

THE “SEVEN SACRAMENTS” OF RUSSIAN BAPTISTS

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Introduction

From the mid-1940s to the mid-1980s, the USSR especially strictly adhered to a policy of isolationism, separating itself from the countries of the West with an “Iron Curtain.” For a long time artificially separating the Soviet Evangelicals from their western co-religionists, and equally persecuting and discriminating against all religious congregations in the USSR, the communists involuntarily created certain conditions under which Orthodox Christians and Russian Baptists—the representatives of the largest Christian confessions in the country—paradoxically drew nearer to one another. The present research will analyze only one aspect of this large subject: how the influence of Orthodoxy affected the ecclesiology of Russian Baptists and, in particular, the doctrine of Church ordinances (sacraments). Whereas Western Protestants usually distinguish only two ordinances—water baptism and the Lord’s Supper—the Russian Baptists not infrequently went further, seriously considering the *seven sacraments* which has drawn them noticeably closer in their beliefs to Eastern Orthodox sacramentology.

This tendency probably appeared after World War II. As far as the author knows, the Russian brotherhood of ECB did not attempt to expand the list of the sacraments before 1948. In any case, all of the basic Russian Baptist official documents of early times accented only baptism and the Lord’s Supper.^[1] However, in the official



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^[1] See, for instance: *Izlozhenie Evangel'skoy Very, Verouchenie Evangel'skikh Khristian 1910 g.* [The Statement of the Evangelical Faith, The Creed of the Evangelical Christians, 1910] in Sannikov, S. (ed.), *Istoriya Baptizma* [History of the Baptists] (Odessa: OBS, 1996), pp. 450-452; *Ispovedanie Very Khristian-Baptistov* [The Creed of the Christians-Baptists] (M.: Izdanie N.V. Odintsova, 1928), pp. 30-39.

AUCECB^[2] document *Statutes of the Union of ECB* (1948), the following far-reaching statement appeared for the first time, “The presbyter of the congregation performs all church ordinances, namely: baptism, the breaking of bread, marriage, praying for infants and for the sick.”^[3] In this way, suddenly the number of sacraments («church ordinances») of the ECB in the postwar USSR increased significantly, and since that time has widened further. All this happened «for some obscure reason,»—if one does not take into account the factor of the growing Orthodox impact on the Russian Baptists.

We recall that the traditional Orthodox enumeration of the sacraments as follows: baptism, chrismation, communion, confession, holy orders, matrimony, and anointing with oil.^[4] It is notable that the list was confirmed only in the thirteenth century; previously there were notable variations in the Church.^[5] Nor did the Russian Baptist enumerations of church ordinances in Soviet times fully agree with each other. For example, we read in *Statutes of the Union of ECB* (1960 edition): “The presbyter of the congregation performs all church ordinances, namely: baptism, the breaking of bread, marriage, burial, and praying for the sick.”^[6] We see here that the list was widened in comparison with the *Statutes* of 1948; burial was added, but at the same time praying for infants was dropped. However, the Soviet Baptists did not stop with five ordinances. The *Letter of Instructions for the Senior Presbyters* (of 1960), which was approved by the AUCECB simultaneously with the *Statutes* of 1960, widened the “short list” by mentioning also: the ordination of church ministers and—completely unexpectedly—the “celebration of our church holidays.”^[7]

Although these two AUCECB documents were soon canceled because of strong opposition from the Initiative Group and the many supporters of this movement in the Soviet Baptist churches, the tension in the brotherhood was by no means due to the list of the ordinances but to other points of the *Statutes* and the *Letter of Instructions*, such as the questionable restrictions on children attending church meetings, baptizing, preaching the Gospel, etc.^[8] It is significant that in 1961 A. F. Prokofiev and G. K. Kryuchkov distributed amendments to the *Statutes of the Union of ECB* (1960) to the brotherhood in which the paragraph on the sacraments was formulated as follows: “The presbyter of the congregation... performs all church ordinances, namely: baptism, breaking of bread, marriage, burial, praying for the sick and pray-

^[2] The All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians–Baptists.

^[3] Archives of Russian Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (ARUECB), F. 1, op. 1d1, d. 96, l. 4.

^[4] See, for instance: Averintsev, S. (ed.), *Khristianstvo: Entsiklopedichesky Slovar'* [The Christianity: Encyclopedia], 3 vols. (Moscow: Bolshaya Rossiyskaya Entsiklopediya, 1995), v. III, p. 7. From the same source we know that the number of sacraments is in some way connected with the seven gifts of the Spirit (Isa. 11:2-3); the seven loaves (Mt. 15:36-37); the seven golden lampstands and the seven stars (Rev. 1:12,16), etc.

^[5] *Ibid.*

^[6] ARUECB, F. 1, op. 28d, d. 52, l. 7.

^[7] Instruktivnoe Pis'mo Starshim Presviteram VSEKhB [Letter of Instructions for the Senior Presbyters of the AUCECB], ARUECB, F. 1, op. 22d.6, d. 4, ll. 3, 8. See also: A. Mitskevich, *Istoriya Evangel'skikh Khristian-Baptistov* [History of the Evangelicals Christians – Baptists] (1983) (Moscow: Rossiysky Soyuz ECB, 2007), pp. 332, 335.

^[8] See details, for instance, in: C. Prokhorov, «The State and the Baptist Churches in the USSR (1960 – 1980)» in K. Jones and I. Randall, (eds.), *Counter-Cultural Communities. Baptist Life in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2008), pp. 1-62.

ing for children.”^[9] Evidently, the Initsiativniki not only had no doubts concerning the “lengthy” (for Protestants) list of sacraments, but even restored praying for children.^[10] This list of church ordinances was then repeated word for word in their own *Regulations of the Council of Churches of ECB* (versions of 1965 and 1974).^[11] Thus, it becomes obvious that Russian Baptists—both the registered (AUCECB) and unregistered (CC ECB)—were not satisfied by just two Protestant “ordinances”; they were strikingly persistent in the direction of “seven sacraments.”

The *Regulations of the Union of ECB*, confirmed by several councils of the registered Soviet Baptists (beginning in 1963), took the place of the *Statutes* of 1960.^[12] The paragraph on the sacraments in the versions of the *Regulations* of 1966 and 1979 reads: “Local churches of the ECB conduct worship services with the preaching of the Gospel, praying and performing baptism, the breaking of bread, marriage, burial, and other ordinances.”^[13] What those enigmatic “other ordinances” might be, the 1990 version of the *Regulations* of 1990 clarifies: “The local church of the ECB conducts worship services with the preaching of the Gospel, Bible study, praying, singing... with performing water baptism according to faith, the breaking of bread, marriage, praying for children, ordination, burial and other ordinances.”^[14]

What the authors of the *Regulations* went around and around about, pronouncing half-words about “other ordinances” and confusing their quantity, two authoritative Russian Baptist ministers and theologians, A. V. Karev and N. A. Kolesnikov, finally defined. They suggested their own lists of the deliberately *seven* sacraments, which we consider at greater length below.

