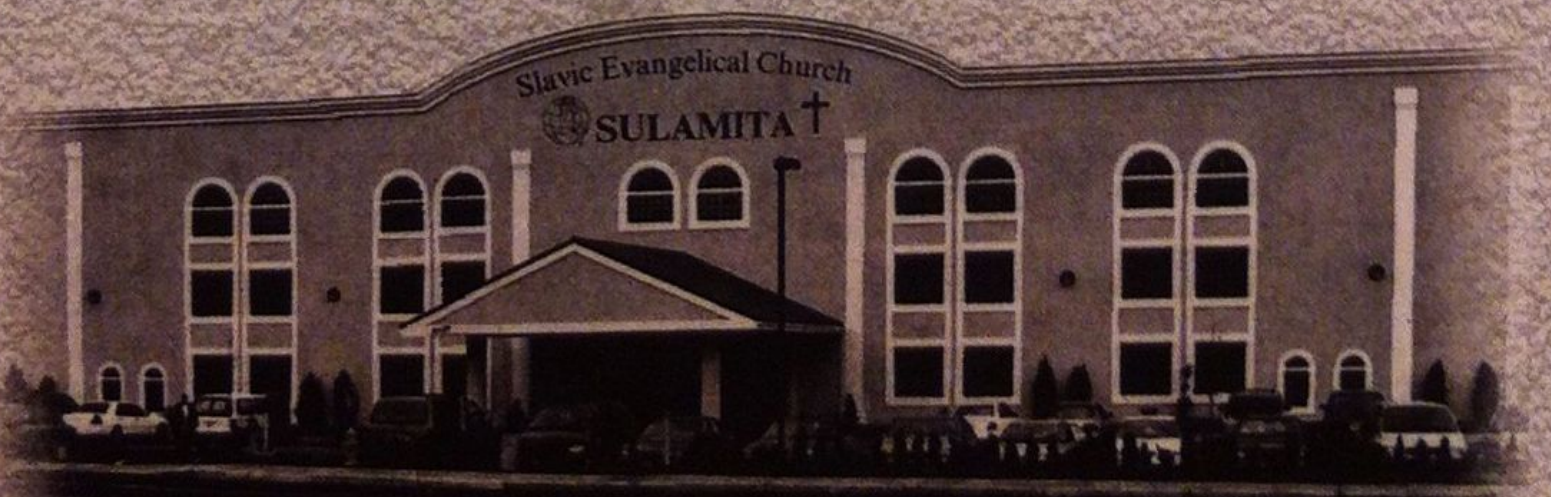
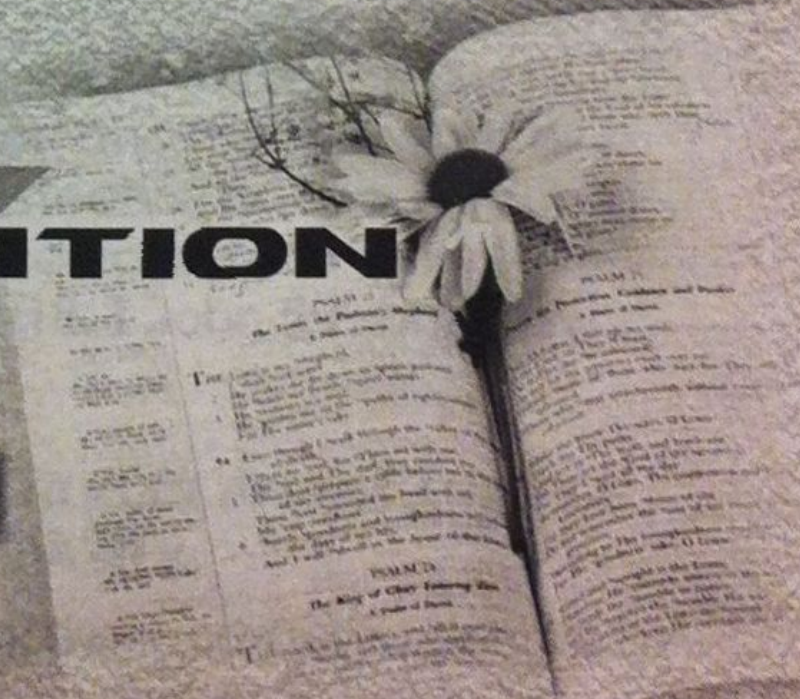




