

## JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE

Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada  
and  
Ukrainian Self-Reliance League of  
Canada

## JSC - Who are we?

- ▣ Joint Standing Committee of the
  - Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada (UOCC)
  - Ukrainian Self-Reliance League (USRL)
- ▣ 7 appointed members appointed in 2005
  - Chair: Audrey Sojonky
  - UOCC: Emil Yereniuk, StephaniaSpytkowsky, Fr. OlehKrawchenko
  - USRL: Tania Mysak, Eugene Luczkiw, Fr. TarasUdod
- ▣ Ex-officio members

## JSC - History

- ▣ Evolved from one of the 8 recommendations of the CYC Futures Project
- ▣ Core mandate:
  - To identify mutual goals of UOCC and USRL and develop an implementation strategy to achieve such goals
  - Renewal of both organizations and by proxy the Ukrainian Orthodox Community (UOC)

## JSC - Terms of Reference

- 1 Clarify the relationship between the USRL and the UOCC by identifying mutual goals and developing an implementation strategy to achieve such goals in order to strengthen this organizational relationship.
- 2 Determine how to facilitate the missionary role of the Church into that segment of the general membership that maintains a cultural identification with the Ukrainian Canadian tradition.
- 3 Facilitate and promote the role of the laity in the Church.
- 4 To determine how to enable the USRL to act as a broker and liaison with common interests in Ukraine where the UOCC cannot be as overt or active.
- 5 Identify the ways and means of encouraging the interaction of the UOCC and USRL with other parts of the mainstream Canadian community with respect to charitable and other endeavors.

## **JSC - Recommendations**

- ▣ Camps
- ▣ Institutes
- ▣ Chaplains
- ▣ Youth Worker
- ▣ Young Adults
- ▣ Leadership Development

## **YOUTH FOCUS GROUPS: NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

Tania Mysak  
Joint Standing Committee  
UOCC/USRL

## **Outline**

- ▣ Background of Young Adults Initiative
- ▣ Methods
- ▣ Results
- ▣ Discussion

## **Young Adults**

- ▣ Under-represented group
  - Church attendance
  - USRL involvement
- ▣ Many formerly active
- ▣ Desire to engage this demographic
- ▣ What are their needs?
- ▣ What can we do to increase their involvement?

### Focus Groups - Process

- ▣ Conducted in 6 major centres across Canada
- ▣ Participants invited (open invite)
- ▣ Standard questionnaire
- ▣ Facilitated by JSC members
- ▣ Proceedings recorded by JSC member

### Focus Groups - Questionnaire

- ▣ Assessing and defining activity
  - Fulfillment
  - Barriers
- ▣ Priorities
- ▣ Impressions
- ▣ Links to UOC
- ▣ Looking forward

### Focus Groups - Analysis

- ▣ Meeting notes analyzed by single reviewer
- ▣ Categorized into broad themes
- ▣ Overall themes/results confirmed by independent second review

### Focus Groups - Results

- ▣ 6 sessions conducted
  - Vancouver – 6 participants
  - Edmonton – 18 participants
  - Calgary – 11 participants
  - Saskatoon – 8 participants
  - Winnipeg – 12 participants
  - Toronto – 5 participants
- Total = 60

## Level of Activity

- ▣ Level of "activity"
  - Active - 27 (45%)
  - Moderately active - 17 (28%)
  - Minimally active/Inactive - 15 (25%)
- ▣ Activity related to UOCC primarily
  - 3 active in CYMK
  - NONE active in TYC or UWAC

## Themes

- ▣ Spirituality
- ▣ Community
- ▣ Motivation
- ▣ Organizations
- ▣ Looking forward

## Spirituality Needs and Knowledge

- ▣ Knowledge of Orthodox Faith poor
  - "I feel my parents/church failed me in instruction in the Faith"
  - Desire for Bible study/workshops on faith
- ▣ Split between those who feel fulfilled in our church and those who are looking elsewhere
- ▣ Perception that some parishes spiritually weak
- ▣ UOCC has too long focused on retaining language and culture

## Spirituality Worship

- ▣ Positive comments on traditions of worship
  - Architecture, music
- ▣ Active participation important
  - "It seems many parishioners are just going through the motions"
- ▣ Understanding of Liturgy
  - Not just related to language
- ▣ Few comments on length of service

### **Spirituality** Relevance

- ▣ Positive comments that Orthodox Church has a “backbone”
- ▣ Desire for priests to be more “in touch” with modern times and young people
  - Poor sermons
- ▣ Community too focused inwards

### **Community** Belonging

- ▣ Socialization important
  - Moving cities difficult (e.g. “breaking in”)
  - Peer group provides motivation
- ▣ Contributing can bring fulfillment
- ▣ Geography can be barrier

### **Community** Family and Continuity

- ▣ Orthodox church “comfort zone”
  - “Same place it has always been”
- ▣ Raising children in church
  - Want to provide children with similar upbringing to what they had
  - Will attend more regularly once children older
  - Don’t attend regularly as they have no children

### **Community** Age Gap

- ▣ Older demographic noticeable
  - “No energy”, “disengaging”
  - “We are preserving the church for the older people”
  - Concern about what will remain in 10-20 years
- ▣ Little focus on youth/young adults

### **Community** Mixed Marriages

- ▣ Pressure to marry “within” community
- ▣ Married outside community
  - “What church will we attend?”
- ▣ Married into community
  - Not made to feel welcome
  - Language barrier

### **Motivation** Negative Experiences

- ▣ Most participants had negative experience
  - Felt unwelcome, difficult to “break in”
  - “Pounced on” to do something/join group
- ▣ Concern about “anti-Christian” behaviour
  - Members and leadership
- ▣ Concern about political agendas
  - Members and leadership