Karev: What are the ordinances of the New Testament Church? I name the seven ordinances of the Church: preaching, [church] singing, praying, serving the neighbor with love, baptism, communion, and keeping the peace in the church. Preaching is the main ordinance...^[15]

Kolesnikov: The holy ordinances of the churches of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists are: water baptism, the Lord’s Supper, ordination, marriage, praying for the sick and children, consecration of houses of prayer, and burial. The serving of these holy ordinances has foundational meaning for the life of the church.^[16]

It is easy to see that the list of ordinances by N. A. Kolesnikov has a much more “sacramental” character than A. V. Karev’s. If just two of Karev’s ordinances, bap-

^[9] ARUECB, F. 1, op. 28d.2, d. 5, l. 10.

^[10] It seems that the leaders of the Initiative Group referred to the *Statutes of the Union of ECB* of 1948, where for the first time “praying for infants” was brought into line with baptism and breaking of bread.

^[11] *Bratsky Listok* [Fraternal Leaflet], no. 11 (1965), supplement. See also: *Ustav Soyuzu Tserkvey ECB: Izdanie Soveta Tserkvey ECB* [The Regulations of the Union of ECB: Publication of the Council of Churches of ECB], 1965, 1974.

^[12] See: *Istoriya Evangel’skikh Khristian-Baptistov v SSSR* [History of the Evangelical Christians – Baptists in the USSR] (Moscow: AUCECB, 1989), p. 244.

^[13] *Bratsky Vestnik* [Fraternal Bulletin], no. 6 (1966), p. 52; nos. 1-2 (1980), pp. 63-64.

^[14] *Ustav Soyuzu ECB* [The Regulations of the Union of ECB], *Bratsky Vestnik*, no. 3 (1990), p. 84.

^[15] A. Karev, “Svyashchennodeystviya Tserkvi” [The Holy Ordinances of the Church], *Bratsky Vestnik*, no. 1 (1963), p. 36. See also: A. Karev, *Izbrannye Stat’i* [Selected Articles] (Moscow: AUCECB, 1977), p. 150.

^[16] N. Kolesnikov, *Khristianin, znaesh’ li ty, kak dolzhno postupat’ v dome Bozh’em?* [Christian, do you know how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household?], 3 vols. (Moscow: Druzhba i Blagaya Vest’, 1998), v. I, p. 41.

tism and communion, can be identified in some measure with the list of Orthodox sacraments (although preaching is the main point for him), already at least four^[17] of Kolesnikov's ordinances—water baptism, the Lord's Supper, ordination, and marriage—are actually identical to the Orthodox ones. Thus, while A. Karev represents, figuratively speaking, the *Occidental* wing of the Soviet Baptists (though he, hardly by chance, notes also the *seven* holy ordinances of the Russian Baptists), N. Kolesnikov in some measure expresses the views of the Baptist *Slavophiles*^[18] and *Pochvenniks*.^[19]

Relatively recently I have published two separate articles in *Theological Reflections* on the peculiarities of the understanding of the first two sacraments (baptism and the Lord's supper)^[20] in the Russian-Ukrainian Baptist brotherhood. Below I focus on other sacraments of the Russian Baptists.

ORDINATION

In his textbook on the history of the ECB brotherhood, A. I. Mitskevich cites the following remarkable opinion of the Russian Evangelical Christians (from which, by the way, A.V. Karev sprang) about the traditional understanding of sacraments by Russian Baptists (N.A. Kolesnikov belongs to the latter group): “[The Baptists] declare that only ordained presbyters have the right to perform baptism and the breaking of bread... However, the same churches let ordinary church members freely to preach. Such an approach is based on the assumption that baptism and the breaking of bread are much more important than preaching...”^[21] Even taking into account the polemic orientation of this statement, probably one cannot but admit a good deal of sacramentalism in the Russian Baptist mentality.

Someone may object that the understanding of the sacraments by Kolesnikov and other “Slavophiles” does not fully agree with classical Russian Orthodox sacramentology. This is probably so. At the same time, the Baptist “Slavophiles” agree even less with the “prosaic” Western Baptist (“Zwinglian”) attitude toward the sacraments. In Soviet times, Russian Evangelical Christians-Baptists willingly and often quoted the Eastern Church Fathers, regarded mystery and divine grace in every church ordinance, and on no account considered them mere ritual or symbolic acts. For instance, P. K. Shatrov, one of the leaders of the AUCECB, wrote about ordination in *Bratsky Vestnik*:

^[17] Or even five, if we connect Kolesnikov's “praying for the sick” with the Orthodox anointing with oil; see the chapter “Praying for the sick” by Kolesnikov, *Khristianin, znaesh' li ty*, v. I, pp. 56-59.

^[18] Cultural and theological opposition to the West is really in part intrinsic for the Russian Baptists, as well as for all Russian society. See a review of the theme: V. Solodovnikov, “Sdelano v Amerike” [Made in America], *Slovo Very*, no. 1 (2002), pp. 25-30.

^[19] The Russian Baptist “Pochvenniks” (from *pochva*, “soil”—a nationalist trend) maintain the great-power “Russian idea” of the exceptionality and unique identity of the Russian way that

logically leads to a defense of the concept of the independent origin and development of the Russian evangelical movement. See, for instance: A. Bychkov, “Stoletie ob'edinitel'nykh S'ezdov” [The Centenary of the Unifying Councils], *Bratsky Vestnik*, no. 6 (1984), pp. 44-45.

^[20] See: “Apophaticism and Cataphaticism in Protestantism”, *Theological reflections*, vol. 6 (2006), pp. 58-68; “On Several Peculiarities of the Understanding of Baptism in the Russian Baptist Church”, *Theological reflections*, vol. 8 (2007), pp. 89-105.

^[21] A. Mitskevich, *Istoriya Evangel'skikh Khristian-Baptistov*, p. 223.

The laying-on of hands is not simply a symbolic action accompanying prayer, but a very important part of consecration to the ministry... John Chrysostom wrote about this: 'Ordination has been performed since the days of Moses according to God's established order. Though men perform the laying-on of hands, God Himself does everything... if the ordination is being done properly.' Consecration to ministry by the laying-on of hands is a holy ordinance,^[22] where the Lord is actively working, if it is performed according His will.^[23]

St. John Chrysostom's writings were regularly cited in the pre-perestroika Baptist periodicals. It should be noted also that not only Chrysostom's wise homiletic sentences were attractive to the Russian Baptists but even some of his reflections on the sacraments—sometimes in the context most favorable for Orthodoxy—appealing to ancient Church tradition and legends. It was helpful for leaders of the AUCECB to establish their teaching on the special status of the presbyter, inaccessible to ordinary local church members. Here are two more typical quotations from works by P. K. Shatrov and N. A. Kolesnikov.

