

MP Not Historical Russian Church

51-65 Minuten

Why the Moscow Patriarchate (MP) is not the historical Russian Orthodox Church !

A brief history of the Moscow Patriarchate (MP) and Russian Orthodox Church Outside Of Russia (ROCOR)

By Fr. Nikita Grigoriev

Rector, Saint John of Kronstadt Parish, Utica, NY

Instructor of Apologetics, Holy Trinity Seminary,

Jordanville, NY 1986-2006

Some of the faithful are being confused by assertions that the ROCOR must necessarily unite with the MP at this time or face dire consequences. These consequences include losing ROCOR's canonical foundation, creating a schism in the Church, becoming a sect, losing respect in the eyes of the world, partaking in the heresy of Donatism, etc. The positive reasons for immediate union are usually given as the claim that Communism has fallen in Russia, the MP has completely renounced "Sergianism" as well as Ecumenism and above all, that Russia, the long suffering Russian people and the MP need the ROCOR now. In other words, the best way for ROCOR to help the Russian people is to unite with the MP now. If they don't do it now, ROCOR will not get another chance, and will become a sect and earn the contempt of the world.

It is worthwhile at this time to sort out some of these assertions in the light of historical fact and to focus clearly on the real issues at hand.

Donatism has nothing to do with why the Russian Orthodox Church, whether abroad or in catacombs cannot join the organization that calls itself the ROC, MP. Donatism was a heresy that taught that the sacraments performed by a priest or bishop of low moral character, or who had fallen into grievous personal sin were not valid. This was, of course condemned by the Church because we're all sinners and none of us would then be worthy to perform them, not to say that we shouldn't strive with all our strength to attain to the high calling.

The fact that many of the MP hierarchy are apparently of questionable moral character is certainly not the actual reason why the Russian Church abroad cannot unite with them. This is a misleading teaching that seems to be generated to deflect the focus to a false issue that can then be handled through accusations of Donatism etc... Our differences with the MP had never been a matter of personal sins or moral character and people should take care not to allow them to be reduced to that.

The reason why we can't "join the MP" is very simple. They are a schismatic group that separated from the Russian Orthodox Church in 1927 under Metropolitan Sergius and to this day remains in that schism. The fact that they have become very powerful, with the help and support of the atheistic government, is entirely irrelevant. They are, from their origin and to this day, a schismatic group that separated from the Church.

It is extremely important to understand what a schism is.

A schism is not a division of the Church into two valid parts that are no longer in communion with each other. Perish that thought! That kind of teaching is the foundation of the heresy of ecumenism.

The Church is one. We believe in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. By its own self-definition, in the Nicene creed, the Church is first of all One.

The unity of the Church is likened to the indivisible unity of the Holy Trinity by Christ Himself in his prayer to His Father, just before His arrest in the garden of Gethsemane. The Church is a living, breathing organism, not just a social, political or even religious human organization. It cannot be contained, prohibited or even destroyed. It is eternal and immortal because it is a body that is imbued with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God Himself. It is the body of Christ and as such, it is indivisible, in as much as the body of Christ is indivisible. The living body of the Church is united and vivified by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, that organically unites all the members of the Church into one, indivisible body, united in the Spirit of Truth, in God Himself.

A schism occurs when a group of people leaves the Church and consequently, breaks communion with the Church. This occurs, as a result of a falsehood or a false doctrine, which is obstinately maintained by the schismatics in opposition to the Spirit of Truth, Who is the very essence of the Church. If the schismatics repent of the falsehood that separated them from the Spirit of Truth, The Holy Spirit of the Church, then they may be received back into the Church through a special rite of confession and absolution and by the reinstatement of The Holy Spirit in them by the Church. If they persist in

their position that is in opposition to the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Spirit of the Church, they remain outside of the Church. They certainly can never be considered as "another part" of the One Church that happens to be not in communion with the "other part" of the Church. No matter how big or how powerful they become in the eyes of the world, they will always remain outside the Church until they repent and are received back into the Church through the mystery of absolution.

The following is a brief synopsis of the actual historical events that led to the schism in the Russian Church in 1927, that resulted in Met. Sergius and his followers, who eventually became known as the Moscow Patriarchate, to be outside the Russian Church.

From his youth, Met. Sergius was an extremely ambitious man who was obsessed with power. When the February, 1917 revolution occurred in Russia, he was quoted as saying that he hopes that perhaps now something of the sort may also take place in the Church. He didn't have to wait very long for his opportunity.

In the years of turmoil following the revolution, he tried to seize power in the Church in 1922 by heading a radical renovationist group calling itself the "living church". This was a group that sympathized with the Bolshevik revolution and broke away from the Church under the leadership of Met. Sergius and so it was, of course, in schism with the Church. But it did not get much support from the faithful and soon petered out despite the great efforts on the part of the godless government to arrest or shoot all who opposed it. The "living church" bishops were trying to take advantage of the time when Patriarch Tikhon was under arrest to usurp power in the Church

with the help of the godless regime. Patriarch Tikhon had staunchly opposed all attempts by the Bolsheviks to gain control of the Church and boldly spoke out against the godless atrocities and brazen lies of the Bolshevik government.

Because of the enormous authority that Patriarch Tikhon wielded not only in Russia but even with foreign governments, the Bolsheviks were forced to release him, still keeping him under very close observation and persecution. The release of Patriarch Tikhon served to quell the "living church" revolution and Met. Sergius then asked to be taken back into the Church, which he was, unfortunately in the same rank, after a clear public confession and a renunciation of the "living church". But he kept his eyes open for another opportunity.

