



Position

of the New Apostolic Church on the Holy Baptism with water and the Holy Sealing



1. The Holy Baptism with Water

Basic Text

- 1.1 The sacrament of Holy Baptism with Water is the first and fundamental¹ act of grace of our Triune God bestowed on a human being who believes in Christ². The act of Holy Baptism with Water includes the washing away of the original sin³. In this respect, the person to be baptized has a share in Christ's merit and experiences his first close relationship with God⁴. He (the baptized) becomes a Christian⁵ and is thus adopted into the fellowship of those who believe in Christ and profess their faith in Him⁶.
- 1.2 The Holy Baptism with Water is a first step to a renewal in the Holy Spirit⁷. By this act, God opens the person to be baptized the way to salvation in Christ and lastly to perfect redemption⁸.
- 1.3 On the Act of Holy Baptism with Water the faithful vows to avoid sin⁹ and to live his life as a follower of Christ Jesus¹⁰. The baptized has access to Holy Communion¹¹.

¹ Here it is stated that Holy Baptism with Water is the first step to salvation (specialist term 'initiation sacrament').

² cf. Galatians 3:26; Acts 16:29–34; Mark 16:16. Prerequisite for baptism of children is the parents' faith.

³ 'Original sin' means the general sinfulness of human race. Since the fall of Adam and Eve sin is weighing heavily on every human being as a fundamental state of mind; thus, all men are sinners (cf. Romans 5:18.19). Details on this issue will be elaborated. The picture of the washing away suggests itself that through a Baptism with Water the individual sins are also wiped out. This is discernible from Acts 2:38. In current practice, we take account of this aspect in that the Baptismal Act is always preceded by a forgiveness of the individual sins.

⁴ Discernible in Galatians 3:27.

⁵ Christians are those who renounce sin and "are alive to God in Jesus Christ" (cf. Romans 6:11) which means that they live their life in accordance with the example given by Jesus and that they profess their faith in Him.

⁶ Here we are facing a broadly defined Concept of Church which deliberately excludes the term "Church". The group mentioned here is not identical with the term "Church of Christ", as generally used in the New Apostolic Church.

⁷ The purpose here is to stress that the Holy Spirit plays a leading role in the Holy Baptism with Water. It is the first step to a renewing of the Spirit as mentioned in Titus 3:5.

⁸ Perfect redemption is the condition of completed souls who faithfully assimilated the godly offer of salvation and thus attained everlasting fellowship with God.

⁹ Here, reference can also be made to the wording of renunciation in the confirmation vow.

¹⁰ cf. Matthew 16:24; John 13:15; Philippians 2:5. Here, another interpretation of the following is used as an orientation toward life and nature of Jesus.

¹¹ This only applies to the Baptism in the New Apostolic Church. Christians from other Christian denominations, whose Baptism is recognized by us, are entitled to permanently partake of Holy Communion from the time of their Adoption. Remark on Adoption: The Adoption in the New Apostolic Church shall be maintained. The (recognized) Baptism performed in other Christian Churches shall no longer be confirmed. We shall rather declare that the faithful is entitled to permanently partake of Holy Communion since he has professed his faith in the new apostolic belief.



- 1.4 The Holy Baptism with Water together with the Holy Sealing conjointly¹² form the Rebirth out of Water and Spirit¹³.
- 1.5 The Holy Baptism with Water cannot be repeated¹⁴.
- 1.6 The Christian Baptism is recognized¹⁵ if it was performed properly¹⁶ by another Christian Church¹⁷, i.e. in the name of the triune name of God.
- 1.7 In the New Apostolic Church the Holy Baptism with Water is also dispensed to children; in this case, the parents profess their faith in Christ. This practice is based on the understanding that children must not be excluded from God's acts of blessing, as they too are in need of the Lord's grace.

¹² The term "conjointly" underlines the association between Holy Baptism with Water and Holy Sealing – entirely in accordance with the Holy Scriptures where, "Baptism" is frequently understood as both Baptism with Water as well as Baptism with the Holy Spirit.

¹³ cf. John 3:5.

¹⁴ Naturally, Baptism as initiation sacrament is not repeatable; analogous to the circumcision in the Old Covenant.

