



The Church in the Valley



ЦЕРКВА В СЕЛІ

(ІСТОРІЯ)

Склала:
ЛІДА МККІННОН

ВІННІПЕГ — 1985

THE CHURCH IN THE VALLEY

(A HISTORY)

Compiled by:
LYDIA MCKINNON

WINNIPEG — 1985

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Ця книжка присвячена для тої маленької групи членів що ще пильно підтримують цю церкву й вірно відвідують зібрання.

This book is dedicated to the few members who still diligently support this church and faithfully attend regular services.

“Everyday I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever. One generation will commend your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts.”

(Psalms 145: 2, 4)

“Щодня буду величати Тебе, і ім'я Твоє хвалити по віки. Рід перед родом прославить твори Твої, і звістить про могучі діла Твої”.

(Псалом 145:2, 4)

— Contributed by Martha Skoworodko

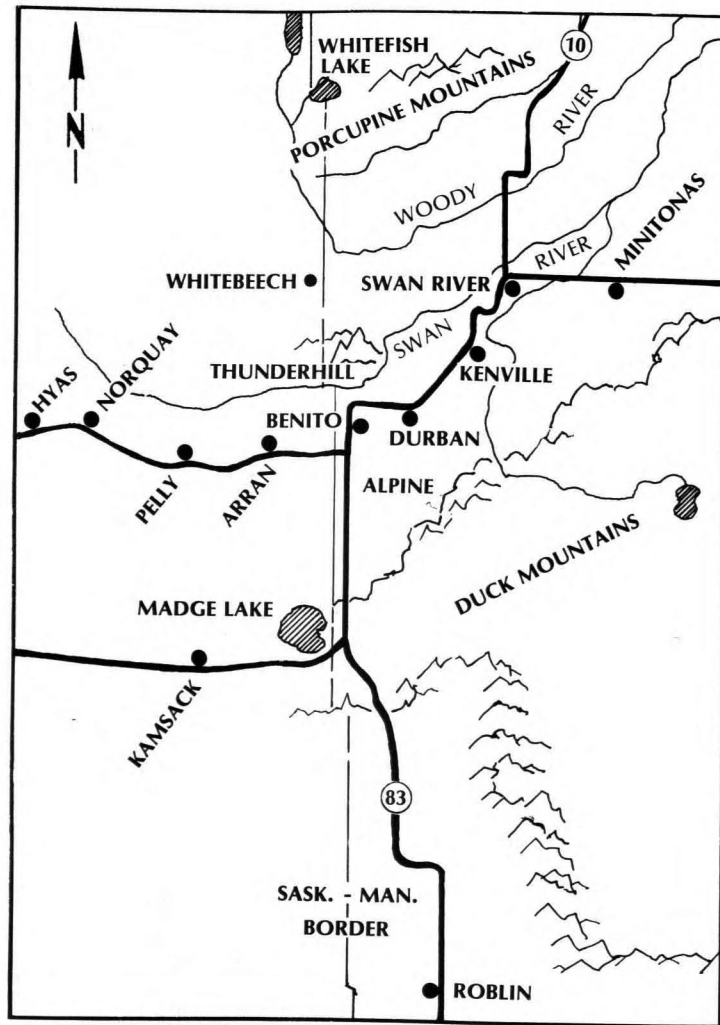
This book is compiled from the wealth of personal information and photographs contributed by a great many people. Approximately 250 people were contacted; about one-third replied. These replies have been fantastic, and we express our gratitude to these people for their valuable contributions.

The history of the church, as expressed here, is not 100% complete. This is due to the fact that many people, who had information, did not share it with us. For these omissions, we apologize.

We hope that you will enjoy reading this book, as much as we have enjoyed putting it all together.

“We are one in the Spirit”. God bless all of you.

— *L. McKinnon*



The village of Benito (incorporated in 1941) is situated in North Western Manitoba in the beautiful Swan River Valley, one mile east of the Saskatchewan border. It is bordered on the south by the Duck Mountains (Alpine) and on the north by Thunder Hill, with the Swan River flowing gently at its base.

It was in this beautiful valley that the Ukrainian and Russian settlers came together and built "The Church in the Valley".

BEGINNINGS

In 1930, the following article appeared in “Evangelical Herald”, under the heading “Evangelism in the World..Canada, - New Group in Benito, Manitoba.”:

Last summer six Christian families from Volyn, settled in Benito, Manitoba in the area known as Duck Mountains, 12 miles south of the village of Benito.

The families were scattered in those mountains and forests several miles from each other without any fellowship. They began to long for fellowship with others from their homeland. In their desperate state, they prayed to God to send them someone to bring them words of comfort and fellowship in their time of need. God heard their prayers and sent P. Kindrat and J. Forsuik from Arran, Saskatchewan, on Saturday evening, October 19. Travelling was extremely difficult, as the roads were clay and snow mixed with rain softened them, making them almost impassable by car.

That Saturday evening a blessed service was held where these two brethren preached God's word. That evening a small group was organized, consisting of 8 members, and 5 guests.

Luke Naydiuk was appointed Pastor of the group and young John Naydiuk as secretary. The group agreed to meet every Sunday to hold services together.

On Sunday morning, around 11 o'clock, the group met again, holding a service at the home of P. Bielik. At this service, J. Forsuik led in prayer and Luke Naydiuk read the scripture. This was followed by a short sermon by J. Forsuik and the main speaker was P. Kindrat. The service was concluded with Holy Communion.

P. Kindrat and J. Forsuik then bid the group “farewell” and proceeded to Minitonas where they participated in a Sunday evening service which included the opening of a prayer home.



Rev. P. Kindrat's picture of the first group of settlers who started the Benito Church. These are: the Sabastian Leskewich family, the David Naydiuk family, the Luke Naydiuk family, the Bazak family, the Blosa family, the Bielik family, John Naydiuk, Mr. Forsuik and Mr. Lipka.



2 Families — 1929
David Naydiuk and Luke Naydiuk

Front row seated — from left to right: Pearl Naydiuk (Yachnik), Mrs. David Naydiuk, Pete Naydiuk, Mrs. Luke Naydiuk, Lydia Naydiuk, Madge Naydiuk, Mary Naydiuk, Fred Naydiuk.
Back row: Mr. David Naydiuk, Mr. Luke Naydiuk, John Naydiuk.

On May 15, 1929, when Sabestian Leskewich and his family were emigrating to Canada, he met the Bielik brothers, Stephen and Paul at the immigration office at Rovno, in Poland. They were scheduled to leave at the same time and decided then and there to travel together. They were then joined by Mr. Lipka.

In Canada, in Winnipeg, they were met by John Huk, and Ignace Sidorchuk, who directed them to the Alpine district.

On July 21, 1929, David Naydiuk and family, Luke Naydiuk and family and Andrew Blosha and family arrived in Winnipeg from the Postnikovsky region of Volyn. The Winnipeg brethren, John Huk, Ignace Sidorchuk, and Stephen Bielik, who had arrived earlier, visited them at the immigration office. Stephen Bielik suggested to them to continue on to Benito where his brother Paul had bought a farm. All three families travelled to Benito and met Paul Bielik and also Sabestian Leskewich, who had a neighbouring farm. Luke and David bought a farm together and from time to time the neighbours visited each other.

In September 1929, J Prychidko came to visit Paul Bielik and they came on horseback to the Naydiuk farm and there had their first Evangelical service.

In mid October 1929, Rev. P. Kindrat came and began organizing services among the settlers. At one such service he appointed Luke Naydiuk as officiating Pastor of the small group.

In the Spring of 1930, a new group of Immigrants came to Benito from Volyn — 4 families: the Bazak family, K. Kerdyk and family, Max Zbirun and family and K. Balasuik and family. Lena (Bazak) Doroshuk from Swan River, Manitoba, writes, “I came to Benito in 1930 with my Dad, Mom and three brothers, First we started services in homes, then Kindrat came in 1931, found us, and he was coming for about 23 years. I got married to Harold Doroshuk in 1936, and moved to Swan River and left Benito church.”

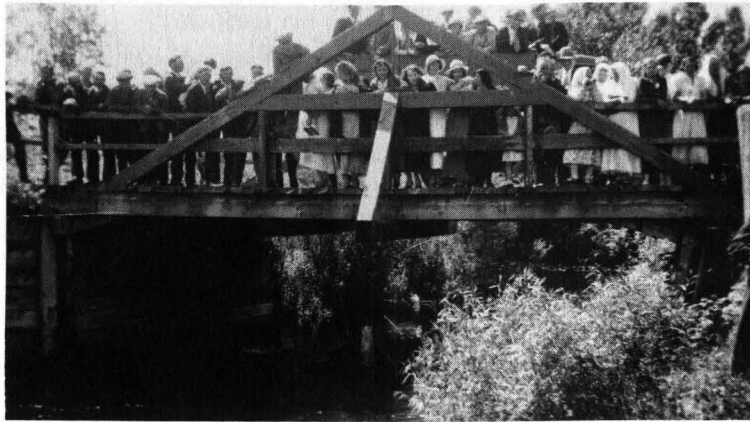
Immigrating from the village of Pitiskiew in the oblast of Dobno of Ukraine, Max Zbirun and his wife Polly and their son William came to Canada on July 2, 1930. They settled in the Duck Mountain area and were among the founding members of the now known Benito Russian-Ukrainian Evangelical Church. The first services were held in the Lipka's home with fourteen people in attendance with the help of Rev. Kindrat. Max Zbirun served

faithfully in the Benito church as a deacon, church treasurer, trustee and choir member, as well as on various church committees for over 50 years, until they moved to Saskatoon in the fall of 1980. Polly Zbirun also worked faithfully along with her husband by helping and supporting him in his various offices. She worked diligently in the Ladies' circle, taking part in various positions. She was a choir member of the church for many years. Polly, along with other members of the church took time to travel to various homes in the surrounding districts to hold services. She contributed by reciting verses and by helping in the music ministry.

Three families immigrated from the Monkovskyi region. These were Dan Leskewich and family, and Andrew and Alex Petelski and their families. Alex Petelski from Kelowna, B.C., writes, “It wasn't easy to leave our homeland to travel far across the ocean... God helped both of us to come to Canada in May 1930. We ended up in the province of Manitoba in the district of Alpine, 10 miles from Benito, where we worked for 10 years. There we met a group of believers; the Naydiuk family, Sabestian Leskewich and Bieliks. We then moved to Durban near Benito where we again worked on our farm until we moved to B.C. in 1975. The beginnings were very difficult. We had to get used to a new way of life, and services were held at various farms, sometimes traveling 20 miles to go to a service.”

During this time Polly Kowalewska, a member of the Polish conference of Evangelical Christians, immigrated to Canada. She had been a priest's daughter in Poland, and was very missionary minded. Dr. Kmeta knew Miss Kowalewska in Winnipeg in the 30's. He tried to get her a position in the Children's Hospital there. She was attending the church where Dr. Kmeta was pastor, but she had plans to go north to Benito. She had some training in music—she would take a hymn book, and with her hands beating out the “time” (there was no piano), she would master the melody and teach it to others. She introduced the women's work into the church in the early 30's. She encouraged ladies to the Lord's work and they had sincerely undertaken this by doing handiwork and setting aside a day for selling their crafts. All proceeds from the sale were used wherever the need was the greatest.

The winters were very cold and no one had cars. Most of the Christian families lived in the Alpine school district and the others



Baptism at the Conference in 1932



1933 — delegates to a Lizard Lake conference.
seated — Luke Naydiuk, Mr. Kudryk, Steve Roda and Tom Bernatsky



Young People at Thunderhill — 1935



A cottage meeting at the Prokopchuk home at Thunderhill

Духовно-назидательный Съезд Еванг. Христиан в Б е н и т о , Ман. с 5-го по 8-ое Июля 1934 года

Этот Съезд происходил в доме, принадлежащем братству **д у х о б о р о в**, с любезного разрешения их вождя **П. П. В е р и г н а**.