The new Bolshevik government had a stated agenda to destroy all faith in God. At first it began to physically exterminate many of the faithful, starting with the bishops and priests, and to demolish most of the churches. Soon they realized, just like the Roman Empire did in the first three centuries, that it was hopeless and that they were bound to lose. The Church, which comprised most of the country, was only becoming stronger and increasingly more resolute. Large crowds were following priests who had been arrested, encouraging them to stand fast and ripping off pieces of their cassocks to keep as relics from the martyrs on their way to certain death for Christ and His Church.

The Bolsheviks realized that they needed a new plan.

Comrade Tuchkov had been selected for the job of destroying the Church. On Dec. 13, 1926 Met. Sergius

was arrested and brought for a chat with comrade Tuchkov. When Tuchkov met with Met. Sergius it was like a match made in hell. Met. Sergius saw a great career opportunity and Tuchkov saw a chance to create a schism in the Church: Exactly what they were both looking for.

Met. Sergius emerged from jail on March 30, 1927 and was then free to live in Moscow with privileges that he did not enjoy even before his arrest at a time when almost all the bishops were being arrested and retained in jail. He began to be suspected of having struck a deal with Tuchkov. It's not clear which one of them was the actual author of that hideous document that entered history under the infamous name of "Declaration of Met. Sergius". Most likely it was a joint effort, with comrade Tuchkov dictating and Met. Sergius obliging. The end result was that on July 29, 1927 Met. Sergius signed the infamous "Declaration of Met. Sergius". This document not only created schism in the Church and precipitated the most vicious persecution of the Church in history, where millions upon millions of Christians were butchered for their Faith in the most horrendous ways imaginable (I personally heard some of the details from witnesses such as the new confessor Bishop Leonty of Chile, for instance), but most importantly it lay the foundation for the creation of nothing less than what may be rightfully called the Antichrist Orthodox Church.

Why?

Consider the third temptation that Satan presented to Christ in the desert. Satan took Christ atop a high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the earth in all their glory. And Satan said to Christ, "all this I will

give to you if you bow down before me". What did Satan want from Christ? Only one thing: that Christ recognize Satan's authority and submit to it. What did Satan promise Christ in return? Permission to operate freely in the world, subject only to Satan's approval, of course. What would have occurred if Christ had agreed to Satan's proposal? There would have been many glorious churches built but they would all have been subject to Satan and would therefore be incapable of providing salvation. That church would have been founded and built not on the Spirit of Truth but on falsehood and belong to the father of lies, Satan.

When the Bolshevik government realized it cannot annihilate the Church they decided to make it theirs, to own it. In corporate business it's a well known principle that if you can't beat your competition, you buy it, so that it works for you. The God-fighting Satanic Bolsheviks demanded then that the Russian Church recognize their authority and totally submit to them, just as Satan had done with Christ in the desert. In exchange they also promised to grant the Church permission to operate, entirely subject to their approval and direction. What would have occurred if the Church had agreed to the satanic government's proposal? Exactly what would have occurred with Christ in the desert: some churches would be permitted to operate on a limited basis but they would be headed by Satan, not by Christ, and would therefore be incapable of providing salvation.

This point is so crucial that it cannot be over emphasized: If a church receives its authority from Satan or through Satan's servants, then that church is Satan's church and not Christ's. It may look like Christ's Church, even try to act like Christ's Church in order to

deceive, but the real, living person of Jesus Christ has nothing to do with it. Such a church is totally the church of Antichrist and subject only to Satan.

Naturally the Russian Church could not possibly accept any such offer from the godless authority. Not only did the Russian Church flatly reject this proposal from the Bolsheviks but, in the person of Patriarch Tikhon, who had that authority, it anathematized the Bolshevik government and all those who collaborate with it in their attempt to destroy the Church of Christ. Anathematized means they were declared to be outside the Church and no longer members of it.

But Tuchkov found one bishop in the Russian Church who was quite ready, on his own, to accept just such a proposal. That was, of course, Met. Sergius Stragorodsky. What Met. Sergius agreed to and signed was the document that he produced during those days in collaboration with Tuchkov in 1927, and this is what became known as the "Declaration of Met. Sergius".

In that declaration Met. Sergius claims that he not only recognizes the godless authority as legitimate and God given and totally submits to it, he joins it in essence and in spirit to the point of completely identifying with it. He then proceeds in the spirit of Satan, the father of lies, to declare that there is no, and never had been, any persecution of the Church by the Bolsheviks, and that the Bolshevik government is only exterminating the enemies of the state. To further demonstrate his oneness with the godless authority he then proceeded to fully collaborate with them in identifying and condemning to death all the bishops, clergy and faithful that had not submitted to him and to the godless government.

Now, if Met. Sergius had made such a declaration on his own behalf, it would have been bad enough, but it would have been useless to the God-fighting Bolsheviks, who were intent on destroying the whole Church. As such, it would have been of no further consequence.

But although he had no right and no authority to do so, Met. Sergius tried to make that declaration on behalf of the entire Russian Church. And this was the crux of it. The Bolsheviks thought that if they could have that declaration signed by the highest-ranking bishop in the Church, they could insist that it was binding for the entire Church. But they were mistaken on both counts. First, Met. Sergius was not the highest-ranking bishop in the Church. Met. Kyril, who had just been released, and Met. Peter, who was in jail at the time, were superior to him. And second, even the highest ranking bishop in the Church does not have the authority, on his own, to commit the Church to any new course, especially one that is completely unacceptable to the Church as a whole.