The laying-on of hands is a visible sign of God's blessing during consecration to the ministry, praying for the sick, and the receiving of the Holy Spirit... Only the ministers, to whom God gave the right, can perform this holy ordinance.^[24]

Ordained ministers are considered the Lord's anointed... God performs the sacrament of making presbyters... A non-ordained person has no right to perform any holy ordinances... [otherwise] he just does them as a matter of form, which gives nothing.^[25]

In fact, this is a confession of the unspoken deep division between the the Baptist clergy ("the anointed of God") and the simple community members ("non-ordained," not admitted to the mysteries of God), which is very similar to the Orthodox Church reality that existed from of old. In such a context, if only the ordained ministers act as mediators of the divine grace, one would think it would be slightly problematic to defend the concept popular among Protestants of the "royal priesthood" of all believers in Christ.^[26] In their time, E. Troeltsch and H. R. Niebuhr justly noticed that already in the second generation, sectarians begin to gravitate not to a "free-" but to a structured church organization, in a measure replicating the way of the historic churches.^[27]

^[22] Concerning the ordination as *svyashchen-nodeystvie* (sacrament) see also: K. Sedletsky, "Izbranie i Rukopozozhenie Sluzhiteley" [Election and Ordination of the Ministers], *Bratsky Vestnik*, no. 6 (1988), p. 52; "From the Life of the Local Churches", *Bratsky Vestnik*, no. 3 (1985), p. 79; no. 2 (1986), p. 74; no. 1 (1987), p. 75, etc.

^[23] P. Shatrov, "Deyaniya Apostolov" [The Acts of the Apostles], *Bratsky Vestnik*, no. 4 (1982), p. 17.

^[24] P. Shatrov, "Deyaniya Apostolov" [The Acts of the Apostles], *Bratsky Vestnik*, no. 4 (1984), p. 24.

^[25] Kolesnikov, *Khristianin, znaesh' li ty*, v. II, pp. 48, 57. See also: N. Kolesnikov, *V Pomoshch' Propovedniku: Sbornik Konspektov* [Assistance to

Preacher: A Collection of Sermons], 2 vols. (Moscow: Zlatoust, 1995), v. I, pp. 285-286 (the words of 1 Samuel 16:13, "Then Samuel took the horn of oil...").

^[26] See, for instance: R. Beermann, "The Baptists and Soviet Society", *Soviet Studies*, vol. 20, 1 (1968), p. 77.

^[27] H. R. Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (Hamden, Conn.: Shoe String Press, 1954), pp. 19-20; E. Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/ John Knox Press, 1992), v. I, pp. 331-43. For an application of the concept "sect – church" to Russian Baptists, see: S. Dunn and E. Dunn, "Some Comments on

Such a tendency impelled ministers of the ECB brotherhood to more serious attempts to understand what the laying-on of hands meant for them. For instance, the following proposition of N. A. Kolesnikov is significant: “The laying-on of hands is a continuation of succession in ministry.”^[28] Probably, this does yet not mean “Apostolic succession”—a teaching which is usually not very popular among Russian Baptists because of the relative youth of their own movement^[29]—but it was still a step in that direction. Although in the Baptist brotherhood the opinion of the advantage of the «spiritual succession» of elders once prevailed (i.e. the preservation of their «true Bible doctrine») as opposed to literal apostolic succession, the early Russian Baptists, like Orthodox clergy, carefully recorded who, where, and when individuals were ordained.^[30] Later this information was usually not emphasized in official sources, but was transferred to the oral tradition of the brotherhood.^[31]

P. K. Shatrov, referring to St. John Chrysostom, found the following important argument on the subject, which helps to alleviate the difficult problem of the ECB brotherhood’s continuity with the ancient Church: a little-known disciple of Christ named Ananias, who was not one of the twelve apostles, laid his hands on Saul (Paul), and the latter was filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:10-18).^[32] (That is God chooses ministers that are pleasing to Him, not only through the laying-on of hands proceeding from the narrow circle of the first Apostles).

Russian evangelical authors were always seeking their own theological way, neither quite Orthodox, nor Protestant. The New Testament texts on the Apostle Paul, who was not one of the circle of disciples during Christ’s ministry on earth, but chosen directly by the Lord on the way to Damascus (Acts 9, 22, and 26),^[33] are not infrequently used as the biblical grounds for the beginning of Baptist ordinations in Russia (though new Ananiases and Sauls are not acknowledged).^[34] It is significant that the Russian Orthodox mentality was ineradicable even in the most “Protestant” approach to the subject. How respectfully the leader of the Council of Churches of ECB put it: “Our *pervozvannye* (the first-called) brethren—Ryaboshapka, Ratushny, Onishchenko...”^[35] In that specific Orthodox word—*pervozvannye*—one can sense the hidden conviction of the apostolic calling of the first Russian Evangelicals-Bap-

Sectarianism in the Soviet Union”, *Soviet Studies*, vol. 20, 3 (1969), pp. 410-412.

^[28] *Bratsky Vestnik*, no. 4 (1986), p. 72.

^[29] See: V. Pavlov, “*Pravda o Baptistakh*” [The Truth about the Baptists], *Al'manakh po Istorii Russkogo Baptizma*, vol. 1 (1999), p. 222; S. Savinsky, *Istoriya evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov Ukraini, Rossii, Belorussii* [History of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists of the Ukraine, Russia, and Belorussia] (1867 – 1917) (St. Petersburg: Biblia dlya Vsekh, 1999), p. 10.

^[30] See: *Baptist*, 1907: no. 1, pp. 20-21; no. 2, p. 10; no. 4, pp. 17-18; no. 5, p. 12.

^[31] P. Steeves, “The Russian Baptist Union, 1917-1935: Evangelical Awakening in Russia,” Ph.D. diss. (University of Kansas, 1976), pp. 28-29.

^[32] See: Shatrov, “Deyaniya Apostolov” [The

Acts of the Apostles], *Bratsky Vestnik*, no. 2 (1985), pp. 26-27.

^[33] Besides Acts 9:17, the texts from Acts 22:14-15 and Acts 26:15-16 also confirm that God used the simple disciple Ananias for Saul’s ordination to the apostolic ministry.

^[34] The theme of incompetent ordinations was always very sensitive among Russian Baptists and repeatedly became the subject of strict investigations. See, for example, the testimony of the former president of the AUCECB, V.E. Logvinenko (Odessa, Ukraine, 1995). See also a circular letter of the leaders of the AUCTCB on this theme: ARUECB, F. 1, op. 1d.1, d. 1d1-139, 1. 1.