ноличники, вышедшие из коммуны и имеющие свои собственные хозяйства (фармы). Единоличников другие духоборы называют «фармалями».



**«Один у вас Учитель — Христос:
все же вы — братья».**
(Матф. 23, 8)

«И сами, как живые камни, устрояйте из себя дом духовный, священство святое, чтобы приносить духовные жертвы, благоприятные Богу Иисусом Христом».
(1 Петра 2, 5)

**ДУХОВНО-НАЗ. СЪЕЗД
ЕВ. ХР. В БЕНИТО, Ман.,
КАНАДА
с 5-го по 8-ое Июля 1934 года**

Известно, что в настоящее время братство духоборов разделилось на три главные части.

Большая часть принадлежит к одной коммуне, называемой:

«Христианская Община Всемирного Братства».

Вторую значительную часть духоборов составляют еди-

н о ч н и к и, вышедшие из коммуны и имеющие свои собственные хозяйства (фармы). Единоличников другие духоборы называют «фармалями».

Т р е т ь я часть духоборов носит наименование «свободников», объявивших себя свободными от всех обязанностей к государству (не признающих никакого подданства, никаких государственных налогов и повинностей и никакой эксплуатации труда людей и даже животных (не упортебляющих при пахоте лошадей, а па-

An article from one of the periodicals telling about
the first Conference that was held in Benito
July 5-8, 1934.



Max & Polly Zbirun
with William & Sadie



1930's after a church service
at one of the homes — Thunder Hill



From left to right: Grandpa Roda, T. Bernatsky, Steve Roda, Mrs. Roda & Hilda
— Horse-drawn van

had to travel 10 - 12 miles to go to services. Sadie (Mosienko) Naydiuk of Kelowna, B.C. writes, "We used horses for transportation or went on foot. It was very enjoyable as we usually sang a lot of hymns and had fellowship along the way as we drove to the meetings."

The steady growth in the meetings inspired Max Zbirun to seek the help of Daniel Leskewich and together they organized the first choir. The choir was such an inspiration to the congregation that music became a very important and much demanded part of the services. Sadie (Mosienko) Naydiuk writes, "We usually had choir practices on Saturday night, so that we could stay over for the Sunday service. These choir practices were such a blessing to me, as was the hospitality of these Christians, who had so little of this world's goods, but would 'move over' to give the choir members a place to stay overnight with them. and share their simple but nutritious meals with us. Also, on Sundays after the service, the hostess always served lunch to everyone before they left to drive home. Everyone had young children, and it was such a joy to get to know all these little ones. I remember the first Christmas concert that I attended. It was a real highlight for all of us and especially the children. It was held in Benito in the Doukhoubour Hall. To bring the children ten to twelve miles on a cold winter's night was not an easy task; so the men borrowed the large Alpine school van, hitched their horses to it, and brought a load down to Benito for the concert. Others came by sleigh, caboose or however — but everyone seemed to get there. Many outsiders came to the concert. It was a lengthy one, but no one minded. The children all had their parts to say. Some sang, our choir sang a few numbers too. There was a Christmas tree for the children with real candles for lights, and candy bags too! It took the Alpine vanload a long time to get home. The wind had blown snowdrifts across the road. Also from Benito, it was mostly an uphill climb to Alpine; but God was there to protect His people and to minister His joy and peace to old and young alike. A very happy occasion indeed!"

The first organizational ladies' meeting was held on January 13, 1937, with the lay pastor, Luke Naydiuk as chairman. Sadie further writes, "I was young in the faith and craved Christian fellowship, so I attended the meeting to see what these dear sisters in the Lord were planning to do for the furtherance of our Lord's

work. But it shocked me to tears when they voted me in, to lead the group. I tried to explain that I didn't know how to do it, nor was I familiar enough with the Scriptures to take on the presidency, but each dear woman promised to pray and help - and pray and help they did. I had so much to learn spiritually and in everything. But they continued to bathe the work in prayer, and our precious Lord was faithful in answering and blessing, for which we were ever thankful to Him. One afternoon a woman came to our meeting with a prayer request. She was as yet not a believer. Her little girl was very ill and she asked us to pray for her. we did, believing in our God of Miracles. He saw fit to raise the little girl up to health. There were other requests for prayer in our immediate women's group, which our Lord graciously answered, and we were encouraged."

The next families to arrive were S. Kozak and family, K. Tutayko and family, Fred Vakulinski and family, F. Shaluha and family, Joseph Bernatsky and family, and S. Pelepchuk and family. Later Mrs. Ewhenia Petelski came with her two small sons, Hryhorij and Walter, with Sawka and Michael Werenich and their families.

S. Pelepchuk and his family arrived in 1936. Services were already in existence in different homes and schools. The families, although living far apart, shared laughter and tears and overcame the many hardships through brotherly love.

For a while there was no official pastor and different brethren took turns preaching. These were: L. Naydiuk, S. Roda, T. Bernatsky, Petelski, Kudryk, Bielik, Leskewich and others.

S. Pelepchuk was briefly interim pastor before he moved to Ontario. He writes, "I often think of Benito as my other family." He and his wife are now retired and living in Windsor, Ontario.

In 1938, two brothers, Mykola and Kuzma Yacknovets and families; Fred Leskewich and family, and Nick Brucki and family arrived in Benito.

Quoting from Annette (Leskewich) Newar from Ottawa, Ontario, "we (Fred Leskewich family of Fred, Nadia, Peter, Annette, Helen, and John) were the last of the Leskewich clan to arrive in Canada. We came in the summer of 1938 and arrived in Benito with no one to greet us. Dad went to the store of Sam Tax, who welcomed us and asked some man to give us a lift in the back of his truck to Uncle Dan's farm. The family there were glad to see us and



Sunday Morning — Bringing Milk for the Conference
1939



Young People's Group — 1941



"Grandma" Metashenko



Mr. & Mrs. Diatchenko (nee Polly Kowalewska)
in front of Luke Naydiuk's house



At the Koziol's farm on Thunderhill — 1940
S. Roda, Mary Roda, F. Soloway, Mr. Blosha, D. Maximow, Mrs. Blosha, Ralph Blosha, Barbara Koziol, Mr. Johnson, F. Koziol, Mr. Sidorchuk



Fedor, Barbara, Izydor Koziol
1939

we stayed with them in their 4-room mud house. We met the Petelskis, Bieliks, Uncle Sabestian, and Yaknovets families living in the immediate area. Worship was held in homes alternately at that time in the believers' homes each Sunday."

The group of settlers in the Thunderhill area consisted of the Roda, Sitko, Yanchuk, Bernatski, and Koziol families, and these would combine with the Alpine group for worship services at Easter and Christmas times in the Benito Doukhobour Hall.

Steve Roda first heard the gospel in 1926, while still in Poland. In 1928, he, along with his wife and young daughter, immigrated to Canada, and settled in the Thunderhill district. They started going to church in 1933.

Fred Soloway from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan writes, "In 1930 I came to Canada, taking a homestead in Saskatchewan. There were no believers nearby, but Rev. P. Kindrat came to visit and explained the word of God to me. In 1934 there was a conference in Benito and I was baptized. God laid on my heart to preach His word and I would walk 5 to 10 miles asking people to come to a service. Our house was very small and made of logs, but we would hold services outside beneath the trees, with the brethren from

Manitoba helping us. When it would rain, or when it was cold in winter, we would hold services at Thunderhill in the home of Brother Steve Roda, and our loving God continued to bless us. I also took it upon myself to approach the directors of schools and halls and ask that we be allowed to hold services on designated Sundays and they allowed it. Many people came to these services and heard the Word of God and were saved."

Izydor (Sid) Koziol and his father, Feodor bought a farm at the foot of Thunderhill in the spring of 1938, near the farm of S. Roda. In 1944, Sid went to Toronto where he met Anna Kipir, whom he married on May 6, 1945. There he bought his first car and they travelled back to Benito to the farm.

Jack Koziol left for Toronto in 1939. In 1956, he and his wife were sent to Seoul, Korea by the Slavic Gospel Association to set up a radio broadcast in the Russian language to Russia and the Far East.

Barbara Koziol worked for the Les Wright family in 1945, and then for the Gnida family near Durban, after which time she moved to Toronto, where she married Dmetro Bazak in 1947.



S. Pelepchuk Family — 1948



Gnida Family — 1945



Mr. & Mrs. Diatchenko, Nadia Petelski, Mr. & Mrs. Max Zbirun

Tom and Nina Bernatsky were involved in the beginnings of the Benito church. Prior to the time that the church was formed, some Jehovah Witnesses gave Tom a Bible. He, desiring to know the truth, began searching the scriptures for himself. In the summer of 1933, the Alpine group held a conference in Benito, and Tom Bernatsky and Steve Roda became believers. That same Fall, they were baptized by Luke Naydiuk and they started services in the Thunderhill area going into homes and holding services. Many became believers. Tom and Nina Bernatsky raised 10 children, all of whom attended Benito church in their younger years.

Tamara (Bernatsky) Hrycak from Lintlaw, Saskatchewan writes, "as a young girl I received Christ as my personal Saviour. Later as a teenager, under the ministry of John Huk, I was further convicted to follow the Lord in a deeper walk and was baptized at the age of 16.

Only for special occasions did we go to Benito where the meetings were held in the Doukhobour Home joined by the Alpine brethren. As a child growing up, I remember these very special times, that us children used to go to Conference was a big thing for us. Also Christmas programs. One particular one stands out in my mind - when 4 of us: Hilda (Roda) Kowalchuk, William Zbirun, Victor Bernatsky and myself had memorized a number of verses and recited them in the order we stood. Afterwards, a Mr. Kmeta, who liked it so well, gave us a box of chocolates. That was exciting..who heard of receiving a box of chocolates in the early 30's. They were distributed evenly amongst the 4 of us. The brethren also had Christmas programs at Poplar Bluff, and all that was exciting because we got to go so far (at least we thought it was far then). The parents tucked us all in one big bob sleigh with a big box on it, all wrapped and covered us in feather ticks and quilts. These were the real open sleigh rides and we enjoyed it.

In the summer times I remember Polly (Kowalewska) Diatchenko used to come to Thunder Hill and visit the homes and would gather us children in one yard and play games with us. We thought she was just great. Then she would take us in the house, tell us Bible stories and sing with us. After that the hostess gave us all lunch ...now that was fun, because in those days you didn't do too much for excitement. We really liked her.

Also, Elizabeth (Severigne) Greshiev, used to come out to the

school and tell all the class (one room school) Bible stories.

Then, when I got to be a teenager, and the church had already been built, choir practices use to be fun. I also had the privilege of attending the Bible school and music school. Those were the good times, to be together with a group of young people. Although I had been very young, and Bible school was quite heavy for me, I'm glad to say not everything went over my head...some did sink in and stayed with me. There were times when I was asked to go with the brethren when they went to hold services in different places such as south of Durban, Margo, Kuroki, Kylemore, and Lintlaw.

Mike Bernatsky writes from Tulsa Oklahoma, "I was born into the church, so to speak, back in November 1942, and so far as I know, began attending from birth."

Quoting from Nettie Forsuik(Ottawa, Ont.), "My earliest recollections of activity amongst the Russian-Ukrainian Evangelical community was centered in home meetings in Saskatchewan where we lived and it was only in the summertime and at Christmas that we journeyed by horse (18 to 20 miles) to Benito to have fellowship with members there. At that time, they met in a hall and during the three-day conferences, we would stay over and sleep in the same hall. Of course, I was very young so do not have the recollections some of the teenagers of the day would. I well remember, however, the religious meetings held in the homes, both at our place and other places in Thunder Hill and White Beach. The families living in these areas eventually were responsible for the building and support of the Benito church."

It was decided to have communion together every first Sunday of the month, with the believers coming together from Thunder Hill and Alpine in a central place. That central place was the home of David Naydiuk. A small Sunday School was started in the Alpine district with Sadie (Mosienko) Naydiuk as the teacher.

