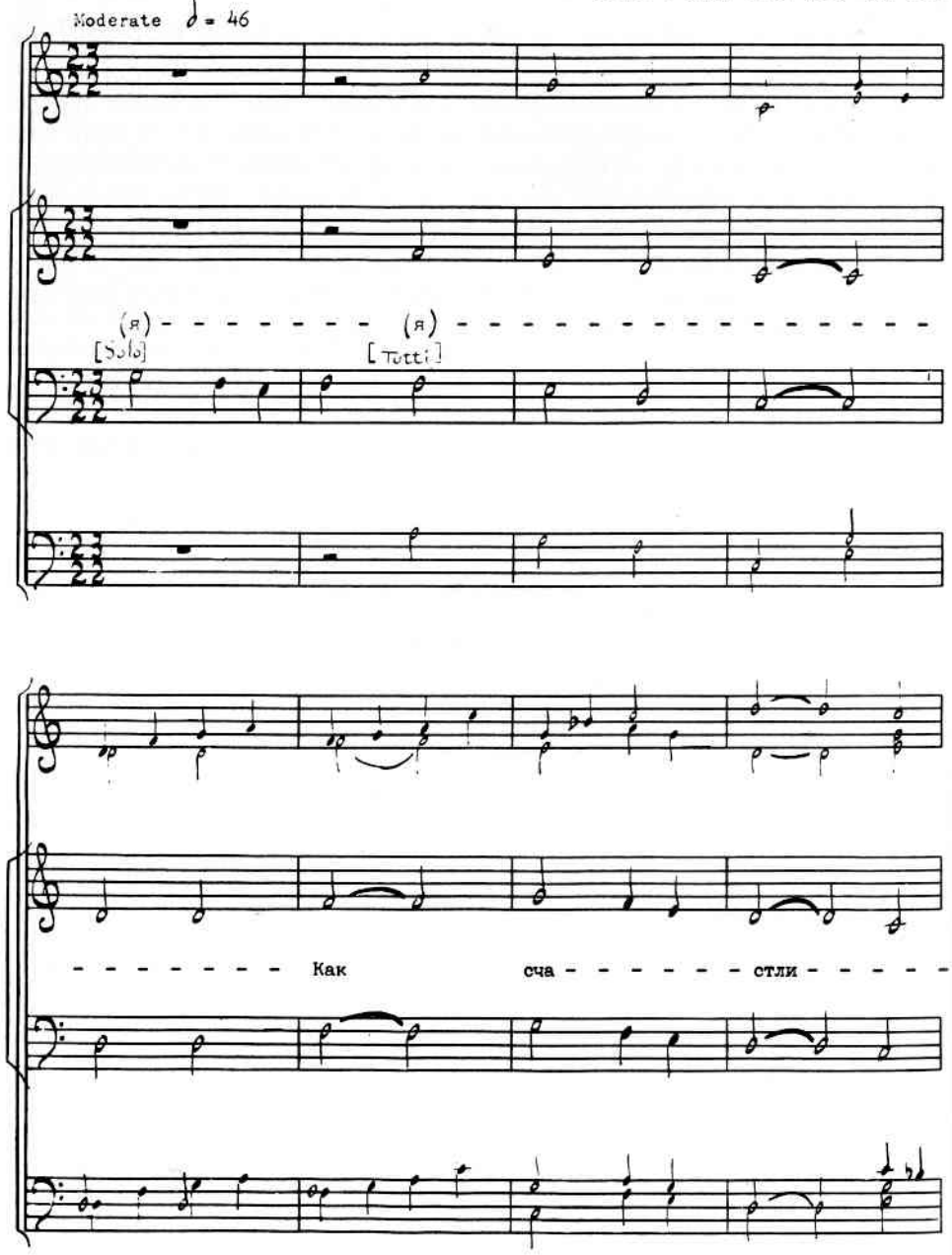
# TRANSITIONAL HYMNS

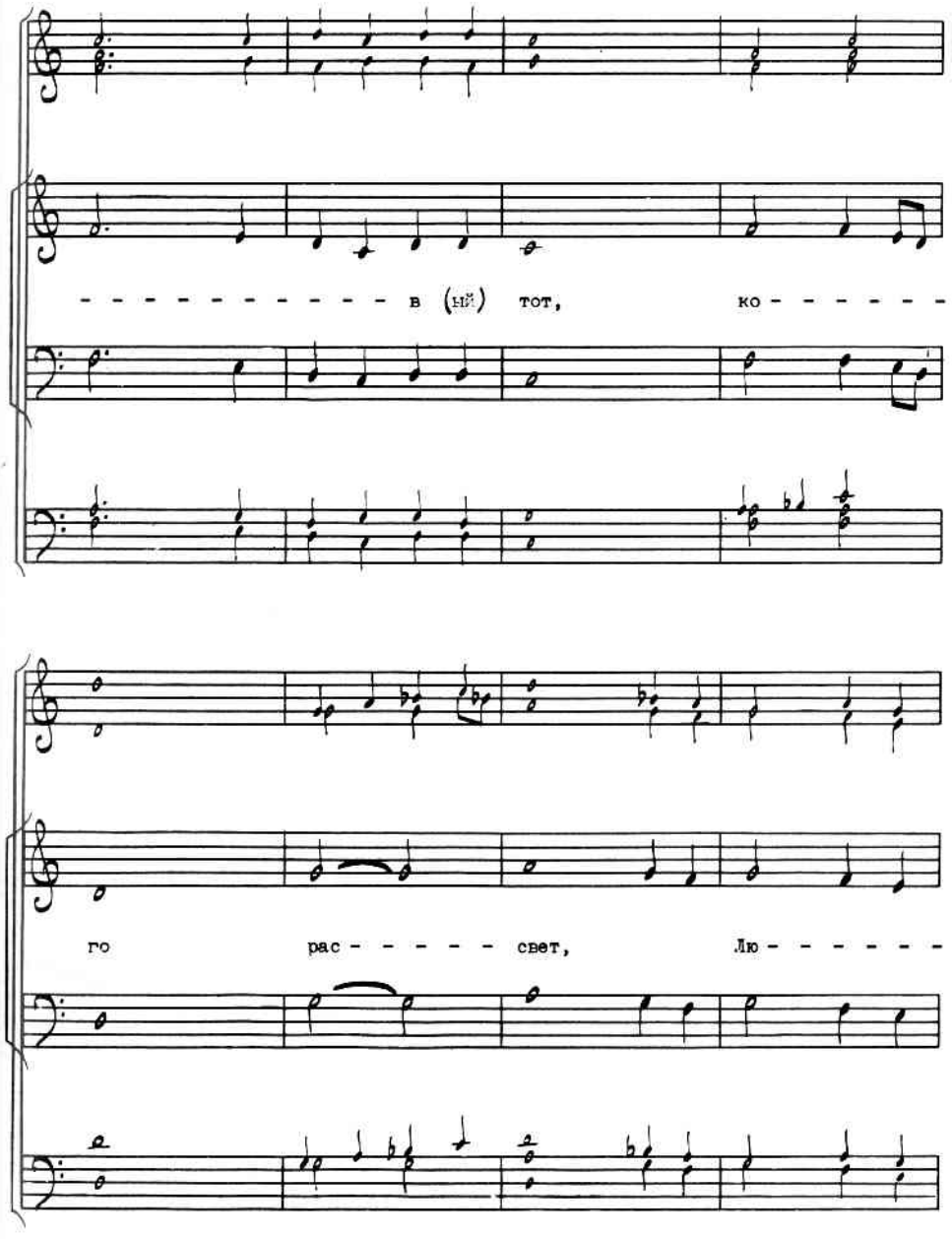
I have designated as 'transitional' hymns all those sung in Russia toward the end of the nineteenth century just prior to the Doukhobor emigration to Canada in 1899. They serve as a link between the traditional Doukhobor culture in Russia and the more highly evolved culture, influenced by Peter V. Verigin, Leo Tolstoy, and others, which the Orthodox Doukhobors continued in Canada. Transitional hymns are not historical in the sense that they refer to specific events, but they often reflect the longing and despair of a people undergoing persecution and exile. They have no distinctive musical style of their own but exhibit the general characteristics of mode, metre, and voice spacing, shared by all Doukhobor and sectarian hymns that have originated after the early hymns.

# How Fortunate Is He

PEA 261-1598

*Sung by the Nick Makortoff choir of mixed elders*
*Grand Forks, B.C., July 12, 1963*