¹⁵ This is an essential deviation from the previous Concept of Baptism of the New Apostolic Church according to which Baptism with Water can only be dispensed by those having been authorized by an apostle. Regarding recognition of Baptism – this being the first act of grace bestowed on a human being - we believe that it is God Himself who makes this act valid and effective. Moreover we take for granted that the person to be baptized has professed his faith in Christ. Based on the above, the Baptism performed in other Christian Churches needs no longer to be confirmed on the Adoption. In spite of this, the act of Adoption with changed contents shall be maintained (cf. explanation to 11).

¹⁶ Performed with water and in the triune name. This applies to Baptisms in the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox and most Protestant Churches. It must be checked whether these prerequisites are fulfilled in other Churches. In case of doubt, the Baptism shall be carried out. A Baptism must always be performed for members of the Jehovah's Witnesses (they do not know of a Trinity) and the Mormons (their view on Trinity is diverging).

¹⁷ cf. item 1.1 last sentence.



2. The Holy Sealing

Basic Text

- 2.1 The sacrament of Holy Sealing is the dispensing of Holy Spirit¹⁸. By this act the faithful is filled with Holy Spirit as a strength of God. It comes about through prayer and laying on of hands of an apostle on souls baptized with water.
- 2.2 The Holy Baptism with Water and the Holy Sealing conjointly¹⁹ constitute the rebirth out of Water and Spirit; by this the childhood in God is attained²⁰. As a child of God the reborn is entitled to become a heir of the future glory²¹. Both acts together allow a transference to Christ. The faithful is incorporated in the body of Christ²²; he is a member of the Work of the Lord²³.
- 2.3 In the act of Holy Sealing, Christ enters the faithful into the Lamb's Book of Life²⁴. He receives the purchase sign of the Lamb²⁵ and is entitled to belong to the bride of Christ²⁶ and to be firstfruit²⁷ in the future kingdom of Christ.
- 2.4 The strength of God received through Holy Sealing enables the faithful to mature to the image of Christ as a new creature²⁸.
- 2.5 Prerequisite for attaining Holy Sealing: The person must be baptized with Water and profess his faith in the doctrine of Jesus and the apostle²⁹. Moreover, he vows to get prepared for the immediate Return of the Lord as a follower of Christ in His servants³⁰.

¹⁸ "Dispensing of Holy Spirit" – this formulation without the definite article "the" emphasizes the conveyed gift of God, unlike the Holy Spirit as person of the Trinity.

¹⁹ Here too it is deliberately stressed that a rebirth out of Water and Spirit is constituted of both the Holy Baptism with Water as well as the Holy Sealing.

²⁰ The attaining of childhood in God through rebirth out of Water and Spirit means that a childhood in God is only gained if both the Baptism with Water as well as the Holy Sealing have been performed. It must therefore not be asserted that the childhood in God is only and exclusively conveyed through Holy Sealing.

²¹ cf. Romans 8:16.17; 1 Peter 1:3-5.

²² cf. 1 Corinthians 12:13.27.

²³ The formulation "Work of the Lord" expresses that God does a particular work of redemption within the "fellowship of those believing in Christ and professing their faith in Him". This work includes only those reborn out of Water and Spirit.

²⁴ cf. Revelation 13:8 and 21:27 in context with Revelation 14:1 and 7:3.

²⁵ cf. Revelation 5:9; 14:3-4; 1 Corinthians 6:19.20.

²⁶ cf. Revelation 19:7.8.

²⁷ cf. James 1:18; Revelation 14:4.

²⁸ cf. 2 Corinthians 5:17.

²⁹ cf. Matthew 28:20 in context with Acts 2:42.

³⁰ The belief in the immediate Return of Christ to take home His congregation is indispensable and determines the conduct of the children of God.



- 2.6 Just as the Holy Baptism with Water, the Holy Sealing is also not repeatable³¹.
- 2.7 In the New Apostolic Church the Holy Sealing is also dispensed to children whereby the parents must profess their faith in the doctrine of Jesus and the apostles. This practice is based on the understanding that children must not be excluded from God's acts of blessing, as they too are in need of the Lord's grace.

Zurich, 2006-01-24

³¹ Since the Holy Sealing is seen in context with the attaining of the childhood in God it is obvious that it is not repeatable.