And so, Met. Peter of Krutitsk, who was the locum tenens of Patriarch Tikhon, and definitely the superior authority of Met. Sergius, distinctly forbade the latter to sign any such declaration on behalf of the Church. This fully legitimate order was sent to Met. Sergius in a letter, which he did not respond to. Then Met. Peter sent a second letter to Met. Sergius, which was delivered to him by hand courier. Met. Sergius also ignored that letter and did not respond to it. This was because he saw an opportunity to seize power in the Church and, with the help of the ruthless Bolshevik government, to extend and consolidate that power over the entire Russian Church.

When the Bolsheviks realized that Met. Peter was a superior of their Met. Sergius, they kept him in jail and eventually shot Met. Peter. Then they proceeded to vigorously support Met. Sergius by ruthlessly liquidating any and all who refused to sign the Declaration of Met. Sergius.

Some of the bishops did join Met. Sergius and signed his Declaration of oneness with the God-fighting government. They formed their own synod, that by no coincidence consisted of many of the old "living church" group, and declared themselves to be the supreme authority of the Russian Church.

But here's the very crux of the whole thing. The Russian Church, as headed by its legitimate leader, Met. Peter of Krutitsk, Met Kyril of Khazan, Met Joseph of Petrograd and scores of other high ranking bishops rejected the Declaration of Met. Sergius and emphatically did not join itself to the God-fighting Bolshevik government. The Russian Church, represented by its leader Met. Peter, strictly forbade Met. Sergius to sign the declaration that joined him and his followers to the godless authority. When Met. Sergius ignored this directive from his legitimate Church authority and did join himself and his followers to the godless authority, the Church broke communion with him. Met. Sergius and his followers then fell under the anathema of Patriarch Tikhon that applied to all those who collaborate with the God-fighting Bolsheviks. They became an entity outside the Church and no longer part of the Church. In other words, they were then in schism from the Church.

The teaching that the infamous Declaration of Met. Sergius was a tragedy because it created a schism in the

Russian Church is right. But who was the Church and who was in schism from The Church? Clearly, the group that was led by Met. Sergius were the ones that left the Church to unite themselves with the godless Bolshevik government, in direct disobedience to their superior, Met. Peter and many other bishops and in complete contradiction to all Church principles.

Two parts of the Church, not in communion with each other on a matter of principle, and yet both valid, but neither comprising the fullness of the Church is the very definition of the heresy of ecumenism. Such a view has never been considered in the Church to have any validity. Schismatics have always been considered by the Church to be worse even than heretics, because they rend the very body of Christ. They may only be received back into the Church after they repent of the cause of their schism and are absolved by the Church of the sin of schism.

Met. Sergius never did repent of his sin of schism and never was received back into the Church again, as he had been the previous time. Not only did he remain outside of the Church, in schism, but also he helped to precipitate a totally ruthless persecution of the Church in order to wipe out any possible competition and to consolidate his supreme position in this, his new Soviet church.

This total persecution, unprecedented in history in terms of scope and ferociousness, was carried out by the secret police of the Bolshevik government, the NKVD, with the help of Met. Sergius and his schismatic church. NKVD agents would arrive at the residence or jail cell of a bishop or priest, frequently pointed out to them by Met. Sergius himself or by one of his accomplices. They

would thrust a copy of the Declaration of Met. Sergius at them to sign. When the faithful would refuse, the agents would often shoot them in the head right on their doorstep. Some of the bishops were dragged out into the street and impaled on a sharpened stake. Others were taken away and sliced slowly on a meat slicer.

All the while the Bolshevik government and Met. Sergius kept insisting that there is no persecution of the Church in Soviet Russia and that they are only exterminating the political enemies of the state and of the people.

Their blasphemy against the Spirit of Truth, The Holy Spirit of God could not have been more obvious. It would be worthwhile to recall that it was Christ who said that every sin a man commits may be forgiven him, but the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven neither in this life nor in the life to come. This is because when a man, through his own volition, becomes totally committed to falsehood, then truth becomes inaccessible to him, and repentance becomes impossible through his own determination to cling to falsehood.

This great persecution, carried out by the godless Communist government and aided by Met. Sergius and his followers, did succeed in killing or imprisoning most of the people of the Russian Church. A considerable portion of the Church went underground and became the ultra secret Catacomb Church, (which is now known as Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church - ROAC.) The other portion of the Church was forced to emigrate and organize itself into the Russian Church Orthodox Outside of Russia by the order of Patriarch Tikhon, which he issued on Nov. 7 / 20, 1920 as Ukase No. 362. The

Catacomb Church (now called ROAC) and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Of Russia was all that remained of the historic Russian Orthodox Church.

This remnant of the Russian Orthodox Church was then physically separated into two parts, remaining completely in communion with each other in the Holy Spirit of God, as the One, indivisible Church of Christ and separated only physically by the godless regime but certainly not divided in Spirit.

The bishops that were forced to emigrate were unable to maintain contact with the Higher Church Administration in Russia and were required to form an independent synod with Met. Anthony Khrapovitsky, the senior bishop, as head of the Russian Church Orthodox Outside Of Russia (also called ROCA- Russian Orthodox Church Abroad), in accordance with Ukase 362.

Patriarch Tikhon died on March 25 / April 7, 1925. The episcopate of the Russian Church Orthodox Outside Of Russia issued encyclicals to all its parishes worldwide to continue commemorating Met. Peter and not to commemorate Met. Sergius. When Met. Peter was killed in prison, the Russian Church abroad commemorated Met. Kyril, the other locum tenens chosen by Patriarch Tikhon. Met. Sergius and his followers were never commemorated by the Russian Church neither in catacombs nor abroad because he was regarded as a schismatic who joined the enemies of the Church and collaborated with them in the persecution of the Church.

