The Gothic versus the Russian. The conflict between the Church of the Goths and the Russian Orthodox Church – A comparison between the Church of the Goths (and similar churches) and the Moscow Patriarchate

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Abstract
This essay is mainly about the Church of the Goths and about the Russian Orthodox Church, and their conflict. The essay will be focusing about important persons in these two churches. This essay will be tracing back the roots of the Church of the Goths, since it is a church, that is unknown by most people in this world. My research will be making a distinction of the differences between the Church of the Goths and the Russian Orthodox Church. This essay will also be discussing the heritage of the Gothic people and the theories of the Goths.

The methods in the essay, is academic sources, information from the Church of the Goths and from the Russian Orthodox Church. The results shows how the information was found, and now it is published for the first time about the Church of the Goths. This means the Church of the Goths has a stronger ground than first expected. The methods were comparing what the different sources says, and if it was possible to connect the Church of the Goths to the Metropolitanate of Gothia, and so on.
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1 Introduction

My idea behind this study about the Church of the Goths and the True Orthodox Church, came one evening at Södertörn University. They had a dinner for the students and the staff within the study of religion during my first semester at Södertörn. It was David Thurfjell, a teacher and an associate professor, now a professor at the school, who later became my teacher in some classes, who first inspired me. I told him and other people in the staff about the Archdiocese of the Goths, which the Church of the Goths is formerly known as.

No one of the staff, nor the students had ever heard of them before. I do not blame them. This church is still unknown, since they are very small in Sweden. David Thurfjell suggested that I should write about them at some point. I thought this idea was very good and waited till the last major essay on the bachelor level to research about the Church of the Goths.

Since my original plan was to travel to Russia with Thomas Sutter, who is the bishop Teodorik of Gotland and the only bishop left in the Church of the Goths in Sweden, I will mention more about the archbishop Ambrose in another chapter. I had to cancel the trip due to long bureaucracy process about visas to Russia.

Even though I am not a member of the Church of the Goths, I have friends in this church, so I’ve had to ask myself if it is possible to be neutral in my portrayal towards the Church of the Goths. It is not my purpose to write a tribute publication about them, nor being antagonist towards them, thus is it not my purpose to offend the m either.

Another problem is I cannot find any research about the Church of the Goths, True Orthodox Christians nor the True Orthodox Church in languages such as Swedish, English, Danish and Norwegian. However, this is a very good opportunity for me to be the first one to research about them, unless the research is published in languages such as Russian, Ukrainian, Greek, Latin or another language which I do not master. Since I am not an Orthodox Christian myself, this will surely become a challenge for me, since I have to study the basics of Orthodox Christianity from the beginning, to try to understand them.

On the other hand, there is plenty of research of the Moscow Patriarchate, since it is the official Russian Orthodox Church in Russia and exists where many Russians live in exile as well. This is the reason for me to write this research in English and not in Swedish.
1.1 Aim and purpose

First and foremost, almost no academic research has been done on this subject. Due to this, the aim of this research is to find information about the Church of the Goths and the Russian True Orthodox Church. Another thing, is there is something called True Orthodox Christians. No matter if it is Russian or not, it can easily be confusing, since the names are very similar.1 However, the True Orthodox Christians and the True Orthodox Church are closely tied with the Church of the Goths. They share so much history that it is pointless to even try to write about the differences between them. I will compare some of the theological issues the Church of the Goths may have in common with the Moscow Patriarchate. I want to see what the Church of the Goths have in common and especially where they disagree with the Moscow Patriarchate. Another purpose, is to find out if the Church of the Goths’ history, which they claim to have, is according to the historical sources. I know there is a lot of sources about the Russian Orthodox Church, since they are the biggest church in Russia and have been that for around a thousand years. There are many sources that affirm their history already. The main issues will be shown in my interviews. My main research questions are:

- What are the historical roots of the Church of the Goths?
- What are the historical roots of the Moscow Patriarchate?
- What are the differences between them?
- What do they have in common?

1.2 Method

I will first compare the theological texts with the Church of the Goths and the Moscow Patriarchate. Since the Church of the Goths itself is a part of the True Orthodox Church², I will also do a comparative study between the Church of the Goths and specifically with the Russian Orthodox Church, to see if there are any differences in their beliefs at all. I will write about their historical roots, which is well known when it comes to the Russian Orthodox Church, but not when it comes to the Church of the Goths. Then I will merge the old information with the new information, so it will be easier to understand what is old and what new information there is in this essay.

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1 Thomas Sutter told this in a phone conversation in Swedish at 10/03/2014.
Then I will also have two interviews, which was done by e-mail. One is with Bishop Teodorik Sutter from the Church of the Goths, the other with Archpriest Babushin from the Moscow Patriarchate, (i.e. the Russian Orthodox Church) in Sweden. However the interviews will be used in Appendix C and Appendix D.

I will also be writing about the critics towards the Church of the Goths and the Moscow Patriarchate (Russian Orthodox Church). However, the Church of the Goths, the Russian True Orthodox Church and the Russian True Orthodox Christians share almost the same history. Only for a short amount of time, do the Catacomb Churches, which is an umbrella definition of different dissident churches in Russia, including the Church of the Goths, share the same history with the Russian Orthodox Church (the Moscow Patriarchate).

Some sources I used which are academic, is an Orthodox and also Russian Orthodox Christian author, who is writing about the Russian Orthodox Church. How do I know I can trust this source? I can compare it with other academic sources to see if there are any differences about the history of the Russian Orthodox Church, between these books I used. But, what if there are different opinions as to the sources about something I do not have any knowledge about. Then, I have no idea of which source is the most accurate one. The same is to be said for the Internet sources and similar information. The academic sources should be more trustworthy than the Internet sources. I can only make the comparison if the academic sources agree or disagree with things that are also written on different Internet sources.

This is also the method I used by comparing different sources with what the spokespersons from the Church of the Goths and the Russian Orthodox Church said. If I had more time and especially money, then I could have been travelling to Russia and maybe Ukraine as well. Then I could have been interviewing members in Russia and Ukraine belonging to the Church of the Goths or another church belonging to the Catacomb Church, with members in the Russian Orthodox Church. If I had known Russian, one could have used Russian sources. This would probably have improved my research.

1.2.1 Method discussion

I am fully aware of there are many different methods to use. I could have traveled to Russia and interviewed people belonging to the different churches and interviewed regular members of the different churches I had been researching about. I could even had been able to try to get an interview of someone representing the Russian government. However, I had been using the method of comparing the historical sources and tried to find out the theological and political
differences the Church of the Goths and the Moscow Patriarchate seem to have. I could have been observing their church services by attending their respective church services. I could also have been using surveys among the members of the Church of the Goths as well as the members of the Russian Orthodox Church.

There is a possibility that there are some ethical problems in my research. I have been avoiding interviews with ordinary members of the different churches in my research, since it is harder to find a member who is prepared to give an interview about her or his church membership. Then there could be an ethical dilemma, if I also wrote their name in this essay. For that reason, I have focused on interviewing the spokespersons of the Church of the Goths and the Moscow Patriarchate in Sweden. Since it is their own choice to be spokespersons of their respective churches, then there should not be any ethical problems at all? The spokespersons should also have more knowledge about their church’s theology and history than an ordinary member.

Is the Church of the Goths the same kind of church as the Moscow Patriarchate? I would say no. The reason for this difference, is that the Moscow Patriarchate is the official church in Russia, while the Church of the Goths is not the official church in any country today. The closest that the Church of the Goths can come to being an official church, is that they are a recognized congregation in Sweden. They are not recognized as a congregation in any other country.

I have noticed that people who just find out about the Church of the Goths, immediately starts to call them a sect. It is not my purpose to point any fingers at a specific religious group and call them a sect or a cult, no matter if that would be true or not. A sect, according to Max Weber, is a group of people that are based on the membership of their community, by showing suitability in public. In a sect, there is a kind of layman priesthood, while a major religious organization has a more inclusive membership. This kind of organization normally includes people that rarely have to show any kind of suitability for the membership as well as the priesthood being usually hierarchic.³ If I use Weber’s definition of a sect, then the Church of the Goths would be considered as a sect.

One problem, is I might use too many sources from the Church of the Goths and more than I use from the Russian Orthodox Church. I will focus on the Church of the Goths, since they are the least known church.

I have been using the church definition as the institution itself, not necessarily the congregation itself. I have been using official views of the church as an institution, since there might be members in their own congregation that might disagree with some of the official views the church as an institution may have. I might had a tendency to write on too broad subject, in which not all of the members of the church may not have been able to give any differences of opinions and beliefs. However, given the wide scope of this subject, I can only write on things I have researched. No matter what, this essay is first researched about the Church of the Goths.

1.2.2 Limitations

Due to lack of academic texts in this study, except about the Moscow Patriarchate, I will mainly use different websites in the research, (with the exception of the interviews) at least with the Church of the Goths. There is not so much information about the Church of the Goths at all in academic books, however there is some information in the old archdiocese they belonged to, before they became a part of the Russian Orthodox Church in the 18th century. It can be tricky to juxtapose different Orthodox churches, due to that they are very similar to each other. There are contrasts, however, especially between the Church of the Goths and the Moscow Patriarchate. One problem, is also that there is a lot of information about the different churches on the Internet. However, the websites online usually have not being audited, which can be a problem. Then it is better to use academic sources, if any, since these sources has been audited.