Annette Newar says, "I accepted the Lord quite young, being of Christian parents and nurtured by the work of the Benito church and particularly the Sunday School work by Sadie Mosienko, who walked or bicycled from Benito to conduct Sunday School work with the children."



Construction of the Church Building
1939 - 1940

Sadie writes, "I recall how one little girl, a preschooler, sang very heartily, 'I've worked for the Lord for a long long time, and I ain't got weary yet!'"

A Bible conference was held every summer at the large Doukhobour Hall in Benito before the church was built. On July 5-8, 1934, at the conference, the main speaker was Ivan Prochanov, the Head of Evangelical Christian Association. This conference was attended by people from all surrounding areas and also many Doukhobours who lived northwest of Benito, who knew Brother Prochanov, when he helped them in 1896, when they immigrated from Russia to Canada. They suffered illnesses on the ship, Kipri, and on that ship, Ivan Prochanov distributed medicine for their illnesses and as a result, they now came to see him and had the opportunity to hear him preach.

Sadie writes, "One year as we were planning for the conference, the church asked Mary Naydiuk and me to look after the dessert part of the meals. They bought us 100 lbs of flour, and different people donated butter, eggs, etc., the rest was up to Mary and me. We baked many, many large cakes. Finally, for the conference weekend we carefully and successfully transported our "sweet cargo" to the dining hall. Hard work? Hardly! Mary and I enjoyed it.

We had three very dear Grandmas that were free to be our conference cooks: Grandma Metashanko, Grandma Roda, and Grandma Petelski. The younger women also helped with the meals, despite being tied down with families, etc. We thanked God for all of them."

In 1939, it was decided to build a church in a central location. Some of the men involved in the actual cutting of the wood for the building were: Jack Koziol, Steve Roda, Fred Naydiuk and Alex Petelski. Alex Petelski, in reminiscing about that time, says, "It was a pleasure for me to work in the woods preparing material for the building of this church."

The lumber was cut near Blosha's farm in Alpine, and was dried at their farm. Sid Koziol helped to haul the lumber and to build the church.

The church building was completed in 1941, and by that time the times were better financially, and more people had cars.

By 1949, the building wasn't large enough to accommodate the people, so a 20 foot addition was built with a new choir loft and new pulpit. In 1953, a foyer and nursery were added.

Frances (Naydiuk) Baum, from Kelowna, B.C. writes, "My memories of our church go way back to its very beginnings for my father, Luke Naydiuk was its first pastor before I was even born. We lived so far out 'in the bush (Alpine)' that I cannot remember actually attending too many services. I do remember going in a wagon far away to church. I have recollections of meetings being held in the homes, for when they came to ours, I remember being very afraid of people and hiding somewhere when they came. When I was in my teens, we had a fairly large group of young people and our leisure hours were taken up with prayer meeting on Wednesdays, choir practice on Saturdays and two services on Sundays. These times for us were fun times when we spent visiting and getting to know each other. We would take turns going to each other's homes for Sunday dinner and the afternoon. Rarely a Sunday went by but that you didn't invite someone over or vice versa. These were feast days for us as that was the day the best foods were served and lots of it. I love to think back of these Sundays. We are much too busy now with so many other things to do.

I loved the huge conference gatherings we had in the summers and at Thanksgiving or harvest time when guests arrived from many places - it was a time of special music, special speakers, and lots and lots of food cooked and served right at the church. Baptismal times were special times for me and they were always held by the river.

Another event that meant a lot to me was the New Year's Eve Watch Night service. I really looked forward to it even though it was such a lengthy service. This was the time that everyone, whether he had any talent or not was given the opportunity to sing, preach, recite or what have you. There were many surprises for us. We ended that evening on our knees asking God to again guide us through another year. I have always tried as much as possible never to miss a Watch Night service."

The 1940's saw a great influx of people into the church.



First Conference in the New Church Building — 1941



Ladies' Group — Thunderhill Area



Travelling to Baptism in the Swan River



Baptism — 2 Candidates: Saul Mosienko & Barbara Bazak

The Fred Gnida family came to Canada in 1929, and settled in the Minitonas area. After moving into the Durban district in 1940, they began attending the Benito church in 1942. The fundamental teaching of the church, as well as their involvement with Sunday School, youth group and choir, was instrumental in the spiritual growth and maturity of the family.

Alex Gnida, of Vernon, B.C. writes, "I started attending Benito church in the early forties with my parents. We used to travel in the summer by way of democrat - lots of fresh air and two horses for power, then in the winter with a sleigh and grain box. Later Dad and his friend, Fred Melnichuk, built a wooden van and a little stove that kept us warm during travelling to Benito church, although Dad had bought a car in 1938, and had it two years. It burned down in 1940, so Dad could not afford to buy another car and we were without a motor vehicle for awhile.

Benito church was on fire for God in the forties and fifties, as I can remember on one revival during an altar call, an older man that sat way back of the church, and the Lord spoke to him and he came forward and threw his cigarettes and whiskey bottle on the floor and asked Jesus for forgiveness and God saved him from all that filth. Then there was this one time during revival when the congregation was on their knees, and I was in the choir loft, with the rest of the choir when a man walked into church dressed like Jesus. We thought he was Him. His clothes were pure white glittering and I do not know what others thought, but I thought that Jesus came and is taking us home to be with Him. How happy I was. At that moment, he came to the front of the church where Br. Roda was kneeling praying and asked him if he could speak in our church and Br. Roda asked him that if he could wait until the end of the service so that the church board could talk to him first, then he could speak. So he settled down, but by the time the service was finished, he slipped out of the church during the benediction and disappeared. That was around 1946."

Fred and Nancy Kaluk attended the Benito church since 1942. Nancy writes, "we bought a farm 4 miles from Benito in 1947, and lived there till 1961. All that time we attended the Benito church. I sang in the choir for many years. I also sang with Mary (Sitko)

Leskewich, a duet on the Benito radio program. My husband had water baptism in 1942. Our three children , Pauline, Peter and Barbara all attended Sunday School until we moved."

Mary (Sitko) Leskewich, from Edmonton, Alberta writes "Walter and I both attended the church since we were kids. We were saved in that church during some special meetings held with John Mark. Walter and I were both baptized in 1949 and attended the church faithfully. We both sang in the choir and later Walter was the choir director, until we left for Edmonton. In 1949, Walter and I started going around together, but back in those days, you weren't allowed to be engaged for too long. We must have gone together for two years, when we were called before the church board telling us, either to get married or stop going around together. So in 1951, we were married in the church and lived in the little church house till we moved to Edmonton in 1955."

The Shakotko family was involved in many church activities. Eli Shakotko spent a great deal of time in missionary work among the farms and villages in the area.

Several members of the family were involved as Sunday School teachers over many years.

Jack Shakotko, from Saskatoon, Sask, writes, "My wife and I joined the church in 1947. I was involved as Young people President and Youth for Christ director. We carried on street meetings every Saturday night in the summer time. During our stay at the church we also built up the Madge Lake Bible camp. We left the valley in 1960, moving to Oshawa, Ont, where I pastored for four years, then in Toronto for three years. I was also Sunday School teacher in Oshawa, ministering in 3 other churches in Toronto till my retirement from General Motors, where I worked for twenty years."

Pearl Horocholyn, from Abbotsford, B.C., writes, "Firstly, it was in that church that I accepted Jesus as my personal Saviour and Lord, in the fall of 1949 - then in the following year, June 10, 1950, received water baptism. It was a joyful experience and the Lord was so real to me as a new Christian, as I was raised in a Catholic religion. Much persecution followed from my family after that -but the Lord kept me all the way. My daughter, Helen, accepted the Lord in D.V.B.S. summer camp at about 10 years of age. Later



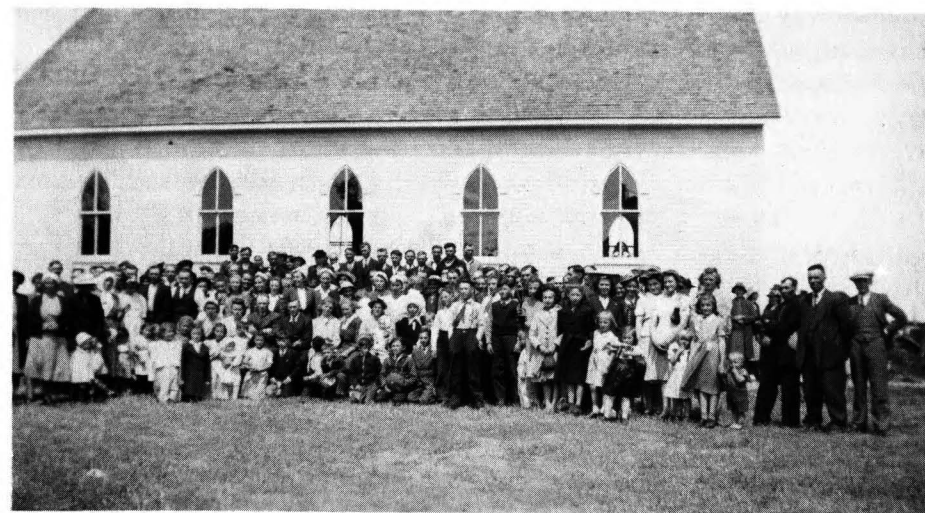
Benito — 1942 Sunday School



Young People — Benito, 1942.



Ladies Group — 1942



Benito Conference — 1942.



she went to Prairie Bible Institute to take her grade 10 - after that she too was baptized in that church. She is a dedicated Christian today. Later she got married to Alex Kadun on October 8, 1956. They have two sons and one daughter. The three of them accepted the Lord when very young.”

With the mission work so great, the need arose for more Christian workers. A Bible school was then started at the church to train young people for Christian service. Some of the instructors were: S. Lipin and S. Fivchuk. Because of the difficulty in holding evening classes, the Bible school was moved to Toronto, Ontario.

Winter courses in music and choir directing as well as courses in the Russian and Ukrainian languages were also offered. The choir directing courses were given by Avdij Worobey and by Sam Kaplich.

The Komenda general store was a great “social” gathering for many of the church members. James and Olga Komenda were prominent members of the church and many members would “drop in” to the store on any given day for informal visits - sometimes staying for several hours if the discussions were good.

Olga’s brother, Nick Lysack and his wife, Nettie, were also



very active in the church. Nick Lysack was Sunday School Superintendent, and Nettie was a Sunday School teacher, as well as a choir member and soloist. Their children, Evelyn and Walter also participated in many musical numbers.

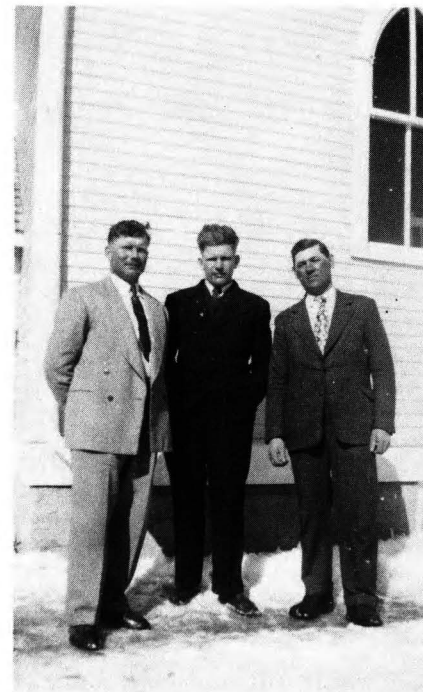
The Malachov family was very involved in church work. Mrs. Malachov was part of the visiting committee, dedicating a good deal of her time to visiting distant members and potential members. Polly (Malachov) Yanchuk, and her sister Lilla (Johnson) were both Sunday School teachers at different times at the church.

Other active families were: Postnikoffs, Shawlinski, Kotosky, Sachatsky, Samchuks, Caryk, Maksimchuk, Schmigel, Maksimow, Pysk, Klemionek, Piatocha, Dubenchuk and Zinkiew.