^[35] G. Kryuchkov, “Prorochesky Golos” [The Prophetic Voice], *Vestnik Istiny* [Bulletin of the Truth], nos. 4-5 (2007), p. 19.

tists by the Lord Himself (like *Sv. Andrei Pervozvannyi*—St. Andrew, the First-Called).

In 1976, in Geneva, during an international Christian conference, the Secretary General of the AUCECB, A. M. Bychkov, met with the famous Orthodox Archbishop John (Shakhovskoy) of San Francisco. Bychkov expressed his appreciation and admiration for the Christian radio broadcasts on *Voice of America*, which Archbishop John had led for many years. Then the two men talked with enthusiasm for about an hour in private on spiritual topics.^[36] At the end of the meeting something amazing happened. Archbishop John said (I quote Bychkov): “ ‘God bless you. Allow me also to bless you.’ He put his hand upon my head and prayed. Then he thanked me for the periodical *Bratsky Vestnik*... I wished him God’s blessings in his preaching of the Gospel, and then we parted.”^[37]

Thus, an authoritative Orthodox Archbishop,^[38] already in his declining years, blessed with prayer the second person in the hierarchy of AUCECB ministers,^[39] and the Baptist senior presbyter gratefully accepted the blessing, and what is more, he did not hide it from his brethren. Though such blessing cannot be regarded as ordination, this is nevertheless a very clear illustration of the extent of spiritual affinity that existed in the 1970s–1980s between Orthodoxy and the Russian Baptists that sometimes bordered on mutual mystical rites. Since, according to the biblical Patriarchal tradition, «the lesser is blessed by the greater,»^[40] the old bishop laid hands on A. M. Bychkov, while the Baptist minister in response pronounced only his wishes of blessings.

This example brings us closer to the understanding of the essence of ordination in the brotherhood of Evangelical Christians-Baptists. A traditional ECB hymn on the ordination includes the following “catholic” appeal to the Lord:

*We lay our hands on our brother
And beseech You, ‘Bless him!’...
Come as an invisible guest,
Lay Your hands on him...^[41]*

It is hardly just a pious allegory. The author of the hymn considers God’s blessing His sensible, mysterious presence in the sacrament: “Lay Your hands on him...”^[42] This is the Lord’s “anointing” or a special spiritual gift given through the laying-on of the hands of presbyters. Therefore, any church election for ministry among Soviet Baptists, for all the formal importance of such a procedure, by no means could replace the sacrament (the ordination). For that matter, the tradition of the Evangeli-

^[36] See: A. Bychkov, *Moy Zhiznenny Put’* [My Life] (M.: Otrazhenie, 2009), pp. 176–178.

^[37] *Ibid.*, p. 178.

^[38] Archbishop John (Shakhovskoy) belonged to the autocephalous Russian Orthodox Church in America.

^[39] At that time the President of the AUCECB was A. E. Klimenko.

^[40] Heb. 7:7.

^[41] *Sbornik Dukhovnykh Pesen Evangel’skikh Khristian Baptistov* [The Songbook of the

Evangelical Christians–Baptists] (Moscow: AUCECB, 1968), p. 228.

^[42] Compare this, for instance, with the Metropolitan Makary’s words from his textbook of dogmatics, “Man performs the laying-on of hands, but God does everything, and His hand touches the head of the person who is being ordained”. — Makary (Bulgakov), Metropolitan, *Pravoslavno-dogmaticheskoe bogoslovie* [The Orthodox-Dogmatic Theology], 2 vols. (Moscow: Palomnik, 1999), v. II. p. 492.

cal Christians, who did not prescribe the ordination of ministers as obligatory, was quickly overcome by the principled stand of Baptists during the merging of these two unions, as it was written in *Statutes of the Union of ECB* (1944): “All congregations of Evangelical Christians and Baptists, as far as possible, ought to have ordained presbyters and deacons, in accordance with God’s Word.”^[43] Hence, in the end, the attitude to an ordained presbyter of the ECB brotherhood was as to a lifelong minister of God, and not just as to a respected man elected by the church for a certain “pastoral term.”

CONSECRATION OF HOUSES OF PRAYER

The solemn consecration of houses of prayer in the Russian Baptist church practice is apparently connected in some degree with the ancient Orthodox idea of *sacral space*.^[44] Where Christians assemble, there is “prayer-filled,” “holy” ground, which is conditioned by the real presence of God: “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, ...the gate of heaven” (Gen. 28:17).^[45] It was written in *Bratsky Vestnik* in 1981: “The choir sang the hymn “Here is the holy ground” ...preparing the souls of those present for the moment of consecration... The house where people worship God and where He dwells is holy ground.”^[46]

The sanctity of the walls of a prayer house is emphasized by “the words of eternal life” reverently written on them—brief Bible verses that reflect the spiritual and moral priorities of the brotherhood of ECB: “God is love,” “We preach Christ crucified,” “Go, and sin no more,” etc. Such wall tablets, lovingly painted and not infrequently decorated with flowers, are, if not a “substitute for icons,” the vital component of Baptist sacral space, its visible part. At the same time, the Word of God painted in oil points to the invisible God who is present at church “in the Spirit.” There are reports, amazing in their moral feeling, that during the destruction of prayer houses at the time of Khrushchev’s campaign against religion, some Soviet Baptists, risking arrest or being run over by bulldozers, selflessly rescued “their holy objects,” including the tablets with God’s words.^[47]

So, it is hardly thinkable for the conservative tradition of the ECB brotherhood, for instance, to joke or laugh in a prayer house, to run inside it or, even more, to play sports there.^[48] Entering with any animals is prohibited.^[49] One does not speak much

^[43] The Statutes of the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (1944), ARUECB, F. 1, op. 11da, d. 54, l. 6.

^[44] See, for instance: A. Lidov, (ed.), *Ierotopiya: Issledovanie Sakral'nykh Prostranstv* [Hierotopy: Study of Sacral Spaces] (Moscow: Radunitsa, 2004); D. Arabadzhi, *Ocherki Khristianskogo Simvolizma* [Essays on Christian Symbolism] (Odessa: Druk, 2008).

^[45] See: Kolesnikov, *V Pomoshch' Propovedniku*, v. I, pp. 211, 408-409.

^[46] “From the Life of the Local Churches”, *Bratsky Vestnik*, no. 4 (1981), p. 66.

^[47] For instance, the testimony of P. A. Semeryuk, a Baptist evangelist from Dushanbe

(Sacramento, California, USA, 2006). See also: *Khristova Tserkov' Est' Sobranie Krestom Iskuplennykh Lyudey: 90-letie Petropavlovskoy Tserkvi ECB* [Christ’s Church is the Assembly of Redeemed People: The 90th Anniversary of Petropavlovsk church of ECB] (Petropavlovsk, 1998), pp. 7-8.

