

THE STATEMENT OF FAITH OF THE EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN-BAPTISTS

PREFACE

Evangelical Christian-Baptists (EC-B) are the church of born-again Christians and their doctrine reflects the aspiration for the Biblical teaching of the first apostles' church.

The systematic theology of the Evangelical Christian-Baptists was worked out on the foundation of the Bible. The Union of Churches EC-B developed on the Eurasian landmass. From time to time, they republished their statement of faith, which was based on the text written in the last Century by the Baptist preacher E. G. Onken. So, in 1906 the statement of faith of the EC-B edited by the chairman of the All-Russian Union of Baptists, D. I. Mazaev, was published. In 1928, a re-statement edited by the chairman of the All-Union Baptists (AUECB), N. V. Odinstsov. An analogous statement of faith was accepted in 1985 at the 43rd Congress of the AUECB.

The contents of this statement of the Evangelical Christian-Baptists reflects the text of the above publications. We hope that the present statement of faith will serve as auxiliary material for the spiritual education and growth of believers and the further organization of churches in our evangelical Baptist brotherhood which is united in the Union of Churches EC-B.

1. ABOUT GOD

The Triune God

We believe in the united, living true God (Isa. 45:22; Jer. 10:10; John 17:3), who created the heavens, the earth and the fulness thereof (Gen. 1:1-2; Psalm 24:1; Isa. 40:26-29, 45:12; Acts 17:24-29), who manifests Himself in three *persons*: Father, Son and Holy Spirit-three in one and the one in three *persons*, who lives forever, «and these three are one» (Isa 48:16; I John 5:7; Rom. 11:33).

«God is a Spirit» (John 4:24), and as a Spirit, He is an invisible being (Gen. 33:20, John 1:18, I John 4:12, I Tim. 6:16). However, «for the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead;...(Rom 1:20).

A man can get to know God only through the revelation (*avowal*) of God about Himself, which is contained in the Word of God and becomes understood because of the action of the Holy Spirit. (II Peter 1:20-21, John 14:26).

God the Father

We believe, that God is *without beginning* (I John 2:14), omnipresent (Psalm 139:7, Acts 17:27), omnipotent (Gen. 17:1), omniscient (Heb. 4:13), sage (Rom. 16:27, I Tim. 1:17), perfect (Matt. 5:48), philanthropic (Ex. 34:6), merciful, longsuffering, abundant in goodness and truth (Ex. 34:6) Holy (Isa. 6:3, I Peter 1:15-16), righteous (Deut. 32:4), just (Psalm 119:137), immutable (Numbers 23:19, Malachi 3:6, Luke 21:33, James 1:17, Heb. 13:8), hates sin (Psalm 5:5-6, 34:16, Hab. 1:13, John 3:36, Rom. 1:18, Eph. 5:6), punishes the lie (Jer. 5:1-9, Heb. 2:2), the avenger Nahum 1:2, I Thess. 4:6), a consuming fire (Deut. 4:24, Heb. 12:29), judges the righteous (Psalm 7:11-13, Acts 17:31), *has* tender mercy (James 5:11), is willing to have all men to be saved (I Tim. 2:4, 2 Peter 3:9).

God is light (I John 1:5). He dwells in the unapproachable light (I Tim. 6:16). God is love (I John 4:16). He loves His creation and this love was shown in Jesus Christ (John 3:16, I John 4:9-10, Rom. 5:8, Eph. 2:4-5). God sent His Son and Holy Spirit to the Earth that the world might be saved (John 3:17, 16:8-11, 13-14, I John 2:27, Rom. 26-27).

God the Son-Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is eternal God (I John 5:20), and does not have a beginning of days or the end of life (Heb. 7:3). He is also the Creator of the Universe (Col. 1:16).

God predetermined that His only begotten Son for the sacrifice of propitiation for the redemption and salvation of mankind (I Peter 1:18-20, 2:24, 3:18, I John 2:2, Gal. 4:4). He appeared in the flesh (I Tim. 3:16), being born from the Virgin Mary through immaculate conception from the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:18).

God the Son joined in Himself the Divine and human nature (Luke 1:35). He came to the world «in the likeness of sinful flesh» (Rom. 8:3), but there was no sin in Him (I John 3:5). «Who did no sin» (I Peter 2:22). He is not implicated in evil, while He could be the sacrifice for the world's sin (John 1:29, II Cor. 5:21, Heb. 9:26).

Jesus Christ is the promised anointed sovereign and only Savior of the world (Luke 4:18, John 4:42, 10:28, Acts 2:36, 4:12, Eph. 5:2). He won the victory over the Devil and Hell (Rev. 3:21, 5:5, I Cor. 15 :54-55), destroyed death (II Tim 1:10).

The Lord Jesus Christ deprived the power *from* the one having the state of death i.e. the Devil (Luke 4:33-36, 41, I John 3:8, Heb. 2:14-15, Rev. 20:3-4, 14). He redeemed us by His blood, becoming the only one mediator between God and man (Col. 1:20, I Tim. 2:5-6, Titus 2:14, Heb. 7:24-25). He became the Advocate for us before the Father, and also as the High Priest of future blessings (I John 2:1, Heb. 9:11-12, 24). A believer in Him has eternal life (John 6:47).