A special note is being made here of the ladies from many of these families, as well as others from families previously mentioned, who were so involved with the ladies circle, giving so generously of their time and talents in preparation of food for conferences, crafts, and many other church related activities. Sadie Naydiuk, Mrs. Palamaryk, and Pearl Horocholyn spent many years leading the ladies of the church in many activities as well as their spiritual well-being.



1946 Committee Members:
Fred Soloway, James Komenda, Luke Naydiuk, Steve Roda, Max Zbirun



Mr. Piatocha, Mr. Worobey & Mr. D. Leskewich



Visiting Missionary — Miss Zirnoff leaving from Benito Station



1947 — Choir



Sid and Anne Koziol

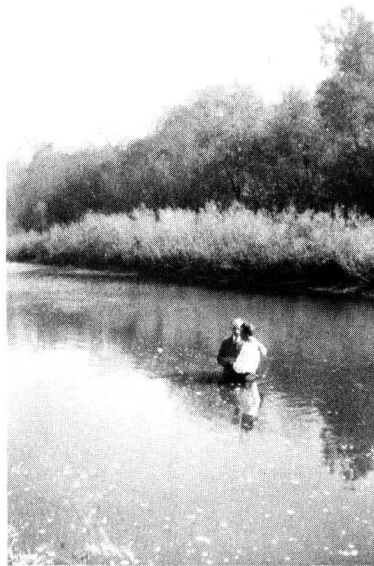
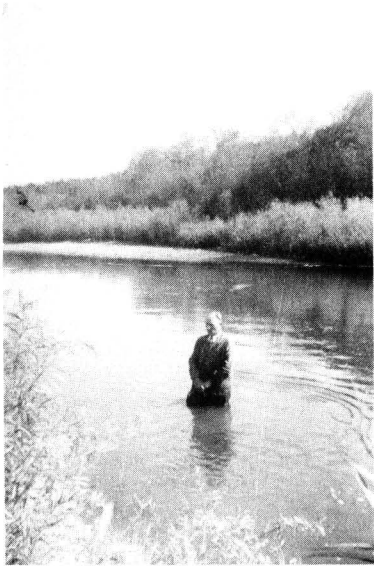


The K. Maksimow Family getting ready to go to church



Members of the Shakotko Family





BAPTISMS

Water Baptism was always an important part of the annual conference.

Shown here: top left — Pastor S. Roda; centre — Baptism of Alex Piatocha; bottom left — Baptism of Nettie (Piatocha) Suk; top right — Mike Gnida and Leonard Komenda waiting their turn.



WEDDINGS



Alice Malachov & Peter Filuk



Barbara Koziol & Jim Bazak



Tamara Bernatsky & John Hrycak



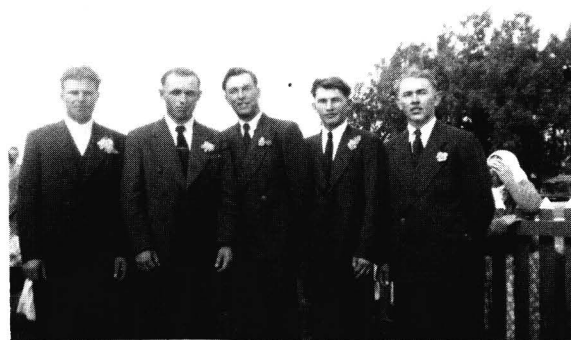
Polly Malachov & Nick Yanchuk



Mary Naydiuk & Doug Thompson



Nettie Piatocha & John Suk



Mina Blosha & Adam Yaknovich





Ladies' Meeting with Miss E. Severign as a guest



Young People's Group — 1950

1947

L. Yanchuk
P. Bielik
S. Roda
F. Leskewich
Rev. Nichiporuk
M. Zbirun
L. Naydiuk
D. Leskewich



SUNDAY SCHOOL



Teacher — Sadie Naydiuk

Late 1940's



Teacher — Mina (Blosa) Yaknovich



1951



Christmas Program — 1950's

Several families from the Benito church sponsored immigrants from Europe after World War II. The Malachov family sponsored Mike and Lucy Pysk and children; the Max Zbirun family sponsored Elias and Nadia Melnyk and children; the Yanchuk family sponsored Peter and Maria Yakubowich and children; Paul Bielik sponsored his nephew Serge Bychkowsky; Fred Soloway sponsored his nephew Serge Radchuk (who is now a prominent Winnipeg lawyer and leader in the Ukrainian community). Others who were sponsored were the Klemionek family and Adam Yaknovich (who later married Mina Blosha).

Serge Bychkowsky writes from Toronto, Ontario, "The village of Benito, particularly the church, played an important role in my family's life. Immigrating in April 1949, from Germany, sponsored by my uncle, Paul Bielik, we started our first steps in our new adopted land. I brought many tools of my trade with me, to earn a living, but all my worries were in vain. God, who guided us through the war, put us in the midst of a wonderful group of people under the guidance of Steve Roda.

From my arrival in Benito, I was delegated responsibilities in the church by the committee, to be choir director, president of youth group and Sunday School teacher for the senior youth. Not only were we accepted into the membership of the family of the church, but the church also provided our housing and physical needs. We stayed in Benito for two years. In that time, the church grew in numbers. The building was enlarged by talented members of the congregation. There were three Sunday services - in the morning and evening in Benito, and afternoon in small towns about ten miles away where there were Ukrainian people. Here I took an active part in preaching and leading the never tiring choir.

Shortly, a closeness developed between the Benito church and the Evangelical Baptist church in Swan River, where I. Polischuk was pastor and choir director and periodically we held services together. I must mention the untiring ministry of Pastor S. Roda, who during our stay, worked hard physically on his farms, and who gave whole heartedly of himself to the ministry of the church. I remember how often, after his work on the farm, S. Roda would drive me to distant farms to visit families who were interested in God. Returning from one of these trips during snow and

icy roads, we would arrive home in the early hours of the morning.

36 years have passed since we arrived in Benito, but my wife and I, to our dying day, will not forget that happy moment when our feet touched free ground in Canada."

Another of these families was the Elias and Nadia Melnyk family. Nadia writes from Winnipeg, Man, "War uprooted us from our native land, causing us to wander over the earth, suffering many hardships, but in 1949, the doors were open to Canada, namely, Benito, Manitoba. Arriving by train at the Benito station, in pouring rain, I noticed that near the station was a wooden bench. I sat on that bench, clutching my two small children, Lydia and Nick, with my husband standing nearby. I looked at the cloudy sky, and cried bitter tears, sighing deeply to God. In a short while, I noticed a tall thin man, slowly approaching. 'are you waiting for someone?' he asked. 'Yes,' said my husband, 'we were supposed to be met by a man named Max Zbirun,' he said, looking at a small piece of paper. 'Oh,' said the unknown man, 'then you are a fellow Christian. Let me welcome you. My name is Eli Shaktoko. It is a real pleasure to meet a family of God. I'll phone Brother Roda."

In a few minutes, a beautiful blue car appeared with two young people in it. "Hallo" they said to us. "What is Hallo?", I asked. That is a greeting in Canada, they answered. "And who are you?...the Zbirun sisters?", "No," answered the young lady, "I am Nadia Roda and this is Violet Soloway."

Soon we arrived at Bychkowsky's house and after that went to Roda's where we were warmly greeted and then went to Zbirun's later on in the day. Here we lived in one house, experiencing God's blessing, and relating our experiences. On Sunday we went to church together in Zbirun's small car, into which we fit eleven people. In the church sang a large choir, under the direction of S. Bychkowsky. I was a member of the church for 18 years, until we moved to Winnipeg in 1966.

Mike and Lucy Pysk, with their three small children, Lydia, Annie, and Peter arrived in 1950, by ship to Halifax, and then by train to Benito, where they lived until June 1956, at which time they moved to Ontario.



BIBLE SCHOOL



Benito Bible School — 1941



Bible School Students Leaving for Toronto





Mr. Worobey leading a choir and orchestra



Benito Choir — Dan Leskewich leading.



Benito Choir



Church Orchestra — 1950



Benito Quartette — in front.



Music School — 1954



Winter Courses — 1954

Союз Слав. Молодежи
Еванг. Христиан,
в Канаде.

СВИДЕТЕЛЬСТВО.

Сим свидетельствуем, что Григор Александр
прослушал Музыкально-Библийские Курсы от 18-го января
до 20-го февраля '54 состоявшиеся при общине Ев. Христиан.
в Бенито, Ман.
- I -

Бенито, Ман.
Февраль 20, 54.

РУКОВ. КУРСОВ.

В. С. Кошкин

Certificate of Achievement



1956 — Benito delegation going to Glendon, Alberta Conference.



1950's Benito Choir — Walter Leskewich, Conductor.

During the 1950's, the church was at its peak. Conferences, Thanksgiving services, and Christmas concerts found the church literally bursting at its seams. Benches and chairs were set up in the aisles to accomodate all the extra people. The food prepared was second to none, and there was always more than enough to feed all the guests who arrived for these events.

There was a great potential to reach people in remote and distant areas, by radio. Anna (Deyneka) Gnida, from Durban, Man., writes, "As a small child living with my parents, Mr. & Mrs. Sam Deyneka, on a farm near Whitebeach, Sask., I can vividly remember listening every Sunday to the Ukrainian Gospel Hour from Saskatoon. The theme song became very familiar to me. I can also remember seeing my father with tears in his eyes as he heard the Gospel proclaimed. Realizing that they weren't getting the spiritual food that they needed from their church, my parents began looking for a church that preached the same message as they had heard on the radio program. After attending a number of churches, in 1952, they began to regularly attend the Russian-Ukrainian Evangelical church in Benito. On September 20, 1953, they followed the Lord in water baptism and became members of the church, where they remained until they went to be with the

Lord, - Pearl Deyneka, in 1978, and Sam Deyneka in 1983."

In August 1957, a radio broadcast "Evangelical Word" was started over station CJGX, Yorkton, Saskatchewan. This radio program is still in existence today, over CKDM, Dauphin, Manitoba.

During the course of these years, missionary outreach included Whitebeach, Poplar Bluff, Arran, Pelly, Kamsack, Margo, Kuroki, Porcupine Plane, Lintlaw, Clair, Yorkton, and Raymore where services were held to bring the Gospel to the people. Often the entire choir would go. The church is also involved in financial support to other Christian Organizations such as Slavic Gospel Association, Pan American Mission, Radio broadcast to the Ukraine, Canadian Bible Society, Sudan Interior Mission, and the Home for Lepers in Paraguay.

Tamara Hrycak writes, "In 1950, with the help of the Benito brethern, we were able to build a sister church at Kuroki, Saskatchewan. Although we had to travel over 25 miles of poor roads, we attended church regularly with our family. In 1978, the Kuroki church building was no longer being used for services, so it was moved to Nut Mountain, Sask. (7 miles from Lintlaw) where we still hold services in the English language, under the leadership of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference."



General Conference June 1955



1957 — Delegates at the General Business Conference.



Mid-1960's Conference

Standing on back of truck:
Nick Melnyk
John Maksimow
Walter Lysack
Ed Yaknovich



1964 — Choir trip to Calgary
Lydia Leskewich - Director.

In the late 1950's, while the church was experiencing its highest point, Satan stepped in and tore it apart. The next few years were painful for many of the members and the membership continued to decline. The young people left for other destinations and many young people joined English churches. The remaining members strived to keep all traditional activities going as before, even though on a smaller scale.

By the mid-60's the situation had stabilized and a solid young people's group and choir was again organized under the dedicated direction of Lydia Leskewich. Many of the local youth began attending and Friday night Young People's was a very fulfilling time of fellowship. Many activities included getting together with other churches' youth groups in the area. One of the greatest of these was the Valentine's banquet which involved five other churches.

The choir participated in several concerts, as well as travelling to many outlying towns and villages. One of its greatest undertakings was the trip to Calgary in 1964. During this time, the Benito choir was even instrumental in producing a record.

