

STATUTES

**OF THE INTERNATIONAL UNION OF CHURCHES OF
EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN BAPTISTS**

**Published
by the International Council of Churches
of the ECB**

2013

The STATUTES

of the International Union of Churches

of the ECB presented herein

are the STATUTES of the _____
(the name of the church according to the name of its location)

_____ **Church of the IUC ECB**

Pastor of the church _____
(Signature)

Pastor of the church _____
(Signature)

**THE INTERNATIONAL UNION OF CHURCHES
OF EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN BAPTISTS**

STATUTES

"Be ready always to give an answer

*to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you,
with meekness and fear" 1 Pet. 3:15.*

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Remembering the words of the Holy Scriptures to walk worthy of the calling with which we were called, and endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3), the Congress of church representatives of the International Union of the ECB on October 10-11, 2001 affirmed the unchanged nature of the statutory regulations and the former structure of the Union of churches of the ECB. At the same time, taking into account the division of our once unified country into several sovereign states, the Congress found it necessary to consider our brotherhood – the Union of Churches of the ECB – to be an international Union, with the name of our brotherhood Union: International Union of Churches of the ECB, and likewise the Council of Churches of the ECB to be called – the International Council of Churches of the ECB (ICC ECB).

In connection with the decision of the General Brotherhood Congress of the IUC ECB on October 5-6, 2005, and October 9-10, 2013, §§ 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 35, 37 were supplemented.

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I

**THE INTERNATIONAL UNION OF CHURCHES OF EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN
BAPTISTS (IUC ECB)**

1. GENERAL

§ 1. The International Union of Churches of Evangelical Christian Baptists is a voluntary association of autonomous churches having equal rights. These churches confess the Evangelical Baptist doctrine of faith. The foundation of this doctrine are the Holy Scriptures — the books of the canonical collection of the Old and New Testaments.

§ 2. The only statute for the spiritual activity of the International Union of churches of the ECB is the Word of God (the Bible). The present Statutes are a body of rules necessary to conduct those aspects of activity which relate to civic and jurisprudential norms of life.

§ 3. In view of the principle of separation of church and state, the International Union of Churches of

the ECB, its governing bodies, departments, and constituent churches are, in regard to their spiritual and intra-church activity, completely free, state-independent associations of believing citizens of the same convictions. The governing body of the International Union of ECB - the International Council of churches of the ECB, its departments, as well as the churches that comprise the Union do not have the status of a legal person, are not engaged in commercial activity or a for-profit business. (Mtt. 10:8, Ps. 14:1, 5).

2. GOALS AND TASKS OF THE INTERNATIONAL UNION

"Reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark." Phil. 3:13-14.

"That, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." Heb. 10:36.

§ 4. The International Union of Churches of the ECB pursues the goals and tasks which the Lord has set before His disciples:

- a) to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all people (Mark 16:15-16);
- b) to help all God's people achieve a higher spiritual level of holiness and Christian godliness (Rev. 22:11; 2 Tim. 3:17);
- c) to pursue unity and consolidation of all ECB churches and believers, on the basis of purity and holiness, into one brotherhood in Christ (John 17:21; Eph. 4:13).

3. COMPOSITION AND STRUCTURE OF THE INTERNATIONAL UNION

"The whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." Eph. 4:16.

§ 5. The International Union of Churches of the ECB unites local churches of the Evangelical Baptist confession. Religious associations that are different in name but kindred in faith can be accepted into the International Union of Churches of the ECB provided that they accept the Evangelical Christian Baptist doctrine of faith and are ruled by the Word of God in their life, ministry and activities.

§ 6. An application from a local church serves to notify the governing body of the International Union of Churches of the ECB (the International Council of Churches of the ECB) that the church has decided to join or withdraw from the Union.

§ 7. Every local church has the right to withdraw freely from the International Union of Churches of

the ECB.

The final decision about admitting a local church to the International Union of ECB Churches, as well as its withdrawal from the Union, is made by the International Council of ECB Churches.

§ 8. The International Union of Churches may have brotherly fellowship with ECB churches and with associations which are different in name but kindred in faith, which are not part of the International Union of ECB Churches, provided that these associations follow the doctrine of faith that does not contradict God's Word.

4. GOVERNANCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL UNION

"Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established." Prov. 15:22.

"The apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter." Acts 15:6.

§ 9. The highest governing body, determining the entire activity of the International Union, is the General Brotherhood Congress of the Evangelical Christian Baptists.