In general perspectives, it is obvious the Russian Orthodox Church has been favored before the Church of the Goths, since they are the majority church in Russia. The Church of the Goths was only a part of the Russian Orthodox Church for approximately 130 years out of approximately 1700 years they have existed, more or less. Since the Church of the Goths were restored in 1994, they have barely got any attention in academic sources or in the media or blogs. This can be the reason the Russian Orthodox Church has been able to have relations with other Orthodox churches, especially in the post-Soviet society today. The Church of the Goths, on the other hand, has been in conflict with almost all other Orthodox congregations since they were founded.
1.3 Theory about History and Historiography

The theories for this essay originate from different sources. The main purpose of this is to be able to describe what the different sources claims to be true. Furthermore, there is also a need to describe the history of my selected churches. It is important since the sources might not always agree with each other. Due to this, one might argue that a comparison between them is necessary.

Paul Robert Magosci claims in his book, *A History of Ukraine* that the Goths originally came from Sweden. Maja Hagerman describes in her book, *Det rena landet*, about different theories about the Goths. Theories mentioned in Hagerman’s book were: the theory that Swedish scientists in the 17th century, thought the Goths came from Götaland, Sweden a long time ago, the theory that the Goths came from the area near the Vistula River, Poland, and lastly, the theory that the Goths were an association that “created themselves”.

Firstly, there is a theory, had strong support in Sweden for few hundred years. An example, is the Geatish Society, (also called the Gothic League) who tried to honor their ancstral heritage. (With the belief in which they thought they were the descendants of the Goths) During the 19th century, the Gothicism and the National Romanticism reached its peak. In Sweden, as well as in many other countries during this time, it was talked a lot about “the birth of our nation”, “our people” and so on. In Gothicism, it was believed that the Geats had a connection to the Goths; because of the similar names. The word Götar (Geats) looks like the word Goter (Goths), which resembles the area of Götaland, as well as Gotland in Sweden.

Magosci claims that the Goths actually migrated first from Sweden and then down to Poland, which later, migrated to the Crimean peninsula, and so on. He believes, obviously, in the theory of the Goths migration from Sweden. Hagerman does not believe in this theory. However, Hagerman agrees with that the Gothic language was very similar to modern languages such as Swedish, English and German. Secondly, one argument Hagerman raises, is that of the Scandinavians not being Christians back then, while the Goths were of Christian religion.

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6 Ibid. p. 49-50.
All these theories started, after the Roman politician Tacitus wrote a book, called “Germania”. This book contained a short text about Gutones. The Gutones, who were living in the Vistula River area, were identified with the Goths. Gutones is the similar word to the Swedish word Gutar, which is a word for someone from Gotland.

Bruce Lincoln does not focus on the Goths in his book, *Theorizing myth*, but does mention historical persons, who were connected with the Goths and with the Germans. Cassiodorus and Jordanes wrote about such thoughts in the 6th century, while Snorri Sturluson did the same in the 13th century; connecting Scythia with Sweden.

Lincoln, however; wrote thoroughly in his book, that there was a kind of national interest in different stories regarding the respective people in Europe during hundreds of years. This further contributed towards the means in which people got their own ideas about their origin. As an example, there was big news about the poems of King Ossian. It was the Scottish poet James MacPherson, who claimed he was the one whom first discovered the poems of King Ossian. It was about King Ossian who lived in the 3rd century. However, after MacPherson’s death, it was discovered it was a fraud, made by MacPherson himself. It was simply about trying to give the Celtic peoples in the Highlands of Scotland a history, which could be compared with Shakespeare and Homer. MacPherson tried to invent a history for the Celtic people, which was still fake.

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7 Ibid. p. 112.
9 Ibid. p. 50-51.
2 Facts about the Gothic Orthodoxy

What are the Church of the Goths then? The Church is formerly known as The Archdiocese of the Goths and the Northlands of the True Orthodox Christians.\(^\text{10}\) They are a registered congregation at the Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency of Sweden (Kammarkollegiet) since December 18\(^{\text{th}}\) 2008.\(^\text{11}\) This registration and recognition is the first congregation to officially become recognized by any authorities,\(^\text{12}\) in any country within the Church of the Goths.

2.1 Members of the Church of the Goths

There is information about how many members there are in the church. According to those numbers, there are over two million members worldwide. This includes, however, also other branches of the Catacomb Church. They have members mainly in the area of the former Soviet republics. All congregations are independent from each other, for security reasons. There are also bigger congregations in Germany, Great Britain, the United States, Canada, Argentina and Paraguay. Smaller congregations exist in the Nordic countries, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, Italy, Brazil and Australia.\(^\text{13}\)

2.2 Organization and leadership

The Archdiocese of the Goths and the Northlands were established in 1994, when Aleksey von Sievers were ordained as the archbishop under the name Ambrose, (АмвросиЙ in Russian) in Moscow. The church is a part of the Eastern Orthodox churches and it has close ties to Russian True Orthodox Church, as well as Russian True Orthodox Christians. Both of them are a part of the Catacomb Church, which is a term for what the Church of the Goths, Russian True Orthodox Church and Russian True Orthodox Christians are. The Catacomb Church is not one organization at all, but is a term for churches that must hide from the Russian government due to persecution. The Church of the Goths got the status of being autocephaly (independent) in 1996.\(^\text{14}\)

\(^{10}\) On the Orthodox Easter in 2012 they decided to change name to the Church of the Goths of the True Orthodox Christians instead, which I attended the Easter celebration as well as the meeting as a guest.

\(^{11}\) Kammarkollegiet October 2014.


\(^{14}\) Ibid.
All congregations work independently, except they share the same leadership when it comes to the Archbishop Ambrose and earlier archbishops (such as Archbishop Andrew of Ufa), and The Church of the Goths in Sweden does not recognize Archbishop Ambrose as their leader anymore. In Sweden there is officially a council, but the church as a congregation is so small that it is mainly two persons who is in charge, even though the members still have the right to come with their own ideas about the leadership. The main leaders in Sweden is Bishop Thomas ‘Teodorik’ Sutter and Viacheslav Pouzeev.

2.2.1 Archbishop Ambrose von Sievers

The Archbishop Ambrose von Sievers was born in Moscow, Russia in April 30th 1966 as Alexey von Sievers, belonging to the Baltic-German family Graf von Sievers. He has been belonging to the Catacomb Church in his entire life. He became a monk at the age of 19 years old and has been called Ambrose since then. He became a priest in 1994, to be in charge for the Archdiocese of the Goths and the Northlands. He got a Degree of Master of Theology (One Year) in Oxford 1998.15

The modern version of the Archdiocese of the Goths and the Northlands was created in 1994, when Archbishop Ambrose became a priest. He claims that it was the Goths who were the first Christians on the land of modern Russia. That is why they are focusing on the Gothic heritage, since the Goths have been living on the soil of modern Russia and Ukraine.

According to Archbishop Ambrose, the first Christians in Russia and Ukraine were Orthodox Christians and were the first to also be Orthodox Christians in the area. The Goths were Arianists. Archbishop Ambrose says mainly the Visigoths were Arianists when only one third of the Ostrogoths were Arianists and the rest of the Ostrogoths were Orthodox Christians. Some academics agrees with Archbishop Ambrose, that the Visigoths were Arianists, while the Ostrogoths were accepted by the Eastern Byzantine Christianity (Orthodox Christianity).16 He also claims to know some of the Proto-Gothic language [sic].17

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17 Ibid.
In December 18th 2011, the Archdiocese of the Goths and the Northlands decided to excommunicate, which means banishment, the Archbishop Ambrose. The decision became official in March 21st 2012. The official reasons were perjury and refusal to repent for what he had done. He has also slandered his own ward brothers within the church. Unofficially, I have been told that Archbishop Ambrose is cooperating with Federal'naya služba bezopasnosti Rossiyskoy Federatsii, (FSB) which stands for Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (FSS), which is the former Komitet gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti (KGB) which is Committee for State Security of the Soviet Union. Since the Catacomb Churches including the Church of the Goths/Archdiocese of the Goths and the Northlands have been persecuted by the Soviet as well as Russian authorities, this is a very sensitive matter for them.

2.3 Political ties
The Church of the Goths nor the rest of the Catacomb Church has any known political ties, except they were strongly against the Soviet government during the Soviet era. Today they are strongly against the Russian president Vladimir Putin. If they belongs to any specific political party in Russia, is nothing I am aware of. In Sweden they do not support any specific party. However they have been in at least one dialogue with members of the Swedish

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I have personally met Archbishop Ambrose few times. The first time I met him, was in 2009 in Stockholm. The last time I met him, was in 2011, in Stockholm as well. My impression of him, is he was very friendly, but was very hard to understand, due to limited knowledge of the English language. He is very interested in the Scandinavian history and culture. I know he has been persecuted in the Soviet Union and later in the Russian Federation.

In 2011, he was planning to escape the persecution in Russia, by coming to Sweden. At the same time, he was not allowed to leave the country. He fooled the Russian authorities by taking the train to Kaliningrad, which is extraterritorial part of Russia, which means Ambrose had to take a train through Lithuania and that still counts as a domestic.