When it became known that Met. Kyril was also killed, the Russian Church Orthodox Outside Of Russia continued to commemorate "the Orthodox episcopate of

the persecuted Russian Church". This clearly did not mean Met. Sergius and his followers and successors, who had actually joined the persecutors and were even assisting in the persecution of the Church. It referred to the Orthodox episcopate of the persecuted Russian Church, the Catacomb Church. This was always completely clear in the Russian Church Orthodox Outside Of Russia and the fact of it was never in doubt until very recently, when an order was issued in the Church abroad to drop the word "persecuted" from the traditional phrase in litanies, etc... and to begin commemorating only "the Orthodox episcopate of the Russian Church" instead.

The Soviet government succeeded in slaughtering most of the visible Church that remained in Russia. But it was not satisfied with this. It also killed many of its own hierarchy, the followers of Met. Sergius that had joined them, who were no longer useful to them.

Met. Sergius and his followers joined the godless government that was persecuting the Church in an effort to save their own lives.

They claimed that by joining with the God-fighting government they could remain alive and out of prison, thereby saving the Church from being wiped out. This idea of saving the Church by actually joining with its persecutors, whose ultimate aim was the complete eradication of all faith in God, was not only absurd but completely foreign to Church teaching and practice during its entire history.

This is truly Satan's idea as can be clearly seen from the words of Christ to apostle Peter when the latter begged

Christ to not go to the Cross and Christ rebuked him sharply saying, "get thee behind me Satan". Christ created the Church precisely by going to the Cross, not by joining with his enemies. This is why the sign of Christ and of His Church is the Holy and life-giving Cross and not a negotiating table. His apostles, with the exception of St. John, all died a martyr's death for Christ and His Church. If there was ever a time when the Church would seem to be totally dependent on the apostles, it was in those first few years of its young life. But the Apostles certainly did not join the pagan Roman government or the God-fighting Pharisees saying that they could not afford to die or go to prison then because they need to remain free and thereby save the Church.

The Church always grows and is strengthened by its martyrs who confess their faith in Christ fearlessly before Satan and his world and triumphantly go to their death, only to live forever in Christ. The blood of the martyrs has always been called "the seed of the Church". To this day the Divine Liturgy can only be performed on the relics of martyrs who died for Christ and His Church.

So Met. Sergius certainly did not save the Church by recognizing and submitting to the Bolshevik government, but very likely he did help save that satanic godless government from collapsing. This became even clearer during World War Two, under Stalin's regime. Stalin unleashed such a reign of terror in Soviet Russia that he succeeded in liquidating practically all of the remaining communists that had actually committed the revolution in the first place. Ironically, communist Russia under Stalin had practically none of the communists left who were actually involved in the communist revolution. This also extended to many of their collaborators, among

them the group under Met. Sergius, because the godless Soviet government had no particular interest in preserving even their own collaborators after they were of no further use to them. Such is the nature of the satanic beast. By the time WW2 broke out very little remained even of the schismatic group under Met. Sergius that the Soviet government called Church. The Soviet government had used them to help them annihilate the visible part of the Russian Church that remained in Russia, i.e. -- the Catacomb Church (or ROAC), and were coming close to liquidating them as well.

They had considerable difficulty in dealing with the catacomb part of the Russian Church because the latter was not centralized, not organized and extremely difficult to infiltrate. The part of the Church that was outside the Soviet Union, the Russian Church Orthodox Outside Of Russia was easy to infiltrate, very difficult to influence (at that time) and impossible to control, because its bishops remained steadfast in their refusal to recognize the legitimacy and authority of the Soviet pseudo-church, as they called it.

Then something unexpected happened that fundamentally changed the attitude of the Soviet government towards the Church.

As the German army began to advance into Russia, the Russians refused to fight for the Soviet government and, without firing a shot, began to give themselves up by entire divisions. The Germans were overwhelmed by the countless thousands of prisoners they had to deal with unexpectedly.

But if the Nazis were bewildered, Stalin was absolutely shocked and terrified. He clearly understood that his goose was definitely cooked, unless he came up with some amazing new idea to motivate the Russian soldiers to fight. And that's exactly what he did. Necessity, they say, is the mother of invention. And Stalin was definitely in a tight spot.

Stalin had been at one time a seminarian of sorts, and he remembered how near and dear was the Church to the Russian heart. So he went on nationally broadcast radio with a heartfelt appeal to all Russians to defend their Church and their fatherland. To make his appeal seem all the more convincing, he began to open churches that had not yet been completely destroyed. Stalin and his "communist" party even began to select suitable individuals to be made into bishops and priests under Met. Sergius. The Russian people were so desperate that even this pathetic ruse worked. The Russians began to fight and despite the phenomenal Soviet inefficiency and staggering loss of life and resources, they were eventually able to beat the Nazis back.

But a very important change had occurred.

The godless Soviet government realized that the Church could be very useful to them, as long as it was their Church and they controlled it completely. Stalin then even went as far as to make his Met. Sergius into a patriarch. A year later Met. Sergius died.

But the "Moscow Patriarchate" (the MP) was born.

The Soviet government organization, that is still now called the MP, originated from a schismatic group of

bishops that joined themselves to the godless Soviet government and were eventually made into a patriarchate by the Soviet government and subsequently greatly expanded by the Soviet government strictly for their own nefarious purposes.

Clearly the present day "Moscow Patriarchate" is not at all the Russian Orthodox Church but rather a spiritual monster that was created by the God-fighting Soviet government by taking advantage of the ambitions and weaknesses of certain individuals in schism from the Church for their own monstrous Soviet purposes.