Although many of the people who originally built up this church are now scattered all over Canada and the United States, and many have gone to be with the Lord, the bond is still there. Whenever, or wherever the opportunity arises for fellowship or meeting with anyone who had attended the Benito church, the feeling is one of family ties, and of a great spiritual bond, which goes beyond any petty grievances or misunderstandings.

The reunion conference being held in the summer of 1985, has indicated this spiritual bond and has generated a great deal of excitement among the people who cherish its memories and who came to know the comfort and closeness of brotherly love.

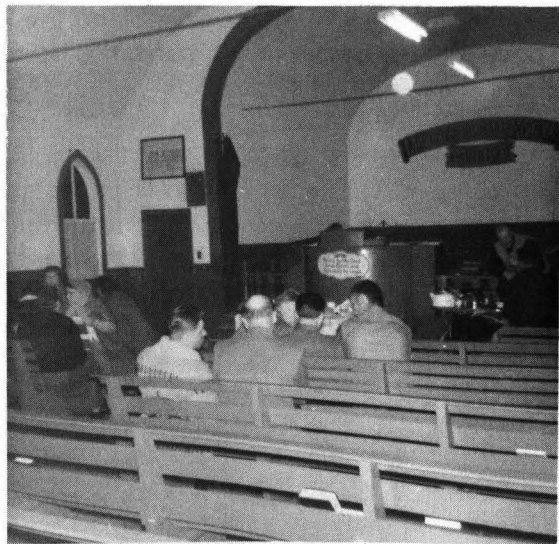




Benito Choir — 1966
This choir won 2nd place in the Manitoba Music Festival in the Swan Valley.



Young People Committee 1964-65
Back row: Ida Leskewich, Lydia Leskewich, Nick Melnyk, Lydia Melnyk, Anna Gnida; Front: John Leskewich, Pete Bielik, Ed Yaknovich



Weekly After Choir Practice
“ЧАЙ” (Tea)



Thanksgiving — late 1960's

ПОЧАТОК ГРОМАДИ ВІРУЮЧИХ БРАТІВ І СЕСТЕР В БЕНІТО, МАНІТОБА

ЄВАНГЕЛЬСЬКИЙ ВІСНИК

Євангеліє в Світі

КАНАДА.

НОВА ГРОМАДА НА БЕНІТО, МАН.

Минулого літа в тій околиці поселилось шість віруючих родин, котрі прибули з Волиня, з повіту Рівного. Ті браття поселились на полудне від містечка Беніто, около 12 миль, — околиця так звана Качачі Гори.

Ті браття знайшлись в розкиненім положенню по тих горах і лісах, по клійка миль один від другого, — без зібрання. Почали тужити за своєю громадою в Рівнім, немов Ізраїльський нарід, коли знайшовсь в полоні у Вавилоні за бувшим Ханааном, в

котрому вони зазнавали великих привілей домашнього життя та дружних сходин.

В тузі своїй браття та сестри підносили свої молитви до Господа, щоби Він післав їм братів, котрі принесли-б їм слова потіхи і мужности в пору великої потреби. Господь почув молитву братів і післав до них бр. П. Кіндрата і бр. Йова Форсюка з Арран, Саск.

Ті брати прибули тут з великими труднощами в суботу вечер жовтня 19. Дорога туди глинкавата, а сніг з дощем розмочив її, то було надміру тяжко дістатись автотом.

В суботу увечері відбулось благословенне зібрання, в котрому ці два брати служили словом Божим. Також того

вечера зорганізовано тут малу громадку з вісьмох членів і п'ятох симпатиків, котрі є любителями Божої правди.

Вибрано руководячим брата Луку Надюка, секретарем і касієром брата Івана Надюка. Браття обіцяли зізджатись кожної неділі в зібрання і разом прославляти Господа і будуватись у слові Божім.

В неділю рано, около 11 години, браття знов зіхались. Зібрання відбулось в домі брата П. Білика. Відспівано пісню „О, Боже Отче в небесах“. Бр. Йов Форсюк провів молитвою, бр. Лука Надюк читав слово Боже, відтак бр. Форсюк зняв коротке слово, а брат Кіндрат вів проповідь на тему: „Що спасє“.

При кінці було Ламання Хліба, на спомин Смерти Господньої і закінчено зібрання піснями: „Най буде Отцю всеблагому хвала“.

Браття попрощались з місцевими братами і сестрами і відправились дальше до Мінітонас, де також відбулось благословенне вечірне зібрання, і взяли маленьку участь в торжестві німецьких братів, при отворенні молитовного Дому в містечку Мінітонас, де також обіцяно дати українським і чеським браттям приміщення для зібрань.

Тут відбулось також Господня Вечеря, де прийнято чотирох новоприюваних членів з Польщі, в ряди Менітонської громади.

П. К.

15-го травня (мая), 1929-го року коли Себастьян Ляшкевич з родиною імігрували до Канади, вони зустріли братів Беликів на іміграційному бюро в Рівному в Польщі. Там вони рішили разом подорожувати. До них прилучився брат Липка.

В Канаді, у Вінніпезі зустріли їх Іван Гук та Ігнат Сідорчук, направляючи їх до околиці Альпайн.

21-го липня (жулай), 1929-го року, Давид Найдюк з родиною, Лука Найдюк з родиною та Андрій Блоха з родиною прибули до Вінніпегу з Постниковської області на Волині. Вінніпезькі брати — Іван Гук, Ігнат Сідорчук та Степан Белик пропонували їм їхати до Беніта, де Степанов брат Павло тільки що купив там ферму. Всі три родини поїхали разом до Беніта де зустріли їх Павло Белик та Себастьян Ляшкевич (сусід). Лука й Давид купили ферму разом та час від часу сусіди відвідували одні других.

У вересні (септембрі) 1929-го року, Я. Прихідко приїхав відвідати П. Белика, та обоє на конях приїхали до Найдюкової ферми й там мали перше Євангельське зібрання.

В жовтні (октобрі) 1929-го року, П. Кіндрат приїхав й також почав організовувати зібрання поміж іммігрантами. На одному такому зібранні він призначив Луку Найдюка як керівного цієї маленької євангельської групи.

Перше ділове і молитовне зібрання відбулось в суботу вечері жовтня 19-го — 1929-го року, в домі брата Павла Белика. На зібранні вибрано керівним громади бр. Луку Найдюка, та молодого бр. Івана Найдюка секретарем і касієром громади.

Брат Кіндрат розїздний проповідник час від часу відвідував громаду маленьку і потішав, скріпляв в знання Слова Божого.

На весні 1930-го року прибули ще чотири родини з Волині і поселились в цій околиці та прилучились до маленької громади щоб разом тішитися братською спільнотою і Словом Божим. Це були родини — Базак, Баласюк, Ляшкевич й Кудрик. 24-го — 25-го травня (мая) відбулись благословенні зібрання в бр. П. Белика, де бр. Кіндрат служив Словом Божим. При кінці зібрання бр. Кіндрат звершив ламання хліба — спомин смерті Господньої де прийнято вже

згаданих членів. В літі тогож самого року приїхали Максим й Поля Збіруни із своїм сином Васильком. Вони поселились біля “Качах гір” та були одними із засновних членів церкви — Руско-Українських Євангельських Християн в Беніто, Манітоба. Перші зібрання відбулись в домі бр. і сес. Липків з присутністю чотирнадцять людей. Це постійне зростання спонукало брата М. Збіруна шукати помочи в брата Даниїла Ляшкевича й разом вони організували хор. Цей хор мав такий вплив на громаду, що музика почала бути важливою частиною зібрання.

Десь у цьому часі приїхала сестра Поля Ковалевська до околиці Беніта. Бувши дочкою попа в Польщі, вона мала прагнення до місійної праці. Її місійне поле — Беніто, Манітоба. Сестра Ковалевська мала трохи науки в музиці — то як мала можливість — взяла співаник з нотами та рукою почала вибивати ритму пісні (бо не було піяна), й так навчала мелодію і пісні церковні. Вона так само почала працю поміж сестрами в церкві. Це було в ранніх 30-их роках. Вона заохочувала сестер до праці для Господа й сестри завзято за це взялись з своєю ручною працею, яку вони продавали один раз на рік. Всі гроші від цієї продажі йшли де була потреба. Перше організаційне жіноче зібрання було в січні (январі) 13-го 1937-го року. На цьому зібранні вибрано молоду сестру Сейді Мосієнко як голову жіночого кружка.

Були часи тяжкі та зими холодні, але люди прагнули за спільністю з іншими та за науку й проповідь Слова Божого. Їхали 10-12 миль зимової пори кінями, тільки щоб бути в спільності з іншими віруючими. В суботу вечором була співанка хору а тоді добрі люди давали нічліг для дальших подорожуючих, щоб в неділю вранці могли всі разом бути на зібранні.

Були концерти на Різдво, на яких діти співали, декламували вірші, та хор співав. Навіть як це забирало довше часу, але чужі люди приходили та слухали й дивувались та чули Слово Боже.

Була ще інша група іммігрантів які жили під “Громовою Горою”. Це були родини — Рода, Сітко, Янчук, Бернатський та Козйоль. Ці родини разом збирались, а в час Великодня та Різдва мали спільні зібрання з групою від Альпайн в

Духоборській Галі.

Брат Степан Рода перше почув євангелію в Польщі в 1926-му році. В 1928-му році він приїхав із своєю дружиною та дочкою до Канади та поселився в околиці “Громової Гори”. Вони почали ходити на зібрання в 1933-му році.

Так само Т. Бернатський почув євангелію. Перед тим як ще була церква зорганізована — дали Русалісти йому Біблію. Він, прагнучи знати правду, почав шукати за нею в Біблії. Літом 1933-го року — громада з Альпайн мала конференцію в Беніті й на тій конференції повірили Т. Бернатський та С. Рода. Тієї осені прийняли водне по вірі хрещення. Після цього вони почали зібрання в околиці “Громової Гори”, йдучи по домах й там влаштовували зібрання.

Брат Ф. Соловей таке пише: “То було 1930-ім році. Приїхав я в Саскачеван, і взяв гомстед, але там близько віруючих небуло. Але відвідував мене покійний брат П. Кіндрат, і пояснив мені значення Слова Божого. В 1934-ім році в Беніті був напевно перший з’їзд, і я прийняв по вірі Святе хрещення. Слава Господу Богу, Він поклав мені на серце благовістити Св. Євангелію, і треба було ходити пішки, від 5 до 10 миль і більше запрошувати людей в зібрання. І так я жив на гомстеді. Хата була маленька, та ще і з логів, то ми робили зібрання на дворі, поміж осиками, а брати приходили з Манітоби і нам помагали. Але як часом падав дощ, або було холодно, чи в зимі, то робили зібрання під “Громовою Горою” в хаті брата Роди. І так нас люблящий Господь благословляв, і люди приходили кожної неділі в зібрання й калялись та приймали по вірі хрещення. Нас стало щораз більш і більш.”

Кожного літа великий Біблійний з’їзд був влаштований в великій Духоборській Галі. 5-8 липня (жулай), 1934-го року, головний промовець на з’їзді був І. Проханов, голова Союзу Євангельських Християн. На цю конференцію прибули люди з сусідніх околиць, також багато духоборів. Ці духобори знали брата Проханова з часу його помочи для них в 1896-го року коли були в подорожі із Росії до Канади на параплаві. Їх зустріли всякі хвороби, але Іван Проханов роздавав медицину для них в той час, й за те вони тепер прийшли почути його коли він давав медицину духовну.

1939-го року було рішено побудувати молитовний дім в центральному місці. Чоловіки самі різали дерева на будову. Брали участь в цьому Яків Козйоль, Степан Рода, Федор Найдюк та Олександр Петельский. О. Петельский так пише: “Господь благословив проповідь Євангелії, люди навертались до Бога, громада збільшувалась. Виникла потреба будувати дім молитви для богослужень. Це був радісний час в службі Господеві. Отже, ми спільними силами дуже швидко збудували дім молитви в Беніто. Мені ж було приємно приготувляти в лісі-резерві матеріал на будову цього дому.”