The Russian authorities were searching for him in Moscow and also had agents waiting for him in Kaliningrad. When he reached Lithuania, he left the train and took another train to Riga, Latvia, and then went to Sweden by ferry. When he came to Sweden, Thomas Sutter and I met him at the Stockholm harbor. We went to Migrationsverket (The Migration Board in Sweden) where he was going to apply for asylum, because of religious persecution. After attending a meeting there, he needed a place to stay for the night. Thomas Sutter was not able to accompany him sleeping at his home that night. Then I offered him to stay at my home for that night. Back then I was living in Flemingsberg, a suburb of Stockholm, which meant we did not need to travel far to arrive back to my home. That was the first time I had an archbishop in my home (and only time too). He barely ate anything that day or the following morning. I saw he had a tattoo on his chest, which he explained it was written “Jesus” in runic letters. He also had tattoos of the swastika on each shoulder.

Later on, he went to Thomas Sutter’s father and stayed there for a while in Lindesberg in Sweden. He lived there for few months, as far as I know. Then, he was suddenly excommunicated from the Archdiocese of the Goths and the Northlands in Sweden. I have no idea of where he went after that.

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parliament, and it was mainly members of the Moderate Party, when the Moderate Party were a part of the Swedish government.

2.4 Criticism of the Archbishop Ambrose and the Archdiocese of the Goths

There is some criticism towards Archbishop Ambrose, there are many pictures of him on the Internet and things a lot of people would think are strange. Some of these depictions are of his Nazi salutes, images of the Totenkopf, swastikas and so on. I will not post any of those images here, due to possible copyright.

Other things that have been put over Internet regarding the church, are statements that Adolf Hitler is celebrated in the Catacomb Church calendar of his invasion of the Soviet Union, because of the anti-Christian Soviet regime. There are icons of Adolf Hitler and he cannot be a saint since he was not an Orthodox Christian, but is still honored for his fight against the Bolsheviks. The icon was painted by a member of the Church of the Goths, who is from Russia.

Then there is a symbol that is also used, which is a special kind of the swastika. This kind of the swastika is called “crux dissimulata” and has its origin from the first Christians in the Roman Empire. They had this swastika, which is a kind of a cross that looks “heathen,” to avoid persecution.

For these reasons, many critics of the Archdiocese of the Goths and the Northlands believe they are neo-Nazis, while they claim they are not. As a matter of fact, they claim that the Gothic heritage is one of the lost tribes of Israel and they seem to be proud of it. Originally, the Israelites had twelve tribes, which ten of the tribes disappeared later in history and no one knows for sure where they went. The remaining tribes were later called Jews, after the tribe of Juda.

3 The Historical origin

In the previous section I showed how the Church of the Goths is organized and about their former leader. I will now move on to discuss the history of the emergence of the Orthodoxy and the First Seven Councils of Christianity, the emergence of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Catacomb Church during the Soviet era, Russian Orthodox Church in modern Russia, Andrew of Ufa, religious persecution, and earliest history of the Church of the Goths and about Gothicism and National Romanticism.

3.1 The emergence of Orthodox Christianity and the Seven Councils of Christianity

3.1.1 The First Seven Ecumenical Councils of Christianity

To fully understand what the churches I am going to write about stand for, it is very important to know what their basic beliefs are. I am therefore writing about the seven ecumenical councils, that almost all Christian congregations have in common. I will also give a summary of what the different canons stand for. The canons are different laws in Christianity. The reason I am mentioning the canons, is to try to understand how similar the different branches of Christianity really are, even though they still have little in common in their interpretations of the Bible. Except the Canons, the different churches have different Ecumenical Creeds in common as well. The Creeds derive mostly from the First Seven Ecumenical Councils of Christianity. My point is, the Ecumenical Creeds they have in common are not enough to show how much the different churches have in common, no matter if they are Orthodox, Catholic or Protestant churches.

3.1.2 The First Ecumenical Council – The First council of Nicaea in 325 CE

It is in this ecumenical council the bishop Theophilus of Gothia participated and from whom the Church of the Goths claim their historical roots.\textsuperscript{51}

Roughly the different canon things such as that any Christian male can become a clergy, even eunuchs, however self-castration is not allowed.\textsuperscript{52} Also how someone who has recently converted from “heathenism”, is not allowed to directly become a bishop or join the

\textsuperscript{51} Cowper, B.H. Syriac Miscellanies. 1861. \url{http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/syriac_misc.htm} Retrieved 11/30/2014

presbyterate. Then discusses how someone who is a bishop, presbyter, deacon or any another from the clergy, cannot live together with a woman, except if it is a female relative such as a mother, sister or any other female relative. Then about how someone should be appointed by all other bishops in the same province, however it has to be at least three of them, in case not all of them are available.

Other discussions is about how a bishop who has been excommunicated is not allowed to become restored by others, unless the excommunication was a result of cowardice or a strife. Then the demarcation between different bishops. (Such as the bishop of Rome will have the jurisdiction of Rome, the bishop of Alexandria of Egypt, and so on) They discussed how the bishop of Ælia (i.e. Jerusalem) shall be honored, which means the bishop of Jerusalem will have a superior position compared to other bishops. If they should letting the Catharis come back to the church. The Catharis were followers of the first Anti-Pope Novatian in the 3rd century. Canon IX, as an example, states that a presbyter has to be deposed if he has been advanced without examination or just before an examination, that they have commit a crime.

The discussions continued how, if someone who has been ordained and either has lapsed before the ordination or after, such a person has to be deposed. Canon XI states that if someone has been fallen without compulsion, still be shown indulgence if they repent. The remaining eight canons from this meeting continues to discuss about which kind of people will be deposed, being anathematized or something similar, and if they are going to be able to come back to the church service, or not.

3.1.3 The Second Ecumenical Council – The First Council of Constantinople in 381 CE

It is said, that it was only the four first canons that were accepted in Constantinople in 381 CE, but was accepted in a council in 382 CE instead. This means that most of the canons were accepted afterwards.
Canon I says, that the Nicene faith will stand firm and all anathema to (banning) all heresy. Canon II details how the bishops are not allowed to work in churches outside their bounds, since it can create confusion. Canon III tells that the bishop of Constantinople will have a prerogative honor after the bishop of Rome, since Constantinople is the New Rome. The remaining three canons are about the same theme about formal things about the bishopric.

3.1.4 The Third Ecumenical Council – The Council of Ephesus in 431 CE
Canon I describes how a metropolitan will be cast out if he deserts his synod and follows the pope Celestine (Celestius who was considered a heretic). The rest of the canons is debating which kind of popes or other clerics that is not in favor, in meaning they are considered heretics, should be avoided.

3.1.5 The Fourth Ecumenical Council – The Council of Chalcedon in 451 CE
Canon I says that all earlier canons made by the Holy Fathers must be observed. Canon II says it is not allowed to sell an ordination. The clerics will be discharged, should they sell an ordination and if a layman or a monk sells an ordination, he will be anathematized. The discussions in the canons continues about corruption and that the clerics is only allowed to work within their own diocese.

3.1.6 The Fifth Ecumenical Council – The Second Council of Constantinople in 553 CE
In this council, there were no canons. Instead of canons, there is a letter from the Roman emperor Flavius Justinian to the pope Virgilius. The letter contains fourteen chapters, which lists people who do not believe in the trinity and are to be anathema.

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64 Ibid. p. 172.
65 Ibid. p. 176-177.
66 Ibid. p. 178.
67 Ibid. p. 225.
68 Ibid. p. 267.
69 Ibid. p. 268.
70 Ibid. p. 312-316.
3.1.7 The Sixth Ecumenical Council – The Third Council of Constantinople in 680-681 CE

There are no canons from this council either. The Council contains mostly different letters from the Roman emperor Constantine Pogonatus and also from Pope Agatho I. There is also a definition of the Christian faith that circles mainly around the trinity.\(^{72}\)

3.1.8 The Seventh Ecumenical Council – The Second Council of Nicaea in 787 CE

Canon I discusses embracing all earlier canons from the other six ecumenical councils.\(^{73}\) Canon II describes how someone who is going to be ordained as a bishop, must know the psalter by heart, which is, “I will meditate upon thy statutes, and will not forget thy words.” and must fully understand what he reads, otherwise he cannot become a bishop.\(^{74}\) The other canons are discussing how the different church buildings will be organized, and also regarding layman are being fined, if they are dishonoring any clerics and so forth.

3.1.9 History

3.1.9.1 The Historical Origin of the Logotype

The logotype which can be seen on the front page, is the double eagle that is both inspired by the coat of arms of the Habsburg dynasty; as well as the Order Saint John of Jerusalem, which also is known as Knights Hospitaller.\(^{75}\) This confirms the Church of the Goths' narrative of their logotype of the double headed eagle as the Eagle of Jerusalem. It is also sometimes referred to the Eagle of Israel. (Since the Church of the Goths claims the symbol comes from Jerusalem) The Runic text around the eagle, is written in the Gothic language as: 
_Ufaraibiskopei goþansk jah norþlandsk_, which means _The Archdiocese of the Goths and the Northlands_, in English.\(^{76}\) Similar logotypes have been used as the coat of arms of the Byzantine Empire, as well as the Russian Empire and the Russian Federation.\(^{77}\)

3.1.9.2 The Origin of the Name

The Church of the Goths has nothing to do with the Gothic architecture in different churches around Europe during the middle ages. It has nothing to do with the modern alternative sub-

\(^{72}\) Ibid. p. 328-350.  
^{73}\) Ibid. p. 555.  
^{74}\) Ibid. p. 556.  
^{75}\) Foster, Dr The Rev'd Michael. [http://www.netpages.free-online.co.uk/gms/eagle.htm](http://www.netpages.free-online.co.uk/gms/eagle.htm) , 2000. Retrieved 10/03/2014.  
cultural group of people who dress like Gothic. The only things they have in common, is the name.