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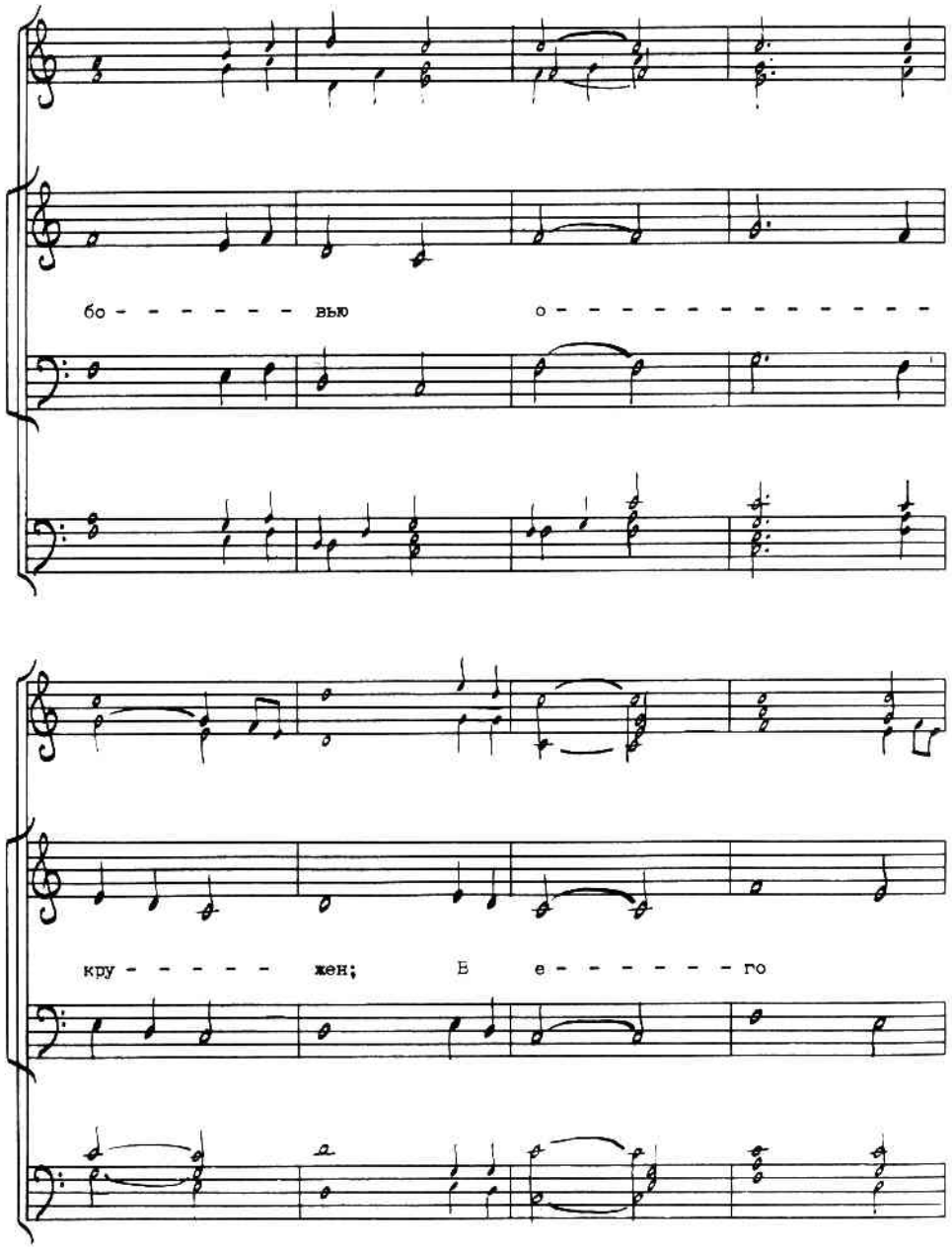
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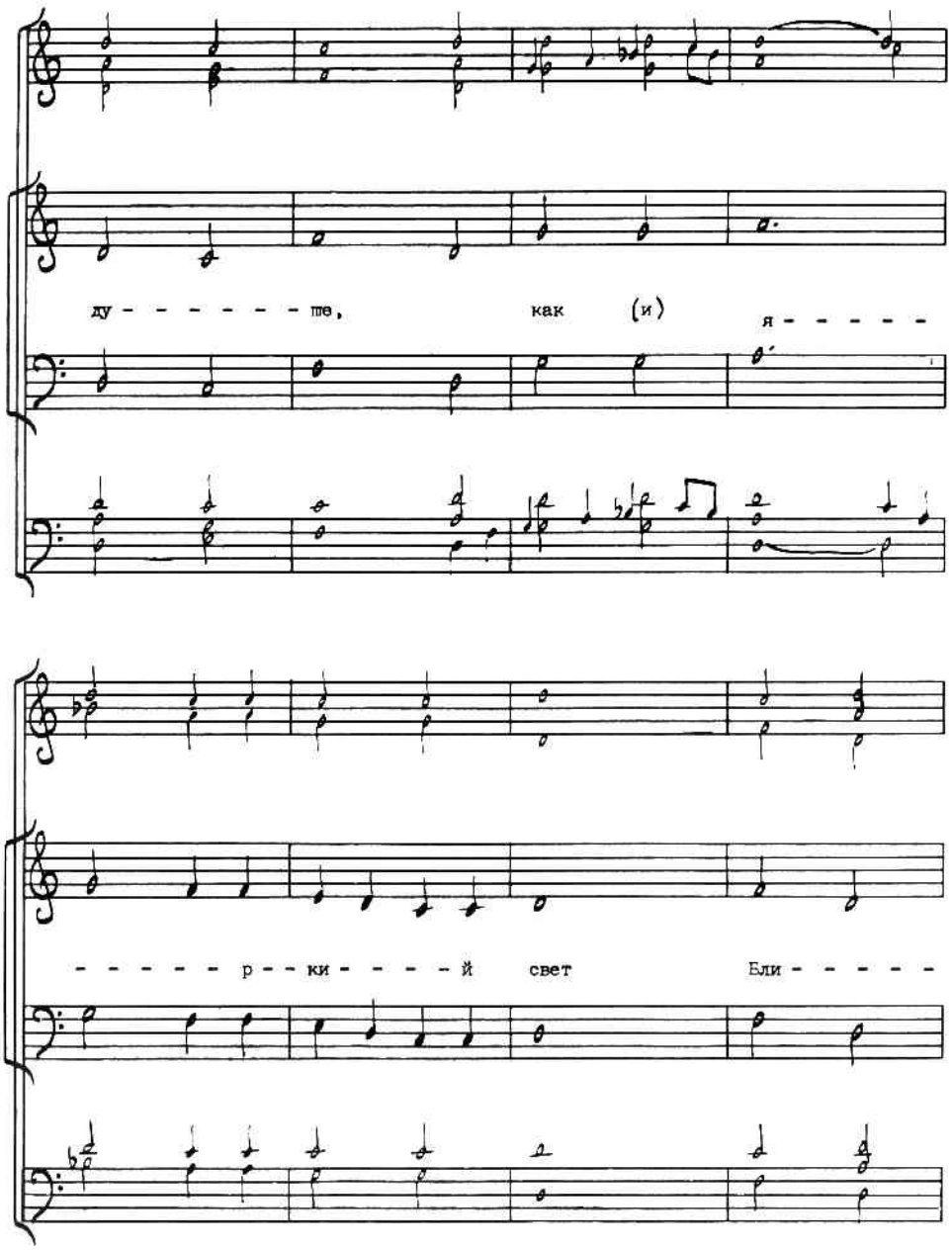