THE CHARTER **Of The Slavic Evangelical Church** **Sulamita**

**DECLARATION
OF FAITH
And Doctrinal
Foundation**



DECLARATION OF OUR FAITH AND DOCTRINAL FOUNDATION

1. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by chosen people of God and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, therefore it is Truth. The Bible is the center of Christian unity and the standard by which we gauge all beliefs, behavior, and opinions of man (2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:21).

2. TRUE GOD

We believe in One true Live God, Infinite Spirit, the Creator of heaven and earth. He is Inexplicably awesome in His Holiness, worthy of all adoration, trust and love; as well as this God is three beings, Father, Son and the Holy Spirit all equal in Their Godly perfection but each fulfilling different functions in accordance to their sovereignty (Romans 1:18, 1 John 5:7, Matthew 28:19).

3. THE CREATION OF HUMAN BEINGS AND THE EARTH

In the beginning, the world was created by the Word of God. Humans are created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27), for eternal life and a relationship with Him (John 2:25, John 6:40, John 10:28, Genesis 3:8-10). Every human has a spirit, soul, and flesh (1 Thessalonians 5:23). One possesses a free will to think, act, feel, desire, and to reject...(Isaiah 32:8, Romans 2:15, Acts 13:46).

4. THE FALL OF HUMAN BEINGS

Knowingly man, through the deception of Satan, transgressed the will of God (Genesis 3:11-12). All humans from Adam inherited sin and death (Romans 5:12); for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). The Father through His Son Jesus Christ, and faith, returns to human beings the lost glory of God and eternal life (Romans 5:19, 1 Corinthians 15:22).

5. EXTRAORDINARY BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST

We believe that Jesus Christ, God's Son, was conceived of the Holy Spirit miraculously; born of Virgin Mary, like no other being born from a woman. He is God in flesh (Genesis 3:15, Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:18-25, 1 John 5:20).

6. SACRIFICES FOR SIN, DEATH, AND HIS RESURRECTION

We believe that salvation of sinners is based wholly on the mercy of God. Through the mediation work of the Son of God, who was predestinated by His Father and willingly took on Himself our nature, did not sin, but fulfilled God's law. Through His personal obedience and death, He accomplished a total redemption from our sins. His suffering, torture and death are a substituted sacrifice for all sinners. Redemption and salvation is for anyone who believes. The death of the righteous one for the unrighteous, Christ the Lord personally took our sins to the Cross, died and was resurrected from the dead (Ephesians 2:2, Acts 15:11, Romans 3:24, John 3:16, Matthews 18:11, Philippians 2:7, Hebrews

2:14, Isaiah 53:4-7, Romans 3:25, 1 John 4:10, 1 Corinthians 5:21).

7. RAPTURE

We believe that Christ rose from the dead, was received up into the heaven, and sits at the right hand of God making intercession on our behalf. Presently He sits on a throne in heaven, incorporating in His marvelous Identity a gentle sensibility with Godly perfection (Romans 8:34).

8. TO BE BORN AGAIN...

We believe that to be saved, a sinner has to be born again. To be born again is to be a new creation in Jesus Christ: it occurs once not as a process. A new creation is the result of the work of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God; it resides in the realm above human influences; it becomes a confirmation of our voluntary acceptance and obedience to the Gospel. A born again person has died to sin and transgression and now lives for righteousness. Thus, one became part of God's Holy nature and received eternal life as His gift. Transformation comes with a personal act of repentance, faith and a new life (John 3:3, 2 Corinthians 5:11, 1 John 5:1, John 3:6-7, Acts 16:30-33, 2 Peter 1:4, Romans 6:23, Ephesians 2:1, 2 Corinthians 5:19, Colossians 2:13, John 3:8).

9. JUSTIFICATION

We believe that the immense Evangelical blessing that Christ gave to those who believe in Him is our justification.