The Church of the Goths got their name from the Gothic people that became known in Europe during the Migration period; also known as *Völkerwanderung,* in German. The *Völkerwanderung* mainly existed between the 5th and 8th century CE, when different Gothic tribes were migrating around Europe. The Church of the Goths got their name from the Gothic people who settled in Eastern Europe. They especially acquired their name in the Crimean peninsula, which however was just before the migration period. This was a long time after the Church of the Goths claim their church was founded.

3.1.9.3 The Historical Roots

The Church of the Goths also want the Swedes and other Europeans to rediscover their own identity and their own roots. Which in this particular case, are the Gothic roots. Today, their church has congregations in Sweden and in Ukraine. The Church of the Goths has *autocephaly,* which means autonomy. It is an independent church.

The church claims to have historical seats at the Saint Laurentius (Sankt Lars in Swedish) church, now a church ruin on the island of Gotland, Sweden, and also the Fortress of Theodoric (mainly known as Mangup Kale) on the Crimean peninsula, now a disputed area between Ukraine and Russia. They claim to be an authentic branch within the Orthodox Christianity and they want to restore the Christian beliefs back to Early Christianity.

The Russian Orthodox Church, also known as the Moscow Patriarchate, was reestablished in 1943, since Joseph Stalin wanted to control the church. However, there were Orthodox Christians who did not like the idea of having the church under the control of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union, since the Communist Party were against all religion in the society. For this reason, the Russian True Orthodox Church (and later also the Russian True Orthodox Christians) were founded. The Catacombists could not trust the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, since they were not Christians at all.

The Church of the Goths claim to be the first religious organization that has made an attempt to establish a church for the Gothic people. It was founded by Andrew the Apostle, on a

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79 Ibid.
missionary trip to the lands of the Gothic people; which was mainly on the Crimean peninsula, when he traveled in the area around 50 CE. The Church of the Goths knew exactly which way Andrew the Apostle travelled in the area which was the fourth missionary trip for him.\textsuperscript{81}

According to the Church of the Goths, their roots are from the Gothic Orthodoxy, which originates from the 3\textsuperscript{rd} and 4\textsuperscript{th} century CE, on the Crimean peninsula. The Archdiocese of the Goths was founded in 270 CE. In the year 324, they got independence and became a Metropolitanate.

The Church of the Goths also claim that there was a bishop with the name Theophilus, who was one of the bishops who attended the First council of Nicaea; who signed the original Nicene Creed. The Church of the Goths claim that the protector of the Church of the Goths was the Church Father John Chrysostom.\textsuperscript{82}

Afterwards, they became a part of the Constantinople Patriarchate. However, they became a diocese in 886 when they were put on the list of the dioceses in Constantinople.\textsuperscript{83}

Around 1283, they became a Metropolitanate once again. They were independent until 1779, when the church came under the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church,\textsuperscript{84} from the Metropolitanate of Gothia and Kaphas in Crimean peninsula; until the Russian revolution in 1917.\textsuperscript{85} It was in 1783, the Russian Empire annexed the Crimean peninsula\textsuperscript{86} and the Metropolitanate ceased to exist in 1786.\textsuperscript{87} There were people who tried to reestablish the Archdiocese of the Goths in 1928, as well as 1942, but without any success.\textsuperscript{88}

To fully understand how the Russian Orthodox Church and the Church of the Goths have developed since Early Christianity, the proceeding Appendix B is a helpful tool to understand it.

\textsuperscript{82} Main page. Gotark.org. Retrieved 10/04/2014
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid.
3.1.9.4 Scandinavian Roots

The Church of the Goths claims that it was not bishop Ansgar, the missionary from Bremen, Germany, who was the first to spread Christianity in Scandinavia in the 9th century. The Church of the Goths claim that there was an Orthodox Christian jurisdiction in Scandinavia ahead of that time, before Scandinavia became a part of the Roman-Catholic Church.

In the academic world, there are claims that there is evidence that Christianity reached Scandinavia as early as the 6th century and the Christian motifs of Byzantium origin are evidences of it. This is true especially in Götaland and Svealand, in Sweden. In The Journal of Swedish Antiquarian Research (Fornvännen) from 2000, authors claim that there are plenty of stone slabs (“liljestenar” in Swedish), found mainly in western Sweden, which have signs of influence from Byzantium.

Rhodin et al. argues that these stone slabs are of older date than other academic sources claim. In many sources, there is information about the stone slabs, indicating they are from the Middle Ages. It is claimed that they are of older origin; such as between the 8th and 10th century, according to Rhodin et al. The slabs motifs with similarities to motifs from Greece and Byzantium, from the same time.

There are old texts written by St John Chrysostom, who was the archbishop of Constantinople. St. John Chrysostom claims there was a Gothic Church near the Black Sea, which was successful in its mission.

Can it be true, that the Church of the Goths claim that Scandinavia and especially the Skara diocese, located in Sweden, was an Orthodox diocese, before Ansgar came to Birka, Sweden? There is a possibility that many, who became Christians before Ansgar, were people who had been abroad and converted to Christianity outside Scandinavia and brought Christianity back home, without being missionaries themselves.

But the problem, is that these stone slabs are very hard to date. There are indications, and indications only; showing that they are from before Ansgar and also before the time from when Christianity stayed in Sweden permanently. This indication would mean, that the Roman-
Catholic Church, was established in the middle of the 11th century in Sweden. One problem with this indication, is it makes it hard to know exactly from when the stone slabs were made. Written documents in Sweden are lacking a lot from the time before the 13th century.

Another problem, is that there is no typology about the stone slabs that has been found in Scandinavia, so far. This is why there is much speculation about the stone slabs, as to what they are and from when. The definition of pre-historic is a society without written sources, and in Scandinavia it lasts to around the 13th century. The first theories regarding the slabs, are that they were grave stones. Today, scientists are not in agreement about this.

There are theories that early Varangians, who were Norse men, (Vikings) were recruited as the body guards of the Byzantine emperors. It is said, that when returning home to Scandinavia, they brought Christianity with them. It would have been very unlikely, that the Varangian guards were Christians, when they were guarding the center of the Christianity. It is good to know, that the Christian, Ansgar, brought with him (Roman Catholicism). It is known, that Christianity died out after few decades, and was gone for few centuries, before it came back more permanently.

Ansgar and other important people after him, who were bishops and other important men within the Roman Catholic Church, did not consider Orthodox Christianity to be Christian. With this being said, the Orthodox Christians that might have existed in Scandinavia, and especially Sweden during this time, would be considered as heathens, in the eyes of the Roman Catholic Church.

Bishop Teodorik told me 3-4 years ago, that they also have close ties to the Greek Old Calendarists and with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Greek Old Calendarists in Sweden, however; wrote in 2009, that they renounce any cooperation with the Church of the Goths.

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95 Ibid. p. 167.
96 Ibid.
97 Ibid.
98 Ibid. p. 166
99 Ibid. p. 177.
3.1.9.5 The Metropolitanate of Gothia

The full name is the Metropolitanate of Gothia and Kaphas\(^{101}\) (alternative spelling is Caffa\(^{102}\)). The history starts at the earliest in the 3\(^{rd}\) century, when Gothic tribes moved to the lands of Ukraine\(^{103}\) and especially to the Crimean peninsula, after the Huns had been conquered most of the area except the Crimean peninsula. When the Ostrogoths who arrived at this area, they were already Christians – Eastern Byzantine Christians – i.e. Orthodox Christians.\(^{104}\)

These Ostrogoths, later became known as the Crimean Goths and their capital was named Doros, which is in the central part of Crimea.\(^{105}\) Around the year of 400, there was an Eparchy (a diocese a bishop is controlling within the Orthodox Christian churches)\(^{106}\) of Gothia founded under the jurisdiction of the patriarch in Constantinople, which were later known as the Metropolitanate of Gothia and Caffa (or Kaphas), which existed until end of the 18\(^{th}\) century.\(^{107}\)

During the following centuries, Christianity was expanding. It expanded so much, in that there was a bishoprics established in Tamartacha (Tmutorokan) in the 730’s CE\(^{108}\), east of the Strait of Kerch (east of the Crimean peninsula\(^{109}\)), which was under jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Gothia in Doros,\(^{110}\) The Archbishop, in turn, was under the jurisdiction of Constantinople.\(^{111}\)

In the late 13\(^{th}\) century, there was a Christian principality (a small country ruled by a cleric) named Theodoro. In this area, the Crimean Goths had ruled between the 5\(^{th}\) and the 10\(^{th}\)

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103 Ibid.
104 Ibid.
105 Ibid.
106 Ecclesiastical province.
108 Ibid.
111 Ibid.
centuries. The Goths had formed a territory of the Orthodox Archeparchy, which later was controlled by the Metropolitanate of Gothia. In some sources, it is also known as the Principality of Gothia. In the 1360’s, the capital was named Mangup; which is the former Gothic center of Doros. During the Middle Ages, there were a big mix of different people; such as Crimean Goths, Byzantine Greeks, Hellenized Alans, Tatars, Kipčaks/Polovtsians and Karaites. However, it was mainly populated by the Byzantine Greeks then.