The resurrected, ascended into Heaven and glorified Jesus Christ is the Creator and Head of the Church (Matt. 16:18, Eph. 1:22-23, 5:23, Col. 1:18, I Tim. 3:16). He will judge the universe (John 5:22, Acts 17:31).

God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is a person and being God (Acts 5:3-4) holds:

- Omnipotence (Romans 15:19)
 - Omniscience (I Cor. 2:10)
 - Omnipresence (Psalm 139:7)
 - Holiness (Eph. 4:30) and other attributes.

The Holy Spirit is the Creator of the universe equally with the Father and the Son (Gen. 1:2, Job 33:4). The Holy Spirit inspired the prophets and the Apostles (II Peter 1:21). *On* the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was sent for a testimony about Christ, for praising Him and for the creation of the Church (John 15:26, 16:7, Acts 1:8, I Cor. 12:13).

The Holy Spirit condemns the world about sin, the truth and about the Judgement (John 16:8), guides *men* to repentance and to revive him. He moves into the repentant, converted and the obedient to God *persons* (John 3:3-6, Acts 5:32, I Cor. 6:19, Titus 3:5). The Holy Spirit lives in *those* born from above (Rom. 8:9, I Cor. 3:16, Eph. 1:13), teaches (John 14:26), condemns (John 16:8-9), directs (John 16:13, I Cor. 2:12-13), guides (Acts 8:29, 13:2), encourages and comforts (John 14:26), affirms (Eph. 3:16-19), bears fruit (Gal. 5:22-23, Eph. 5:9), and provides *benefits* for service in the church (I Cor. 12:7-11, 28).

God's Word repeatedly commands believers to filled by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18, Acts 2:4, 4:8, 8:31, I Cor. 2:4), to have power for a holy life and a testimony about Jesus Christ (Acts 1:8, 4:31, I Cor. 2:4). Holy Scripture commands not to sin against the Holy Spirit (Isa. 63:10, Mark 3:29, Acts 5:3, 9, 7:51, Eph. 4:30, I Thess. 5:19).

2. ABOUT THE WORD OF GOD

We believe, that the Bible, i.e the canonical books of the Old (39) and New (27) Testaments are the Word of God, written by God's men by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:21) for *the direction of* mankind to the way of salvation (II Tim. 3:15-16). *The Holy Spirit* opens the mind of every God-fearing *person* to the comprehension of the Holy Scriptures (Psalm 23:14, Luke 10:22-24, II Peter 1:20), so that with *His* assistance they become for one the source of God's knowledge, fully enough for the knowledge of the truth and God's will concerning life and service (II Tim. 3:16). Any revelation contradicting the Word of God is false. (Isa. 8:20).

The Holy Scripture is the only source of Christian faith (John 20:31, Rom. 10:17) and is the spiritual guide for believers concerning salvation, life and service (Joshua 1:7-8, II Peter 1:19, Rom. 15:4, I Tim. 4:16, Heb. 4:12). Addition to the Word of God and decrease and also perversion of the text in translation or interpretation draws for itself severe punishment from God (Rev. 22:18-19).

3. THE CREATION OF THE WORLD

We believe that God created heaven and earth, sun, moon and stars (Genesis Chapters 1 and 2, Acts 17:24), all things seen and unseen (Psalm 89:12, I Cor. 8:6, Heb. 11:3, Rev. 4:11) revealing His eternal power, might and omniscient sage wisdom (Eph 3:9-10, Col. 1:16).

God created also a man in His appearance and likeness (Gen. 1:27, 5:1, James 3:9).
«God that made the world and all things therein. (Acts 17:26)

Humans were for:

- Dominion over all living things on Earth (Gen. 1:26, Psalm 8:5-9).
 - Good affairs (Eph. 2:10)
 - The glorification of God (I Cor 6:19-20)
 - An eternal (Gen. 2:9,17), holy (I Peter 1:15-16, Matt. 5:8) and blessed in unceasing fellowship with God (Gen. 3:8, John 12:26, 14:1-2, 23, 17:24, I Thess. 4:17).

God created angels (Col. 1:16), *so* that they *could be* in service to Him (Psalm 101:20, Heb. 1:7) and to those who inherit salvation (Heb. 1:14).

Angels are incorporeal creatures (spirits), *who* excel humans in strength and power (II Peter 2:11), are differentiated by denomination and level of authority (Col 1:16, I Thess. 4:16).

Angels of God are always before the face of the Heavenly Father (Isa. 6:1-7), rejoicing about the salvation of sinners (Luke 15:10), observing the lives of people and children (Dan. 10:12-21, Matt. 18:10) and observing the life of churches (I Cor. 11:10, I Tim. 5:21).

The Lord sends angels for the punishment of impudent ones who revile God (Acts 12:23). Though angels excel man by their power, the Word of God forbids *us* to worship them (Rev. 22:8-9).

The First of the Archangels did not resist in truth. He sinned (Ezek. 28:16, I John 3:8) and became a human killer (John 8:44) and was called the devil. Following him, some angels did not save their dignity and sinned, for this God tied them by the bonds of the darkness of hell (II Peter 2:4, Jude 6).

4. ABOUT MAN

We believe that God created man in His appearance and likeness (Gen. 1:27, 5:1, Isa. 45:12) and put him as a ruler over His hand's affairs (Psalm 7:7).