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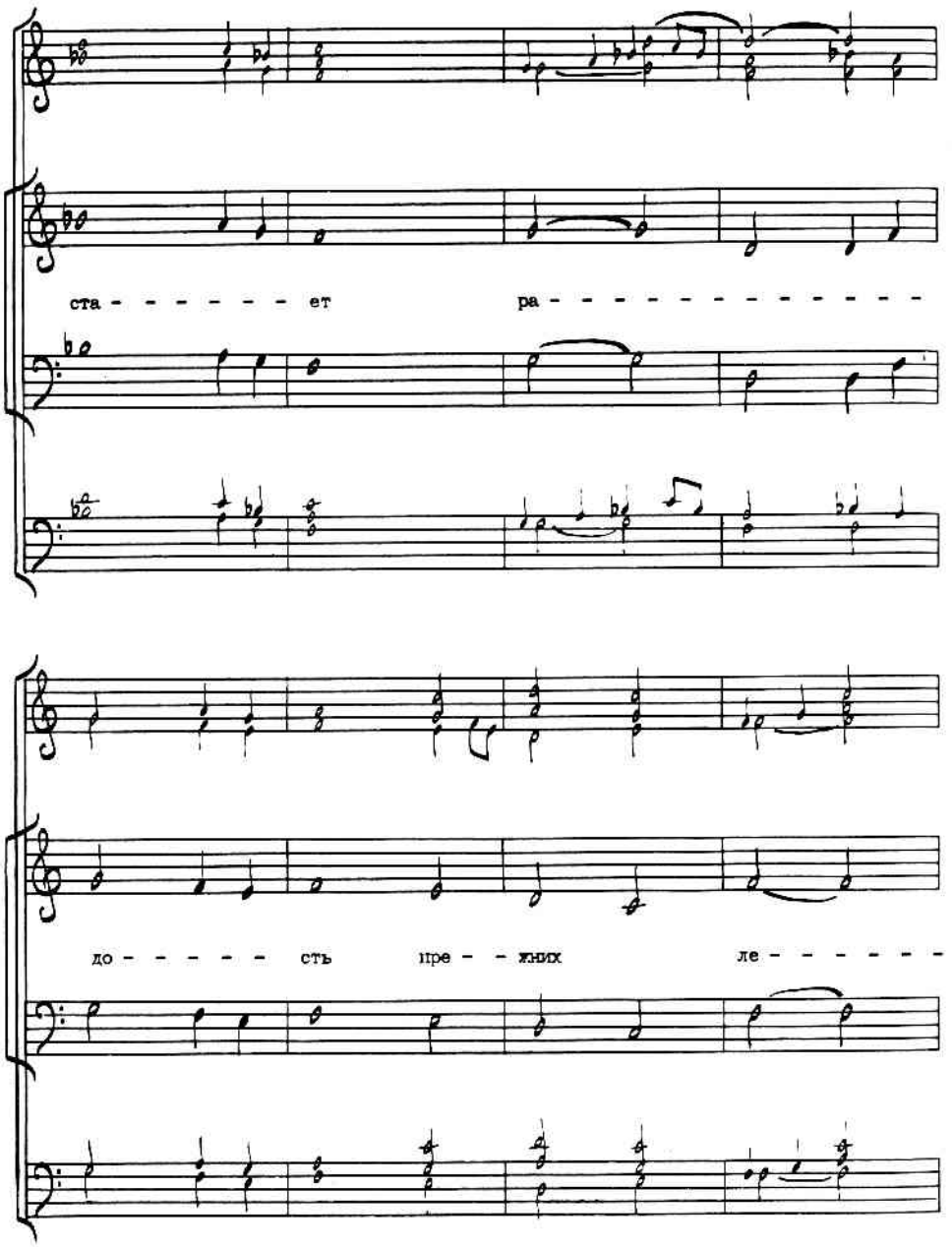
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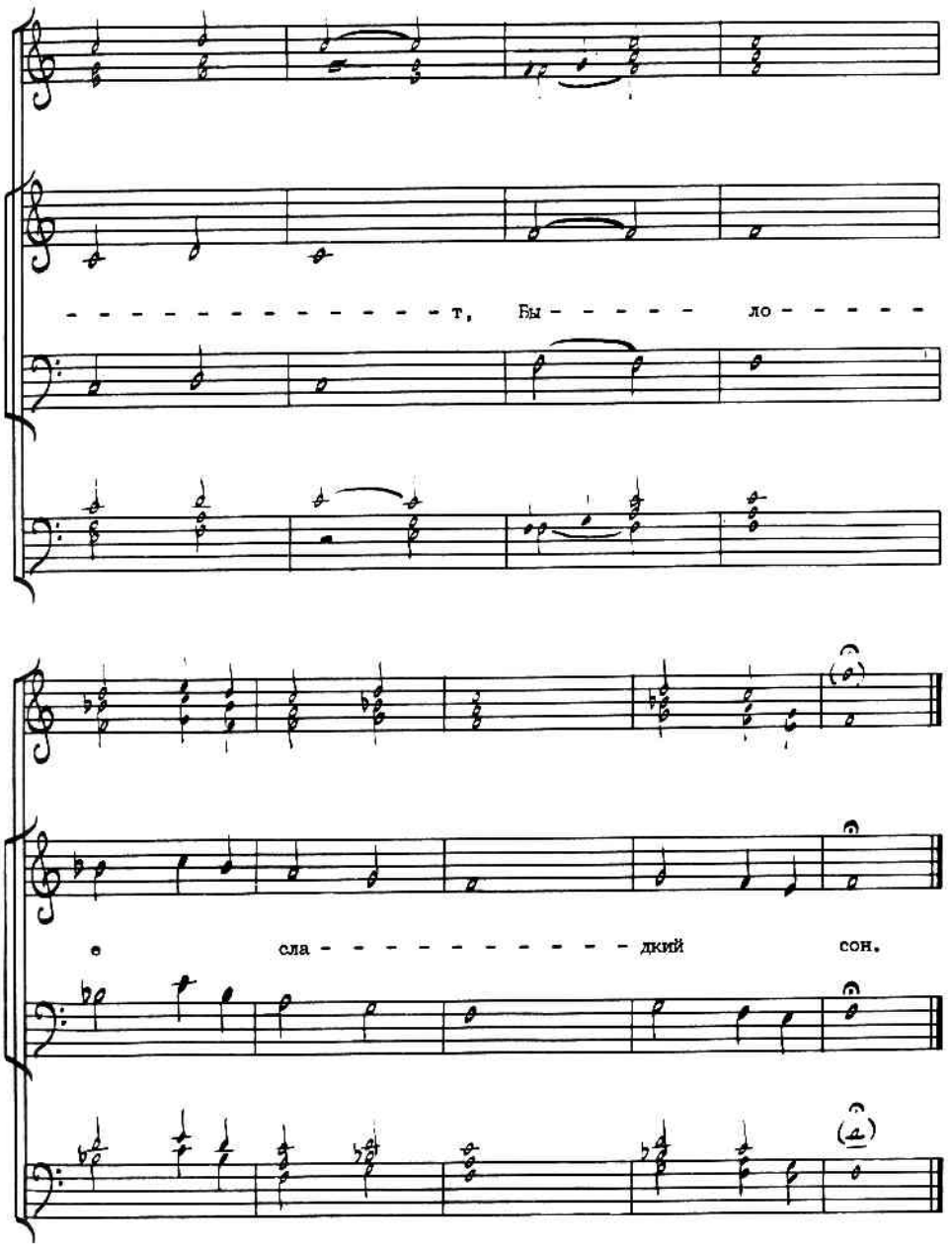
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Как счастлив тот, кого рассвет,
Любовью окружен;
В его душе, как яркий свет
Блистает радость прежних лет,
Былое, сладкий сон.