- A. Justification includes the forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life based on the sacrifice of Christ on Golgotha.
- B. Justification is given without merit to deeds of righteousness that we may do, but is totally by faith in the redemptive blood of Jesus. Christ's righteousness is a substitute for ours (Acts 13:39, Isaiah 53:11, Zechariah 13:1, Romans 5:1, 5:9, 8:1).

10. SALVATION BY FAITH

We believe that faith in our Lord Jesus Christ is the only stipulation to our salvation (Acts 16:31, Galatians 2:16, Ephesians 11:6).

11. PURIFICATION

We believe that born again believers through the constant purifying work of the Holy Spirit in them and their daily battle with the nature of flesh are being transformed into the image of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:15-16, Ephesians 5:26-27, Revelation 22:11).

12. RIGHTEOUS VS. UNRIGHTEOUS

We believe that there is a radical difference between the righteous and the unrighteous. The righteous through faith justified by Jesus Christ and purified by the Holy Spirit are truly righteous in Him. All who continue to live in disbelief and sin are the unrighteous in God's eyes and are under the condemnation of eternal suffering. This difference between people is effective during time lived here on earth, and also after the death – eternal blessing for those who are saved, or eternal suffering for those

without God (Malachi 3:18, Genesis 18:23, Romans 6:17-18, 1 John 5:19, Romans 6:23 & 7:6, Luke 6:23, Matthew 25:34-41, John 8:21).

13. WATER BAPTISM

We believe that water baptism is the relationship of committing to serve God with a clear conscience (1 Peter 3:21); it represents a commandment of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20). Water baptism is administered:

- A. By ministers of the church who are born again and have attained Evangelical truths (Ephesians 4:11-12)
- B. In the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit (Colossians 2:12, Romans 6:3-4)
- C. Through the full immersion into the water (John 3:23, Acts 8:35-38)
- D. The baptism of the children in the church does not take place (1 Corinthians 7:14).

14. BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the gift of speaking in tongues, and dissemination of the gifts of the Spirit by His will, for the maturation and spiritual growth of believers (Acts 2:4 & 10:45-49 & 19:6, Mark 16:17-20, Romans 8:14-16).

15. THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that the Lord's Supper is the remembrance of Christ and His death. When preparing to be partakers in the Lord's Supper, every believer should examine himself or herself in order to be worthy to partake in it. Those who are reconciled with God, live in peace with the

Church, and have been baptized are permitted to partake in the Lord's Supper. As we take part in this act, we manifest Jesus' death until He comes. The bread and the wine symbolize Christ's tortured body and the blood that He shed. The Lord's Supper testifies of a relationship and unity of believers in Christ and gives them power for a faithful service to God. Prior to the Lord's Supper, the members of the Sulamita congregation have an opportunity to practice the washing of each other's feet (John 13:4-17, 1 Timothy 5:9-10, Genesis 18:3-5, John 6:53-58, Matthew 26:29, s Corinthian 10:16-17 & 11:23-32, Revelation 3:21).

16. THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

We believe that the church is a united body, the bride of Christ, created through God's way of redemption in times past. Christians of all nations, races, and social groups, regenerated by faith in Christ, cleansed by His blood, baptized by His Spirit into one body and consecrated to God are members of one body, whose head is Christ. In spite of numerous different understandings in the broad spectrum of denominations, the Holy Spirit creates unity, with an end result that accomplishes co-operation and mutual understanding of all Christian groups. The Holy Bible, especially the epistles to the first apostolic church, is the guideline for Christians in the questions of faith and life. By means of the Holy Spirit, God gives gifts to the church to effect affirmation of Christians and the spreading of the Gospel (John 17:21, Acts 2:38-44, 1 Corinthians 12:14-31, Ephesians 1:22-23 & 2:10-22 & 5:25-27, Revelation 5:9).

17. MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

We believe that God established marriage between a man and a woman for unified intimate life together, and for the birth and upbringing of children. In a marriage, two mature adults find fulfillment in mutual love, interests, joys, ideals, aspirations, and responsibilities. Those who are entering marriage have to be Christians. Believers are not permitted to marry non-believers. We believe that divorce is a serious violation of God's decree of marriage. Marriage between same sex couples in the church is not administered. Christian parents have a responsibility to raise their children by giving them examples of honorable living, praying for them, involving them in the family worship of God, teaching them the Word of God, and raising them complaisant to God's will (Genesis 1:27-28 & 2:18-24, Proverbs 5:18-19, Malachi 2:13-16, Matthews 5:31-32 & 19:4-9, 1 Corinthians 7:10-11, 2 Corinthians 6:14, Ephesians 5:22-23 & 6:4, Hebrews 13:4, Romans 1:18-32).

18. THE CHURCH AND THE GOVERNMENT

We believe that God established higher authority for observance of the law in a community and its prosperity. The functions and responsibilities of the government and church are different. For the Christian, the laws and interests of the Kingdom of Christ have to be the most important. Our Christian responsibility is to pray for our leaders and to proclaim truth, love, righteousness, and redemption. We have to honor representatives of authority, fulfilling the requirements of society: witnessing against discrimination, corruption, and injustice, paying

taxes and obeying all the laws, which are not contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ (Matthews 22:17-21, Acts 4:19, Romans 3:1-7, 1 Timothy 2:1-6, 1 Peter 2:13-14). We believe that Christians have to live according to the law of love and must forgive their enemies, as Christ taught and demonstrated to us. The Church is the body of Christ. The awful arrogant reality of war contradict the character of Christians, who attempt to fulfill the law of life in Christ in all relationships, in all situations, including personal injustice, social unrest and international strains. We believe that when a Christian takes up arms in wartime, it becomes a violation of God's will. However, where it is possible, one should fulfill alternate tasks for the cause: mediation between quarrelsome topics, easing suffering and proclaiming the witness of Christ's love (Genesis 20:1-17, Matthews 5:17-28 & 5:38-45, Romans 12:19-21 & 13:8-10, 1 Peter 2:19-23).

19. THE FINAL TRIUMPH OF CHRIST

We believe that God who creates history always accomplishes His purposes. After death the righteous go into eternal Godly peace and fellowship with Him, while the unrighteous will suffer the separation from God and await the final judgment.

In the day of the Lord's coming, those believers who are left alive will be raptured and those who died in Christ will be resurrected to be with Christ perpetually. Christ will be judging all people. The righteous will inherit the Kingdom of God, but unrighteous will eternally suffer in hell. In the end, death will be exterminated, the antichrist destroyed, and satan will be thrown into the lake

of fire. Christ will create a new heaven and new earth, on which will inhabit righteousness and God will be all in all. This blessed hope of the Church will be fulfilled in eternity. "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of God is coming" (Matthews 25:13). "He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly," Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!!!" (Revelations 22-20, Isaiah 2:4 & 61:1-11, Matthews 25:13 & 25:31-46, Mark 9:43-48, Luke 16:22-23, John 5:25-29, Acts 1:11, 1 Corinthians 15:21-28, Philippians 1:21-24, 1 Thessalonians 4: 16-17, Titus 2:11-14, 2 Peter 3:3-13, Revelation 1:15, Revelation 1:20-22).

also has the right to join with other Christians and organizations for similar activities.

1. THE CHURCH'S MISSION

- 1.1 The Church is called to proclaim the Gospel message to all nations and to make disciples based on the foundation of teachings of Jesus Christ (Mark 16:15, Acts 20:24, 1 Timothy 2:1-4).
- 1.2 The Church's mission is also aimed to teach and mentor God's Word to the growing generations (Ephesians 6:4).
- 1.3 Church's goal is to develop good relationships and have fellowship with other like-minded Evangelical Churches (John 17:21). This goal of unity shall be based on the Word of God.