God created man to be sinless, with a free will (Gen. 2:16-17, Joshua 24:15, Jer. 21:8).

God blessed man (Gen. 1:28).

The Fall

Tempted by Satan, man fell into sin and was deprived of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). By one man sin came into the world (Rom. 5:12) and *it* moved up in all generations in each man (Rom. 5:19), all became as children of anger (Eph. 2:3) and the retribution for sin is waiting for everybody, which is death (Rom. 6:23).

Sin divided man from God (Isa. 59:2). By breaking the commandment of God, man fell, separated from God and came to do evil. Man is not in a condition *to* independently go back on the way of righteousness, since his intellect and conscience are defiled (Titus 1:15) and by nature he is the child of anger.

Redemption

God loves man and does not want his destruction. He sent into the world His only-begotten Son in human flesh (Heb. 10:5), that by His blood, shed on Golgotha's cross *would* accomplish the redemption of all the people (Eph. 1:7, Rev. 5:9). Jesus Christ satisfied the demand of God's holiness (Rom. 3:25-26) and now salvation by grace is given to all people (Acts 28:28, II Peter 3:9, Rom. 3:24, Titus 2:11).

In order to receive salvation, it is necessary to have faith, which is taking place by hearing God's Word (Acts 4:4, Rom. 10:17, Heb. 11:6). God gives salvation to one who accepts His Word and repents from sins under the action of the Holy Spirit (Luke 7:29-39, Mark 1:15, John 3:16, Acts 2:38, 41, 16:31, 26:18, Eph. 2:8).

Faith induces a man to trust the Lord and be obedient to Him (Matt. 4:18-20, Luke 8:38-40, Acts 19:18-20, II Tim. 1:12, Heb. 11:8). The confession of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior is confirmation of true faith (Matt. 10:32-33, Luke 12:8-9, John 20:28, Acts 8:37, Rom. 10:9-10, II Cor. 4:13). The evidence of true faith are the works of faith (James 2:26, Gal. 5:6, Hebrews chapter 11). «Even so faith, if it hath not works is dead, being alone.» (James 2:17)

Salvation depends from man, will he be saved through faith (Acts 2:40-41, Eph. 2:8) or rejecting the Word of God will he make himself unworthy of eternal life (Acts 13:46). *Man* comes to believe and is revived, that is becomes a participant in Christ, once enlightened and tastes of the heavenly gift, becomes a participant of the Holy Spirit and tastes the good God's Word and the strength of the future lifetime, will reach eternal life only in that case, if the beginning life is firmly preserved (kept) to the end. (Ezek. 18:24, Heb. 3:14, 6:4-6, 10:38-39).

Repentance, Conversion, Forgiveness, Revival

The Holy Spirit reveals a man in sin and opens him to the goodness of God, motivates him to repent and convert to God (John 16:8, Acts 2:31-38, Rom. 2:4). Man is being saved (Acts 2:40), if he takes revelation from the Holy Spirit, repents from sins, appeals from deadly affairs to God and takes Jesus Christ as a Savior and Lord (John 1:12, Acts 3:19, 5:31, Heb. 6:1, 9:14).

Repentance and conversion include in themselves the contrition about sins (Psalm 38:19, II Cor. 7:10), confession of sins and leaving them behind (Prov. 28:13, Luke 18:13-14, Acts 19:18-19, 26:20).

The consequence of conversion and personally receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior is the forgiveness for sins and (Acts 10:42-43, I John 1:9, Col. 1:13-14) and the birth from the Holy Spirit and God's Word, without which *it is* impossible to be saved and to come into God's kingdom (John 1:12-13, 3:5-6, James 1:18).

Through the birth from above, man becomes a child of God, a partaker of God's nature and a temple of the Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:4, I Cor. 6:19, Heb. 2:14).

Indicators of the birth from above:

- Change from a way of life (II Cor. 5:17, Eph. 4:22, 5:8, Rom. 6:16-17).
 - Rejection of profane and worldly lusts, hatred of evil (Psalm 97:10, James 1:21, II Peter 1:4, Eph. 4:22-24, Titus 2:12).
 - Fulfillment of the will of God (Psalm 143:10, Eph. 6:6).
 - Love toward the lord and the Church (John 13:34, I John 3:14, 5:1, I Cor. 16:14, Gal. 5:13, Eph. 4:15).
 - Thirst for fellowship with God through the Bible and prayer (Psalm 55:18, 63:2, 119:10, Acts 17:11).
 - Aspiration for the likeness of Jesus (Philip. 2: 13-15, II Cor. 3:18, Gal. 4:19).

Justification *and* Adoption

By faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, *men are* born from above, receiving justification for free, by His grace, by redemption in Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:24, Gal 2:16). By faith, they find peace with God (Rom. 5:1), *and* receive the evidence from the Holy Spirit, that they are children of God and legatees of eternal life (I John 5:10-11, Rom. 8:16-17, Gal. 4:6-7).

Justification changes the condition of the man, *who came to* believe before God: he is saved from the anger of God (Rom. 5:9), and is freed from eternal blame (Rom. 4:5, 5:1, 8:1, 30). The one, *who came to* believe, becomes free from guilt for past sins and from fear of judgement for them (Rom. 3:24-25, 28, 5:9, II Cor. 5:21, Gal. 2:16). God adopts atoned and justified ones and they become the legatees of the Kingdom of God (Rom. 8:16-18, Gal. 3:26, 4:4-5, Eph. 1:4-7).

Sanctification

Sanctification is the will of God for all redeemed *people*: « For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness» (I Thess. 4:3-8). Without holiness nobody can see God (I Thess. 4:3-7, Heb. 12:14). When a man comes to believe in God, he is sanctified by the Blood of the covenant (I Peter 1:1-2; Heb. 10:10, 14, 29, 13:12). A Christian

needs permanent sanctification during all his life (Heb. 12:14, Rev. 22:11). He brings fruit of holiness by the guiding Word of God and acting by the Spirit (I Peter 1:15-16, Rom. 6:22, Gal. 5:16).

Sanctification is separating from sin (I Peter 2:9, Titus 2:14), dedicating yourself to God and transforming in the image of Jesus Christ (I John 3:23, Rom. 6:2,6,8,12-13,12:1-2, II Cor. 5:15, Phil. 2:5,15, I Thess. 3:13).

Sanctification is carried out by God (I Thess. 5:23) with the participation of the believer himself. God operates through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:11-12, I Cor. 1:30, Eph. 5:27, I Thess. 5:23, Heb. 10:10), through His Word (John 5:27) and the Holy Spirit living in us (I Cor. 6:19-20).

Out of man's participation are attributed:

- Blame, confession of your sins and the realization of need in the forgiving grace of God (I John 1:7-9, I Cor. 11:31, II Cor. 7:1, Heb. 4:16).
 - Faith in cleaning by the blood of Christ (Heb. 10:19-22).
 - Investigation and acceptance of the Word of God with the desire to obey it (John 5:39, Acts 17:11, James 1:21, I Peter 2:1-2, I Tim. 1:13, 3:15-16).
 - Holy walking before God under the influence of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:14, 12:1-2, Rev. 22:11).
 - Trust to the Lord in all circumstances of life (Jude 24-25, II Tim. 1:12).

Holy love to the Lord and his commandment, under the operation of the Holy Spirit, attracts the children of God to permanent sanctification (Rom. 5:5, II Cor. 3:18, 7:1, Eph. 4:15, 23-24).

Prayer

Prayer is a means of communication between man and God (Psalm 5:2-4, Philip. 4:6). In prayer, we worship God, glorify Him, talking about His greatness and glory (I Chron. 29: 11-15, Psalm 103:1-19).

In prayer, we open our desires and needs before God, Who is powerful *enough* to fulfill our requests (Philip. 4:6-7). He answers to prayers of those, who appeal to Him with a pure (clean) heart, with faith and by His will (Psalm 50:15, 66:18, Mark 11:24, I John 3:21-22).

«The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of them that fear Him: He also will hear their cry, and save them.» (Psalm 145:18-19)

The Word of God teaches us to pray:

- About that the name of our Heavenly Father was sanctified (Matt. 6:9).

- About the coming *of* His Kingdom (Matt. 6:10).
- About that His will be done, as in Heaven, so in Earth (Luke 11:1-2).
- About yourself and relations (Matt. 6:11-13, 15:22, 17:15).
- About the success of spreading the Gospel (I Tim. 2:1-4, I Thess. 1:8, II Thess. 3:1).
- About all the saints and about the Church (Eph. 6:18, Philip. 1:4).
- About the Church's servants (Matt. 9:37-38, Rom. 15:30, Eph. 6:19).
- About the sick and suffering by the will of God (James 5:14-16, I Peter 4:19, Heb. 13:3).
- About those who offend and persecute the children of God (Matt 5:44).
- About rulers, governors and all people (Jer. 29:7, I Tim. 2:2).

Children of God are called always and for all things to thank God, because all His intentions serve for the blessing of the believer. (Jer. 29:11, Rom. 8:28, I Thess. 5:17-18).

The Apostles and the disciples often prayed with fasting (Acts 13:2, II Cor. 11:27).

According to the Word of God prayers with fasting are to be done:

- With a necessity of personal humbleness and with the desire to be closer to the Lord (Ezra 8:21a, Isa. 57:15, Dan. 10:12).
 - With the election and the *laying on of hands* of the church's servants (Acts 13:2-3, 14:23).
 - For the general needs of people off God (Ezra 8:21-23) and disasters (Joel 1:14, 2:12-15).
 - For emotional experiences, sorrows (II Sam. 1:12, Psalm 33:13, 69:11, and other circumstances (Mark 9:29, II Cor. 6:4-5).

Fasting is not only abstention from taking food and drink and staying in prayer, but also the display of virtue, discovery of the «fetters of untruth» and establishment of the proper relationship with people (Isa. 58:3-12, Matt. 5:23-24).

5. ABOUT THE CHURCH

We believe that Jesus Christ created the Church (Matt. 16:18). She is maintained on the foundation of the teaching of the Apostles and prophets and has Jesus Christ, Himself as the foundation-stone (I Cor. 3:11, Eph. 2:20, Col. 1:18).