This fact had always been perfectly clear to the Russian Orthodox Church in the catacombs in Russia and, until very recently, to the Russian Church Orthodox Outside Of Russia (in exile and in the Diaspora.)

Soon the MP became an extremely useful tool for public control in domestic affairs and a potentially invaluable asset for Soviet influence in the international arena. The MP not only joined the ecumenical organization called the World Council of Churches, they presently became members of its ruling body. But to realize its potential for international influence the MP really needed to first acquire the ROCOR. There was one rather large problem though.

The Russian Orthodox Church, whether in the catacombs or abroad, never recognized the MP patriarch as a legitimate patriarch and, until very recently, the MP as a legitimate Church. Even though the other Local Orthodox Churches of the world, as they began to be increasingly more corrupt in the twentieth century, began to recognize and accept the MP as the legitimate Russian

Orthodox Church, the Russian Church Orthodox Outside Of Russia (ROCOR) was still holding out and was confessing to the world the illegitimacy and the spiritual invalidity of the MP. This was, of course more than a little awkward for the MP. It was completely unacceptable.

Immediately following WW2 the iron curtain was erected and the cold war era began. The Russian Church Orthodox Outside Of Russia expanded hugely due to the large numbers of Russian refugees from the Soviet Union. Most of these people knew next to nothing about the Church except that the MP was definitely not the Church but rather a department of the godless Soviet government. They integrated immediately, almost seamlessly with the ROCOR, because of their common aversion for godless communism, and zealously set about buying or building new churches and establishing vibrant parishes.

The Soviet government continued to infiltrate the parishes of ROCOR and made many attempts to get them to accept and submit to their own "Moscow Patriarchate". Practically all of these attempts resulted in nothing more than scandals and remained fruitless. The vast majority of these "second wave" immigrants remained very resistant to Soviet propaganda, having experienced the fruits of it first hand. The isolation of the Soviet Union and its MP during the cold war years helped to preserve the ROCOR for two generations. Eventually, the Soviet Union was exhausted by its own absurdity and collapsed. Ironically, the MP stayed totally intact as the only remaining thoroughly Soviet institution.

As the iron curtain was lifted, a vast number of new immigrants, referred to as the "third wave", began

flooding into the ROCOR parishes from the Soviet Union. Naturally, they knew nothing about the Church, having grown up as the third and fourth generation in the USSR where no Orthodox literature had ever been available and even MP church attendance had still been vigorously discouraged. But tragically, and this was of crucial importance, they were completely ignorant of the origin and true nature of the MP. Naturally, they assumed that the MP was the actual Russian Orthodox Church, as it was presented by the Soviet government, and that the ROCOR was simply the extension of the MP abroad.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

Most of them had no idea that the Russian Orthodox Church, whether Abroad or in Catacombs, was not in communion with the MP group. Most of them had never even heard of the Catacomb Church (now ROAC). Unfortunately very few of them, and by then, few even of the ROCOR knew that the MP was not the Russian Orthodox Church but a department of the Soviet government that originated from a schismatic group of bishops that joined themselves to the godless Soviet government and were eventually made into a Patriarchate by the Soviet government and subsequently greatly expanded and groomed by the Soviet government for their own ends.

But nonetheless, due in part to the sheer numbers of these new immigrants in ROCOR parishes, but mostly because of the spirit of worldliness and spiritual laxness in many, a new kind of thinking began to take root in many ROCOR members and parishes. This was accompanied and supported by an enormous propaganda effort on the part of the MP. The result was

that a new and erroneous concept of the Church began to appear in the ROCOR. The spirit of worldliness began to prevail among many in the ROCOR, regardless of their rank or position in the Church.

The Church began to be viewed much more as a worldly political organization rather than the mystical Body of Christ and the indivisible vessel of the Holy Spirit. Forgotten were the words of Christ to His followers when he said, "You are not of the world, as I am not of the world. I have chosen you out of the world. The world will hate you as it hated Me. But be brave, little flock, for I have vanquished the world".

As the worldly spirit, the spirit of the Antichrist, began to creep into hearts and minds of the members of ROCOR including some of the clergy and hierarchs, they began to view the Church more and more as a corporation engaged in the business of building churches, ordaining priests and "servicing the religious needs of the people", as the MP actually put it. This corporation could now enter into negotiations and consider mergers with other such corporations. As a worldly corporation, the church now derived its validity from its acceptance and endorsement by the world, not so much by unbroken Apostolic succession or adherence to traditional pure Orthodox Christian doctrine and practice. Any corporation acquires respect and validity in the eyes of the world, based mostly on how large it is and how long it's been in business.

But the actual Church of Christ is not a worldly corporation. The Church is very special, unique, otherworldly, absolutely precious and very exclusive. It is exclusive because it is very different from the world and

its members, albeit in the world, are not of the world. The Church is spiritually invincible, no matter how small the Church becomes by the time of the Antichrist. This invincibility was promised to it by Christ Himself when He said, "I will build My Church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it". And membership in the Church is extremely precious. It's compared by Christ to the pearl of great price that the merchant found in the field and then sold everything he had so that he could buy that field. But that membership can be very fragile and can be lost very easily.

When Christ was arrested in the garden of Gethsemane, apostle Peter followed Him into the property of Kaifa, the high priest, to see how it would turn out. One of the servants thought she recognized Peter as one of the followers of Christ and she said to him, "aren't you one of them?" Apostle Peter swore that he wasn't and that he doesn't even know Christ. At that moment Peter lost his rank of Apostle and ceased even to belong to Christ (he wasn't exactly a member of the Church yet because the Church only came into existence fifty-three days later). On two more occasions that night, when she questioned him, he denied being "one of them".