2. CHURCH ACTIVITIES

To fulfill established goals, the Church conducts:

- 2.1 A normal service shall include the preaching of the Gospel, the study of the Bible, prayers, singing of psalms (as a church, a choir, group, or a solo) with the accompaniment of various musical instruments, and plays. Special Services shall include water baptism by immersion, the Lord's Supper, weddings, prayers for the children and the sick, the dedication of ministers, funerals, and other services.
- 2.2 The Church may have Biblical educational institutions and training sessions according to the teachings of Jesus Christ. The Church may create divisions, missions, publishing, groups, and activities for the needs identified for the vibrancy of the Church. The Church may open centers for rehabilitations, hospitals, children's daycare, schools, publishing houses, and own a site on the Internet. The Church

- 2.3 Services of the Sulamita Church are conducted on Sundays and throughout the week on designated days, as well as on Christian holidays.

3. MEMBERSHIP

- 3.1 The Sulamita Church is a voluntary gathering of Evangelical Christians for corporate worship, biblical teaching, testimony, spiritual growth, gospel preaching, and ministry of mercy and virtue. In order for the Church to function in an orderly manner, a membership must be established.
- 3.2 To Become a Member of the Church One Has to:
 - a. Be born again
 - b. Be baptized by immersion
 - c. Be in agreement with the Declaration of Faith and Doctrinal Foundation, attached hereto and incorporated herein.
 - d. Be recommended by the leaders of the Church after interviews with them.
 - e. Request a letter from the church committee with needed information in cases of moving in or moving out of the church
 - f. Receive confirmation of membership from Church during Church service and with Church's prayer.

3.3 Active Membership

Anyone who agrees with the given requirements of this charter, who is not younger than 16 years of age, and is actively involved in

the Church, and fully dedicated to Christ has the right to vote. Only members of the Church may hold office, serve in leadership or teach.

3.4 Membership Termination

Membership termination may occur in the following situations:

1. In the case of member's death
2. According to the Holy Scriptures due to:
 - a. Retaining of the false doctrines (Galatians 1:8-9)
 - b. Living that is contrary to Christian beliefs. Living an immoral and unchristian life, hindering the peace and unity of the Church and practicing the following sins: stealing, drinking, smoking, drug use, abortions, witchcraft, homosexuality, lesbianism, bestiality, fornication, adultery, and other sins blemishing Christian living (1 Corinthians 5:11, 6:9-11; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:1).
 - c. Church member's compensation, support, attendance or participation in: drugs, alcohol and tobacco products, night bars, night clubs, prostitution institutions, games of chance, cults, indecent information and same type of video cassettes (pornography, battlemens, etc.), as well as pornographic websites.
3. If a member of the church is absent from the services for an extended period of time, he or she becomes an inactive member. A final decision of membership termination can be made by a church committee after attempts have been

made to amend the situation by prayer, counselling, and exhortations. The inactive person may request the dismissal from the Church membership as well.

4. With a change of location or change of a Church, a member may request a recommendation letter from the church committee.

3.5 The Right to Terminate and Ostracize

The Church has the right to terminate membership and ostracize those who have violated the Word of God by the above-mentioned points (Ephesians 3:6, Matthew 18:16-17).

3.6 Membership Reestablishment of Previously Terminated Members

Based on the Word of God the Church has the right to reestablish a previously terminated member through his or her personal repentance and the adjustment in life with humility (2 Corinthians 2:6-8). The Church committee will decide the reestablishment of a member with evidence of changes in the person's life and also with confirmation of the Church.

4. **DICIPLINE**

- 4.1 Members of the church and guests are expected to maintain cleanliness and order in the church and on its property.
- 4.2 During the Church services, it is forbidden to walk around, chat, chew gum, feed kids in the sanctuary, and be rowdy.

- 4.3 There must be absolute compliance to the requests by the ushers and those in charge of regulations in the church and on its property.
- 4.4 Those who refuse to comply with the requests of the ushers or interfere with the worship service will be removed. They will also be held liable for any monetary damage to the church and its property (2 Corinthians 3:2-3).
- 4.5 Christians must dress modestly, with decency and propriety. Clothing should not be extravagant or revealing to the extent that others are tempted by what one wears. (1 Peter 3:3, 1 Timothy 2:9-10, Titus 2:3).
- 4.6 In all cases, when discipline must be administered, it should be administered with humbleness and accepted with thanks.
- 4.7 When there is a dispute between believers or personal relations among members have broken down, the effort for resolving such conflicts should be in accordance with Matthew 18:15-18. The following steps should be taken to ensure a resolution to the conflict:
- a. Trying to solve the conflict with a person one-on-one
 - b. Conflict solving with an attendance of one or two witnesses
 - c. Hearing with a church committee
 - d. Discussion during a members only service and the final decision of the Church body.
- 4.8 If these actions do not bring anticipated results, the church committee has the right to make decisions regarding membership termination.

