

# Kingdom Report

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## **Russian Church Builds a Christian Civilization After Soviet Communism**

Here is an interesting example for the Church in Southern Africa facing a collapsing socialist government economy. Astonishing new Christian Theme Park in Crimea. This is how the Orthodox Church is winning the culture war in Russia.

This has been a bad week for South Africa and for a failing Pres. Ramaphosa and his ANC party.

- The GNU could not pass a budget on budget day in Parliament. This shows a total breakdown in the GNU as these things need to be sorted out behind the scenes before hand. The problem: Big tax increases needed for huge budget deficits.
- Pres. Ramaphosa publicly attacks the American administration.
- The American administration cancels the very important R8 billion in aid for the HIV-Aids support.
- AGOA and big tariffs coming on our exports to America of which it is a big surplus trade for us.
- The Pres. Ramaphosa invite Pres. Zelensky of Ukraine for an official visit and show of support which is really going to antagonize Russia, our main BRICS partner.
- And then of course we have already antagonized the very powerful international Jewish community with our ICJ case on Gaza.

For a country that has to put out the begging bowl for international loans this is a powerful group of international interests to antagonize. And to top it all off we had a return to stage 6 load shedding.

I believe we face a dark economic, political and social future for our nation and our region. We are well on our way to "failed nations state". The government debt load is unsustainable and growing. We have no credible economic policy for growth. Our race laws once again discriminate on the basis of race. There will be no foreign investment with our BEE laws. There are many growing emerging markets that are investor friendly.

If I look at the inevitable end result of these geo-strategic and economic blunders I am reminded of the collapse of all socialist governments of the past 100 years. And the present world stage is littered with these failures.

However there are good stories of after-collapse rebuild. The one that really drew my attention this last week was what is happening in Russia. I have already mentioned in past

blogs the amazing impact of the Russian Orthodox church in rebuilding Russian society after the calamity of communist rule. What drew my attention this last week was a report on the opening of a Russian Orthodox theme park in Crimea. Yes a Theme Park”. And no it is not a new Disneyworld. It is the creation of the vision of one of them most important Metroropolitans (rank of Arch Bishop-Cardinal) of the Russian Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Tikhon. “Theme park’ isn’t really the right word. Its creators call it a Christian museum-church complex, but that doesn’t do it justice either. Tikhon has been an amazing figure in Russia to revive the concept of Russia as a Christian Orthodox civilization.

**”Astonishing New Christian Theme Park in Crimea”  
Was he headline in the media that caught my attention**

Tikhon is a force of nature in Russian Orthodoxy, repeatedly pulling off feats and mega-projects which strain reality. He became one of Russia’s leading celebrities after writing *Everyday Saints*, first published in 2011, and not just a best-seller, but one of the most read Russian books of all time, like in the top 5 or something, which is quite something considering the competition. It sold in the area of 10 million copies, but was also available free online, and there were many pirate print editions, so it was probably read by several 10s of millions of Russians, opening Christianity to them. .

This launched Tikhon as a major force, and what came next was equally implausible. This includes building a huge and impressive cathedral in central Moscow in memory of the canonized martyrs of the Bolshevik terror, especially the Romanov family, a world-class seminary, creating one of the largest Christian publishing houses in Russia, one of the best church choirs in Russia which tours widely, reviving 2 monasteries, creating 2 revisionist historical documentary films which had a major impact on public understanding of Russia’s past, heading the culture department of the Patriarchate (Russia’s mini-version of the Vatican), major church renovations around the country, creating a large agro-holding company which produces healthy food for the above, and much more.

Tikhon is also a major film maker. The most recent, **Downfall of Empire – a Russian Lesson** (2021) is a 5 hour tour-de-force which provides a radically revisionist analysis of what really caused the Russian revolution. His first film, similar in approach, **Downfall of Empire – a Byzantine Lesson** (2008), which is relevant to the New Chersones Theme Park.

In it Tikhon examines the amazing and largely unknown history of the Eastern Roman Empire, inaccurately named ‘Byzantium’. He argues that Constantinople fell after a 1200 years of success because the Christian autocratic monarchy allowed the oligarch class to get too powerful, and these men eventually conspired with the evil Venetians, the globalists of their day, to collapse the Christian Eastern Roman Empire. The Turks were simply the partial beneficiaries who did the actual military work. The film appeared when Putin was doing battle with Russian oligarchs, and the message was clear: A strong centralized state, ideally and Orthodox monarchy, has to be in charge, otherwise expect disaster. Tikhon purposely built his theme park in Chersones Crimea for good reason...

So how is Crimea connected to antiquity, and how did it become Russian, and how did Russia come to be converted to Christianity 1000 years ago, long before the modern Russian state truly took shape in the 15th c., if Crimea was still part of the Eastern Roman Empire 1000 years ago? The first mentions of it are from 500 b.c. when Greek colonies were established. It was a subject of Rome from 63 b.c. to 341 a.d. Then for 900 years, from 341 – 1204, it was part of the Eastern Roman Empire ('Byzantium'). For the next 250 years the Mongols, Venetians, Genoese and others fought over them, with respective periods of control, before finally coming under the Ottomans in 1449, where it stayed until 1774, when Catherine the Great conquered it. Since then it has been part of Russia.