^[48] The author remembers well the shock felt by a small Russian evangelical congregation during perestroika on seeing their guests, young American Baptists, making a ping-pong game in the sanctuary.

^[49] It is highly probable that this is the impact of an old Orthodox tradition going as far back as the 88th canon of the Sixth Ecumenical Council,

in the Lord's house, even if no church service is going on at the moment; or if somebody holds a pious conversation, it should be done quietly, in a low voice. The words that will be met with approval here are mainly words of prayer. As a Russian Baptist presbyter observed, "First of all, let us pray, since this is here the House of prayer, not even a House of preaching."^[50] This is more of a monk's than a Protestant's attitude (with all due Baptist respect for preaching).^[51] And the elderly Baptists, even before occupying an ordinary seat on a church bench, ask God's blessing for this.

It is noteworthy also that any outsiders, including ordinary believers ("non-preachers") were usually forbidden (or, more precisely, it was "not considered appropriate") to occupy the church pulpit, "the holy ground", — and that was required not only during a church service but also when the prayer house was empty. According to a pious ECB legend, a preacher in the USSR was punished by instantaneous death from God for his excessively loose behavior in the pulpit of a prayer house.^[52] Any item of the church's belongings — chalices, communion table (the analogue of the altar table), pews, treasury, etc. — is a "holy object," which must be used only "according to its intended purpose."^[53] It is known that Russian Baptists, in spite of their usual benevolence and readiness to help others, refused unbelievers, even their good neighbors, who asked, for example, to borrow a prayer house's pews for a secular celebrations (wedding, birthday, etc.),^[54] church musical instruments, etc. ("Excuse us! They are devoted to the Lord!").^[55] This attitude to the church items, it seems, has more ancient and authoritative ground than the relatively short history of Russian Protestantism. For example, the 73rd Apostolic canon and the Tenth Canon of the Constantinopolitan Council of 861 utterly forbid the use any pieces of church property for personal needs.^[56]

Russian Baptists could also consider sacral space much more widely, not bounding it by the church walls. For example, it is better to baptize people in a natural body of water, one made by the Creator (river, lake), than in a baptistery; it is possible to find a place for prayer, "the holy ground where nobody takes a step," even in a prison ward;^[57] it is better not to use any clubhouses and movie theaters, those "playgrounds

"Let no one introduce into a sacred temple any beast whatsoever..." — Nikodim, Bishop (ed.), *Pravila Pravoslavnoy Tserkvi* [The Canons of the Orthodox Church], 2 vols. (Moscow: Otchiy Dom, 2001), v. I, p. 582.

^[50] Testimony of presbyter S.Yu. Sipko (Omsk, Russia, 2009).

^[51] Cf. the traditional monk's approach: "Prayer is above all... The significance of prayer... is possibly even higher than preaching". — Cited in N. Pestov, *Sovremennaya Praktika Pravoslavnogo Blagochestiya* [The Contemporary Practice of the Orthodox Piety], 4 vols. (St. Petersburg: Satis, 1995), v. II, p. 288.

^[52] Testimony of Baptist presbyter V. N. Khot'ko (Petropavlovsk, Kazakhstan, 2000). Former minister of CC ECB, L.E. Kovalenko, also testifies that the pulpit in prayer houses of the unregistered Baptist churches was not considered

anything other than "holy and awesome ground" (Sacramento, California, USA, 2006).

^[53] Kolesnikov, *Khristianin, znaesh' li ty*, v. I, pp. 72-73; *V Pomoshch' Propovedniku*, v. II, pp. 383-384.

^[54] Testimony of presbyter L.I. Mikhovich (Minsk, Belarus, 2008).

^[55] See, for instance: S. Ryzhenko, *Stranniki My Na Zemle. Istoriya Petropavlovskoy Obshchiny ECB, 1908-1988* [We Are Strangers on the Earth. Chronicle of Petropavlovsk Community of ECB, 1908-1988] (Petropavlovsk — Steinhagen: Samenkorn, 2008), p. 138.

^[56] See: *Pravila Pravoslavnoy Tserkvi*, v. I, p. 154, v. II, pp. 302-303.

^[57] See testimony on the subject in: I. Bondarenko, *Tri Prigovora* [Three Verdicts] (Odessa: n.p., 2006), p. 167.

of demons,” for divine services.^[58] Here is one of many reports reflecting such a mentality:

From the life of the local churches, city of Petropavlovsk. ...G.I. Mazaev lived at a distance of 90 kilometers from Petropavlovsk... His workers were mainly believing people. Mazaev’s farm had a Sunday school and weekly prayer services. The local population said, ‘There is holy ground for seven versts^[59] in this neighborhood’.^[60]

Most probably, the “local population” mentioned here was Russian Orthodox. Thus, these people freely used the expressions that were common in their midst—“holy ground,” “for seven^[61] versts,”—but another point is noteworthy in this case: the reputable Baptist periodical repeats these words with pleasure because they were said about an eminent evangelist of the Baptist brotherhood. It shows once more the considerable mental similarity between the Russian Baptists and Orthodox believers. For example, the words by Russian classical writer N. V. Gogol about his journey to the monastery *Optina Pustyn* come to mind: “Grace is visibly present there... Several versts away from the monastery, moving there, you already sense its fragrance...”^[62] Now, we can understand better why, in the Russian Baptist tradition, the consecration of houses of prayer, as well as of ordinary houses and apartments of believers,^[63] so often was perceived as not only acceptable, but also quite necessary “mysterious” actions.^[64]

From the life of the local churches, Bryansk Region, city of Dyat’kovo. ...Here was the consecration of a new house of prayer... The choir sang a solemn hymn, “How lovely are Thy dwelling places, o Lord of hosts.” Then the presbyter read Solomon’s prayer of dedication of the Jerusalem Temple (1 Kings 8), whereat the church ministers prayed for the consecration...^[65]

City of Nikolaev. ...The high point of the celebration came. The three presbyters, standing near the pulpit, read Solomon’s prayer from 2 Chronicles 6:14-42. Then... the presbyters, lifting their hands up, besought the Lord for the consecration of the house of prayer. All the church was also earnestly praying to God...^[66]

It would be simplistic to comment on such reports, as it was sometimes done (including by the Baptists themselves), only in the following way: the Russian Baptists perform the consecration of buildings because “it is written.” If we limit ourselves to this principle, the sacrament itself would be attributed rather to externally formal

^[58] Although during perestroika, the meetings of new Baptist congregations often took place in rented clubhouses and movie theaters, older believers often resisted this practice very much, given preference to the church walls or, in the last resort, the private houses of pious Christians.

^[59] *Versta* is an old Russian unit of distance equal to 0,66 mile.

^[60] *Bratsky Vestnik*, no. 5 (1988), p. 94.