5. CHURCH LEADERS

- 5.1 The Church elects ministers according to the Holy Word of God, from which one is elected as a senior pastor (1 Timothy 3:11-12, Titus 1:5-9).
- 5.2 Once the ministers are elected by the Church, they may be financially supported by the Church (1 Corinthians 9:13-14, 1 Timothy 5:17-18).
- 5.3 The senior pastor is the spiritual leader of the Church. He is expected to preach, teach the whole counsel of God as revealed in His Word, be the pastor of the flock, and increase the spiritual maturity of the members of the Church.
- 5.4 The senior pastor together with the other ministers is responsible for the church services, baptizing new believers, administering the Lord's Supper, offering prayer for the children and the sick, as well as other Biblical tasks necessary for the Church's life.
- 5.5 The senior pastor speaks as a representative of the church to the government and other organizations.
- 5.6 It is not permissible for any of the ministers to make personal decisions regarding solving Church problems without the consensus of the church committee.
- 5.7 The church committee selects deacons qualified as set forth in God's Word for a trial period (Acts 6:1-6, 1 Timothy 3:8-13). Then, after the trial period, with consideration by the church committee and the consent of the church, a deacon is consecrated in a solemn service for his or her works.
- 5.8 Deacons must help the pastor in the church work, participate in the distribution of the Lord's Supper, visit and serve members of

church as needed, help in organization and conduction of water baptism, and assist with holiday and other services.

6. THE CHURCH COMMITTEE

- 6.1 The church committee shall be formed with seven* of the most active, experienced, and spiritually minded members of the Church for providing counsel to the pastor, rendering decisions, making recommendations and working with the pastor to coordinate all church activities.
- 6.2 The head of the church committee is the senior pastor. Only the church committee will investigate any accusations against a minister. The Church conducts the dismissal of a minister only after the church committee's investigation and confirmation of any of the following reasons:
- Backsliding
 - Deviation into a heresy
 - Health conditions
 - Personal reasons
- 6.3 Questions at the church committee meetings are resolved according to the Word of God and with the consensus of 2/3 of the church committee members (attendance of all committee members is required).
- Note: should this number be changed by the anonymous vote of the church committee the number must always remain an odd number.*
- 6.4 The church committee meetings will be conducted at least once a month.

- 6.5 During church committee meetings, the senior pastor may invite brothers who have Spiritual guidance and experience in the life of the Church to provide counsel. However, these brothers, who are not members of the church committee, shall not vote.
- 6.6 For decisions of especially difficult and sensitive issues that require of the Church's confidentiality, the senior pastor may gather a Council formed of pastors only, who have been committed to the Lord to handle such issues. These issues, settled by the Council formed of pastors only, cannot have any bearing on Church government.
- 6.7 The church committee allocates assignments for church personnel that are not identified in this charter and are held liable for yearly reexamination of Church workers' salaries. The church committee is also responsible for the distribution of the Church's budget.
- 6.8 The pastors' ministries (small groups).
The purpose of the small groups is to give strength to the life of the church through prayers and to unite people and provide them with an opportunity to serve each other, as well as praising God through singing and witnessing. The whole church is designated into small groups and the leader who has met the minister's criteria is appointed to each one of the groups (1 Timothy 3:8-13).
- 6.9 The small group leaders are carrying the responsibilities of service to their groups in the following areas:
- Spiritual

- b. Emotional
- c. Social
- d. Physical (Ex. Transportation of the elderly)

7. THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND MAINTENANCE SERVICES IN THE CHURCH

- 7.1 For handling the administrative and maintenance ministry of the Church an intern pastor is chosen to whom is offered the scope of service.
- 7.2 For handling the clerical and accumulative work of the Church, an administrator and a secretary are chosen, who are liable to the church committee. They are responsible for managing and storing all the Church's documentation.
- 7.3 The senior pastor's assistant together with the administrator and a secretary sign all documents related to the administrative and maintenance activities of the Church.
- 7.4 An appointee will be responsible for the maintenance aspect of the church and is liable for:
 - a. The Church property
 - b. Preparation of recommendations for the purchasing of necessary equipment
 - c. Inspections of essential insurances
 - d. Coordination of the executions of the construction works
 - e. Coordination of the execution of the accumulative activities
 - f. Carrying out control over renters of the facilities and property of the Church
 - g. Preparation of the financial-maintenance account for the Church budget.

- 7.5 People with appropriate expertise in specialized areas will be selected to help with the maintenance of the church.
- 7.6 The financial budget of the church is sustained by the tithes and free will offerings as well as wills.
- 7.7 For the conduction of the financial services, a treasurer and an accountant are appointed, who are responsible for:
 - a. Maintenance of financial documents
 - b. Depositing of all collected money into a Church bank account, as well as accumulative bill payments with Church checks
 - c. Salary disbursement to the Church employees
 - d. The preparation of quarterly and yearly financial reports, as well as transmission of all financial documents for auditing
- 7.8 The accountant and the treasurer must be part of the financial services group of the Church. All the incoming finances designated for different services must go through an auditing committee.
- 7.9 The church committee elects the members of the audit committee from the reliable church members for different divisions of labor.

8. MARRIAGES AND THE FAMILY

- 8.1 The rights and responsibilities of those committing themselves to marriage are established on the foundation of the Bible with love and agreement. There should be no premarital restricted actions (Hebrews 13:4).

- 8.2 Marriage is between a man and a woman only, as established by God and through Him (Genesis 1:27, 2:24).
- 8.3 Marriage is valid till death of one of the partners occurs. Divorce is not permitted unless only on those premises established in the Gospel (Matthew 5:32, 19:3-9; Romans 7:3; 1 Corinthians 7:10-15).
- 8.4 The Church gives priority to family obligations, holiness of the marriage and the support for an order in the family according to the principles in the Bible specified to the head of the family (Ephesians 5:22-25).
- 8.5 Primarily attention should be focused on family prayer and provision of Christian environment and relationships (1 Timothy 3:3-4, 5:8).
- 8.6 Children should be raised in the spirit of the teachings of the Holy Bible (Proverbs 13:24, 19:18, 29:15; Hebrews 12:10).
- 8.7 With the parents' request, children are sanctified to God with the prayer of a minister and church when a child is preferably still an infant (Mark 10:16, Luke 18:15-16, 1 Kings 1:27-28).
- 8.8 In the Christian family it is not permitted to read or watch any kind of information that defiles a life of a Christian.
- 8.9 The Church has a right to investigate family conflicts, especially if it causes slander and gossip amongst others.

9. THE CHURCH AND THE GOVERNMENT

- 9.1 We must honor members of authority and obey the laws that do not contradict the

Word of God, willingly fulfilling our social responsibilities.

- 9.2 The Church honors the higher law of the life of a Christian, "Life of Love," and deviation from evil, hypocrisy, abuse, and the taking up of arms against another person in any circumstance of personal or general character.
- 9.3 We believe that for a Christian to take up arms in a war is against the will of God (Matthews 5:38-48, 1 Peter 3:9-11, Romans 12:17-21).
- 9.4 If the authorities take into account Christian dogma and provide an alternative to military service, Christians must comply with authorities.
- 9.5 We have to pray for the leaders of this country, as well as for peace and prosperity of this country.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 No one out of the ministers of the Church is permitted to sign documents or decide any questions related to the church and the government without the agreement of the church committee and the Church.
- 11.2 The Church leaves the right to amend or add to the character of this charter.

THE UNION AGREEMENT WITH THE CHURCH

Identifying that Jesus Christ is my personal Savior and Lord, I submit myself to God as revealed in the Holy Scriptures by the Holy Spirit and to the loving leadership of ministers of Sulamita Evangelical Church, as well as to the testimony given to the Church and these