Дерева були зрізані та сушені біля фарми А. Блохи. Помагали всі корчувати та будувати. Церковний будинок був закінчений в 1941-ому році й як вже ті часи були ліпші, люди могли купувати авто й приїждати на зібрання скорше.

В 1949-ому році будинок був замалий вмістити всіх людей, то було потрібно добудувати двадцять футів до будинка. Збудоване підвищене місце для хору та кімната для маленьких дітей.

Маючи таку велику працю, постала нужда для працівників. Почалась тоді Біблійна школа в церкві. Вчителі були С. Липин, С. Фивчук та інші. За причиною що не було можливості мати вечірні класи, мусіли перемістити школу до Торонта.

Зимою були лекції музикальні та в проводі хору. Так само були лекції в навчанні Російської та Української мови. Вчительом лекції для проводу хору був бр. А. Воробей.

Сорокові роки бачили великий наплив народу до церкви в Беніті.

Родина Гнидів яка прибула до Канади в 1929-му році, жила в околиці Мінітонас, але в 1940-ім році перебралась до околиці Дурбан та почала відвідувати зібрання в Беніті у 1942-му році. Основне навчання, наслідок в недільній школі, в групі молоді та хору був великим впливом на духовний зріст цієї родини. Вони до сьогоднішнього дня беруть активну участь в церковному житті.

Велику участь брали також родина Шакотків. Ілля Шакотько пильно працював на місійному полі по фармах та

селах цієї околиці. З цієї родини були вчителі недільної школи на довгі роки.

Яків (Жак) Шакотько пише таке: “Моя дружина й я стали в члени цієї церкви в 1947-му році. Я брав участь як голова гуртка молоді та як директор в локальному відділі “Молодь для Христа”. Ми мали зібрання на вулиці кожної суботи вечора. Так само, поки ми ще мешкали там, ми змогли збудувати Біблійний табір на Мадж Лейк.”

Були інші родини що також брали велику участь в церковному житті. Яків й Оля Коменди — їхня крамниця в місті Беніто була відкрита для всіх й на тижні чи в суботу вечір, люди зходились порозмовляти та часом й до пізньої години.

Брат Олі — Микола Лисак та його дружина Надя також були завязані працівники в церкві. Обоє мали велику працю в недільній школі. Брат Микола був директор, а сестра Надя вчителькою. Сестра Надя й їхні діти були дуже музикальні й брали активну участь в хорі та зібраннях.

Родина Малахов також були завязані люди. Сестра Малахов була на комітеті які відвідували членів церкви та інших людей. Сестра віддала багато часу на подорожування в далекі кутки околиці щоб когось відвідати. Поля (Малахов) Янчук та її сестра Ліля (Джонсон) були вчительками недільної школи.

Інші родини які брали участь в житті церкви були: Постніков, Щавлінські, Котовські, Сахатські, Самчук, Царик, Максимчук, Максимов, Писк, Клемйонк, Дубенчук та Зінків.

Кількох родин з церкви поруцились та виписали бідних та нещасних людей з Європи, які згубили все що мали після II-ої Світової Війни, та шукали можливість почати на ново в новому Богом благословенному краю.

Одних із цих людей був Сергій Бичковський який приїхав до свого дядька Павла Беліка в квітні (април) 1949-го року. Брат Бичковські так пише:

“Містечко Беніто, яке знаходиться у Канадійській провінції Манітоба, а зокрема в ньому Церква Євангельських Християн, відіграли у житті моєї родини історичне і незабутнє враження. Переселившись туди у місяці квітні 1949

року із повоєнних таборів у Німеччині за старанням мого дядька Павла Беліка, ми розпочали там перші неспівливі кроки нашого життя у пригорнувшій нас — новій Батьківщині.

Турбуючись без потреби наперед про моє майбутнє професійне заняття у Канаді, я привіз туди із Німеччини багато усякого столярського знаряддя, сподіваючись ним заробляти щоденний хліб для прожиття моєї родини на новому місці поселення. Однак, по нашому приїзді до Беніта негайно виявилось, що я глибоко помилився, бо надаремні були усі мої турботи про працю та хліб щоденний у благословенній Богом, багатій краєні — Канаді. Нас добрий — Всемогутній Бог Отець у Своєму провидінні провівши нас безпечно через воєнну хуртовину долиною смертної темряви, передбачив і приготував заздалегідь для мене за посередництвом щедрих братів та сестер Бенітської Церкви Євангельських Християн, на чолі із її ревним Пресвітером Степаном Родою, духовну працю у згаданій Церкві. Від самого початку нашого приїзду до Беніта, були мені надто великим привілеєм доручення Комітетом Церкви обов'язки: диригента хору, служіння Словом Божим, предсідника гуртка молоді та учителя Недільної Школи старшої молоді.

Наше чудове прийняття у члени духовної родини Бенітської Церкви, окрім вище сказаного, характеризувалося також неперевищеним піклуванням її членів про наше місце замешкання і про хліб щоденний для нашого фізичного існування. Для цього було приділено нам наново приладдям, а брати та сестри — фермері, постачали нам поживу для нашого ошчасливленого, початкового життя на вільній канадійській землі.

На тому благословенному Богом становищі ми прожили у Беніті два роки. Бенітська церква Євангельських Християн того часу зростала чисельно на славу Божу. Було заплановано поширення молитовного дому, що незабаром виконали здібні майстри — члени місцевої Церкви. Слід при цьому згадати, що недільні Богослуження відбувалися три рази: вранці і вечорами у місцевій Церкві, а пополудні у віддаленому на десять міль містечку де проживали пере-

важно українці. На всіх цих Богослуженнях я мав великий привілей служити Словом Божим та диригувати хором невідомих співаків Бенітської Церкви.

Незабаром, того часу зав'язалася тісна співпраця поміж Бенітською Церквою і Євангельсько-Баптистською Церквою у Сван Рівері, віддаленій від Беніта на 25 миль, де був тоді пастором і диригентом хору мій друг і земляк Іван Поліщук. Періодично відбувалися тоді урочисті Богослуження, на яких у співпрацюючих Церквах виступали зо співом два хори.

На цьому місці не можу проминути мовчанкою про заслуженого і довголітнього пресвітера Бенітської Церкви Степана Роду, який в часі нашого там перебування працюючи тяжко на своїх фармах, одночасно ревно і цілковито безінтересовно (без нагородження) виконував пресвітерську працю в Церкві з великою самопопосвятою. Пригадую собі, коли частенько після тяжкої праці на фермі брат Рода віз мене своїм автом далеко на відвідини зацікавлених Словом Божим родин на фармах, щоб їхні душі здобути для Царства Божого. Повертаючись із такої подорожі зимовою порою, ми через сніговії та слизькі дороги, нерідко аж над ранком з труднощами поверталися до наших домів.

Від того благословенного Богом часу, коли ми приїхали до Беніта, минуло вже 36 років, але ми з дружиною до кінця нашого життя ніколи не забудемо того щасливого моменту, коли наші ноги стали на вільній землі благословенної Канади. Ми глибоко вдячні Богові за цю щасливу країну, за її свободу, за справедливі закони демократичної влади. Ми дякуємо Богові особливо за Бенітську Церкву, яка нам бездомним дала колись щедрий притулок і затишок під крилами братньої любови."

Так само інші родини помагали виписувати людей до Канади. Приїхали так родини Мельник, Якубович, Писк, Клемйонук, й вони всі вдячні цим щирим людям за новий початок.



Маєстро Сергій Бичковський керує хором.

В 50-их роках церква росла. З'їзди, свята Подяки, Різдвяні концерти — на всіх цих okazіях було стільки людей що ледве всіх помістити. Лавки та крісла були виставлені щоб вмістити всіх людей. Так само сестри завше приготували стільки їжі, щоб ніхто не був голодний.

В цих часах також повстала можливість поширювати Слово Боже до відділених та далеких місць через радіонадання. В серпні (август) 1957-го року почалась радіо програма "Євангельське Слово" через стацію в Йорктоні, Саскачеван. Ця програма існує до сьогоднішнього дня через стацію в Давфин, Манітоба.

Через роки, місійна праця розповсюдилась, в місцях як Вайть Біч, Поплар Блаф, Арран, Пелі, Камсак, Марго, Курокі, Поркюпайн Плейнс, Лінтлав, Клер, Йорктон та Раймор. Доїжджали проповідники, часом з цілим хором із Беніта до цих місць, маючи тут зібрання. Церква так само фінансувала місійні організації.

Церква росла та розмножувалась, але те що Бог благословить, сатана старається на всі сили розбити. Так сталося тут у цій церкві в Беніто в пізніших 1950-их роках. Сатана вступив та розсипав будову. Наступні роки були болючими для членів й членство меншало та меншало. Молодь відіхала до більших міст та багато пішли до англійських церков. Ті що залишились не падали духом, але на всі сили старались працювати для Бога на Його ниві.

Вже в 60-их роках знов праця поволі йшла вперед. Під дирекцію сестри Ліди Ляшкевич, зорганізована велика

група молоді, недільна школа та хор.

Хор співав в локальних місцевих концертах, та роз'їжджав по інших містечках, навіть мав можливість поїхати до Калгарі. В цей час також була видана платівка з хору.

Сьогодні багато тих людей що будували й працювали в церкві в Беніто, живуть по цілому світу, а також вже багато відійшли у вічність, але та спільність ще існує. Де б ви не поїхали та зустріли когось що погодить від Беніта, то як зустрічатись із своєю ріднею.



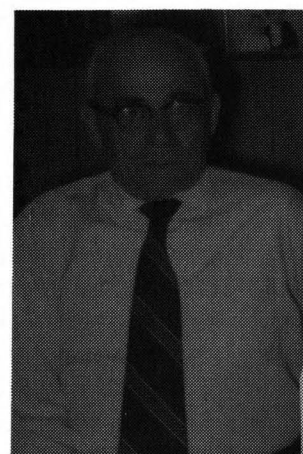
Євгенія Петельська



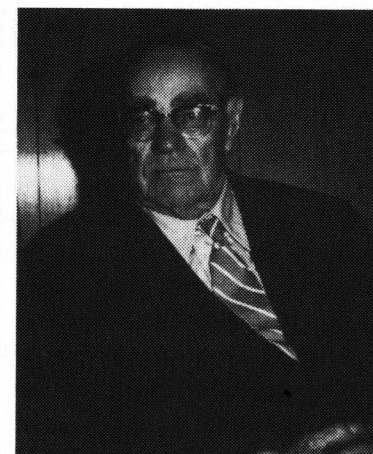
Яків Коменда



Надія Ляшкевич



Володимир Ситко



Антін Котовський



Сестри Максимчук, П'ятоха, й Соловей.



Марія та Петро Якубович



Анна Почобут



Олена Самчук

OUTREACH



Group from Benito holding services in Margo, Sask.



Opening of Doukhobor Prayer Home in Kamsack
Where Benito Church held many missionary services.



Benito mixed quartet visiting older lady in Dauphin



Group visiting Margo
Speakers: Mr. Bernatsky & Mr. Piatocha
Singing: Tamara Bernatsky & Mary Naydiuk

ORIGINAL PASTOR - LUKE NAYDIUK



Luke & Sadie Naydiuk & Elias & Nadia Melnyk — longtime neighbours from Benito, visiting in the Naydiuk home in Kelowna — 1984.

On July 21, 1929, Mr. & Mrs. Luke Naydiuk and family arrived in Winnipeg and were sent on to Benito by S. Bielik, whose brother Paul already had a farm there.

On October 19, 1929, Rev. P. Kindrat visited the small group of settlers and appointed Luke Naydiuk as Pastor of the group.

He gave unselfishly of himself to further God's work among the settlers. Times were difficult and the roads were very poor. Transportation was usually by horses, but isolated locations did not discourage the believers.

As more and more settlers arrived, a church was built in a central location in 1940.

Luke Naydiuk was pastor of this church until 1941, when he and his family moved to Ontario, where they lived for several years. After a few years, they decided to return to Benito to the "home church".

