume the commitment of religious education of the young people?
- What is the extent of negative interference with the Orthodox Church? Will the Ukrainization of the Catholic Church lead to adoption of religious practices typical of the Orthodox Church (e.g. attending church only on the occasion of greatest feasts)?

Simple translation of the Bible and liturgical texts does not solve the problem because the entire sphere of religious sentiments and associations is untranslatable.

It seems probable that the diminishing distinctness of the Roman Catholic Church will result in increasing conversions to other religions and sects.

These issues are of great importance for the future of the Roman Catholic Church in Ukraine. Polish faithful deprived of their liturgical language lose their national identity as the main motive for preservation of cultural and national distinctness ceased to exist. Moreover a certain homeostasis based on the sameness of national and religious identity has been disrupted. As it was rightly expressed by Branscombe and al. the distinctness of a group not only warrants social identity of its members, but also constitutes a sort of active protection. It should be doubted whether this socio-religious experiment conducted in a revolutionary manner by the clergy unprepared for this task may give successful results.

In several parishes the priests, despite pressure from the hierarchy, were able to combine the development of religiosity with consolidation of Polish national identity. Interestingly, many Poles who converted to the Catholicism were motivated by Polish character of the Church. It attracted young people who, in turn, brought to the Church their parents who lost their faith during the communist period. So it is 'the call of blood' that makes them adhere to the Catholic Church. Their participation in the parish life begins with learning Polish, which is also taught during catechisation. In such localities, as there are no colliding interests, the interdenominational relationships are based on mutual tolerance.

In most of the localities included in the survey there was a significant portion of Polish population indifferent to religion. It seems that the most efficient way to gain such people would be to refer to their Polish national sentiments. Acceptance of rigorous Catholic morality is much easier for these people who can consider it as a part of their native tradition than it is for persons

grown up in the Orthodox culture. Obviously, there are some exceptions here, nevertheless as a general rule adoption of behavioural patterns is easier and more durable if they conform to one's cultural code.

Attempts made by some priests to attract the Catholicism non-Polish believers give rise to disapproval, suspicion and distrust. Contrarily, highly regarded are those priests who show respect for other religions and remain sceptical about conversions.

Such clear attitude of the priests is widely accepted and followed as a method of ordering social reality, in some localities greatly complicated after 1990 by increasing activeness of different sects. Consequently, the rise in religiousness occurs parallel in both the Catholic and Orthodox Churches without causing tensions or conflicts. Moreover, owing to clear criteria of national and religious categorisation, it reinforces the feeling of national affiliation. People of Polish origin are often pushed to convert to the Catholic faith by public opinion alone. Couples of mixed national background go together to either Catholic or Orthodox churches, without compromising on religious identity of either side. Furthermore, Polish language classes attract young generations into active church attendance. Regardless of whether or not these children will remain in the Church, they will certainly retain a non-stereotypical image of the Catholic Church and a wide tolerance toward other denominations.