Он вспомнит прошлые года,
И точно расцветет.
К чему унынье и вражда?
Его пламенная мечта
В заветный край несет—

В заветный край, в родимый дом,
В знакомый, милый сад,
В село над тихим ручейком;
И он в смущении немом
От счастья плакать рад.

И чувств забытых дивный рой,
Опять в душе кипит;
Он молод снова, и одной
Невольной, жаркою слезой
Он сердце обновит.

Пускай мрак ночи впереди,
Гроза шумит — пускай:
Ему не сбиться на пути,
Надежда есть в его груди,
Он знал, он видел рай.

Тоска-ль возьмет его порой,
На жизнь ли падет тень,
Глаза-ль подернутся слезой,
От черных дум под бури-вой
В глухой осенний день,

Все разлетится точно дым
При сладком слове — Мать,
Воспоминанием живым,
Он говорит: я был любим
И мне легко страдать.

*Translation:*

How fortunate is he who meets each dawn
Surrounded closely by love;
Which, like a brilliant light within his soul,
Reflects the joy of days gone by,
The past, like a sweet dream.

He recalls to mind those former years,
And virtually blossoms out.
Why have sorrow, why have hate?
Such flaming thoughts carry him
Back into the land of fantasy;

His cherished land, his childhood home,
The known, beloved garden,
The village by the quiet stream;
In wistful meditation he
Gladly weeps from happiness.

And half-lost thoughts in a wondrous stream
Overwhelm his soul again;
He's young again, and with a single,
Unrestrained, hot tear
His heart is renewed.

So, let the darkness lie ahead,
The storm may threaten too;
He shall not waver from his path,
Hope firmly dwells within his breast,
He has known, he has seen paradise.

Though longing gets him down at times,
In his life a shadow threatens,
His eyes may fill with tears some day
From gruesome thoughts at stormy times
That follow hazy autumn days.

All this disperses like smoke
At the tender word—Mother;
With vivid recollection
He says aloud: I have been loved.
And it's easy for me to suffer.

DATA:

This hymn was written in the 1880's by the leader of the Doukhobors, Peter Vasilievitch Verigin, while he was confined to prison in the Kavkaz area of Russia. Eventually released from prison, Verigin in 1903 joined the thousands of Doukhobors whom he and Leo Tolstoy and the English Quakers had worked so hard to send to Canada in 1899. Originally entitled *Meditations of a Prisoner*, the hymn is supposed by some Doukhobors to have been based on an earlier Russian poem. At any rate, Peter Verigin sent it to his faithful followers with the exhortation to provide it with a psalm-like melody so that it might be preserved in the Doukhobors' permanent repertoire of religious songs. This was done by a group of the foremost singers of the time, headed by Ivan Evseivitch Konkin. It may account for the somewhat archaic flavour of the music. The hymn is still widely sung by Orthodox groups in British Columbia.

Peter's Day picnic held in Verigin, Saskatchewan, after the singing of psalms and other religious observances. June 29, 1964