After His Resurrection, Jesus needed to reinstate Peter three times, once for each of Peter's denials that he was "one of them".

Similarly, the Soviet government demanded from all the bishops and clergy of the Russian Church, "Are you with us or are you with them?" The bishops that signed the Declaration of Met. Sergius declared that they were with the godless government and not "with them", not with the Church that was under arrest and was being

crucified.

To this day they have not been reinstated into the Church to say nothing of their rank of bishop, successor of the apostles. Naturally, the Apostolic succession in the group of bishops that followed Met. Sergius into schism with the Russian Orthodox Church was severed at the time of their schism from the Russian Orthodox Church in 1927. The fact that many of them were also killed by the godless government that they had joined, does not make them martyrs for Christ. They had already denied Christ and His Church and joined with the godless government to save their lives and, ostensibly to "save the Church". When they were of no more use to the godless government, they killed many of them, as they killed all their collaborators who had outlived their usefulness.

Now the MP is teaching that over eighty percent of those who they call the new martyrs belonged to the group that followed Met. Sergius and joined the godless government. They're still denying the martyrdom of most of the real martyrs who were put to death (with their help) because the martyrs did not deny Christ and remained faithful to His Church. They are replacing them with their own martyrs, individuals who denied Christ and His Church to join the godless government only to become victims of that same government. This is all to further create the impression that they really are the Russian Orthodox Church that emerged from the persecutions with their own host of martyrs.

This is a total falsehood. The MP is not the real Russian Orthodox Church. This is, as it always was, only propaganda and disinformation propagated by the

godless Soviet government. They are an uncanonical, schismatic group founded on falsehoods and deception that usurped power in the Russian Orthodox Church and consolidated and developed that power only by force and by brutal repression. The Russian Church Outside Of Russia (ROCOR) as well as the Catacomb Church (Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church - ROAC) was always well aware of this and so every effort to get the ROCOR to "join the MP" remained unsuccessful. The phrase "join the MP" was dropped and in its place new language began to be introduced to help the deception become accepted.

"Reunite the Russian Orthodox Church" became the new slogan. This had definite advantages over the previous language. First of all, it finally granted the MP, a priori, that elusive status of a legitimate, canonical Church. Second, the MP became de facto the "other part of the Russian Orthodox Church" separated from the Russian Church Outside Of Russia only by "historical circumstances". Those "historical circumstances" then turned out to be nothing more than the iron curtain, erected by the Soviet regime. When the iron curtain was removed and the Soviet regime was reorganized and renamed, clearly there were no more obstacles to the "reunification" of the Russian Orthodox Church.

This new deception was not accepted by the majority of the Russian Church Outside Of Russia . Many voices rose up in protest demanding that the real reasons and causes of the schism with the MP be addressed. Some of these reasons were dismissed out of hand by the Church administrations as trivial and of no consequence. The issue of "Sergianism" and the MP's vigorous participation in the World Council of Churches

seemed to remain.

The MP then simply declared that Sergianism was irrelevant because it was all in the past and, as far as their participation in the WCC was concerned, well, they really were there only to witness Orthodoxy. This was perfectly clear and acceptable to some in the ROCOR but completely unacceptable to many others. The ROCOR by then was becoming increasingly polarized into three factions: ones who were in favor of immediate union with the MP, ones who were completely opposed to union, especially under current conditions, and a third group that just wasn't sure. The pro union group (PU) began to claim that the MP had renounced Sergianism and were obviously not ecumenists but rather witnesses of Orthodoxy. The contra union group (CU) insisted on a clear renunciation of Sergianism by the MP and their complete withdrawal from the WCC.

These objections were not a problem for the Church administrations because they now had a completely new concept of the Church. They would negotiate the differences between the two Churches, make the necessary compromises, which are the essence of any negotiation, and arrive at a new, mutually acceptable truth. That was, at least, the plan. Both sides agreed to form negotiating committees and proceed as soon as possible. To make sure the negotiations proceeded smoothly and successfully, the ROCOR team was carefully selected by the instigators of the union to consist mainly of pro union (PU) personnel, with the probable exception of one or two contra members who could be relied on not to create any awkward moments and derail the negotiations.

The rules, under which the negotiations were to proceed, were laid down from the outset by the MP. The past, and nothing in the past was to be discussed. "Sergianism" was off limits and the name of Met. Sergius was not to be mentioned.

Having solved the problem of "Sergianism" in this way, the committees could now proceed to address the real issues of administration that needed to be resolved, or rather, that needed to be explained to the ROCOR. The ROCOR negotiating team got the gist of it right away but they had considerable difficulty explaining it to the rest of the Church, that couldn't seem to understand that the MP renounced Sergianism. So much so, in fact, that the MP didn't even want to talk about it.

The contra union (CU) people still weren't buying it.

The ROCOR team then returned to the negotiating table with much hand wringing and asked the MP if they could possibly state something a little stronger concerning the "S" word. Some of their more challenged brethren weren't getting it still. The MP commission then demonstrated their great patience and condescension. They conceded that "The state must not interfere in the inner structure, administration or life of the Church". That would be rather difficult in the case of the MP, considering the state still owns, literally owns the entire MP, body and soul, down to the last brick and kamilavka. The MP also assures us that, "The Church must support all good initiatives of the state, but must resist evil, immorality and harmful social phenomena..." That's exactly what Met. Sergius did. He completely supported all good initiatives of the state, (as defined by the state, of course), and he vigorously resisted the evil and harmful

social phenomena that consisted mainly of all those unrepentant enemies of the state, mostly the bishops and clergy that did not support him.