Members of the Church are baptized by the same Spirit (I Cor. 12:13), represent each other as members and constitute one body (Rom. 12:5, I Cor. 12:14), which constitute and aggregate by means of any mutually fastened ties. Jesus Christ is the head of this body (Eph. 1:22, 4:15-16). *This* spiritual relationship attracts the saints to union, and that is why Christians, who live in the same locality, join a local church (Acts 11:22, 13:1, I

Cor. 1:1).

Local churches constituting the united body of the Lord, join between themselves in multi-various ties. The Lord perceived this for the participation in the needs of the saints (Acts 11:27-30, I John 3:17, Rom. 15:25-27, II Cor. 8:14-15, 9:12-14), for the combined solution of spiritual questions (Acts 15:1-2, 4-29).

Ties between churches become stronger, when church union servants take care about local communities *of believers*, who received grace from God for that *work* and the trust from the churches (II Cor. 11:28, Col. 4:7-8, Philip. 2:19-25). The goal of their service is the joint acting for faith, «once delivered to the saints» (Jude 3, Philip. 1:27-29), the building of local churches (I Tim. 3:14-15, 5:17-22, Titus 1:5) and spreading of the Good News about the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ (Acts 16:1-3, 20:4, Rom. 16:3-4).

We believe that the unification of churches in the tight union of love and peace, based on holiness is accomplished by the Lord Himself by the Holy Spirit. (Psalm 93:5, Eph. 1:4, 2:13, 4:16).

From the day of Pentecost, *there* exists the universal (invisible) church, created by Jesus Christ, in which is included local churches (Acts 2:41-47, Eph. 1:20-23).

The Universal Church

The universal church consists of saved, born from above people (Acts 2:47, Titus 3:5), redeemed by the Blood of Jesus Christ from every tribe, tongue, nation and generation (Col. 1:12-22, Heb. 12:22-23, Rev. 5:9-10), having the evidence in themselves, that they are the children of God (I John 5:10-11, Rom. 8:16).

The Universal Church is:

- The flock of Christ (John 10:16, 21:15-17, I Peter 5:2, Heb. 13:20)
 - The spiritual house or temple of God (I Peter 2:5, Eph. 2:19-21, Heb. 3:6).
 - The bride of Christ (II Cor. 11:2, Eph. 5:27, Rev. 19:7-9, 21:9-10).
 - The body of Christ (I Cor. 12:12-13, 27, Eph. 1:22-23, Col. 1:17-27).
 - The pillar and ground of the truth (I Tim. 3:15)

All coming to believe and *being* born from above *through* Jesus Christ are immersed by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ (John 1:33, Acts 2:47, I Cor. 12:13, Gal. 3:27, Col. 2:12).

At the end of the period of grace, the Church of Christ will be raptured from the earth, meeting God, always to be with Him, to see Him and share *in* His glory (John 17:22, 24, I Cor. 15:51-57, Philip. 3:20-21, I Thess 4:13-17).

The Local Church

The Local Church is a gathering of revived souls, who live in the same locality, joined by the same faith (one confession of faith), the same love and hope for the creation of the Body of Christ and combined service to God (Matt. 18:17, Acts 2:42-47, 14:23, Eph. 4:11-16, Philip. 2:1-2). Belonging to the Universal Church, does not liberate *one* from necessity to belong to Local Church (Acts 2:41).

Local Churches are created by the Lord in different countries, cities and settlements (Heb. 3:4-6). Their purpose is to proclaim the perfection of Those Who called us from the darkness into His wonderful light (I Peter 2:9), glorify God (Rom. 15:9), contribute to the growth of church members in the knowledge of God and Christ (Col. 2:2), to help Christians to perfect themselves in the life of faith and love (Eph. 4:12-16), to spread the kingdom of God on earth (Acts 13:1-3, Rom. 10:15, Philip. 1:5), to contribute mutual service one to another (I Peter 4:10).

Membership in the Local Church

The conditions for uniting a soul to a local church are faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, revival and water baptism (Acts 2:38, 8:37, 19:2-5, Rom. 10:9-10, I Tim. 6:12). Baptism is given to *those who* willingly receive the Word of God and believe from the whole heart (Acts 2:41).

Through baptism by faith a man makes a covenant with God and becomes a member of the church (Acts 2:41-42, Heb. 8:10).

Structure of the Local Church

Every Local Church belongs to God (I Cor. 1:2). The Head of the church, Jesus Christ, determines the order in churches by the Word of God and by the leadership of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 11:2, 14:33, 40, 16:1, Eph. 4:11-12).

Servants in the Local Church are placed by the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:2, I Cor. 12:28, Eph. 4:11). He, *Jesus Christ*, calls for service men filled with the Holy Spirit and wisdom (Jer. 30:21, Acts 6:3, Heb. 5:1-4), provides them with gifts and abilities for service (II Cor. 3:4-6). By indications, marked in the Holy Scripture, the church should determine *who* is called by God and choose them for service (Acts 6:2-7, 13:1-3, 15:22, 20:28, Eph. 4:11-12, Titus 1:5).

Pastors, *those* who bring the Good News (evangelists) and deacons are chosen by the church, *they* must correspond to requirements of Holy Scriptures (I Tim. 3:1-12, Titus 1:5-9). Teachers are chosen by the church on based *their* calling (Rom. 12:6-7). *Being* placed into service is accomplished by ordination of the minister who has that commission (II Tim. 1:6, 4:5, Titus 1:5).