^[61] We see here the sacral number “7” again.

^[62] Letter to A.P. Tolstoy, in: N. Gogol, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochineniy* [The Complete Works], 14

vols. (M.: Izd-vo AN SSSR, 1952), v. XIV, p. 194.

^[63] Russian Baptists usually invited their presbyters to dedicate dwellings, as when they built a new house, moved into another home, encountered a “poltergeist,” etc. Such practice is also analogous to the Orthodox practice.

^[64] Concerning the consecration of prayer houses as *svyashchennodeystvie* (sacrament), see for example: *Bratsky Vestnik*, no. 2 (1986), p. 74.

^[65] *Bratsky Vestnik*, no. 6 (1986), p. 70.

^[66] *Bratsky Vestnik*, no. 1 (1987), p. 78.

acts.^[67] However, just on the basis of inner spiritual need to pray to God to dwell in their meetings, Russian Baptists “besought the Lord” and “earnestly prayed”, waiting for an invisible, but literal filling of their church buildings by “the glory of the Lord” (1 Kings 8; 2 Chron. 6-7). N. A. Kolesnikov, elucidating the essence of the prayer of consecration by Russian Baptists, emphasizes the reality of the sacrament:

All the newly built... houses of prayer have to be consecrated and dedicated to the Lord... Does the service which we perform really mean *consecration*? Yes, absolutely... We believe, humble ourselves, and seek God’s favor... to hear His word, ‘I have heard your prayer and your supplication... I have consecrated this house...’ (1 Kings 9:3).^[68]

In the 1960s–1970s, there were several attempts at theological comprehension of the sacraments, which were traditionally celebrated in communities of the brotherhood. And the general direction of thought of the authoritative authors of ECB usually clearly indicated their Eastern Christian identity. For instance, in 1964 the well-known minister of the Evangelical-Baptist brotherhood, M.V. Vanin,^[69] gave the following explanation for the mysterious action of consecration of divine service space (including all components of the building, as well as the things inside):

What is the essence of consecration?.. “Moses! Put off thy shoes from off thy feet...” It did not come to Moses’ mind that the ground on which he stood was sacred. It was no different from the surrounding earth... The sanctity of the ground on which Moses stood was owing to the fact that God had set foot on it... Everything the Holy God touches becomes consecrated... Moses was shown the model of the tabernacle... which he had to construct for worship... The suitable materials (wool, cloth, gold, silver, etc.) ...put together in a single whole structure, could not be called holy. Only when the Lord descended in the cloud... from that time the tabernacle became holy... became His house... The essence of consecration is in the touch of God. Everything God touches becomes consecrated.^[70]

Such is the *essence* of consecration, according to Vanin, whose article without any reservations was published in «Bratsky Vestnik.» Consequently, it is to some extent reflected the «catholic» thinking of Russian Baptists. Any intervention of atheistic censorship in such specific matters was hardly possible. Due to such an attitude to consecration in the Baptist brotherhood, doubtless, once the ideas of the sanctity of “the walls themselves” at prayer house appeared, within which one must not be irreverent, where the pulpit is “holy ground”, where any part of space is a “prayer-

^[67] See, for instance: A. Wardin, (ed.), *Baptist Identity*, in: *Baptists Around the World: A Comprehensive Handbook* (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), pp. 1-6. This author even names Baptists here “people of the Book” striving to do everything according to the Scriptures. However, in practical life the situation is, of course, more complex—especially in Russia.

^[68] Kolesnikov, *Khristianin, znaesh’ li ty*, v. I, p. 60.

^[69] He was an executive of the Union of Evangelical Christians, a long-term prisoner. M.

V. Vanin’s authority in the brotherhood of ECB is indicated, for example, by the fact that he was in his time proposed as head of the movement started by the Initiative Group (he refused, however). See: Yu. Kryuchkov, *Vnutritserkovnoe Dvizhenie ECB v Byvshem Sovetskom Soyuze* [Within the Church Movement of ECB in the Former Soviet Union] (Sacramento, Cal.: n.p., 2001), pp. 43-44; and also testimony of B.M. Zdorovets (Spokane, Wash., 2006).

^[70] V. Vanin, “Osvyashchenie” [Consecration], *Bratsky Vestnik*, no. 2 (1964), p. 46.

filled place,” to be where it is “blessed” and “awesome” simultaneously (for “God dwells” there). And exactly for this reason even the most simple worship objects in the church inevitably become “holy objects.” The Eastern Christian tradition of concentration on the literal “touch of God” becomes especially obvious in comparison of the stated above, for example, with the following words of a famous Orthodox bishop: “All that comes from God, or whatever His grace-filled power touches, becomes sanctified and sacred. That is why the Scripture is sacred, which is the Word of God; God’s churches are sacred; prayers are sacred sacraments and services of the Church. Angels, prophets, apostles and other bearers of God’s grace are sacred. People and things... also become sanctified.”^[71]

MARRIAGE

Similar trends are observed in the interpretation of other sacraments in the Russian Baptist brotherhood («people... also become sanctified»). In the theology of Russian Baptists, the blessing performed during the marriage rite is usually considered the gracious and mysterious unification of two believers into “one flesh” (spiritually and physically) to be a “household church.” Therefore, the groom and bride must have the same belief^[72] in order to form their children in the faith.

The marriage of a believer and an unbeliever is a sin... How shall we proceed when unbelievers ask us to officiate at a marriage ceremony? The Church of Christ does not take any orders, and her sacraments are not to be sold...^[73]

I believe that marriage is a holy ordinance identical with baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and others.^[74]

Thus, N. P. Khrapov and N. A. Kolesnikov definitely added marriage to the list of sacraments. All young Baptist men and women knew from childhood that a “genuine wedding” could take place only at church, and that any kind of “worldly” marriage is a sin. Unbelievers, as a rule, could not aspire to marry a member of an ECB congregation; even their “public repentance” was not enough (it was necessary also to “be tested,” baptized, etc.), since the church’s “sacraments are not to be sold.”

A traditional Russian Baptist bridal hymn says,

*O God, the groom and bride
Stand before You today, according to Your will...
Lay Your hand on them o God...
So that their holy union would not be torn,
Lead them to the good goal.*^[75]

The repeated characteristic appeal to God in Russian Baptist “sacramental” songs—“*Lay Your hands on him,*” “*Lay Your hand on them,*” etc.—is not a literary

^[71] Bishop Alexander (Mileant), “Thoughts about the Kingdom of God, or the Church,” *Missionary Leaflet*, no. 83 (1999).

^[72] To be Baptists in practice.

^[73] N. Khrapov, ed., *Dom Bozhy i Sluzhenie v Nem* [God’s House and its Service] (The Council of

Churches of the Evangelical Christians—Baptists, 1972–1974), <<http://www.blagovestnik.org/books/00280.htm#81>>.