And Russia's conversion? In a nutshell, in 988 the Russian ruler Vladimir, based in Kiev, had decided to convert to the Orthodox Christianity of the Eastern Romans, but he felt that this might imply that he was subjugating his nation to them, so he decided to invade a province of theirs which neighbored one of his, to make it clear he wasn't. So he marched down to Chersones, in Crimea conquered it, and had himself baptized there. He then relinquished the town back to the Romans, returned to Kiev, and proceeded to convert his kingdom.

Chersones Park was built in Chersones Crimea as visual reminder to Russians where their faith and culture came from a 1000 years ago. It is a dramatic statement This is who we are....a Christian Civilization. A cultural memory that the communists tried to destroy.





It was built at breakneck speed in under 2 years (1 year 8 months to be exact) by the Military Construction Company of the Russian Armed Forces (VSK) on 60 acres next to the naval stronghold of Sevastopol, home of the Russian fleet. The land previously housed military installations. Work started in mid – 2022, shortly after the most recent phase of the war began. The complex was officially aptly opened to the public on July 18, 2024, the anniversary of Vladimir’s conversion more than a millenimr ago. Tikhon conceived of the whole thing already more than a decade ago, and has been actively working on it for 10 years. The vision was multifaceted for the park.

1. A reconstruction of Chersones as it was in 1000 a.d., when it was an eastern Roman Christian Byzantine city, with actors re-enacting life and trades of that age.
2. A bold testament to the truth of Christianity. A missionary project.
3. Museums of Christianity, Antiquity and Byzantium, Russian history, the history of Crimea and Novorossia, the lands currently suffering from the war in the artificial political entity known as ‘Ukraine.’ The whole complex is envisioned as an open-air museum.
4. Newly founded male monastery of 20 monks and novices rebuilt on the site of a 19th c. monastery founded by the Romanovs.
5. Sumptuously restored major cathedral.
6. Place of pilgrimage with a pilgrim welcome center and accommodation.
7. Very large state-run childrens’ summer camp and year around art school for children capable of engaging 10s of 1000s of children per year.
8. Byzantine crafts center where you can take lessons from craftsmen dressed in costumes from around 1000 a.d.
9. Large reconstructed Roman open-air amphitheater for plays and concerts.
10. Presentation space for Christian art and design, a place to reflect beauty in architecture and art.
11. Huge public space for large-scale Christian events, rituals, and historical re-enactments, including an open-air outdoor church with regular services.
12. Major ongoing archeological excavation and preservation site dating to 500 b.c., when Chersones was part of the Roman empire.
13. Academic research institution dedicated to studying antiquity.

14. Propaganda project (in the good sense of that word), seeking to demonstrate why these lands have been part of Russia for centuries, at times playing roles of utmost importance to her very founding, including her conversion to Christianity 1000 years ago, and Russia's Christian wars of liberation against the Turks in the 18th century, her inheritance from Constantinople.
15. Draws a parallel between Russia and the Eastern Roman Empire based in Constantinople. The idea that Russia is the 3rd Rome.
16. Major family-oriented tourist destination, with hotels, restaurants, and recreation.

### The Southern Africa Cultural Revolution

We are going to have to build a new nation from a shared history of all our people. I don't mean our individual histories of the Afrikaner or Brits or Zulus or Sotho or Koi or San.

We need to unite our people as the New Israel of God with a 2000 year common history. Tikkon could remind Russians out of the darkness of communism that they have a 1000 year history behind them and that history is started when their first Czar became a Christian and united people and lands under Christian conversion to form the Russian people and their Orthodox Christian Civilization.

We need to boldly declare with scripture there are no Greek or Jews or Gentiles or male, female, or master, slave in Christ. We are a family. And our family has a 2000 year history behind us. And we are world changers. We are nation builders, we are civilization builders. We are creators and creative. We have changed history. And we all share in our family history through the ages.

That means we stand against racism and those who would divide us by race. We support one another. Not "cadre deployment" but Kingdom family deployment. We can do far better with our tax money flowing through our churches to help the sick, poor and unemployed than what government bureaucrats can do with our hard earned income. We need less government and more local community upliftment.

Here is the future challenge waiting for us. After this socialist government has come to the end of a ruined economy, we the Christian community of Southern Africa are going to have to do what Isaiah prophesied "rebuild the waste places".

To do that we have to do what the Russian Orthodox church had to do after 70 years of communist misrule and national poverty....create a new national identity of who we are in Christ, what is our shared Christian heritage and create a new cultural identity on which we can build a prosperous Christian civilization.

And this Metropolitan Tikkon of the Russian Orthodox Church looks to me like the new Apostolic leadership that God is bringing to the Church of tomorrow.