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An Appeal - January 31, 1988

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AN APPEAL
JANUARY 31, 1988

-Moved by the sense of responsibility for the future of the Russian Orthodox Church,
-suffering from wounds received by the Church from the policy of State atheism in the
USSR,

-not willing to allow the official celebrations planned by the Moscow Patriarchate to the
1000th anniversary of Baptism in Russia appear to be a next pompous attempt firstly to hide the
captive state of the Church and secondly to prove that absolute freedom of worship reigns in the
Soviet Union and there is no persecution for confession of faith, we the group of Russian
Orthodox believers think that it is necessary:

1. To organize mass signatures under appeals requiring the release of all the prisoners of
faith;

2. To continue collecting signatures under the appeal to the Presidium of the Supreme
Soviet of the USSR about changing Stalin-time laws connected with religions so that the Church
will get back its natural rights and the most important one—the right to freedom of speech;

3. To support the Appeal of Archbishop Feodosy of Astrakhan-and-Yenotayev to open
Kiev-Pechora Monastery—the font of Russia;

4. At the time of the Anniversary, on the 7th of June, on the day of acquiring the head of
John the Baptist, to convene a Christian seminar on historical-theological problems of Church and
the legal status of religion in the USSR—to fill in important gaps in the history and
contemporary life of the Church which appeared at the jubilee theology conferences of the Moscow
Patriarchate;

5. To ask the representatives of independent Christian community to appeal to the Local
Council of the Russian Orthodox Church with a call to canonize the new Russian martyrs of the
XXth century and to disaffirm the statute of the Local Council of 1961 which was approved under
pressure from outside and which deprives the priesthood of the possibility to participate in full
measure in the church-parish life; all the power in the Church has to appertain to the Church itself;

6. We, members of the Sole Holy Apostolic Church of Conciliarism, united by faith,
love and hope around the Sacrificial Chalice of Christ propose to celebrate in June 1988 the Divine
Liturgy for the persecuted because some of us are deprived of the joy of participation in the
liturgical life of church as builders of Divine Mysteries. We will offer up our prayer for the

persecuted and persecutors in hope that God will make understand those who rise their right hand at Him and His Church;

7. To organize the exhibition reflecting the real Church life and its profaned sacred places, to hold the festivals of Christian art and other initiatives;

The 1000th Anniversary of Baptism in Russia is a festival not only of Russian Orthodoxy but of all Christian confessions which historically were formed on the territory of our country. We invite to participate in our initiatives Catholics and Protestants as well as representatives of all creeds for whom our God Jesus Christ is not enemy but intercessor for Good and Light. We are glad to greet at our celebrations our brothers Christians from abroad, especially the Head of the Roman Catholic Church Most Holy Pope John Paul II to whom we will send a respectful invitation in case the authorities of Moscow Patriarchate will think embarrassing to make this historical step leading the peoples of East and West to peace and unity in God.

The priest Valery Lapkovsky (the town of Kerch)
Alexander Ogorodnikov (Moscow)
Victor Aksyuchits (Moscow)
Gleb Anishenko (Obninsk)
Vladimir Osipov (Tarusa)
Michael Bom bin (Riga)
Vladimir Poresh (Leningrad)
Evgeny Pazuchin (Leningrad)
Alexey Goncharov (Drushkonvka, Donetsk reg.)

Initiative Group for Preparation of the Celebration of the 1000th Anniversary of Baptism in Russia.

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