In correspondence with the New Testament teaching of Jesus Christ and the Apostles, the order of placing servants by ordination, established in brotherhood is *based* on the foundation of Acts 6:3, 14:22-23, I Tim. 3:1-15, Titus 1:5-9.

Pastors, as the house-builders of the church of Christ, are in charge of the local church. They are bound to be faithful (I Cor. 4:1-2), diligently and pleasingly to God carry a care about souls (I Peter 5:1-4, I Cor. 4:1-2, Heb. 13:17).

The task of pastors:

- Shepherd the church (Acts 20:28-31).
 - Support those who are weak (Acts 20:35).
 - Admonish members of the church in sensible teaching (II Tim 2:15).
 - Reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all long-suffering and edification (II Tim. 4:2, Titus 1:9).

Those who bring the Good News (evangelists) and teachers, the same as pastors, are house-builders of the church and perform a service of religious rite (Rom. 15:16, Eph. 4:11-12). They participate together with pastors in the discussion of and decision on spiritual questions (Acts 15:6, 22, Philip. 1:1). By the commission of the church and servants, messengers who bring the Good News and pastors perform service out of the limit of local churches, preaching the Gospel to all people, and taking care of churches (Acts 13:14, 16:1-3, II Tim. 4:1-5).

Deacons help pastors and teachers in the service. Mainly they are assigned to matters of financial services and charity (Acts 6:1-4).

Servants of the church may be kept supported by it (Matt. 10:10, I Cor. 9:14, Gal. 6:6, I Tim. 5:17-18).

Servants *who have* sinned are subject to the church's penalty equally with other members of the church (I Tim. 5:19-20), but their questions *should be* considered with the participation of the responsible servant, who is caring about many churches (I Tim. 5:19-20).

The laying on of hands loses power when a servant performs heavy sin or shows unfaithfulness (I Cor. 4:2, Heb. 12:15-17). In these cases, the church makes a decision about punishment and taking off ordination with the participation of the servant, having the commission to ordain (Ezek. 44:10-14, Hosea 4:6, Malachi 2:7-9).

Responsibilities of Members of the Church

Members of the church should:

- To keep obedience and faithfulness to God (I Sam 15:22-23, Rev. 2:10).
 - To live between themselves in peace and mutual love (II Thess 1:3).
 - To pray about *local church* servants and to render particular honor and obedience to suitably commanding pastors. (I Peter 5:5, Gal 6:6, Col. 4:3, I Thess. 5:12-13, I Tim. 5:17, Heb. 13:17).
 - To keep unity of the church by the teaching of Jesus Christ (Rom. 15:5-6, Philip. 1:27, 2:2).

- To participate in zealous collaboration in the life of the church, the church's needs, and financial service (I Peter 4:10, I Cor 12:25, II Cor. 9:7, Heb. 13:16).
- To keep the church's secrets from the outer world (Song of Sol. 4:12, Matt. 7:6).

Every member of the church is called to keep attendance to divine service meetings (Psalm 14:3, 27:4, 122:1, Heb. 10:25) and to suitably participate in the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:42, I Cor. 11:26-28).

Church Discipline

In the church are accepted those who are born from above and are taught on the basis of Biblical teaching, they are accepted only after when the church will be acquainted with their spiritual condition and they confess their faith in front of the church (Rom. 10:9-10, I John 4:1-3, 15). Acceptance realizes a decision by the church.

Members of the church should be attentive to each other (Heb. 10:24-25), courteous (Rom. 12:10), to receive admonishment, not breaking the establishment of the Lord (Matt. 18:15-17), should observe, that someone will not be deprived the grace of God (Heb. 12:15).

Members of church should be attentive to each other (Heb. 10:24-25), courteous (Rom. 12:10), receive admonishment with love and admonish not breaking the establishment of the Lord (Matt. 18:15-17), observe will not deprive God's grace (Heb. 12:15).

It is demanded from servants of the church that they observe the commandment cleanly and unrebukably (I Tim. 4:12), teach the children of God to observe all what the Lord commanded (Matt. 28:20), with vigilance (II Tim. 4:5), condemn those opposed to the truth (Titus 1:9).

Christians should be content by having subsistence and clothes (I Tim. 6:8), subjected to the love of God, which attracts them to the way of selflessness and refusal from material excess and impels them to sacrificial service for the sake of the success of preaching the Gospel (Matt. 6:25-34, 16:24).

In divine services and in life the children of God should have the appearance proper to saints, i.e. to dress themselves with diffidence and chastity (I Tim. 2:9, Titus 2:3). In accordance, wives should cover their heads (I Cor. 11:5-10).

Imitation of the world in clothes, in general way of life, in indecent fashion, in performing musical in divine services and life- tells about the friendship with the world and is animosity against God.

The servant is called to be zealous about the cleanness of the church, that is to present her to Christ as a clean virgin (II Cor. 11:2).

For the preservation of cleanliness and decency in the church (I Cor. 5:6-7, II Thess. 3:6)

steps of church influence exist: exhortation (I Tim. 1:5, Titus 2:15), accusation (Matt. 18:15-18), observation (II Thess. 3:14) and excommunication (I Cor. 5:12-13).