3.2 The emergence with the relations of the Russian Orthodox Church – The Moscow Patriarchate

3.2.1 The History of the Russian Church

The history of the Russian Orthodox Church as of today, with emphasis on the differences of historical background, in relation to the Church of the Goths.

9th century

The history of the Russian Orthodox Church has its’ roots with the Swedish Vikings, also known as the Varangians. These people settled in today’s Russia, during the 9th century. They were also called Rus, after Roden, in Roslagen, Sweden. They called the new land in Eastern Europe Gårdarike, after they founded Kiev, in modern Ukraine. Their new kingdom was called Kievan Rus*. The Varangians were assimilated to the local Slavic culture and its people. Later on, during the 10th century, they officially became Christians. It was the Grand Duchess Olga, of the Kievan Rus’, the first ruler in the kingdom; who was baptized into Christianity. Olga’s son, Svyatoslav, was not interested in his mother’s choice of religion. There were, however, Christians in Tmutorokan and in Kiev before the year 988 CE.

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112 Ibid. p.118f
113 Ibid.
115 Daniel, Wallace L. The Orthodox Church and Civil Society in Russia. Texas A & M University Press. College Station. 2006. p. 10.
118 Pospielovsky, Dimitry. The Orthodox Church in the History of Russia. St Vladimir’s Seminary Press. 1998. p. 23.
It was Svyatoslavs’ son, Vladimir I, (also called the Great) who united the Kievan Rus’, which was religiously divided. He was not a legitimate son,\textsuperscript{119} since his mother was a concubine of Svyatoslav. This being said, he was sent to Novgorod, to rule there instead. This turned out to be very good for him, since the two legitimate sons of Svyatoslav started to fight each other. Then, Vladimir put together an army of Norwegian Vikings, went to Kiev to fight his brothers and won. Then, he became prince of the Kievan Rus’.\textsuperscript{120}

He tried to make his own kind of Slavic religion a state religion, but the people did not approve this. Then, he made Christianity the state religion instead, even though most people in his country still followed the traditional Slavic religion. After sending several messengers to different countries, he finally chose the Byzantine Christianity, since he thought it was the most beautiful Christian tradition.\textsuperscript{121} He was hoping to get married to someone in the imperial family of the Byzantine Empire. Vladimir was baptized in 988 CE\textsuperscript{122} and then became a member of the church. After the baptism of Vladimir, all other religions in Kievan Rus’ were outlawed.\textsuperscript{123}

11\textsuperscript{th} century

It was Yaroslav the Wise, the son of Vladimir, who did more to increase the power of Christian church.\textsuperscript{124} He decided to build the Saint Sophia Cathedral in Kiev\textsuperscript{125}. He demanded the Russian church to be led by an archbishop, but also a metropolitan and the first one was Theopemptus, from Byzantium.\textsuperscript{126} The liturgical language has always been the Slavonic language and not Greek, which is unique.

The Russian church has always been an autocephaly and was closely attached to the Russian identity.\textsuperscript{127} Yaroslav married Ingegerd Olofsdotter, who was the daughter of the Swedish king Olof Skötkonung. When Ingegerd became older, she joined a monastery, took

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{119} Ibid. p. 19.
\item \textsuperscript{121} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{122} Pospielovsky, Dimitry. \textit{The Orthodox Church in the History of Russia}. St Vladimir’s Seminary Press. 1998. p. 20.
\item \textsuperscript{126} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{127} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
the name Anna and then became known as St. Anna, who is considered a saint within the Russian Orthodox Christianity.\textsuperscript{128}

\textbf{13\textsuperscript{th} century}

During the 13\textsuperscript{th} Century, the churches, monasteries and different cities were increasing and developed.\textsuperscript{129} In the 13\textsuperscript{th} century the Mongols, also known as the Golden Horde or the Tatars, conquered the area and were plundering the churches, monasteries and the cities,\textsuperscript{130} as well as the countryside.\textsuperscript{131} The Mongols, who later converted to Islam,\textsuperscript{132} let the conquered people keep their rulers; who had to pay extra taxes, and also, to keep their religion.\textsuperscript{133}

\textbf{15\textsuperscript{th} century}

In the year of 1480 CE, the Novgorod area was united with the Moscow area under Ivan III, (the Great).\textsuperscript{134} During this time, Kiev was a part of Poland-Lithuania. The Russian identity became stronger and Moscow replaced Kiev as the seat for the church.\textsuperscript{135} It was especially after the conquest of Constantinople; by the Turks in 1453 CE,\textsuperscript{136} that Ivan III considered himself to be the protector of the Orthodox Church. That was also one reason he was the first Russian ruler to use the name Tsar, which means Caesar in Russian.\textsuperscript{137} He married the niece\textsuperscript{138} of the last emperor of the Byzantium Empire.\textsuperscript{139} He also made the double eagle, the Russian coat of arms; after it had been the emblem\textsuperscript{140} of Byzantium.\textsuperscript{141} He did this in 1472.\textsuperscript{142}
15th - 16th century

A new Metropolitan diocese was founded in Moscow in 1461. Moscow was now called the Third Rome. Constantinople had been the Second Rome. Moscow got their first patriarch in 1589, under the reign of Tsar Feodor I. The Moscow Patriarchate was founded at the same time.

18th century

Peter I (the Great) chose not to have any successor when the patriarch Adrian died in 1700. There was no patriarch over the Russian Orthodox Church until 1721, when Peter the Great created the Holy Synod. This was that in which a council of twelve members had amongst them a chief procurator. Three of the members were bishops and the other ones were either from different monasteries or married priests. After 1721, the patriarchate was abolished. The Tsar of the Russian Empire, had the main power of the Russian Orthodox Church. The Russian government could make dissidents leave the Holy Synod, while a patriarch was chosen for life. This increased the power of the Russian government over the Church. Although the Spiritual Order had the control over the Holy Synod, it was not considered a divine institution but as a state department.

The government used the Holy Synod, by making new rules in order to control the people. The priests had to break the confidentiality, if there were any confessions about what the Russian government considered hostility towards the government. The priests were forced to

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146 Ibid. p. 237.
155 Ibid.
156 Ibid.
157 Ibid. p. 120.
give the Russian authorities all the details about the person who had confessed his hostility towards the government and was considered to be an enemy of the state.\textsuperscript{158}

The Russian government did other things as well, such as closing many monasteries and limiting the possibilities of founding new ones. There were also limitations on social issues such as charity for the monasteries. The church, however, was never stopped completely during this time.\textsuperscript{159}

3.3 The emergence of the Church of the Goths during the Soviet era

3.3.1 The history of the Russian Orthodox Church in the Soviet and post-Soviet time

20\textsuperscript{th} century

The Russian Orthodox Church became separated from the state in 1918,\textsuperscript{160} during the Russian Revolution.\textsuperscript{161} The Patriarch of Moscow and the Russian Orthodox Church was Tikhon, (born Vasily Ivanovich Bellavin) who had been elected in 1917.\textsuperscript{162} He was against the new Soviet government. He chose to excommunicate the Soviet government.\textsuperscript{163} He also declared to be loyal to the Soviet power, but he later tried to retract his statement.\textsuperscript{164} He was later killed in 1925.\textsuperscript{165} The church was persecuted in the 1920’s and 1930’s. Many priests and bishops were murdered, until there were barely any priests and bishops left alive.\textsuperscript{166}

The Soviet government noticed the Russian church had huge popular support, so they founded their own church, called The Living Church. The Living Church preached allegiance to the Soviet regime. That did not fool the people, who were choosing to stay away from the new churches and were staying in the traditional churches instead.\textsuperscript{167}

\begin{footnotes}
\item 158 Ibid.
\item 159 Ibid.
\item 160 Daniel, Wallace L. \textit{The Orthodox Church and Civil Society in Russia}. Texas A \& M University Press. College Station. 2006. p. 28.
\item 164 Daniel, Wallace L. \textit{The Orthodox Church and Civil Society in Russia}. Texas A \& M University Press. College Station. 2006. p. 29.
\item 166 Ibid.
\item 167 Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
Joseph Stalin became very surprised,\textsuperscript{168} when he found out how people reacted in the areas where Nazi-Germany was occupying parts of the Soviet Union in 1941, since the churches were re-opened immediately and a lot of people gathered in the churches. The first one who told the people to get together and defend their fatherland, was the Metropolitan bishop Sergius.\textsuperscript{169}

Stalin changed his behavior towards the Russian Orthodox Church. He re-established the Russian Orthodox Church in 1943,\textsuperscript{170} as a public organization.\textsuperscript{171} It was the patriarch of Moscow and the Holy Synod, (which existed 1721-1917) who became the leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church, although they had never existed at the same time before 1943. The patriarch of Moscow and the Holy Synod had never existed at the same time.\textsuperscript{172} The priest seminar was resumed, some monasteries were re-opened and some religious literature was allowed to become distributed. However, the church was still persecuted. It became worse in 1959\textsuperscript{173} and even worse from the 1970’s. Then, the church was not allowed to do any charity, mission or have any seminars.\textsuperscript{174}

Since Stalin re-established the Russian Orthodox Church, he has been portrayed in icon images in Russia. (See Appendix A)

\textbf{20\textsuperscript{th} – 21\textsuperscript{st} century}

Since the 1920’s, different Russian Orthodox congregations have been divided and many people were emigrating from the Soviet Union then.\textsuperscript{175} Even after the fall of the Soviet Union, there are still many congregations abroad which are still divided. There are mainly four different jurisdictions outside the Russian Federation. One jurisdiction of Churches is the Moscow Patriarchate. This Moscow Patriarchate is a Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia that has close ties to the ecclesiastical authorities in Russia. They have around 30 000 – 40 000 members mainly in Western Europe.\textsuperscript{176} The second jurisdiction of churches, are the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia, (ROCOR) which has around 150 000 members

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{168} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{169} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{170} Christensen, Torben & Göransson, Sven. \textit{Kyrkhistoria 3. Från västerns religion till världsreligion}. Esselte Studium AB. Lund. 1976. p. 32.
\item\textsuperscript{172} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{173} Pospielovsky, Dimitry. \textit{The Orthodox Church in the History of Russia}. St Vladimir’s Seminary Press. 1998. p. 313.
\item\textsuperscript{176} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
worldwide. The third jurisdiction of churches, are the Patriarchal Exarchate for Orthodox Parishes of Russian Tradition in Western Europe. It has around 50,000 members. Lastly, the third jurisdiction church, is the Orthodox Church in America, (OCA) which is also including the Greek Catholic Church. It has around 1,000,000 members altogether.

The Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia, has after 1990. Newly founded new congregations in Russia, which have increased tensions between Russia and the Moscow Patriarchate. In Russia, the ROCOR identifies themselves as the Independent Russian Orthodox Church.

3.3.2 Archbishop Andrew of Ufa

The Archbishop Andrew of Ufa, was born as Prince Alexander Alexeyevich Ukhtomsky, on December 26th or 28th in the year of 1872, in the village of Voslom, Arefinskaya, Rybinsk uyezad, Yaroslav, Russia. He is the spiritual leader of the Church of the Goths.

On either June 25th or July 25th, 1911, he became a bishop of Sukhumi. In the year of December 22nd 1913, he then became the archbishop of Ufa. Very soon, he became very popular among the people and attracted a lot of people of all ages to the cathedral.

In the end of 1921, a few years after the Russian revolution, the Patriarch Tikhon of the Russian Orthodox Church, had appointed Andrew of Ufa, to become the Bishop of Tomsk. Andrew was later declaring that the Church was loyal to the Soviet power. But still, he was under supervision when he went back to Ufa, in 1922. During this same year, he declared the autocephalous (independence) for the Church of Ufa. He also consecrated a group of bishops within his own diocese.

Andrew of Ufa was arrested in 1923 and was sentenced to three years in exile, after the authorities had declared that he was engaged in anti-Soviet propaganda. He was first sent to Tashkent, Uzbekistan and then to Ashkhabad, Turkmenistan. In Tashkent, he had to be in a prison for a while, before he was sent to Ashkhabad. In 1924, he was sent to Moscow.

177 Ibid.
178 Ibid.
179 Ibid.
180 Ibid.
196 Ibid.
197 Ibid.
198 Ibid.
Andrew of Ufa was in a great conflict with Metropolitan Sergius, since he was friendly to the Soviet power. Metropolitan Sergius was successful by banning Andrew of Ufa, but later on the ban, was declared to be invalid. Sergius reiterated the loyalty of the Church to the Soviet power in 1927.

In 1930, the Metropolitan Sergius gave an interview where he claimed there was no religious persecution in the Soviet Union, which Andrew of Ufa was criticising since he had been persecuted a lot by the Soviet authorities. Andrew of Ufa called Metropolitan Sergius as being a liar.

There are different information about when Andrew of Ufa died, but some sources says he died in prison in 1937, while other sources says he died in 1944. No matter which year he died, his life was ended by execution. Before he died, he united and was behind a lot within the Catacomb Church, since he was against the main Russian Orthodox Church since they recognized the Soviet government. He is the spiritual leader within the Catacomb Church even today, since he wanted to go back to basic Christianity and was against the Soviet regime.

3.3.3 The Religious Persecution

In 1990, there was a murder of Archbishop Alexandr Men, who was killed with an ax. Archbishop Men had been a leading dissident during the Brezhnev era and had for a long time criticized the Soviet government. The murder has still not been solved. There are theories that it was KGB or nationalists who did not like that he had some Jewish ancestry or that it could have been other members of the Russian Orthodox Church that did not like his new ideas of the Church, who murdered him.

In 1997, Russia passed a new bill about restrictions to religious freedom. The Western world was protesting after the Duma (the Russian parliament) had passed it, and the Russian president Boris Yeltsin vetoed the bill after pressure from the countries in the Western world. However, afterwards Yeltsin signed another bill that was even more restrictive against organized religious organizations in Russia than the first bill was. The persecutions against

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199 Ibid.
200 Daniel, Wallace L. *The Orthodox Church and Civil Society in Russia*. Texas A & M University Press. College Station. 2006. p. 29.
202 Ibid.
religious minorities increased after this, especially towards the Catacombists (members of the Catacomb Church/Russian True Orthodox Church/Russian True Orthodox Christians), Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Hare Krishnas and so forth. Usually the persecutions was harassments. Murders were very rare.

This means the Church of the Goths were (and still is) persecuted in Russia. Two bishops were murdered in 1997. The quote below gives more details:

In January two of its leaders, Bishops Yevragi and Geronti, were killed; church officials claim they were murdered by government agents. Bishop Amvrosi von Sievers alleges the motive for the killings was the clerics' knowledge of cooperation between the KGB and the Orthodox Patriarchate. Mr. von Sievers says that he has been followed and has received threatening telephone calls. On Feb. 27, returning by train to Moscow from St. Petersburg, he says he was taken from his sleeper at 3 a.m. by two men, beaten up, and told to end his "anti-state activity."  

This quote shows when the Church of the Goths were most persecuted in the post-Soviet Russia.

3.4 The emergence from the Gothicism and the National Romanticism

To fully understand what the Gothicism and the National Romanticism, we have to look at its roots. Gothicism (Goticism in Swedish) can be identified with the Geats (Götar in Swedish) and with the Goths. It is about connecting the Swedish people with the Goths, since many believes that the Goths originally came from Sweden.

The Gothicism was close connected with the National Romanticism that was popular mainly during the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. I have been showing two authors opinions about the Goths that they were not from Sweden. I do not really agree with them. I would use the expression “No smoke without a fire”. I think there is a possibility that the Goths originally came from Sweden. I do not believe all Goths left Scandinavia. I think a group of people left because of overpopulation. I visited the Gotland Museum during the summer in 2014. They say the population in Gotland declined before and under the Migration

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Period, if I remember the information correctly. There is a possibility the Goths in the Vistula River area, chose to live there from few to several generations, before they chose to resettle on the Crimean peninsula. There is also a possibility that some of them chose to stay in the Vistula River area.

Many people in history have compared many similar words that can connect the Goths with the Geats and the Gotlanders. However, I have not seen anyone comparing the similarity between Gutnish (Old Gutnish was its own language) as well as the Gotlandic dialect (which is the modern dialect of the Swedish language). Without being an expert on the Gothic language, I can still point out the main similarity in grammar and especially the diphthongs between Gutnish, Gotlandic and the Gothic languages. The similarities are too many to be a coincidence.

Since many still believes the Goths came from Sweden, I will show a map of the most common theory about the migration of the Goths and other Germanic people (and the Huns). The map seems to be accurate, according to the traditional theory about the Goths.

Source: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/2d/Invasions_of_the_Roman_Empire_1.png (2/13/2015)
4 Discussion and analysis

I have been trying to answer my four main questions. The questions are:

- What are the historical roots of the Church of the Goths?
- What are the historical roots of the Moscow Patriarchate?
- What is the differences between them?
- What do they have in common?

Did I get any answers of my questions? Did I find the historical roots of the Church of the Goths? Yes, I found out there are records about their earliest roots from 4th century, when Bishop Theophilus attended the first ecumenical council of Nicaea in 325 CE. They had their own Metropolitanate on the Crimean peninsula, for a long time. There were many records about them having a separate history from the Russian Orthodox Church, until the end of the 18th century, when the Church of the Goths became a part of the Russian Orthodox Church.

After the Russian revolution, the Catacomb church was founded. From that branch, the modern version of the Church of the Goths was founded in 1994. Then their church had the name Archdiocese of the Goths until they changed the name in 2012.

How about the second question? There is plenty of records about the history of the Russian Orthodox Church. It was very easy to find the information to answer this question. The Russian Orthodox Church does not have as long history as the Church of the Goths, was still been dominating within the Orthodox Christianity for centuries while the Church of the Goths has never got this dominating position. The Russian Orthodox Church has been around for more than a thousand years. Their church has never been as persecuted like the Catacombists, even though they have been persecuted as well.

Did I really find the differences between the Church of the Goths and the Russian Orthodox Church? There are some issues that separate them, however the conflicts seems to be more political than theological issues. It is obviously very difficult for an outsider like me to fully understand why there is a conflict in the post-Soviet society. If the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia could reconcile with the Russian Orthodox Church, then could the Church of the Goths reconcile with the Russian Orthodox Church as well? The future will tell if they ever can bury the ax and reconcile.
Then we have the fourth question. Did I really get an answer on this one? What I understand, if I understood it correctly, there are very few theological issues that separate the Church of the Goths from the Russian Orthodox Church. What they have in common, is that both of the churches are Orthodox Christians, at least they claim to be Orthodox. They share the same saints, use the same kind of icons, and use almost the same liturgy (the Church of the Goths use the Gothic language in their liturgy, in addition to the Church Slavonic language that is in use in Russian Orthodox Christianity). These two churches believe in the same God. They are basing their beliefs from the same Bible, from the same canonical laws, and so on.