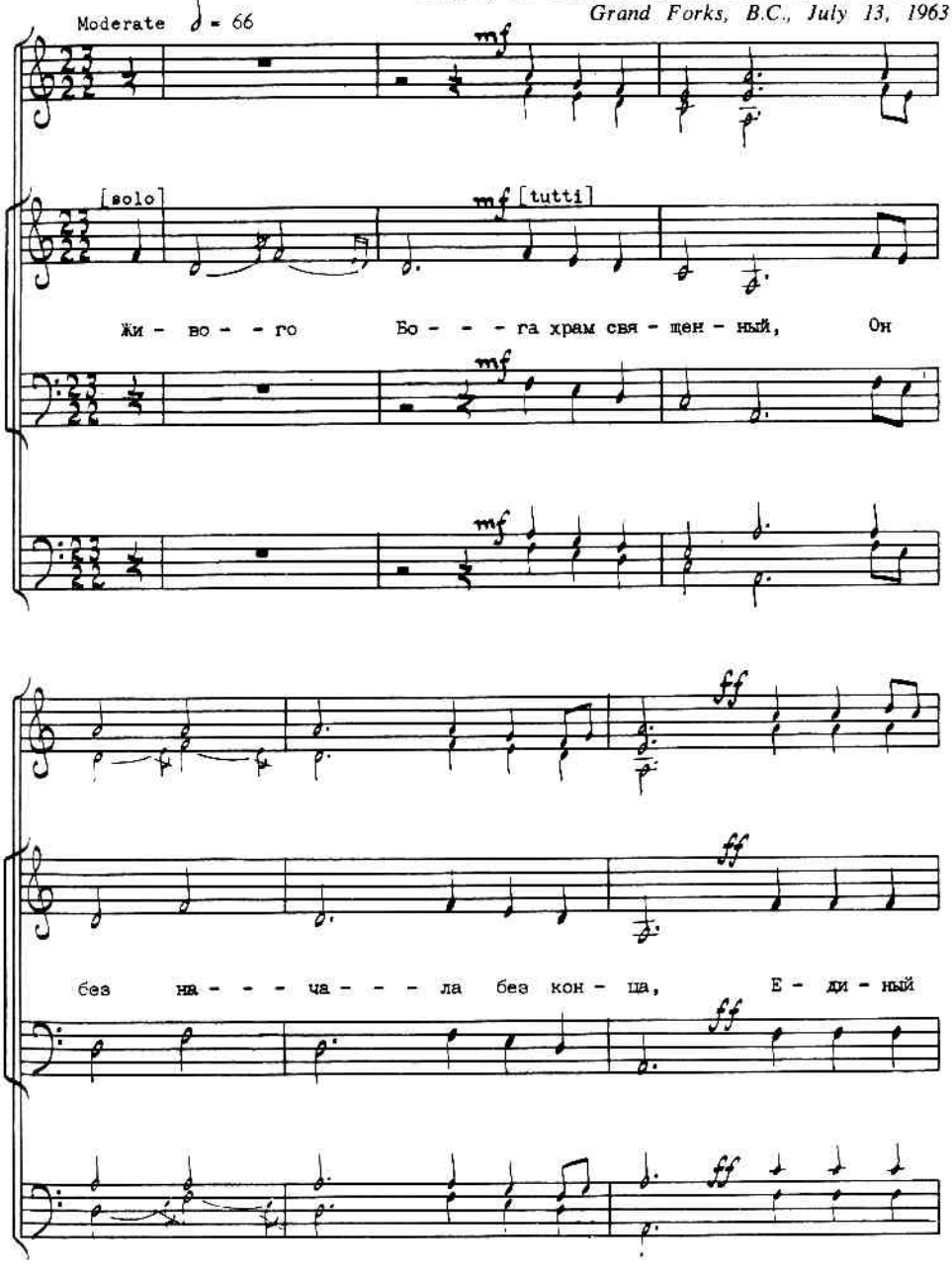
The Dimitri Fofonoff choir singing *The Holy Temple of the Living*