§ 10. To implement decisions of the Congress and to conduct activity of the International Union between Congresses, the General Brotherhood Congress elects the International Council of Churches of Evangelical Christian Baptists (ICC ECB) in a reasonable number. The Council of Churches shall choose from its midst the Chairman of the International Council of ECB Churches, the deputy Chairman and the members of the executive committee with subsequent approval of these individuals by the Congress.

During the interim period, the International Council of ECB Churches may receive and remove up to 1/3 of its members.

Admission to the Council of Churches and exclusion from the Council is to be made taking into account the views of the local church, the regional ministers and the ministers of the Council of Churches.

§ 11. The International Council of Churches of the ECB establishes departments of evangelists, the publishing, and other departments.

§ 12. Regular General Brotherhood Congresses are called once every four years. Norms of representation at a General Brotherhood Congress, as well as the place and time of the Congress, are determined by the International Council of Churches of the ECB.

5. MINISTRY AND ACTIVITY OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF THE ECB

"The care of all the churches." 2 Cor. 11:28.

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." Col. 3:17.

§ 13. The ministry and activity of the International Council of Churches of the ECB are determined by the goals and tasks set by the Congress and reflected in the present Statutes. The ministry and activity must be conducted in full accord with the teaching of Jesus Christ.

§ 14. The International Council of Churches is charged with:

- a) rendering spiritual and organizational aid to local churches and to regional and interregional brotherhood councils. The IUC ECB maintains contact with them both by way of written communications as well as by visits by its representatives;
- b) publishing essential spiritual literature and supplying it to the ECB churches;
- c) organizing training courses and seminars for Bible preachers and choir directors;
- d) representing the ECB churches externally both locally and internationally.

§ 15. The ECB Council of Churches has a seal and a stamp.

§ 16. The office of the International Council of Churches of the ECB is located in the city of Moscow, Russia.

§ 17. The International Council of Churches of the ECB gives an account of its activity to the General Brotherhood Congress of church representatives of the Evangelical Christian Baptists.

6. RESOURCES OF THE INTERNATIONAL UNION

"Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints." 2 Cor. 8:4.

§18. The International Union's resources are made of:

- a) voluntary contributions and offerings of local churches of the ECB;
- b) voluntary offerings of private persons;
- c) other contributions.

§ 19. The International Union's resources are audited by an auditing commission elected by the Congress and consisting of 3 members. The commission reports the audit results to the next regular General Brotherhood Congress of church representatives of the Evangelical Christian Baptists.

7. TERMINATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL UNION'S ACTIVITY

§ 20. A decision to terminate the International Union's activity is adopted exclusively by the General Brotherhood Congress of church representatives of the ECB in its capacity as the highest governing body of the International Union of Churches of the ECB.

II

REGIONAL (DISTRICT) AND INTER-REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS OF ECB CHURCHES

"Every purpose is established by counsel." Prov. 20:18.

"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."
Eph. 4:12.

§ 21. All spiritual and organizational activity locally is performed by regional (district) and interregional associations of churches of the ECB through the associations' governing bodies.

§ 22. The governing bodies of an association are: a conference of representatives of the association's ECB churches, and the association's brotherhood council elected by the conference.

§ 23. The frequency of the conferences, and the number of members in the regional (district) and interregional brotherhood councils, are determined by the conferences of representatives of the ECB churches of the respective associations.

§ 24. In their spiritual and organizational activities regional (district) and interregional brotherhood councils are guided by the Word of God, by decisions of conferences of their associations, and by goals and tasks of the International Union of Churches of the ECB (*see* § 4), and they give an account to:

- a) regional (district) and interregional conferences of representatives of churches of the ECB; and
- b) the International Council Churches of the ECB.

§ 25. Expenses related to the activity of the regional (district) and inter-regional associations are covered from resources received from local churches for the International Union of Churches of the ECB.

III

THE LOCAL CHURCH OF THE ECB

"That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church

of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." 1 Tim. 3:15.

8. GOALS AND TASKS OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

§ 26. A church of the ECB is an association of believing citizens of the Evangelical Baptist confession of faith, who have united to satisfy jointly their spiritual needs, and who have the goal of preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the salvation of sinners and for helping believers achieve holiness and Christian godliness expressing itself in love for God and for one's neighbor (Mark 16:15-16; 1 Thess. 4:3; Mark 12:30-31).

§ 27. To achieve the foregoing goals, the church of the ECB organizes meetings for Gospel preaching, prayer, studying the Holy Scripture, and for other spiritual needs. An inseparable part of a worship service is congregational and choir singing, with musical accompaniment.

§28. All citizens, including children, are given free access to worship services.

§29. Worship services of a local church of the ECB are held on Sundays, Christian holidays, and on other days of the week as the church sees fit.