### **Motivation** Priorities

- ▣ Career/Family
  - Top priority
  - Need for balance of these priorities with church
- ▣ Relevance determines priority
- ▣ Most want to keep church a priority

### **Motivation** Barriers

- ▣ Geography
- ▣ Time
- ▣ Negative experiences
- ▣ Mixed marriages
- ▣ New to community

## Language and Culture

- ▣ Different upbringing gives different perspective
  - Some placed culture before faith
  - Some had no ties to culture
  - Most felt retention of some degree of culture important
- ▣ Language important
  - No real push for "all English" (20-50%)
  - Given more importance in Eastern Canada

## Organizations

- ▣ Not on radar for this demographic at present
- ▣ Value in CYMK, unclear on relevance of TYC/UWAC
- ▣ "Pushy to join"
- ▣ Separation of men and women undesirable
- ▣ Not welcoming/accommodating for young people

## Looking Forward Openness

- ▣ Language
  - Remove stigma of language
  - Have options
- ▣ Mixed marriages
  - Accepting non-Ukrainians
- ▣ Gender issues
  - Consolidate organizations
- ▣ Generational issues
  - Focus on youth/children

## Looking Forward Modernization

- ▣ Revisit reliance on volunteers
- ▣ Collaborate and amalgamate
- ▣ Rethink fundraising efforts
- ▣ Use technology to its fullest
  - Communication
  - Tracking
  - Fundraising

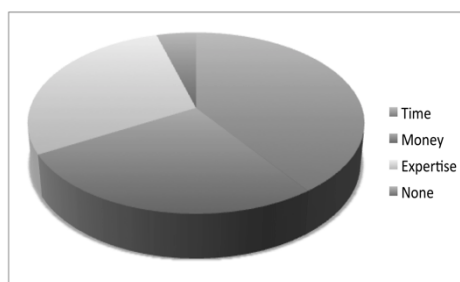
### Looking Forward Engagement

- ▣ "If not me, who? If not now, when?"
- ▣ "We go through cycles in life and at times we give a lot and at other times nothing at all"
- ▣ Young people may have to set course or standard
- ▣ We need to devote time to change the vision
- ▣ Not giving up, taking ownership, trying to solve problems
- ▣ "I feel better talking about my church"
- ▣ Attendance in church cannot be a chore

### Looking Forward Leadership

- ▣ Proactive leadership development
- ▣ Succession planning
- ▣ Leaders must be respected and respectful
- ▣ Leadership = change management

### What Will YOU Contribute?



### Impressions

- *The participants also felt that at the present time their involvement is purely emotional; **they need to see some potential**; their faith is important and that is why many came to the meeting, and they still need convincing that if they gave more money that it would help the UOC.*



### Impressions

- *Organizational building blocks as currently structured in UOCC and USRL are falling apart*
- *Some concern for USRL but more focus and concern about the consequences for the UOCC*
- *The heavy inference was: Are we reacting to change OR are we (could we be?) agents of change?*

### Impressions

- *We need to make the changes in the UOC and these changes need to work for them as young adults and will last (it need to be sustainable). The young adults do not need a quick fix but a permanent solution.*

### Impressions

- *The group made the statement that they have become complacent. We have taken, the church and organizations, for granted.*
- *Could this mean that there will have to be some extenuating factors/disaster that will cause these adults to get involved?*

### Impressions

- ▣ *"An interesting discussion arose about looking at successful communities and building upon what they do right. Ultimately, as a community we don't support each other. In an ideal world, somebody needing help should be able to access money or expertise...we generally provide neither."*

## Organizational Change

- Create urgency
- Form powerful coalition
- Create vision for change
- Communicate vision
- Remove obstacles
- Create short-term wins
- Build on the change
- Anchor the changes into culture

Kotter: Harvard Business Review "Leading Change"

## SO NOW WHAT?

## Implications

UOCC

- ▣ Call to improve faith-based education
  - Goal = better understanding of Orthodox Faith
  - Quality more important than quantity
- ▣ Culture of lifelong learning
  - Education does not end with Sunday School
- ▣ Look at alternate forms of education
  - Adult learners – use your expertise!!

## Implications

URSL

- ▣ Vision and mission must be relevant
- ▣ Listen to the young people we have (e.g. CYMK)
- ▣ May involve
  - Significant organizational change
  - Clarity in focus (church-based)

## Implications

UOCC & URSL

- ▣ Leadership must be developed
- ▣ Proactive and deliberate
  - Right people on the bus
- ▣ Utilize the skills we have
  - Right people in the right seats on the bus

## What Appears Obvious

- No single solution
- No quick fix
- No “program” will address these issues
- Heterogeneous group
- Multi-faceted approach
- Long-term solutions
- Paradigm shift
  - Retention vs. Renewal

## Where to start?

- ▣ Be proactive
- ▣ Be creative
- ▣ Be patient
- ▣ Take personal responsibility
- ▣ “Be the change you are trying to create”
  - M. Ghandi
- ▣ “If you build it, they will come”
  - Field of Dreams

## Maximizing Engagement

Knowledge

Motivation

Environment

## Motivation – Needs Based?



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

## Know Your Audience

- ☐ Generation X (1965-1980)
  - Resourceful, independent
  - Dislike micromanagement ("establishment")
  - Technology savvy
  - Place high value on work-life balance
- ☐ Millennials or Generation Y (1981-1999)
  - Creative, thrive on innovation; collaborative
  - High sense of entitlement, question everything
  - Technologically adept
  - Operate at scatter-shot pace; short attention span

## Closing Thoughts

- What am I doing to make things better?
  
- What am I doing to make things worse?