Excommunication of a Christian could be accomplished in a case:

- Of falling away from faith in God (I Cor. 16:22).
 - Of Deviation in heresy (Titus 3:10).
 - Of the accomplishment of sin (Matt. 18:15-18, I Cor 5:11-13, II Thess. 3:6).

Members of the church, who fail to keep God's commands and after exhortation, which was made to them, *who* do not repent openly and sincerely, who do not intend to reform and *do* remain in sin, the church punishes: puts them on observation or excommunication (II Thess. 3:14). In case of a difference of opinion about the question of punishment the minority should submit to the decision of the church.

The Church accepts the excommunicated after his sincere repentance, him leaving sin and the presence of the fruits of repentance (II Cor 2:6-8).

Thus *it* is incumbent to arrange the order in the church and to keep her cleanliness, *so* that the Lord could dwell with his people (John 14:33, II Cor. 6:15-18).

6. ABOUT WATER BAPTISM

We believe that water baptism by faith is a commandment of Jesus Christ, and also the testimony of faith and obedience to the Lord (Mark 16:15-16, Acts 2:38, 41). It is a solemn promise to God of a good conscience (I Peter 3:21). Baptism is given to born from above *ones*, who willingly received the Word of God and Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (John 1:12, Acts 2:41, 5:31). All, baptized in Jesus Christ, were baptized in His death (Rom. 6:3-5, Gal. 3:26-27, Col. 2:12).

Baptism can be received only *those who have* reached a conscious age (Mark 16:16, Acts 2:41).

With the performing of baptism, the servant asks the baptized: «Do you believe, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?» (Acts 8:37). After an affirmative answer, the servant, on the basis of Matthew 28:19, says: «By the command of the Lord and by your faith, I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.» The baptized confirms: «Amen.» Baptism is performed by only one full immersion in water.

After baptism of water, the prayer of blessing is performed in the presence of the church. The servant prays at *the side of* the baptized with the putting on of hands (Acts 8:17, 19:6), then *he* performs the Lord's Supper.

7. ABOUT THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that the Lord's Supper (the bread aspect) is a commandment of the Jesus Christ for the remembrance and proclamation of His suffering and death on the cross (Matt. 26:26-28) and should be performed until His coming for the Church (I Cor. 11:23-26).

Participants in Lord's Supper witness about their unity with the Lord and with each other (I Cor. 10:16-17). Therefore, to communicate with the body and to the Blood of Jesus Christ, only souls born from above, who witnessed about their death with Christ through baptism of water and are at peace with the Lord and with the church can participate (I Cor. 11:27-25).

Bread and wine show the on the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ (I Cor. 11:23-25).

8. ABOUT THE LAYING ON OF HANDS

We believe, that the teaching about the laying on of hands refers to the rudiments of Christ's teaching (Heb. 6:1-2).

With the prayer, with the laying on of hands, the servant calls for a blessing from God on those over whom he is praying (Gen. 48:15-16, Num. 27:19-23, Acts 14:23).

The servant, performing a prayer, laying hands upon *the head* recognizes that the one on whom he is putting hands on deserves the blessing *and* meets the requirements of God. Therefore, the Word of God warns *us* from hurried ordinations, that *we* do not become a participant in another's sins (I Tim. 5:22). «And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.» (Heb. 7:7)

The Bible tells about the laying on of hands with blessing on the children of Joseph by Israel (Gen. 48:13-20).

God commanded Moses to lay hands on Joshua, «a man in whom is the spirit», to put him before society and to give him instructions. «And thou shalt put some of thine honor upon him.» (Num. 27:18-23) Joshua «was full of the spirit of wisdom . . . and the children of Israel hearkened unto him.» (Deut. 34:9)

The Lord Jesus Christ laid hands, healing the sick (Mark 6:5), blessing the children (Mark 10:16) and gave *this* promise to those who came to believe «...they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.» (Mark 16:18).

Based on facts, stated in Holy Scriptures, servants who have the right of religious rite-pastors, those who bring the good news (evangelists), and teachers- with faith and prayer lay hands :

- On *those* baptized by faith.

The goal of such prayer is to call God's blessing on the following life of the baptized, to ask for the leadership of the Holy Spirit and protection from any evil

(I Chron. 4:10, Psalm 23:12, John 17:12, 20, Rom. 8:12).

- On children, whose parents devote them to the Lord and who cannot yet carry the responsibility for their actions. The servant is asking for blessing, entrusting the child to God's care (I Sam. 1:11, 27-28, Matt. 19:13-15, Mark 10:13-16). With this, parents are reminded about their responsibility before God to educate *their* children in teaching and instruction of the Lord (Eph. 6:4).
- On the sick by their faith asking and their faith.
The goal of the prayer is healing.
The prayer upon them is preceded *by* the acknowledgment and repentance of faults (Mark 16:18, James 5:14-16, I John 3:20-22).
- On entering *into* marriage.
The goal of the prayer is to call *for* the blessing of God on the joint life of those entering *into* marriage (Gen. 1:28, Psalm 126:1-4, Prov. 10:22).

With the placing of brothers, chosen by the church *as* a pastor, evangelist, teacher or deacon, the ordaining servant, in the time of prayer, lays hands upon them. (Acts 6:6, 13:1-3, 14:23, I Tim. 4:14).