§30. Premises for worship services of the church of the ECB can be provided by the state or by private persons.

§31. The church of the ECB participates in regional (district), interregional, and general brotherhood conferences and congresses of ECB church ministers, has ties with other local ECB churches both in its region and outside its region; and through its participation comprehensively supports the activity of the International Council of Churches of the ECB.

9. RELATION TO THE STATE

"My Kingdom is not of this world." John 18:36.

"Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" Matt. 22:21.

§ 32. The local church of the ECB is a completely free association of believing citizens of like faith that is independent from the state.

§ 33. Election and removal of ministers, acceptance into membership and excommunication, administration of spiritual services, general and membership meetings are performed by the church in accordance with the principle of separation of church and state. The question of registration (i.e. incorporation) of congregations of the International Union of Churches of the ECB is decided by the General Brotherhood Congress. If necessary, a non-regular Congress can be called to decide such questions.

10. COMPOSITION OF THE LOCAL CHURCH AND DUTIES OF A CHURCH MEMBER

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Eph. 2:10.

§ 34. Any person can be a member of a church of the ECB who has believed in Christ as his personal Savior, turned to God through repentance, received water baptism as a believer, and follows the Word of God in his life.

§ 35. A church member is called, under the guidance of the Word of God:

— to grow in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:18);

— to bear witness of Christ with word and life (Rom. 1:16);

— to treat people according to Christ's teaching, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" (Matt. 7:12), and not to do to others what you do not want done to yourselves (Acts 15:20);

— to labor conscientiously, "...working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Eph. 4:28), because the Scripture says, "If any would not work, neither should he eat" (2 Thess. 3:10);

— to participate zealously in the life of the church, to minister according to his calling (Rom. 12:6-11); not to forsake the assembling of Christians together (Heb. 10:25), and to bear responsibility for the spiritual condition of the church and its members (Gal. 6:1-2);

— to care for those of one's own house, be a good example in one's family, keep peace and holiness (Heb. 12:14), bring up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4); to apply, in accordance with the Biblical teaching, reasonable discipline to one's children for the purpose of upbringing (Prov. 13:24; 23:13-14; Heb. 12:6-8); strive to serve the Lord with all one's house (Josh. 24:15).

Note: Based on God's Word (Gen. 1:27; Rom. 1:26-27), in the International Union of ECB Churches marriage is recognized as only between a man and a woman.

— to obey civic laws according to Jesus Christ's teaching, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Mark 12:17), and to pray for the government that in accordance with God's will it would use the authority entrusted to it in such a way as to preserve peace and justice (Rom. 13:5, 7; Acts 5:20; 1 Tim. 2:1-4).

11. LOCAL CHURCH GOVERNANCE

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His Own Blood." Acts 20:28.

§ 36. The highest governing body of a local church of the ECB is the membership meeting of the church.

§ 37. All the important questions, such as: acceptance into membership, excommunication, election of ministers, and others, are decided by the membership meeting of the church. Striving to observe principles of moral purity, the church in necessary circumstances conducts an open discussion of the immoral conduct of its members with subsequent adoption of measures appropriate to the circumstances: putting on notice, excommunication (1 Cor. 5:11-13).

§ 38. To perform everyday ministry and spiritual nurturing of its members, the church elects a pastor, deacons, and other ministers, and also a church council in a number determined by the church itself. The pastor, the deacons, and the church council give an account of their activity to the membership meeting.

§ 39. All established services of the church such as baptism, breaking of the bread, weddings, funerals, prayer over sick people, and prayer over children, are performed by the pastor and by other ministers elected by the church for these purposes.

§ 40. Members of the given church, as well as members of other churches, participate in preaching and in worship services at the discretion of the church council.

§ 41. The pastor of the church is primarily responsible for the conduct of worship services.

§ 42. External representation of the local church in making agreements to use premises and so on is carried out by three members of the church who are elected by the church. Ultimate determination of questions related to relations with state authorities is reserved for the membership meeting of the church.

12. RESOURCES OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." 2 Cor. 9:7.

§ 43. The financial resources of the local church consist of freewill offerings of believers and are spent on the needs of God's work as the church itself sees fit.

§ 44. The local church may have an inventory book to record property received from the state as well as bought or donated.

§ 45. The resources and valuables of the church are audited by an auditing commission elected by the church and consisting of three members. The commission reports the audit results to the church.

13. CLOSURE OF A LOCAL CHURCH

§ 46. The activity of a local church of the ECB can be terminated only by a decision of a membership meeting of the particular church.

THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN BAPTISTS

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