One problem I had during this research, is being able to guarantee the validity of truth in such sources as what I have read in books, seen on different websites or what others have told me, regarding the subject of The Russian Orthodox Church and Church of the Goths. I can only hope the different sources are valid in their findings. I am not an Orthodox Christian, and have never been. I am not from a country where the Orthodox Christians are in large numbers, which means it has been very difficult to even research about things that is common knowledge among Orthodox believers. But then that still might be good, since I have to explain what different things are, in order for non-Orthodox believers to understand what different things mean. That helps myself to remember what is what in Orthodox Christianity.

At first, I was actually skeptical to the sources of the Church of the Goths. But, it was very surprising that they had much stronger ground than I first could expected in this case. I thought that if they even had sources, it would be sources that are extremely hard to find. Well, that is still true in one matter. I could find more sources, also academic sources, to prove a lot of things the Church of the Goths claim to be true when it comes to their history.

To research about these different perspectives that the Church of the Goths has, and what different perspectives the Russian Orthodox Church has been very interesting. This has been an eye opener to read from different perspectives and I do not belong to any side, which means less prejudice, if any prejudice. I will still try to keep standing outside the conflicts the Church of the Goths and the Russian Orthodox Church have, but now I can understand more about what the conflict is about.

Is there anything I could have done different? Yes, very likely. It would have been very interesting to travel to Russia to meet members of the Catacomb Church, including the Church of the Goths in Russia. It is too bad the bureaucracy to receive a travel visa to Russia takes so long time. I should have tried to plan this better few months before I even started to
research for my essay. Are there any other sources I could have been using? Some of the books is not possible to borrow, of the books I needed. At least I could find other books instead.

How likely is it that the stone slabs really have Byzantine origin, or at least inspired by the Byzantine icons? It seems there are different sources that agree with The Church of the Goths about some Byzantine influences. These influences show it actually existed mainly in Västergötland and Gotland in Sweden before Ansgar the missionary. However, I do not know if all the researchers and experts agree with these influences or not.

If the stone slabs are really of Byzantine influences and also before Ansgar, the missionary, then the history books has to be changed in Sweden. It does not matter for me, if the Roman-Catholic Church of the Orthodox Church was first in Sweden. It would actually be strange, if the Orthodox influences did not existed in Sweden back then. The Swedish Vikings mainly traveled through what is now modern Russia down to Constantinople, before the Swedish Vikings became Christians.

The discussion among experts would be interesting to listen to and read. Did the Orthodox Christians come to Scandinavia before the Roman Catholics and did they have any missionaries in Sweden or not? Or was it rather Swedish Vikings, who had been traveling around in Eastern Europe, became Orthodox Christians and came home to live an Orthodox Christian life in Sweden? It is really not my purpose to analyze this deeper than this.

The definition of a church can be different, depending on which definition someone is using. It is common to refer to a church as the building itself. It is also common to refer to a church as the congregation itself. Meaning, it is the people in the congregation that define the church, not the building itself. The main differences between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Church of the Goths, is the Russian Orthodox Church tries to improve the relations to the Russian authorities as well as other Christian congregations, while the Church of the Goths seeks conflicts with the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian authorities, because they see them as the biggest political antagonists.

I found there are some people who argues that the Goths did not come from Sweden, while others argues that they actually came from Sweden. The ones who does not believe in it, says it is just myths about the Goths. The ones who believes the Goths came from Sweden says there is evidence about it. The debate in the academic world continues…
One problem with the interviews, was that the questions were very different from each other, since I asked mainly one kind of questions to Babushin, while I asked completely different kind of questions to Sutter. I have not been able to use the interviews of Babushin and Sutter as sources. Both interviews was by e-mail. But they can still be seen in Appendix C and Appendix D.
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Phone conversation
Thomas Sutter in a phone conversation in Swedish at 10/03/2014.

Printed newspaper
Appendix A

Joseph Stalin can be seen in the middle in this icon from the Soviet Union.

Source: http://www.gotark.com/0_0_0_0_250_349_csupload_31683872.jpg?u=714610859

Retrieved 11/22/2014
Appendix B

Simplified explanation of the different churches history

Early Church

- Russian Orthodox Church
  10th century - present

- Archdiocese of the Goths and the Northlands
  3rd century - 1786

Catacomb Church
  1917-present

- Russian True Orthodox Church
- Russian True Orthodox Christians

- Archdiocese of the Goths and the Northlands (Reestablished)
  1994 - present
Appendix C

Interview with Archpriest Vitaly Babushin from the Moscow Patriarchate. My interview with him was through email. The interview took place in November 16, 2014.

How do you see that it was Stalin who restored the Moscow Patriarchate in 1943?
The Moscow Patriarchate has been established at several times through the history and it is true that it was Stalin who restored the Patriarchate after the initial decades there all the Russian Orthodox Church was persecuted and banned by the Soviet government. During the time of the Russian Revolution of 1917 was the Russian Orthodox Church abroad and the underground. Stalin’s restoration of the Patriarchate was for political reasons, not religious.

How do you view the Living Church from the 1920s?
The Living Church was a heretical church that the atheist regime tried to use to worship false gods. The true believers Orthodox was during this time underground, in the catacomb churches and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia. The Living Church also failed to recruit a sufficient number of members, therefore, decided that the authorities finally put down this experiment.

What, if any persecutions the Moscow Patriarchate encountered during the Soviet Union and Russia after the fall of communism?
During the Soviet Union we are talking about the systematic mass murder of faithful Orthodox Christians and an enormous destruction of churches and monasteries. The starting gun was the murder of the Tsar family. During the first decades killed more than 30 000 000 believers. The church fled abroad and went underground. Part of the church could operate above ground after Stalin, although many true Orthodox still seemed underground and in secret until 1989. During the 1990s, reunited the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia with the Moscow Patriarchate and the association meant that Russian Orthodoxy was healed after the difficult decades of persecution and political corruption as the church endured and imposed. This reconciliation between the foreign church that has been most critical of the Soviet system and the Russian Orthodox Church
under the Patriarchate, should be seen as it is now healed Church and acknowledged each other in full for a new future of the unit. Today there are some groups who claim to be part of the Russian Catacomb Church but that is not it, and use political ideologies and pagan symbols to create a perverted religion that has as little to do with Orthodoxy as the Living Church.

**Icons on Stalin and Lenin have occurred in Russia historically. Do you know if there is still today, whether it's your own congregation or any congregation in Russia?**

Such icons are heretical and firmly rejected by the Orthodox Church. They do not exist in any official church or in any monastery today. One can only image canonical saints. There are even some that made icons of other political leaders. These are contrary to the Orthodox Church. It would be perverse to see Lenin, Russian Orthodoxy biggest destroyers of the modern era, as an Orthodox saint. It falls on his own grip.

**How do you see the Patriarch Sergius defense of the Soviet power in the 1920s until he died?**

Patriarch Sergius was jailed and they threatened to kill the other bishops and priests, if he did not sign the declaration. One could say that he was wrong and should have chosen the martyr death. One can also see that he was trying to save the life of Christian brothers. It is not our place to judge this, but the cause of God. Content of the declaration is contrary to the New Testament. One should obey God rather than men in most respects. But one should not judge when you do not know all the circumstances and are in a very different situation today. One must remember that not a single dogma was deprived of the Orthodox Church during this time. The Communist Beria said, Russian Orthodoxy is like a nail: the harder we hit it on, the deeper it sinks into people's hearts.

**Has your congregation any cooperation with the Russian Orthodox churches that is not belonging to the Moscow Patriarchate?**

The Russian Orthodox Church has inter-communion with all the churches that are in association with the canonical patriarchates. It has therefore also communion with the Russian Paris Exarchate belonging to Constantinople.

**Does the Moscow Patriarchate have any cooperation with the Russian state today?**
Cooperative today looks like so that the Russian government has given the Russian Orthodox Church a number of benefits to be able to rebuild the churches and monasteries that the Soviet state had previously destroyed. It has also taken account of the church's wishes in such areas as homosexual propaganda against children. At the same time, the state does not interfere in the Russian Church's faith or morals. On the contrary, one sees that this faith and morals should inspire all people, including those with a political office.
Appendix D

Interview with Bishop Teodorik (Thomas Sutter) from the Church of the Goths. The interview was by email and took place in November 23, 2014. The interview was in English.

**Please describe yourself about who you are.**
I am a simple believer who try to follow the Commandments of God and have the guidance of the Scriptures influence every area of my personal and social life; in family, at work, with people I meet, political opinions, consumer awareness, cultural affinity and taste, not to mention thoughts and actions. In the end, it is the perception of reality – how one perceives and feel about the surrounding world – that defines Christians’s worldview and that worldview’s orthodoxy, and only total surrender to the Grace of God in His Spirit through repentance and remorse can establish the positive eschatological outlook at the world as a place for creativity and harvest; where a Shining City shall be built.