We do not see in Holy Scripture a basis for teaching a succession of grace from the Apostles. Because, the Lord himself places the servants in the church (Eph. 4:11). *He* provides them with gifts for service and wisdom (Jer. 1:5, I Cor. 12:11, Gal. 1:15). And *He* blesses *them* by the prayer of the layer on of hands, who received *his* commission from the responsible servants of the brotherhood (Titus 1:5) with the witness of the Holy Spirit.

9. ABOUT RESURRECTION DAY

We believe that Jesus Christ rose for justification on the *first* day of the week (Matt. 28:1-6, Mark 16:9). This day speaks about the victory and glorious triumph of our Redeemer and about the future resurrection of all people (I Cor. 15:22-23). This is the day of the Lord: «This is the day which the Lord hath made» (Psalm 118:24, Rev. 1:10).

The first and second appearance of the resurrected Christ to His disciples happened on the first day of the week (John 20:19-26). Also, the coming down of the Holy Spirit occurred on the first day of the week (Acts 2:1).

We honor Sunday as a special day, on which the church gathers together for joint worship of God and study of the Holy Scripture (Acts 20:7, I Cor. 16:1-2).

10. ABOUT MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

We believe that marriage is established by God (Gen. 2:18-24). This is the union between a man and a woman, was created for mutual help and encouragement, for the

continuation of humankind and for the joint passage of life's journey in love and agreement (I Cor. 7:39).

The husband can have only one wife and the wife is to have only one husband (I Cor. 7:1-5). Christians have the right to get married only with members of a church of their own denomination (I Cor. 7:39).

God established that entering into marriage a couple would not be get divorced (Matt 19:6-9), that spouses were to be true teach other until death (Rom. 7:2). After the death of one of the spouses, the Word of God allows the *survivor* to get married a second time, but only in God (I Cor. 7:39).

By the Word of God, divorce is not allowed, «what therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder» (Matt. 19:6-9). Christ confirms this word one more time: «Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery» (Matt. 19:9). Her *it* is talking about divorce for any reason, except fornication. Consequently, the Christian family is insoluble until the coming of death of one of the spouses.

Difficult marriage and divorce questions in a church are guided by the Word of God with the participation of responsible servants.

As a rule, the Christian family has many children. Deviation from child-bearing is a sin. God gives life to a man and defines its duration (Job 10:8-12, Psalm 137:13-16). Children in the family are a precious gift from God (Psalm 125:3). Couples *who are* faithful to God receive children from the hand of God, by His discretion (Psalm 126:3-4, Isa. 29:23).

Parents, and primarily fathers, bear the responsibility for the spiritual education of children (Deut. 6:5-9, Psalm 76:3-7). Their Christian duty is to educate their children in the teaching and directions of God, showing a personal example of Christian piety (Eph 6:4).

11. THE CHURCH AND THE STATE

We believe that the existing authorities are established by God. Therefore in civil questions, which are not contradictory to the commands of God, members of the church should submit to the authorities (Matt. 22:21, Rom 13:1-7).

Christians are called to pray about rulers and governors (Jer. 29:7, I Tim. 2:1-3), that the use of the power entrusted to them is *conducive* to the preservation of peace and justice, in order for us to conduct a quiet serene life in all piety and cleanness.

The separation of church from the state and the freedom of conscience answer to the principles of the New Testament.

The Head of the church is Christ, and *it is* inherent to her to obey Him (Eph. 5:23-24).

The Church of Christ is not from this world (John 17:15-16, 18:36), and she cannot be dependent on a temporal power or interfere in its matters (II Cor. 6:14-18), the more, so to take on herself functions ordained by God to temporal powers, *but* to act in her *own* spirit and by her *own* methods (Matt. 20:25-28, Luke 12:13-14).

The church is obliged to keep herself from any interference of the outward in her inner life and service (Acts 4:19, 5:29). In *their* attitude *towards* the State, members of the church live by the principle, enunciated by Christ: «Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's» (Matt. 22:21).

12. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

We believe in the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 1:11), which includes in itself two events.

1. The rapture of the Church, i.e. the resurrection of the dead in Christ and the change of the faithful still living.

This, invisible to the world, is the rapture of the Church and her meeting with Christ in the clouds (I John 3:2, I Cor. 15:52-57, Philip, 2:16, 3:20-21, I Thess. 4:16-17, 5:23). After the rapture the saved will appear before the *judgement seat* of Christ (I Peter 5:4, I Cor. 3:14, 9:24-25, II Cor. 5:10, II Tim. 4:7-8).

2. The coming of Jesus Christ in power and glory in the Day of the Lord (Matt. 24:27, 25:31, 26:64, I Thess. 1:10, II Thess. 1:7, Rev. 1:7, 19:11).

This, the open, visible coming of Christ, will be marked by justice on humankind, after that will ensue the millennial kingdom (Rev. 20:1-6). After the thousand years, will the unrighteous resurrect. They will appear before the White Throne for justice (Rev. 20:11-15).

Then will come eternity. The righteous will enter eternal bliss, but the unrighteous will be thrown into the lake of fire for eternal torture (Matt. 25:46, John 5:29, Rev. 20:11-15, 21:7-8).

«Surely, I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus» (Rev. 22:20).

*This Statement of Faith was accepted
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