^[74] Kolesnikov, *Khristianin, znaesh’ li ty*, v. I, p. 55.

^[75] *Sbornik Dukhovnykh Pesen*, pp. 224–225.

trope, but first of all the expression of a sincere desire for God's genuine blessing (grace), received by the laying-on of the hands of presbyters prayerfully performing the holy ordinance. This is the beginning of the mutual path of the newlyweds to heaven. Therefore, divorce was unacceptable under any circumstances for traditional Russian Baptist communities. Even in the case of adultery, when the Saviour Himself allows spouses to divorce,^[76] the Soviet Baptists often excommunicated the straying partner, considering him (her) a morally sick person who urgently needs healing, rather than the dissolution of the marriage by the faithful spouse.^[77]

PRAYING FOR CHILDREN

The next solemn ordinance in the church practice of Russian Evangelical Christians-Baptists, to some extent replacing the baptism of infants, was praying for children (blessing, dedication). This widespread and practically necessary service for a believing family also is counted as one of the holy ordinances (sacraments).^[78]

Blessing is asked at the beginning of every undertaking. Therefore, the blessing of children should be done in their infancy... Infant baptism does not correspond to Scripture, but children cannot remain outside of spiritual communion, which is the ministry of blessing children that we have. It should be taught and observed so that the people of God would not be deprived of blessing... Christ Himself commanded, 'Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me' (Mt. 19:14).^[79]

Evangelical Christians-Baptists do not baptize infants, but... they are prayed over and consecrated to the Lord.^[80]

The logic of this ordinance in the Russian Baptist church life is as follows. Although Jesus Christ Himself was circumcised in infancy (the traditional analogue of infant baptism in Orthodoxy^[81]), He then voluntarily was baptized. Without doubt, Christ did not baptize the children brought to Him (nor did Christ command His disciples to baptize them), but He blessed them.^[82] Consequently, the blessing of children by a minister of God with the laying-on of hands is a holy ordinance established from the time of Christ.^[83] It is a gracious spiritual seed planted in the souls of infants, which favors them to grow in faith in God. This motivation for blessing children by Russian Baptists is close to the traditional Orthodox understanding of infant baptism.

Before the beginning of perestroika in the USSR, many babies born to Baptist families solemnly received a church blessing on the fortieth day after their birth.^[84]

^[76] Mt. 5:32.

^[77] Khrapov, *Dom Bozhy*, <<http://www.blagovestnik.org/books/00280.htm#85>>. See also: Nemtsev, V., *Soyuz Lyubvi* [The Love Union] (Minsk: "Probuzhdenie", 2002), pp. 374-379.

^[78] Kolesnikov, *Khristianin, znaesh' li ty*, v. I, pp. 41-42.

^[79] *Ibid.*, p. 56.

^[80] I. Gnida, "Tserkovnye ustanovleniya", [The Church Institutions], *Bratsky Vestnik*, no. 4

(1988), p. 76.

^[81] "If in the Old Testament God considered infants capable of making a covenant with God, why deprive them of this benefit in the New Testament?" — Makary, *Pravoslavno-dogmaticheskoe bogoslovie*, v. II, p. 338.

^[82] Mt. 19:13-15; Mk. 10:13-16; Lk. 18:15-17.

^[83] Kolesnikov, *Khristianin, znaesh' li ty*, v. I, pp. 55-56.

This practice bore a strong resemblance to Orthodox baptism (only without water). Although the blessing of infants in the Baptist brotherhood was not considered a guarantee of salvation, in case of an early death they were, of course, to be numbered with the “heirs of eternal life.” One should take into account also that children of Baptists do not become members of the Baptist church after their blessing. When they grow up, they will have some day to make a deliberate, adult choice: either to become a full-fledged member of the Christian congregation or to refuse the blessing they received in infancy.^[85]

In this connection, however, it is necessary to make an important addition. From our point of view, the influence of the general church atmosphere on a child should be certainly taken into account, as the child *unconsciously* memorizes fragments of Christian hymns, sermons and prayers, has a sensation of the solemnity of divine service, makes friends at the prayer house, etc. Therefore children not infrequently feel exhilarated by visiting a church (though they do not understand many things there). In other words, the familiar and frequently emphasized arguments of ECB authors that, “Baptists deny infant baptism, professing the *conscious, deliberate* baptism by personal faith [in Christ],”^[86] only “*adult* people, who have experienced the new birth” should be baptized,^[87] etc., are largely counterbalanced by the less definite (more complicated) practical life of local communities. Actually, the child’s sub-conscious, emotional impulses are actively brought into play in the Russian Baptist brotherhood, and children in their community join Christian mode of life early.

In support of the above statement, suffice it to mention how serious conflict flared up between Russian Baptists and the Soviet State at the beginning of 1960s, when the authorities attempted to forbid (or restrict) children from attending church services. At that time, many believers preferred to defy the officials, and in the wake of this to be persecuted and thrown into prison, but finally they succeeded in asserting the right to “bring and carry”^[88] their children to church (although they understand nothing about matters of the faith up to a certain age).^[89] By that very fact, actually, it was clearly shown that one cannot overly exaggerate any rationalistic aspects of Soviet Baptist “conscious faith.” Therefore, the blessing of little children at ECB churches is much more than just a touching rite.

[84] See, for instance: Khrapov, *Dom Bozhy*, <<http://www.blagovestnik.org/books/00280.htm#86>>.

[85] See details in: C. Prokhorov, “On Several Peculiarities of the Understanding of Baptism in the Russian Baptist Church”, pp. 102-104.

[86] V. Popov, *Khristiane Baptisty v Rossii: Istoriya i Sovremennost'* [Christians-Baptists in Russia: History and the Present], <<http://baptist.org.ru/go/history>>. See also: P. Rogozin, *Otkuda vse eto poyavilos'?* [From whence do all these come?] (Rostov-na-Donu: Missiya “Probuzhdenie, 1993), pp. 70-71; *Osnovnye Printsipy Very Evangel'skikh Khristian – Baptistov* [The Basic Principles of Belief of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists] (Odessa, 1992), pp. 112-116; etc.

[87] M. Ivanov and A. Sinichkin, eds., *Evangel'skie Khristiane-Baptisty: 140 Let v Rossii* [The Evangelical Christians-Baptists: During 140 Years in Russia] (Moscow: RS ECB, 2007), p. 7; *Verouchenie Evangel'skikh Khristian – Baptistov* [The Creed of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists], *Bratsky Vestnik*, no. 4 (1985), p. 46.

[88] See: Mt. 19:13; Mk. 10:13.