And finally, to completely assuage the doubts of the most apprehensive, the MP clearly stated that the Church should always firmly confess the Truth, and that, "when persecutions commence, to continue to openly witness the faith and be prepared to follow the path of confessors and martyrs for Christ". Such beautiful words. Met. Sergius, the founder of the MP, could not have agreed more. He also clearly stated that there was absolutely no persecution of the Church in Russia. Of course if there had commenced persecutions for Christ and His Church, Met. Sergius would undoubtedly have been the first to follow that path of confessors and martyrs for Christ. As it turned out, though, according to Met. Sergius and his MP, there weren't any persecutions of the Church then and only enemies of the state were being dealt with.

So did the MP renounce Sergianism?

They will not even discuss it or even permit to mention the name of Met. Sergius. Sergianism is buried in the past, they said, and quite irrelevant today.

In a manner of speaking they are right. Sergianism, as understood by most people today is a betrayal of the Church, usurpation of Church authority and a hypocritical subservience to a godless government. That did occur in the past, quite right. That is how the MP was born. But what was born was a spiritual monster, a baby Antichrist church.

Born of the denial of Christ, baptized in the spirit of

Satan, this church grew and developed on a steady diet of lies and deceit and has matured into a ravenous spiritual predator with a world-wide appetite. ROCOR is not dealing with simply the issues of “Sergianism” or “Ecumenism” in the MP anymore, those are only symptoms of the spiritual condition of the MP. Besides, the MP is right, it really is too late for that now. It was a little naïve of ROCOR to think they could “negotiate” with the MP. ROCOR is up against a bona fide Antichrist church. In the spirit of Antichrist, it lures its prey with illusions and deceit. It even tries to panic its prey into submission.

These are the three great illusions and deceptions of the MP:

First, the MP is trying to deceive everyone that they really are the Russian Orthodox Church.

Second, that the current MP Patriarch is a bona fide Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) Patriarch and the current MP administration is the bona fide Higher Church Administration of the ROC, continuous with that of Patriarch Tikhon.

And third, they are trying to panic ROCOR into believing that ROCOR’s canonical foundation is about to “expire” unless the ROCOR immediately “reunites” with the MP, or actually, submits to the MP.

The third illusion depends on the second, and the second illusion depends on the first.

Having become acquainted with some well documented historical facts, as outlined above, which the MP understandably refuses to discuss, it’s all too clear that

the MP is not the real Russian Orthodox Church and that the MP Patriarch is not the real Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) Patriarch. It is just as clear that the current MP church administration is certainly not the Higher Church Administration mentioned by Patriarch Tikhon in his Ukase No. 362. Where does this amazing notion of ROCOR's canonical foundation "expiring" come from then? Reverse logic confirmation of the MP as the legitimate HCA (Higher Church Administration) of the ROC.

Ukase No. 362 of Patriarch Tikhon, which provides the canonical basis for the ROCOR, contains 10 paragraphs. Paragraphs 2, 5 and 10 have a direct bearing on this question:

Paragraph 2 essentially states that if a diocese is out of contact with the Higher Church Administration (HCA), or if the HCA, headed by Patriarch Tikhon, for any reason whatsoever ceases its activity, the diocesan bishops should form a temporary Higher Church government.

Paragraph 5 states that if the conditions in par. 2 become protracted or even permanent, the diocesan bishops must institute new episcopal Sees with the rights of semi-independent or independent bishops.

Paragraph 10 states that all measures taken in places in accordance with the present instruction, afterwards, in the event of the restoration of the central ecclesiastical authority, must be subject to the latter.

With regard to par. 2, the ROCOR bishops were abroad and definitely out of contact with the HCA of Patriarch Tikhon. The HCA of Pat. Tikhon ceased its activity because Pat. Tikhon died and all the other members of

his HCA were arrested or killed. So the ROCOR bishops formed a Higher Church government.

With regard to par 5, the conditions above did become protracted and the ROCOR bishops did institute new Sees with independent rights.

With regard to par. 10, the central ecclesiastical authority, referred to by Pat. Tikhon, has not been restored to date and consequently the condition referred to in par. 2 has become permanent as has the independent authority and canonical foundation of the ROCOR in accordance with par. 5 of the Ukase.

The notion that ROCOR's canonical basis is about to expire is an indirect attempt to establish a priori the MP as the real ROC and its Patriarch as the legitimate ROC Patriarch, just like Patriarch Tikhon was. The underlying false assumption is that the MP Patriarch and his Synod are the same Higher Church Administration that Pat. Tikhon referred to in his Ukase No. 362 and that the Central Ecclesiastical Authority of the genuine Russian Orthodox Church has been somehow restored in the MP and therefore, the ROCOR must now submit to this MP.

In reality there is nothing of the sort. This is only an attempt to cloud the issue and create a stampede of the ROCA into the hands of the MP.

Once again, everything depends on whether the MP is regarded as a forgery, created by demonic powers on the basis of deceit and rebellion against the ROC of Pat. Tikhon or as the genuine Russian Orthodox Church, rightful heir to the ROC of Pat. Tikhon. Some people believe the first and see joining in canonical communion with the MP as a betrayal of Christ. Other people believe

the second and build their arguments on that belief. Bullion logic excludes the middle position, of the MP as the legitimate ROC but its Higher Church Authority as illegitimate. Either the MP is legitimate or its not. It can't be both.

What does all this mean?