In the meantime, Mrs. Naydiuk's heart condition got worse and she went to be with the Lord.

Luke Naydiuk and the younger children returned to the family farm in Benito.

Several years later he married Sadie Mosienko, and they were blessed with 5 children.

Luke and Sadie Naydiuk presently live in Kelowna, B.C.

Madge, Lydia and Sam live in Toronto, George in Kapuskasing, Ontario, Frances in Kelowna, B.C., Ruth in Keswick, Ontario, Violet in Warren, Michigan, James in Nanaimo, B.C., and Gregory in Kelowna.

Home with the Lord are: Walter and Samuel, who passed away in Europe and John, Eunice, and Alexandra, who passed away in Canada.

PRESENT PASTOR - STEVE RODA



Steve & Maria Roda with their daughter Hilda

Steve Roda heard the Gospel in 1926, while still in Poland. In 1928, along with his wife and young daughter, he immigrated to Canada and settled in the Thunder Hill district, north of Benito.

In the summer of 1933, the Alpine group held a conference in the Doukhobour prayer home in Benito and Steve Roda became a believer. He was baptized by Luke Naydiuk in September 1933 and started a ministry in the Thunder Hill area with

other believers such as Tom Bernatsky. They conducted services in homes and spent long hours visiting neighbours and preaching to them from God's word.

The Koziol family, who lived on a neighbouring farm, have this to say about him:

"We knew him as an unselfish man, doing the best he could for everyone."

The Benito church building was completed in December 1940. In April 1941, Steve Roda was appointed Pastor of the congregation, taking over the reins from Luke Naydiuk, who had left for Ontario.

During the day, he worked hard physically on his farms, and then gave himself whole-heartedly to the ministry of the church. In the evenings, he and several brethren from the church would drive for miles visiting families who were interested in God; quite often returning from these visits on snow-covered icy roads, arriving in the early morning hours.

On one such trip, he was accompanied by Fred Soloway. As they were returning in a horse-drawn van, during a snowstorm, a rabbit jumped out in front of the horses, frightening them. The van overturned, landing on the door side, being dragged for miles. They both thought that this was the end for them, but God miraculously saved them and they arrived home unharmed.

Pastor Roda, though not as actively involved as in the past, still continues his labour of love - now in its 44th year - truly a life-time dedicated to serving God and preaching his word to those who want to hear it.

Steve Roda and his wife still reside in Benito, near the home of their daughter and son-in-law, Alex and Nadia (Hilda) Kowalchuk. They have three granddaughters - Janet, Linda, and Gloria - all living in Alberta.

LADIES' ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

OCTOBER 19, 1930



Miss Polly Kowalewska organized the ladies' group and pointed out to the ladies, the type of work that they could do for God.

A few women donated handmade articles for sale, and designated a day on which the sale would be held. The sale was a great success - all the articles were sold and the money received was donated to places in Poland - the poor, needy, orphans - from whom letters were received.

Polly Kowalewska was not able to stay for too long, as she lived in Toronto. The ladies group was left without a leader until Miss Kowalewska would visit from time to time. This went on for five years, after which time, this work stopped for two years. The congregation continued to pray for the ladies' work to continue, and on January 13, 1937, they held an organizational meeting at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Balasuik.

The meeting was opened by Luke Naydiuk, who read Galatians 3:26-29, and Hebrews 11:11; this was followed by a short review and prayer so that God would bless this small service. The song "Living for God" was sung, and Sadie Mosienko read James 1:22-27, and 5:17-18. Hymn #398 from the book, "Hoosli". Then Olga Pilipchuk read Colosians 3:15-23, and the song #15 was sung from "Hoosli". Ewhenia Petelski then recited Acts 5:1-4, and song #255 was sung. Luke Naydiuk then read Exodus 35:25-29 and preached a short sermon from it. After the short service, the ladies went into their business meeting at which time they unanimously elected young Sadie Mosienko as President of the Ladies' Circle, with Ksenia Leshkewich as secretary, and Ewhenia Petelski, as treasurer. The offering collected was 75¢ and after the service, the ladies asked that everyone pray for them. After prayer, they dispersed to their homes with the faith and hope that God would help them in the future.

KUROKI CHURCH — A SISTER CHURCH TO BENITO



Inside of Kuroki Church 1957
Pastor at the time — Paul Diatel



Cottage Meeting at Kuroki
1962



Benito Choir at Kuroki — Thanksgiving 1965



Benito Members at Kuroki Conference

HERE AM I; SEND ME ... ISA. 6:8

During its duration, the Benito church has received world-wide recognition, with many guests from many countries, visiting and bringing message in word and song.



Left to right: Mr. Hnylitski, Mr. Tarasuik, Mr. Myzychka, Mr. Roda

Many of its own “children” also went out sharing their talents with people in many parts of the world.
The next few pages are a tribute to some of these.



The singing families of Krawchuk and Karpetz from Argentina, who having moved to Winnipeg visited Benito often. They later moved to Sacramento, California.

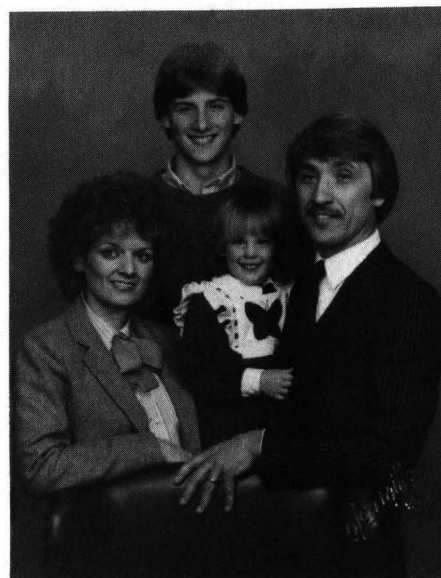


Jack and Vera Koziol have been missionaries since 1957, joining FEBC's Russian Department in 1969. They have served both in Manila, Philippines and South Korea, and presently are at FEBC U.S. Headquarters in La Mirada, California.

Both of Russian descent, Jack came to Canada in 1937 from Poland, while Vera grew up in Ontario, Canada.

Jack has been programmer, Russian Program Consultant, and most recently, Director of the Russian Department for FEBC. He records several of his own programs: "Evangelical Tidings", "Life of Christ" and "Written Word", while he and Vera contact and coordinate schedules for other groups which provide Russian programs. These are all part of 21 hours of daily broadcasting to the Soviet Union from 5 FEBC transmitter sites.

Jack and Vera have a married son Tim.



Mike & Julie Bernatsky and family
Cameron & Nicole

In the late 1960's Mike Bernatsky worked with World Wide Pictures, a division of the Billy Graham organization. In May 1973, he went into pastoral work in Cheyenne, Wyoming and then in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1984, training young men for the ministry and lay leaders for home fellowship leadership.

In 1983, Mike and his family travelled to New Guinea, New Zealand and Australia on a missionary journey, visiting villages and translators working with Wycliffe Bible Translators.



Olga Klemionek

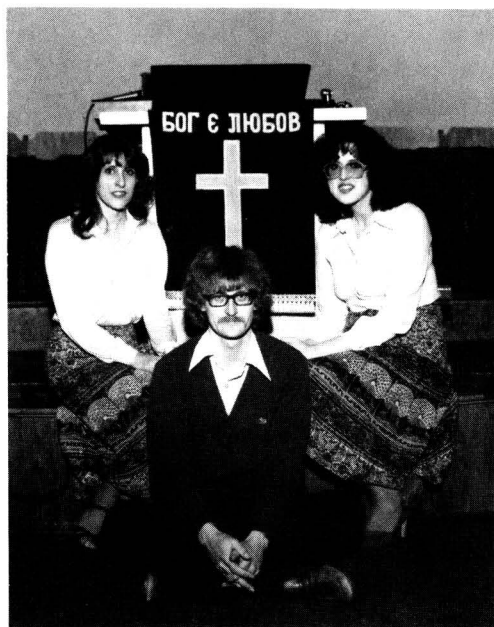
In her early twenties Olga went as a missionary to the Iron Curtain countries. She was: Seeking — to reach the Slavic People of Europe. Speaking: as the ability which God giveth — Singing: and making melody in my heart to the Lord. Later Olga married and with her husband, went to Bolivia as missionaries. While there God blessed them with twins. From a small town such as Benito to the many corners of the earth, God sends them.



Alex and Mary Piatocha

Alex Piatocha graduated from the Saskatoon Bible Institute in 1951 after which he became a part time minister at Franchere, Alberta. His first full time ministry was at Evansberg, Alberta, then at Round Valley, Alberta. Since 1955, Alex Piatocha has been the pastor of the Ukrainian Evangelical Baptist Church in Edmonton. He has also been very much involved in other areas of ministry. He has been the president of the Ukrainian Evangelical Baptist Conference of Western Canada. He has been chaplain of the Edmonton Eskimos football team. He is an evangelist, speaking in churches across Canada and the United States. In the last eight years Rev. Piatocha has had the opportunity of visiting the churches of the Soviet Union — especially the Ukraine where he not only ministered in God's word, but was able to take with him Bibles, literature and obtain other aid for the churches there.

From the days of his youth in the Benito Church to this very day, Alex Piatocha has worked diligently for the Lord. He was not afraid to say, "Here am I Lord, send me".



The Manna Singers
Nick, Ruth & Anne Melnyk

Nick, Ruth and Anne Melnyk got their start in the singing field by being encouraged at a younger age to participate in song during services, special programs and in the choir of the Benito Russian-Ukrainian Evangelical Church.

Now as of 1980, they have formed the group "MANNA" and on a part-time basis have been travelling across the country ministering in song and in God's word. They have sung from Edmonton to Toronto and at various places in the States. They have also had a few guest appearances on different TV programs.

They sincerely thank the people of the Benito Church for their encouragement and prompting in their childhood. *"Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it."* (Proverbs 22:6)



Violet Ulaniuk (Soloway), Anne Zbirun, Lydia Rodyck (Zbirun) — active members of the Saskatoon Ukrainian Evangelical Church, take part in musical numbers — solos, duets, trios, quartets, and the choir. All of these are important for their TV ministry, visits to Prince Albert, Wakaw and other visitations in the Saskatoon area.

Among the other talented people who originated in the Benito Church:

- Metro Leskewich — music director at Briercrest Bible Institute.
- Nick and Rachel Sitko — ministering in song at various conferences and get-togethers.
- Martha Skoworodko (Soloway) — hard-working pastor's wife.
- Nick Lysack — translator of many books, tracts and other publications from English into Ukrainian.



The Hrycak Sisters

The Hrycak Sisters — Nina, Evelyn, Ruth, Faith, Sharon, Linda, Debbie and Joanne have been singing together for many years. Some of them started when they were only 2 or 3 years old. The four who now live in Calgary, Alberta still sing together, and on occasions, are now joined by their daughters.

- Serge Bychkowsky — composer who has compiled many song-books.
- Those who call Benito home and though they haven't seen each other in years, get together at conferences and organize quartets and other musical numbers. Eg. The Benito Quartet at a Kelowna conference, — Walter Leskewich, Nick Sitko, Alex Gnida and Nick Melnyk.

GOOD TIMES AND FRIENDSHIPS

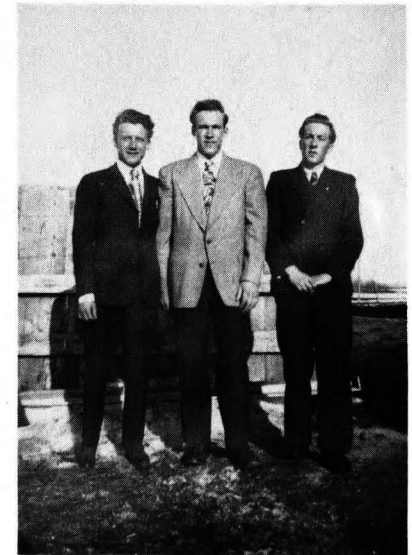
Times were tough, but hardships could never dampen the spirit of friendships. The church played an important role in establishing deep moral standings, and was very strict in its teachings, but this did not mean that the young people led boring lives. The next pages speak for themselves.



Young people going home from church



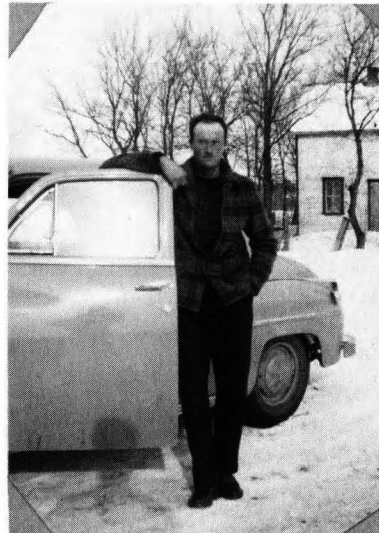
Mary Naydiuk & Lydia Leskewich



Alex, Peter & Sergie 1948



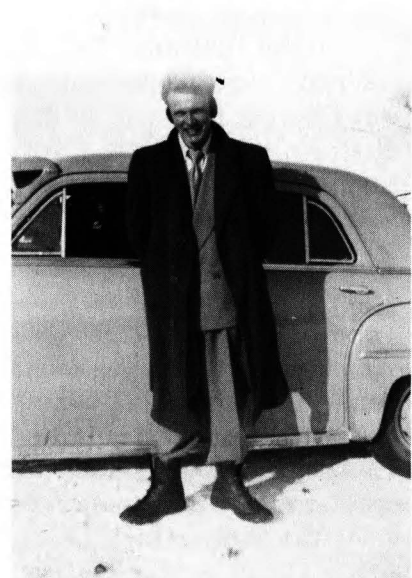
Young People after-church activities



Alex Gnida



Metro Leskewich



Steve Naydiuk



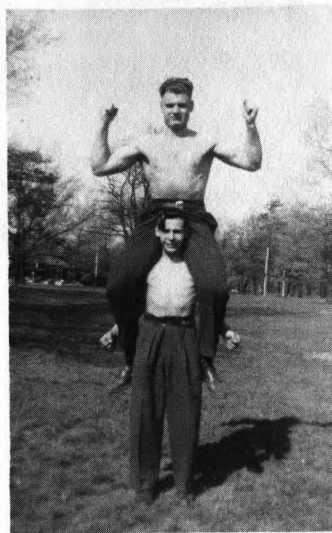
Nettie & "Weasel"



A happy group of friends



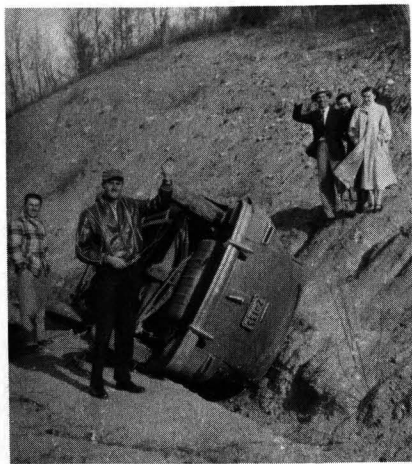
Show-offs



Leskewich family



The Koziol family



Mixed quartet on tour to Dauphin 1954



Mr. & Mrs.?



Making roses for Valentine's Banquet 1964

GO YE INTO ALL THE WORLD...



The Max Zbirun family
taken on the occasion of Mrs. Zbirun's 80-th birthday — 1984
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan



Tom & Nina Bernatsky & family



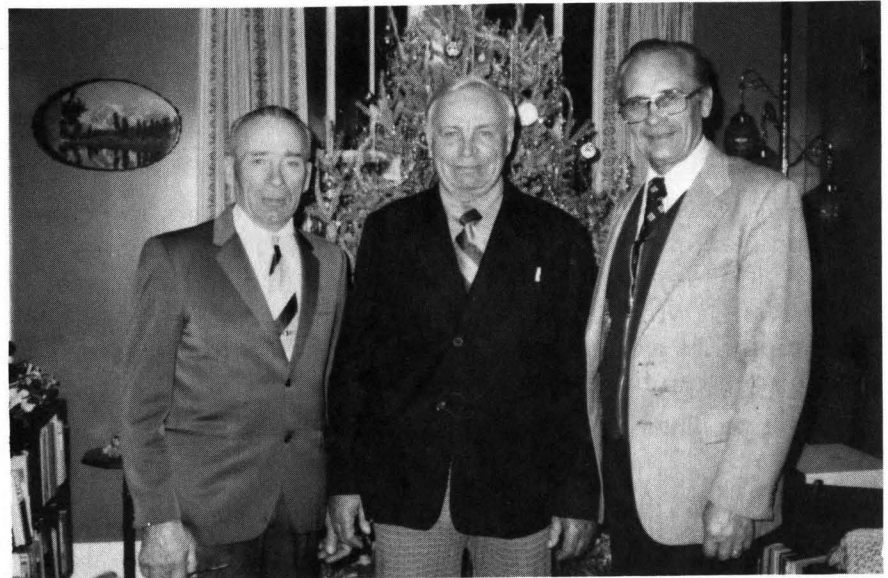
Eva & Alex Petelski
Kelowna, B.C.



Kip & Lydia (Bernatsky) Fullerton family



Carl & Pearl (Naydiuk) Yachnik
& family
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan



The Koziol Brothers
Izydor, Clifford, Jack



Fred & Nancy Kaluk
Fresno, California



Elias & Nadia Melnyk & family
Christmas — 1984 Winnipeg, Manitoba

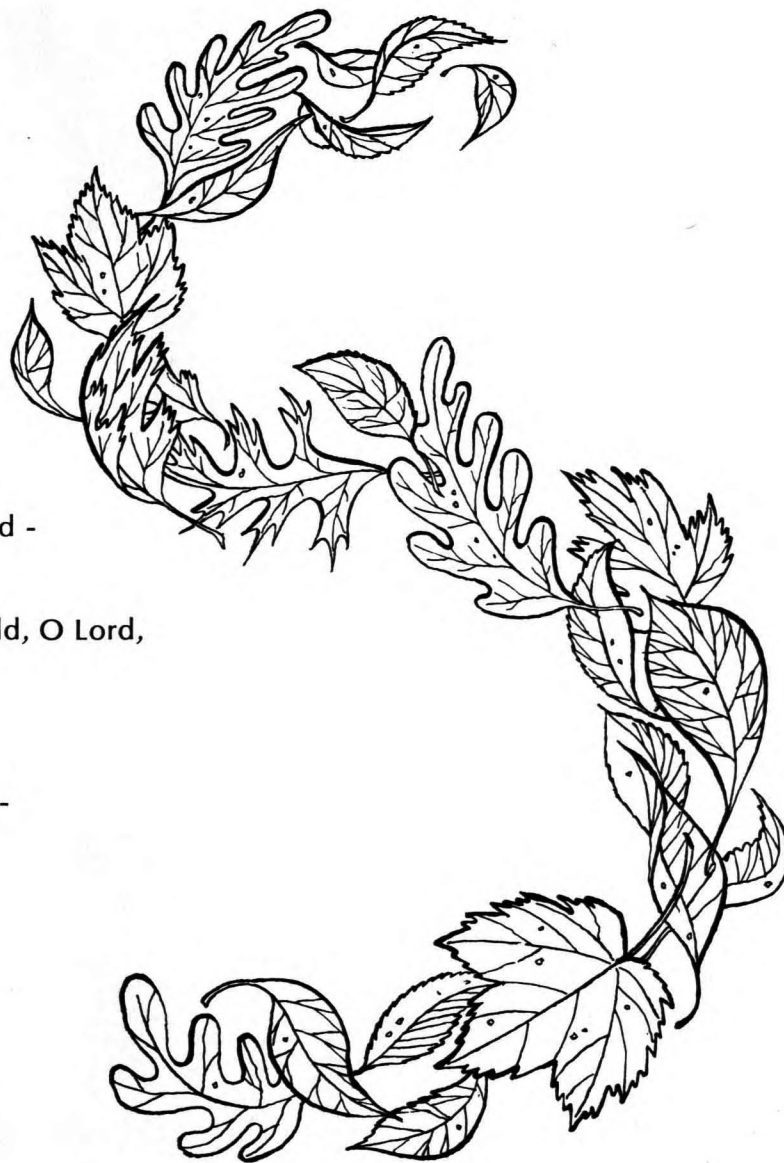
Frances (Naydiuk) Baum writes, "several years ago, the church denomination under which my husband and I were serving, celebrated its fiftieth year of service in Canada. In commemoration of that event, I wrote a song for it, which also served as my personal testimony. As we reunite and visit back and forth, I am sure the same song can fit in our celebration. Here it is:"

Sometimes the paths that I have walked
Have often led through rocky trails;
Sometimes the thorns have stung and pained -
As I have sought to learn thy ways.

More precious, more precious than gold, O Lord,
Thy faithfulness to me.
Oh may thy all consuming fire
Burn out the dross in me.

Sometimes my heart has strayed from Thee -
And colder grown from day to day;
As I have chosen selfish ways,
Instead of trusting Thee each day.

But Thou, O Lord, has sent these tests -
To gently burn this self away;
And with Thy loving, tender hands
Hast wrought pure gold from out the clay.



A good summary of the memories of the Benito church can be found in the following quotations from various people who have written their feelings:

Pearl Horocholyn:

"I cherish the Benito church very highly and always will - for it meant a lot to me and still does - praying daily for it. I have many memories of that church which cannot be described in words. God bless all."

Sadie Naydiuk

"Many of our pioneers are with the Lord now, but to those who are left, with us yet, I say, "Thank you for your testimony and your prayers. God bless you all."

Alex Petelski:

"We thank God for the church in Benito where we grew spiritually and of which we have fond memories in our hearts."

Alex Gnida:

"As for Benito church, I will never forget the precious memories when a lady came to me and asked me if I would like to be saved and I said, 'yes' and since then Jesus has been helping me from day to day and giving me joy and satisfaction."

Serge Bychkowsky:

"We sincerely thank God for this country, for its freedom, its honest democratic government, and especially for the Benito church, who gave us poor homeless people a sincere embrace and comfort under the wings of brotherly love."

Martha (Soloway) Skoworodko:

Psalm 145:2,4:

"Everyday I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever. One generation will commend your works to another, they will tell of your mighty acts."

Добре підсумовання із спогадів Бенітської церкви знаходиться в наступних цитатах від різних людей які написали свої враження:

Параська Горохолин:

"Я поважаю Бенітську церкву дуже високо — бо вона багато для мене означала — й ще означає. Я молюсь щоденно за неї. Я маю багато спогадів про цю церкву що нема слів розказати. Хай Бог благословить Вас всіх."

Сейді Найдюк:

"Багато з наших піонерів є вже з Господом, а для тих що ще є з нами я хочу сказати, 'Дякую за ваше свідоцтво та молитви. Хай Бог благословить Вас всіх.'"

Олександр Петельскі:

"Ми дякуємо Богу за церкву в Беніто де ми росли духовно, й з якої ми маємо люблячі спогади в нашим серці."

Олександр Гнида:

"Бенітська церква — я ніколи не забуду одну сестру яка прийшла до мене та й спитала чи я хотів би бути спасеним. Я сказав 'так' й від того часу Ісус Христос помагає мені день від дня та дає мені радість й задоволення."

Сергій Бичковський:

"Ми глибоко вдячні Богові за цю щасливу країну, за її свободу, за справедливі закони демократичної влади. Ми дякуємо Богові особливо за Бенітську Церкву, яка нам бездомним дала колись щедрий притулок і затишок під крилами братньої любови."

Марта (Соловей) Сковородько:

"Щодня буду величати Тебе, і ім'я Твоє хвалити по віки. Рід перед родом прославить твори Твої, і звістить про могучі діла Твої."

And here's to the future...

(Your story, yet to be written for future generations — God willing)