[89] See, for instance: Savinsky, *Istoriya evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov Ukraini, Rossii, Belorussii* [History of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists of the Ukraine, Russia, and Belorussia] (1917–1967) (St. Petersburg: Biblia dlya Vsekh, 2001), pp. 204-207; [Anonym], “Poydem s Maloletnimi Nashimi...” [“We Will Go With Our Young...”], *Vestnik Istiny*, no. 1 (2001), pp. 38-40; etc.

PRAYING FOR THE SICK (AND BURIAL)

Praying for the sick (anointing with oil) in Russian Baptist life is based on the scriptural texts of Jas. 5:14-15 and Mk. 6:12-13,^[90] often interpreted quite in the spirit of sacramentalism. For example, the senior executive minister of the AUCECB in Ukraine, I. S. Gnida, wrote in *Bratsky Vestnik* in 1988: "Olive oil, which has been *previously prayed over* by presbyters, can be used for anointing. The *sanctified* oil is used for the *holy ordinances only*, i.e. for the anointing of the sick."^[91]

The former senior presbyter of Krasnodar Territory, Ya. A. Grinchenko, also testifies about the practice of sanctifying the oil before the ordinance of the anointing the sick, adding that Baptist presbyters in the USSR used not only olive oil for this purpose (which was a rarity in the USSR) but also sunflower oil.^[92] N. A. Kolesnikov mentions in this connection "any vegetable oil," emphasizing the faith of the sick and the presbyters taking part in the holy ordinance of anointing and prayer for healing.^[93] One of the former leaders of the Council of Churches, the presbyter from Sukhumi, D. I. Chueshkov, speaks about the special efficacy of this ordinance and openly parallels it with the Orthodox sacrament of anointing with oil.^[94] On the whole, practically all of the elderly Russian Baptist ministers and church members interviewed by the author spoke about the prayer for the sick with anointing very positively.^[95]

The last of the "seven sacraments" is burial.^[96] Taking into account the Christian belief in the immortality of the soul, precisely here, in the gracious and mysterious transition of a believing person from this life to eternity, one should seek the cause of why the mournful ceremony of committing the dead body to the earth suddenly becomes a holy ordinance in the Russian Baptist churches. It should be noted here that burial was also considered sometimes as a genuine sacrament in the ancient Eastern Christian tradition. For instance, St. Dionysius the Areopagite and St. Theodore the Studite held this opinion.^[97] The belief in the resurrection of the dead and eternal reward is fundamental for all branches of Christianity. N. A. Kolesnikov writes: "It is necessary to create an atmosphere of recollection of the life, ministry, good works and deeds of the departed... Even if he was not a church minister... he was a light for his family circle... The existence of man is not finished after death."^[98]

Before burial, as a rule, there is a special worship service in which preachers speak about the frailty of life on earth and the eternal heavenly dwelling places for the dead in the Lord.^[99] An important part of this service is mourning songs, which

^[90] See: Kolesnikov, *Khristianin, znaesh' li ty*, v. I, pp. 56-57.

^[91] Gnida, *Tserkovnye ustanovleniya*, p. 78. (Italics supplied. — C.P.).

^[92] Testimony of Ya. A. Grinchenko (Sacramento, Cal., 2006).

^[93] Kolesnikov, *Khristianin, znaesh' li ty*, v. I, pp. 57-58.

^[94] Testimony of D. I. Chueshkov (Seattle, Wash., 2006).

^[95] For instance, these are also testimonies of: P. A. Chumakin (Kent, Wash., USA, 2006), V. P. Litovchenko (Los Angeles, Calif., 2006),

L. E. Kovalenko (Sacramento, Calif., USA, 2006), and others.

^[96] Kolesnikov, *Khristianin, znaesh' li ty*, v. I, pp. 61-63.

^[97] See, for instance: P. Malkov, *Vvedenie v Liturgicheskoe Predanie* [Introduction to Liturgical Tradition] (Moscow: Izd-vo PSTGU, 2006), p. 15.

^[98] Kolesnikov, *Khristianin, znaesh' li ty*, v. I, p. 63.

^[99] See, for instance: Khrapov, *Dom Bozhy*, <<http://www.blagovestnik.org/books/00280.htm#88>>

usually are also influenced by the Orthodox traditional melodies (so-called *otpevanie*). One of the most famous Soviet Baptist composers, N. I. Vysotsky wrote in *Bratsky Vestnik*:

...We should be cautious selecting and singing our songs: any lilting tunes... do not go well with such a time; they are incompatible with our respect for the memory of the deceased... At the same time, Orthodox songs, such as “Give rest with the saints,” or “Memory eternal,” and others, fit the situation very well.^[100]

Thus, burial of the dead in the Russian Baptist tradition is both quiet sadness accompanied with inescapable tears and a spiritual consolation given by the prayers and songs in common with the whole congregation. But the main thing here is something else: burial retains a mystery; it is a church ordinance animated by Christian faith and the hope of a meeting with the departed loved one in heaven soon.

Conclusion

In the Russian-Ukrainian Baptist brotherhood, symbolic interpretations of the “church ordinances” covertly surrender to the idea of sacrament, which makes the general picture of the ecclesiological views of the Russian Baptists deeper and more significant. All of the above, in any measure, can be summarized in two simple questions and answers: – Is Christian symbolism present in the church ordinances of the Russian Baptists? – Yes, certainly. – Are their ordinances *only* symbols? – No...

In the period after the Great Patriotic War, the Soviet Baptists inclined more and more to Eastern Christian sacramentalism and the church practices corresponding to this teaching. In the self-isolation of the USSR from the West, it seems that this process was to some extent natural. There was a total shift of Baptist ideas in Russia from their original international-Protestant trajectory towards the national Christian “Russian way.”^[101] The historically established dominance of the Orthodox population in the country, which influenced the Russian Baptists, contributed to the development of this trend. The unity of Christians from different denominations especially manifested itself in extreme situations, in the times of Communist anti-religious campaigns. Government actions significantly limited contacts of the ECB brotherhood with Western Baptists; there was an acute shortage of confessional (“correct”) literature, etc. It is noteworthy that the apogee of sacramentalism in the ECB brotherhood, the vivid expression of which became the “seven sacraments” of the Russian Baptists, was in the 1980s, when in Russia, in the atmosphere of glasnost and perestroika other pro-Western theological tendencies began to develop.

^[100] N. Vysotsky, “Znachenie i Sila Dukhovnoy Muzyki” [The Meaning and Power of the Religious Music], *Bratsky Vestnik*, no. 5 (1978), pp. 61-62.

^[101] It is possible to draw a parallel here with the way the Soviet leaders changed their course from

international-Communist to national-Patriotic during WWII. See, for instance: M. Shkarovsky, *Russkaya Pravoslavnaya Tserkov' pri Staline i Khrushcheve* [The Russian Orthodox Church under Stalin and Khrushchev] (Moscow: Krutitskoe Patriarshee Podvor'e, 1999), p. 95.

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