**You did not grow up in an Orthodox church. Why did you chose to join the Archdiocese of the Goths and the Northlands and then later, the Church of the Goths? Why did you not join a bigger Russian Orthodox Church as the Moscow Patriarchate, the ROCOR or even the Greek Old Calendarists or one similar?**
No one is born Christian, even if the foreknowledge of the LORD know which paths all hearts, minds and bodies will walk along. That I was baptized by bishop Ambrose’s Catacomb church (Archdiocese of the Goths) was pure providence, and a decision influenced by my best friend. The thought had grown in me for a while, to become Christian, since I since my early teenage years had been attracted to religion – but since we live in apostate and superstitious culture, that meant aspects of neo-paganism, Gnostic strands, metaphysics and fatalistic Communism essentially. None, neither Marxism and Leninism, secular social science, dialecticism, Spenglerian romanticism nor Evolian integral traditionalism could explain the answer I searched for seven or so years to find: What is the driving forces and impulses of history, and the meaning of life in it? Surely, though, it took a few years for God’s Spirit to clear me of my old ways and patterns of thought, even after Baptism.
The Russian Church Abroad had more or less ceased to exist when I was called to become Christian, and was absorbed by the Sergianists. Though smaller branches of the ROCOR exist today, they are smaller parishes which – like the Old Calendarists – are first and foremost a social forum for their respective ethnic diasporas. Today this is irrelevant, since we have accepted the New Calendar, which would make us anathema to the dozens of Old Calendar denominations. The Sergianists (Moscow Patriarchate) isn’t Christian so these I thank God Almighty I haven’t joined. The main reason for not joining any of these sectarianists is, I believe, because they all are content with the state things are like, and doesn’t advertise their existence nor try to be missionary and attract new followers. We shall not forget that among the entities you mention there are ethnic diaspora clubs and Russian state departments; none of these needs recruitments, except the last ones for espionage or some Kremlin propaganda or financial schemes.

What do you mean with cherish the West? Are you a part of the Christian Identity movement?

The West needs regeneration by God’s Spirit, through God’s Son. By God our Father, in all spheres and aspects of social, economical, cultural, judicial and personal life; something not happening because the Western civilization has abandoned faith and faithfulness to God, and when something pious have been kept, it has often than not been orthodox, but heresy or superstitious belief.

What you call “Christian” identity is one of these superstitious beliefs, and not Christian at all, but racialist. Racism is a secular ideology, and pure ignorance, irrelevant to the Orthodox Faith and socio-political life in general; and by interpreting the Scriptures through Gnostic lenses of ethnical Chosenness and as a racial history book the proclamation of the Nicene Council overwhelms me: “Anathema to heresy!”

Sure, though, our former bishop Ambrose had some racial speculations mixed with Pentecostalism and Dispensationalist millenarianism, but he is long gone, and irrelevant issues to us today. We proclaim a contrary position with regards to Eschatology: there are no instances of racial choseness in the Scriptures, as black and Jewish and identity white racists claim. God may curse nations, not arbitrary, but by their own criminal actions and the complicity of the majority because of their silence to correct the iniquities, but the step to racial choseness (by God) is a far one into darkness – and Scriptural silence is certain.
The apostle said that “there are not Hebrews nor Greeks, Scythians nor Barbarians, but you are one in Christ”, which means that the orthodox Christians are one nation, one Ecumene, one faith-community, living by the breath and words of God. This is of course contrary to the ethnic Hellenist obscurancy of the orthodox Greeks or the Russians, who through their phyletism and primacy of national pride undeserved is far similar to ‘Christian’ identity than are we, who are Conciliarist with universal outlook. That said, since Christianity has answers to all questions, including those ‘answered’ by secular science, it also have answers to ethnological questions and the issue of divergence of human societies and ethinical groups.

**Why are you in conflict with the Moscow Patriarchate of today?**

They are disturbing the peace and sobornost (conciliarity) through their completely Pharisaic and impious appearance. This more so since the Maidan revolution in Ukraine, where it is they who was the primary initiators of the armed insurgency in Donetsk and Lugansk. Their prelates, like Vsevolod Chaplin, Hilarion Alfeyev. Cyril Gundaev and many others have scandalized the Orthodox faith internationally and among their own people, and through their words and actions ridiculed and blasphemed it – and thus God. They aren’t believers, but idolaters, and they aren’t Orthodox nor even Christian, but God knows all; the worst kind of Pharisee their elite are very rich and through the appearance of personal spirituality and external splendor they convey that they are spiritual giants and Supreme Priests who alone hold the keys to heaven, who personally disperse the gifts of entrance. All the Sergianists hold up are the gates of Hell, which foolish sheep are entering without second thought.

True it may exist a few Orthodox among the Sergianist assemblies, but they are not a majority, and shouldn’t be there at all, even though the internal disciplinarian propaganda of this patriarchate keep them in check. In essence the Sergianists are a totalitarian Christ-denying communist cult, which also is a department of the state, and attracts many unbelievers and even non-sergianists for ‘patriotic’ reasons, and like all state “orthodox” “churches” are a hub for criminal activity.
Once you said you have some kind of cooperation with the Greek Old Calendarists. Why are you in cooperation with the Greek Old Calendarists and not with other more mainstream Russian Orthodox churches?

We haven’t. Bishop Ambrose, many years ago, visited Old Calendarists many years ago, but all it eventually led to was conflict. We and the Old Calendarists have few things in common, except in viewing the Phanar “Constantinople Patriarchate” as a new Papism and apostate from orthodoxy, and shared views on Hesychasm and Gregory Palamas, perhaps, but these are general similarities among those deriving from orthodox Christianity.

What are the differences between the Church of the Goths, the Catacomb Church, the Russian True Orthodox Church and the Russian True Orthodox Christians?

Old Calendarist Greeks and Russian groups claiming Catacomb lineage all call themselves “True Orthodox” as a denominator, usually with the suffix “Church” or “Christian”. We have always called ourselves True Orthodox Christians because of our parochial and Conciliar worldview, with rejection of Pharisaic clericalism, communal and personal piety with respect to the laws of God, focus on the reading and application of Holy Scripture in life, and reconstruction of orthodox sacramental life from its twisted and distorted modern perception towards an authentic and primordial perception of the Eucharist, Baptism, Confession, Anointing, Apostolic Succession, and so on. It’s not the traditions that have changed primarily, but the perception of it – in several successive waves in many centuries – which has led to not only change, but loss of understanding of what orthodox Christian conceptions of Church, Eucharist, Salvation and so on, means.

But it is true that in this we differ from True Orthodox denominations in many aspects. Three essentially are noteworthy: 1) True Orthodox ecclesiology is Donatist in character and essentially identical with that of both the Sergianists and the Papists in that salvation only exist in the congregation which can claim apostolic succession in the linear “canonical” sense. 2) Tsarism is the political ideology of Russian True Orthodoxy and the litmus test of orthodox social and political understanding, which we regard as genuinely false. 3) The holiness of the Old, Julian Calendar, which we have more or less abandoned because of practical reasons. Christians are to live in society as it is today, not yesterday, and celebrate Pascha and Pentecost and Christmas on the dates the contemporary calendar say – especially when that calendar is almost identical to the old church calendar. The ancient Church Christianized the old pagan Roman calendar when it Christianized the
Roman oikomene, because the conception of time (kairos) must be evangelized also. But that doesn’t mean that the original evangelized calendar can be sacrosanct in all times and cultures, especially as time and conception of time changes: must China implement the Julian Calendar to become Christian?, one may ask. The absurd question is self-answered. To celebrate Christmas on January 6th is only obscurant and lead to separation between Church and World; not to mention the fact the difficulties among believers who often have to celebrate two Christmasses, two Pentecosts and two Paschas each year. Only conservative conventionalism can justify such disparities.

Because of this we have begun to label ourselves as Conciliar (‘sobornoye’) with the regard to Orthodox Reconstruction of purity in the perception of Sacramental life in the Eucharist, Baptism, Confession, the Holy Orders and Ecclesiology, Salvation and Soteriology, Apostolic Succession, Eschatology and the Kingdom of God, the standard of God’s Law (Theonomy) in the life of the world in its purity, as God the Word (Lord of His Kingdom in the world, sitting at His Father’s right side) revealed these to His apostles and the early Church and the world. When orthodoxy has lost meaning this meaning must be reasserted and conveyed for moderns to understand, without diffusion. Revelation isn’t only mystical and personal, but a revealed mandate and commission from God how to live and order the world of man.

You have also told me that you and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (the Mormons) recognize each other. Why do you recognize them, since they do not keep any form of traditional Christianity, which Orthodox Christianity does? The Mormons are blasphemers, which is sad, since one cannot deny their worldly achievements. We haven’t had any cooperation or mutual recognition (what ever that would benefit: an orthodox should only care about recognition in the sight of God, not the sight of Pharisees and men), and won’t, but some of our former bishop Ambrose’s apprentices in Russia were both True Orthodox and Mormon, which is from where this idea of “recognition” originates; but it isn’t. All this show that Ambrose lied and some of his followers are interfaith syncretists. My contact with Mormons relate to them trying to convert me, and me them. Missionary efforts among Jehovas’ Witnesses and LDS Mormons and other deviators are blessed enterprises though.
How does the Church of the Goths/Archdiocese of the Goths organize itself within Russia and in other countries?

We organize ourselves in Conciliarity, in small parishes and study groups, led by a teacher with the calling to evangelize Orthodox and Biblical understanding, and which partake in communal prayer and communion in love of God and of brothers and sisters through the Eucharist and Agape meal. God knows the future, but the Gospel is a message of increasing faith and holiness in culture from glory to glory, until all corners of the earth has heard, listened and submitted to the evangelical proclamation of God’s Kingdom “now”, and “soon”, in the Resurrection of all Saints and the everlasting life thereafter which is Salvation.