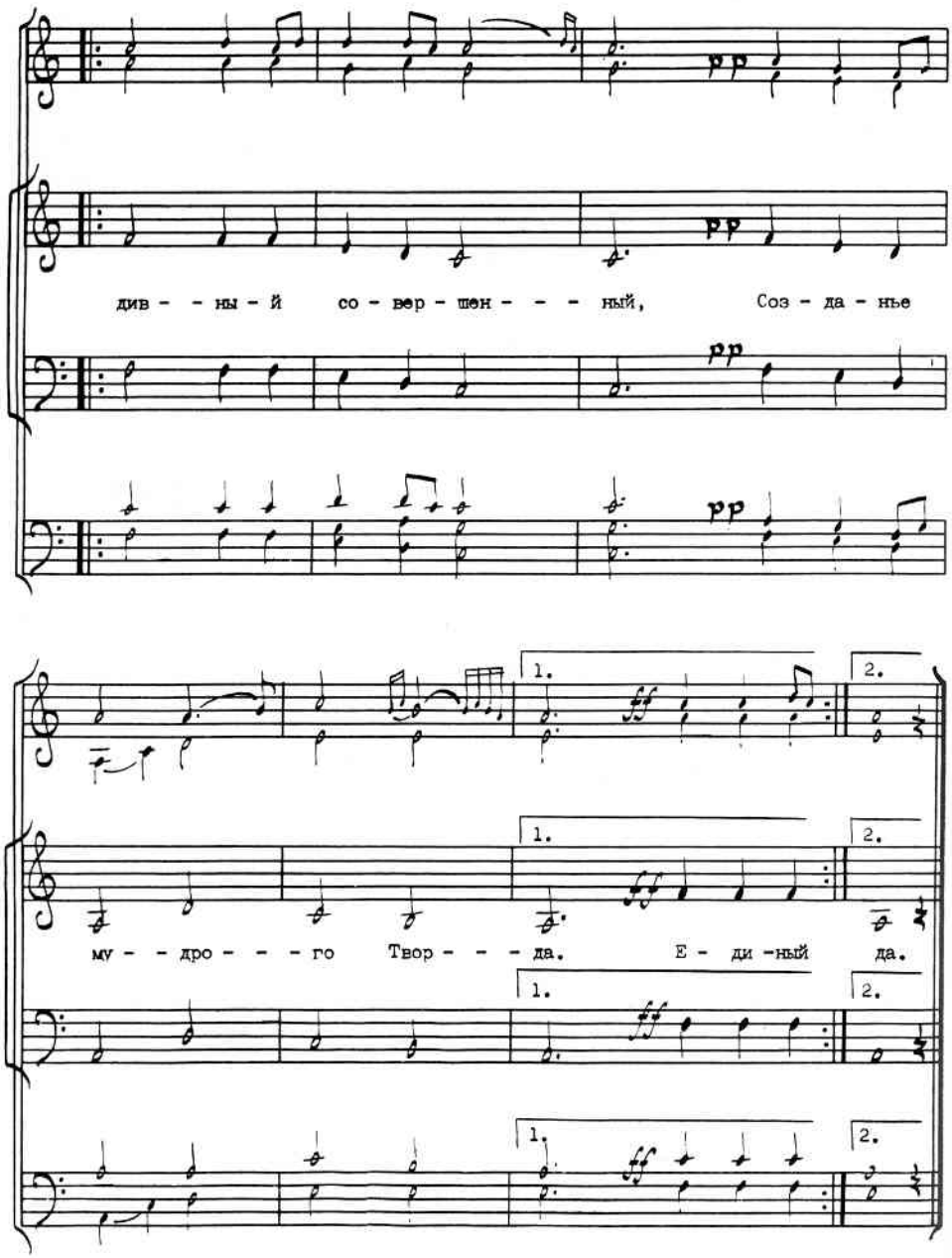
# The Holy Temple of the Living God

*(Record 1, Side 2)*

PEA 264-1611

*Sung by the Dimitri Fofonoff choir of mixed elders*
*Grand Forks, B.C., July 13, 1963*

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Живого Бога храм священный,
Он без начала без конца,
Единый дивный совершенный,
Созданье мудрого Творца. } (2)

В тебе я вечно пребываю,
И от тебя не отделюсь,
В тебе я Бога созерцаю,
О, лишь в тебе сливаюсь с Ним. } (2)

В тебе, мой храм нерукотворный,
Бог все Собой об'единил,
Зачем-же дух вражды позорной
Нам храм искусственный сложил? } (2)

Зачем высокими стенами
Он разделил сердца людей,
Из братьев сделал нас врагами
Ожесточил сердца людей? } (2)

Роскошным блеском ослепляя,
Он Бога скрыл и подменил,
Обрядом пышным отвлекая,
Он совесть нашу усыпил. } (2)

Живого Бога храм священный
Нас во едино собери,
Любовью чистой совершенной
Нас озари и примири. } (2)

*Translation:*

The holy temple of the living God,
Without beginning dwells forever;
The one perfected, wondrous image
Created by the wise Creator. } (2)

In thee I ever wish to dwell,
And from thee never to be apart;
In thee God's presence I perceive,
In thee with Him do I unite. } (2)

Annual Children's Sunday School Festival, Grand Forks, 1963. On the left, Anna P. Markova holds her grand-daughter Nina Verigin; on the right, Eli A. Popoff, Director of the Festival, sits with boy charges. Notice the ever-present bread, water, and salt—traditional Doukhobor (and Russian) symbols of hospitality.

In thee, my shrine of holy making,
Within Himself God united all;
Why then has the spirit of hate
Built for us an artificial shrine? } (2)

Why, with walls so high and rigid,
Has hate divided the hearts of men;
From brethren making them adversaries,
Their hearts be hardened to condemn: } (2)

Material gains but serve to blind us,
Lust obscures God, His truth to hide;
With pompous rites we are distracted,
Our conscience hate has stupefied. (2)

Holy temple of the living God,
In humbleness unite us all;
With love pure, crystal-clear, divine,
Enlighten us and reconcile. (2)

DATA:

The text of this hymn beautifully illustrates some of the fundamental beliefs of the Doukhobors. The 'holy temple of the living God' is, of course, not a church but the mind of man himself. Doukhobors regard the established churches, with their hierarchies of priestly power, as 'artificial shrines' (verse 3), 'with walls so high and rigid' (verse 4), where 'with pompous rites we are distracted' (verse 5). Like the Quakers, the Doukhobors believe the true Christian life is lived by good example and good deeds, not by complex rituals and dogmas.

This antipathy toward the church indicates a possible survival of beliefs associated with the Bogomil doctrines that originated in Bulgaria in the tenth century (*see* Introduction, page 1). Bogomil taught that God had two sons, Satanail and Michael, the latter the spiritual effluence of God, which was later to become manifest in the personage of Christ. Satanail (Satan) created the lower heavens and earth but not man. According to Bogomil belief, it was Satanail who was responsible for the Crucifixion and the later establishment of the Orthodox Church.

With further studies it may be possible to date the origin of *The Holy Temple of the Living God*. We do know that it was sung by Doukhobors in Russia at the turn of this century and that it was again revived in the 1920's during the Soviet resettlement of Doukhobor families in the Don River area. The hymn was brought to Canada from Russia only in 1961 by Anna P. Markova, mother of John J. Verigin, the present leader of the Orthodox Doukhobors. Since then it has achieved wide popularity among many Doukhobor groups in British Columbia. Mrs. Markova's presence in Canada is providing an important cultural link with the Russian past and an invaluable insight into those traditions which are undergoing modification in the Canadian environment.