It means that there are two parallel realities, two worlds co-existing here. One is the Kingdom of Christ, the Prince of Truth. The other is the kingdom of the prince of this world, the father of lies.

Christ has built His Church, the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

Satan is busy building his own church of the Antichrist.

When the Apostles asked Christ about the end times, He started by saying, "Do not be deceived, for many shall come in My Name and shall deceive many". That is exactly the aim of Satan, to deceive as many as possible by building a church that resembles the Church of Christ in every possible way. But Christ said that fortunate are they who received the love of Truth in their hearts and also that His sheep know the sound of His voice and they will not follow a stranger's voice. This idea of deliberate and intense deception in the Church is very prevalent in the Holy Gospel in connection with the end times before the appearance of the Antichrist.

Why will so many be deceived? Very simply because of their love of this sinful world. Christ warned that a person cannot serve God and Mammon (the world) at the same time.

The world, in this context, does not mean mankind or the beauty of nature. Quite on the contrary, Apostle John wrote that, "For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son so that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life".

When Christ warns us about love for the world, He means the fallen world that lies in sin. The corrupt, the ambitious, the greedy, the envious world of pride and lust for power that runs on lies, deceit and flattery belongs to Satan, the prince of this world. The church of the Antichrist uses all that material for its construction. It is being built on a foundation of pride, constructed of lies and deception, cemented by laziness, timidness, carelessness, indifference, love of comfort and convenience and energized by lust for power and hatred for the Church of Christ.

The ROCOR has always been as a lighthouse on the shore of a dark and stormy ocean of the world. Its purpose has been, and still is, to be a beacon of light and hope in a world overwhelmed by spiritual darkness and despair. It served as a compass and a direction for a world lost in the fog of compromise.

Its mandate has been to keep inviolate and pure the Holy Orthodox Faith and Tradition, free from any compromise with the spirit of the world. It was faithful to this calling and served it well by remaining separate from the world. You cannot save a man drowning in quicksand by climbing in after him. You must remain on firm ground and extend your hand or a stick out to him. But to save him you must remain on solid ground yourself.

There is no question that the Russian people are in great

spiritual need. This is exactly the reason why ROCOR needs to exist and cannot afford to self-destruct now. ROCOR has not carried the precious pearl of pure, genuine Orthodoxy all these years in very challenging conditions only to throw it away now, when the goal is almost in sight.

Orthodox Russia was built and developed into a great Orthodox empire on the principle that “God is in not in might but in truth”. The Soviet government tried to substitute might for truth, and so its might crumbled. Now it’s more desperate than ever to gain acceptance and respect in the eyes of other nations. They wish to “join the league of civilized nations” as they put it themselves.

That is why now, more than ever, they need to acquire the ROCOR by hook or by crook, not only to silence “the witness that got away” but to reinforce the illusion of direct and legitimate historical continuity of the modern day “Russian Federation” with traditional pre-revolutionary Russia that ROCOR represents to them. This new self-image and vision of the Soviet government has naturally been extended to its MP department. Once the MP acquires the ROCOR, all questions of its legitimacy as the Russian Orthodox Church and the heir to Patriarch Tikhon will finally be put to rest. Unfortunately so will all hopes of a spiritual resurrection in Russia. The MP has never given the Russian people any spiritual nourishment and it never will. Not because it refuses to but because it can’t. The MP is not a spiritual entity but only a political one.

The Russian people are depending on the ROCOR to be there when they will be ready for what ROCOR has to

offer. The Russian people have been under a deluge of lies and propaganda for decades. They are completely drenched. They are now only beginning to dry out. When they dry out, ROCOR will need to bring back the little flame of the true Orthodox Church that it carried out at the time of the revolution. That little flame must not be allowed to go out by putting it out into the rain of lies that is the MP. It must be guarded carefully so it can start a proper fire when it's time. That can only happen when the firewood is sufficiently dry and ready to catch fire. Otherwise, the still wet logs will not catch and the showers will extinguish the little flame.

The godless regime in Russia did not collapse after a few years, as was expected by many, and ROCOR found itself dispersed, by the providence of God, throughout most of the world. And so now ROCOR's responsibility is not only to the people of Russia but to all those who seek the Kingdom of Heaven the world over, regardless of race or nationality. Christ has many other sheep in other yards as well, that He needs to bring into His flock.

And that is why now, more than ever, ROCOR needs to continue to live and to remain absolutely steadfast in its witness of Holy Orthodoxy and absolutely resist the spirit of this world that is trying to take it over and make it join the church of the Antichrist.

.....

notes added by ROAC poster:

*Nothing written here is really new. It has all been written many times before, and undoubtedly will be written many times again.

*Every one decides for themselves based on what is in

their heart. Pray, like you've never prayed before, that God grant you the love of nothing but the Truth in your heart, at any cost. If you are fortunate to receive such a love of Truth, then be prepared to pay the price for it. The price is going to be very high, but it will be worth it many, many times over. You will be one of those fortunate few who will escape the delusions of the antichrist and live forever with Christ.

*Today, the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church (ROAC) remains the only historical and authentic continuation of the Russian Orthodox Church prior to 1917.

source: <http://www.roacusa.org/moreNikita.html>

*note from Joanna: This essay was not dated, but it was posted between 3/31/07-4/12/07 on the ROAC site. The ROAC opinions at the end were added by the ROAC poster. I saw no reason to delete them. Opinions, whether we agree or disagree, do not change the stated historical facts.

We assert and maintain that our ROCA under Vladyka Agafangel is the sole valid continuation of the ROCOR and that the ROAC, RTOC, ROCIE and any other R-fragments are not canonical despite their claim.

post related to this subject: