

# CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF THE BAPTIST UNION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

As revised and adopted at the Annual Assembly in 1933,  
and amended at subsequent Assemblies

## 1. Name

**THE BAPTIST UNION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA**

## 2. Definitions

In the Constitution and By-laws of THE BAPTIST UNION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA the following terms will have the meaning herein assigned to them:

**BOARD** shall mean a group of individuals appointed annually by the Assembly in accordance with approved Terms of Reference, to administer specific areas of the Union's ministry, as defined by the Assembly from time to time.

**CHURCH** shall mean a gathered community of Protestant believers which accepts the supreme and final authority of Holy Scripture in all matters of faith and practice, observes the two ordinances of Believers' Baptism by Immersion and the Lord's Supper, and affirms its adherence to the Declaration of Principles as set forth in Clause 4.

**DELEGATE** shall mean a person appointed as an accredited representative by a Member Church, Territorial Association and who has been officially registered as such.

**EXECUTIVE** shall mean the committee constituted as under 9.1.

**FELLOWSHIP** shall mean a congregation accepted into Fellowship status by a Territorial Association on the basis of an acceptable Constitution and a desire to work towards full membership

**GENERAL ASSOCIATION** shall mean an association which is not a Territorial Association but comprises individuals, churches or groups united in a common interest for specific purposes in keeping with the objects of the Union by means of a constitution acceptable to the Union; which association is recognised and accepted as such by the Union, although not a member thereof.

**MEMBER CHURCH** shall mean a church in membership with the Union.

**MINISTER** shall mean a person whose name appears on one of the accredited ministerial lists of the Union.

**OFFICERS OF THE UNION** shall mean the President, Vice-President, Ex-President, the General Secretary, and the Associate General Secretary.

**TERRITORIAL ASSOCIATION** shall mean an association which includes 10 or more member churches in a distinct and separate geographic area which are united by way of a formal constitution as an association for the purpose of fellowship and service and is admitted as such to membership of the Union by a 75 per cent vote of the Assembly.

**TRUSTEES OF THE UNION** shall mean such persons as the Assembly shall from time to time appoint as such.

**UNION** shall mean The Baptist Union of Southern Africa.

## 3. Membership

3.1. The Union shall comprise:

3.1.1. All Member churches at the date of adoption of the Amended Constitution and such Churches as shall be admitted to membership by vote of the Assembly.

3.1.2. All Territorial Associations in membership with the Union at date of adoption of the Amended Constitution and such Territorial Association as shall qualify

for and be admitted to, membership by vote of the Assembly

3.2. Dismissal of Members:

Notwithstanding anything contained in 3.1 above the Assembly shall have power to remove from membership any Member Church, Territorial Association by a 75 per cent majority vote of the Assembly. If however a motion from the Executive is introduced for removal or dismissal pursuant to By-Law 2 (b), a majority vote by the Assembly shall be sufficient authorisation for the removal of the member church from membership of the Union.

**4. Declaration of Principle**

The basis of the Union is:

- 4.1. That the Lord Jesus Christ, our God and Saviour, is the sole and absolute authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and that each Church has liberty to interpret and administer His Laws.
- 4.2. That Christian Baptism is the immersion in water into the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, of those who have professed repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ who "died for our sins according to the Scriptures; was buried, and rose again the third day."
- 4.3. That it is the duty of every disciple to bear personal witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to take part in the evangelisation of the world.

**5. Objects**

The objects of the Union are:

- 5.1. To advance the cause of the kingdom of God primarily in Southern Africa.
- 5.2. To promote unity and brotherly love among its member churches and churches moving towards membership.
- 5.3. To disseminate Baptist Principles and to maintain religious liberty.
- 5.4. To establish and assist Churches wherein Baptist Principles are practised.

**6. Functions and Powers**

- 6.1. To collect information respecting the history, organisation and work of Member Churches and Associations.
- 6.2. To co-ordinate and combine the efforts of Member Churches in all matters affecting the general welfare of the Union, and its Members.
- 6.3. To engage in medical, educational, relief and other benevolent work and to confer and co-operate as occasion may require with Member Churches and other christian communities and philanthropic societies.
- 6.4. To make provision for retiring and relief allowances for its staff, Ministers, Missionaries and their wives or widows.
- 6.5. To provide for theological education and for training for service in the churches.
- 6.6. To control admission to and deletion from the Union's lists of accredited ministers.
- 6.7. To provide for the supply of church and mission requisites.
- 6.8. To give services of advice or arbitration in cases of difference or dispute, with the consent of the parties concerned.
- 6.9. To receive, purchase, hold, hypothecate, sell, donate, lease, exchange and partition movable and immovable property.
- 6.10. To act as Trustee for any Church or Association whether established or to be established.
- 6.11. To invest funds of the Union in such manner as may be prescribed by By-Law
- 6.12. To confer and co-operate as occasion may require with Member Churches and Ministers in connection with ministerial settlement and the like.
- 6.13. To tender advice to Member Churches and Ministers on all matters appertaining to

ministerial settlements and the like.

- 6.14. To borrow money with or without security for the purposes of the Union, and Associations, in such manner at such times and on such conditions as the Executive may determine.
- 6.15. To appoint and dismiss staff.
- 6.16. To make or amend such By-Laws as it may deem necessary for the proper administration of its business.

## **7. Method of Functioning**

- 7.1. The Union shall function through its Assembly.
- 7.2. The Union as a legal body shall exist in its own right, separate from its members.
- 7.3. The Union shall continue to exist even when its membership changes and there are different office bearers.
- 7.4. The Union shall be able to own property and other possessions.

## **8. The Assembly**

- 8.1. The Assembly shall consist of:
  - 8.1.1. Delegates
  - 8.1.2. The Executive
- 8.2. Right to attend the Assembly:

The following persons shall have the right to attend the Assembly and with the consent of the President, to participate without the right to vote:

  - 8.2.1. Past-Presidents in membership of a Member Church, Ministers, and two representatives of each General Association.
  - 8.2.2. Those persons who at October 1976 were Personal Members of the Union and who have continued to fulfil their obligations as such.
- 8.3. The Assembly shall meet annually when possible, and the Executive shall have power to summon a special Assembly.
- 8.4. The resolutions of the Assembly shall be executed by the Executive unless the Assembly otherwise direct.
- 8.5. 10% of the total member churches of the Union present shall constitute a quorum.

## **9. The Executive**

- 9.1. The Executive shall consist of:
  - 9.1.1. The Officers of the Union.
  - 9.1.2. Representatives from and elected by each Territorial Association to reflect the total constituency of the Association, based on the principle of proportional representation. The formula to be determined by the Assembly from time to time.

*(The formula for the proportional allocation of the 24 Territorial Association seats of the Executive to be as follows:*

- 9.1.2.1. *There will be a minimum of three and a maximum of six representatives per Association.*
- 9.1.2.2. *The actual allocation of seats will be determined annually by the post-Assembly Executive, based on a simple percentage of churches belonging to the Union in each Association.)*

9.1.3. One representative from each recognised Board.

9.1.4. Such other members but not exceeding four in number as may be co-opted by vote of three-fourths of the Executive members present at the meeting dealing therewith.

9.2. Each member of the Executive shall be a baptised believer in membership with a Member Church.

9.3. The Executive shall meet at such times and places as may be considered necessary for the dispatch of business.

9.4. The Executive shall be fully constituted provided there is the necessary quorum notwithstanding the failure on the part of any Association referred to in sub-clause 9.1.2 to elect a representative thereto or thereon.

#### **10. Submission of Differences**

It is desired and expected that every member of the Union shall submit all grave differences, which tend to create divisions, to the Executive for arbitration and shall abide by the award therein subject to a right of appeal to the next meeting of the Assembly.

#### **11. Union Assets**

All immovable property of the Union shall be registered in the name of the Trustees of the Union.

#### **12. Authentication of Documents**

The General Secretary of the Union or his deputy is authorised to issue under his signature any certified copies of, or extracts from, the Constitution and By-Laws of the Union, or of minutes of meetings of the Assembly or the Executive, to which full faith and credence shall be given.

#### **13. Dissolution**

13.1. The dissolution of the Union may be effected by a 75% majority vote of the delegates present at the Assembly.

13.2. In the event of 13.1 such Assembly shall authorise the Executive to transfer any assets that remain, after all the liabilities of the Union have been met, to another non-profit organisation having similar objectives.

#### **14. Alterations of Constitution and By-Laws**

Amendments to this Constitution shall be effected by resolution of the Annual Assembly in pursuance of a notice of motion in writing given at the previous Assembly and published as that Assembly shall direct. Such a resolution shall require the approval of a two-third majority of those present and entitled to vote at the Assembly except in the case of a proposed amendment of the Declaration of Principle which shall require approval by all members of the Union.

**(E-mail changes to: [handbook@baptistunion.org.za](mailto:handbook@baptistunion.org.za))**

## BY-LAWS

### 1) Ministerial Recognition

- a) The regulations adopted by the Assembly from time to time shall be deemed to be incorporated herein.
- b) It shall be a condition for ministry recognition that every Minister, Probationer Minister, Student Minister and Candidate for Recognised Ministry shall accept without resort to a Court of Law the decision of the Executive and of the Assembly as hereinafter provided for and the decision of the Executive and of the Assembly and of the court of appeal pursuant to the regulations mentioned in sub-paragraph (a) hereof.

### 2) Admission to Membership of the Union

- a) The following procedure and criteria shall be used when receiving and considering applications from any Church for membership of the Baptist Union, with a view to recommending their acceptance by the Assembly:
  - i) The receipt by the General Secretary or his deputy of a completed written prescribed application from the Church together with a copy of the Constitution of the same by the end of February.
  - ii) The receipt by the General Secretary or his deputy of an adequate report, based upon a questionnaire to be prepared by the Executive, from the Territorial Association by the end of April.
  - iii) The documents referred to in Clause (i) and (ii) shall be submitted to a Sub-Committee of the Executive of the Baptist Union, which Committee shall make its report to the Executive.
  - iv) Before reaching its decision the Executive shall require clear evidence that:
    - (a) the applying church is numerically and financially viable. That is, that it has already taken firm root in the community it serves, shows promise of expanding its membership, is meeting its present financial obligations satisfactorily, and is likely to be able to meet - within what the Executive decides to be a reasonable time - the normal financial challenges of an established church in the context in which it exists with particular reference to its responsibility for the support of and retirement provision for its pastor. ***(This support should not exclude the possibility of the pastor providing for part of his/her income through "tent-making".)***

Notwithstanding iv (a) above, the Executive may decide to waive or modify the condition relating to financial viability, if in its judgement and that of the Association in which the applying church is situated, the work is of such a strategic importance as to warrant an ongoing witness.

- (b) within the membership of the Church there is leadership capable of fostering spiritual growth based on Baptist principle and providing sound administration.
  - (c) The applicant church has as an essential element in its order and life, the recognition and practice of the principle that each member of the church has the responsibility and inalienable right to participate fully in its life and government, including the appointment of its leadership.
- v) The Executive may, at its discretion, appoint a sub-committee of its own members to meet with the executive body or the members of the applying church, to discuss matters relating to the Baptist understanding of the nature and administration of a local church. This sub-committee shall, after such meeting or meetings, submit a confidential report to the Executive.

- b) It shall be understood that such Churches are completely autonomous and as such are free to manage their own affairs in terms of their own adopted constitutions. However, a condition of continuing membership of the Union shall be that when a church desires to alter its constitution, such proposed alterations must receive the approval of the Baptist Union Executive. In the event of a church adopting an amendment which is not acceptable to the Executive, the Executive shall enter into meaningful negotiations with the church. In the event of this proving unsuccessful the Executive shall be entitled by a 75% majority vote to introduce a motion to the Assembly for the removal or dismissal of such member from the membership of the Union.
- c) Fellowships which have been formally recognised by a Territorial Association will enjoy Fellowship status of the Union. They shall be listed in the handbook, receive all relevant correspondence, pay affiliation fees (as per 8c), and be entitled to representation at the annual Assembly without the right to vote.
- d) Applications for admission by any Association to membership of the Union shall be in writing and in the hands of the General Secretary of the Union or his deputy at least five months prior to the Assembly, for the Executive's recommendation or otherwise.

### 3) **Appointment of Delegates**

- a) Every Church shall be entitled to appoint to each Assembly not more than three delegates on the basis of one delegate for each 100 members or part thereof.
- b) Every Association in membership with the Union shall be entitled to appoint to each Assembly one delegate.
- c) Notification of such appointments shall be given to the General Secretary of the Union or his deputy at least 21 days prior to the Assembly.

### 4) **Business of the Assembly**

- a) The President of the Union shall enter upon his office at the opening session of the Assembly and shall thereafter preside at all sessions thereof. In the event of his failing to take the chair the Vice-President shall do so, failing whom, a chairman shall be elected by the Assembly.
- b) The Vice-President, the General Secretary, and the Associate General Secretary of the Union shall be elected at a meeting of the Assembly.
- c) A Vice-President shall be appointed to hold office for one year and at the conclusion of that year he shall without further election, become President of the Union. If by reason of circumstances it becomes necessary to elect a President, such appointment shall be made at a meeting of the Assembly and for a period of one year.
- d) All the office bearers recited in Sub-clause (b) above with the exception however of the Vice-President, shall be appointed to hold office for a period of three years unless the Assembly shall otherwise resolve. At the expiration of his period of office, each such office bearer shall be eligible for re-election for a further similar period, subject however to the right of the Assembly to resolve otherwise as to the period of appointment.
- e) The procedure for the election of the office bearers recited in Sub-clause (b) above (and where applicable for the election of the President) and of such persons as require to be elected to the Executive shall be as follows:
  - i) Nominations for the office of the Vice-President (and where applicable of the President), for membership of the Executive and, when necessary for the posts of General Secretary, and Associate General Secretary of the Baptist Union shall be invited from Churches and Associations in Membership with the Union whose affiliation fees are not in arrears.
  - ii) Such nominations shall be on the form sent out by the General Secretary of the Union or his deputy to Churches and Associations at least three months prior to the Assembly.

- iii) Nominations shall reach the General Secretary of the Union or his deputy at least eight weeks prior to the Assembly. Immediately thereafter the General Secretary or his deputy shall inform each nominee of his nomination and shall seek consent to nomination in writing. If no such consent confirmed in writing is received by the General Secretary or his deputy five weeks before the Assembly, the nomination shall be invalid. Nominations received later than the prescribed date shall be invalid.
  - iv) The General Secretary or his deputy shall notify all members of the Baptist Union of the names of the consenting nominees including those nominated by the Executive at least four weeks before the Assembly.
  - v) Failing sufficient valid nominations for the Executive from Churches, Associations and Personal Members the Chairman shall, at the first business session of the Assembly, invite further nominations from members of the Assembly there present.
  - vi) Nominations made by Members of the Assembly pursuant to the provisions of Sub-clause (v) above shall be in writing on the form provided. No speeches shall be permitted in connection therewith.
  - vii) Notwithstanding anything in Sub-clause (iii) and (iv), should a situation arise in relation to the filling of these posts which is declared by a 75% majority of the Executive to be an emergency situation, the Executive or any member of the Assembly shall have the right to bring a nomination or nominations directly to the Assembly. It is understood that in such a situation when a nominee has been unable to give his prior consent, his election at an Assembly shall constitute an invitation to him.
  - viii) Complete lists of all nominations as aforesaid shall be prominently displayed as from the commencement of the Assembly and, further, the time arranged for such elections shall be announced from the chair of the Assembly immediately after the induction of the President and such elections shall take precedence as the first business after the tea interval during the first business session of the Assembly.
  - ix) Elections shall be by ballot. In the event of a tie the Chairman shall have a casting vote.
  - x) In the election, where necessary, of members to the Executive, each voter shall vote for not more than the required number of members. A nominee shall be declared elected only after receiving a majority of the votes cast, and shall enter into office as an Executive member immediately at the conclusion of the Assembly at which he is elected.
  - xi) In the case of the Vice-Presidency a majority of votes cast shall be necessary for election, provided that the sole nominee shall be declared elected. In the event of a first ballot being inconclusive the names of the two nominees receiving the greater number of votes cast shall be submitted to a second ballot and the nominee receiving a majority of votes cast at such second ballot shall be declared elected.
  - xii) In the case of offices other than that of the Vice-Presidency and Executive members (in respect of whom see (x) and (xi) hereof) no nominee may be elected to such office unless a majority of those present and entitled to vote, vote in favour of such nominees. This stipulation shall apply regardless of the number of nominees to any office. In the event of a first ballot being inconclusive in respect of any such office, the names of at least two nominees receiving the greater number of votes cast shall be submitted to a second ballot. Should no nominee receive the required majority, the name of the nominee with the greater number of votes shall be submitted to a final ballot. In the event of no nominee for a particular office receiving the required majority, the Executive is empowered to make interim arrangements in respect of that office until the next Assembly.
- f) In addition to the foregoing appointments the Assembly may elect annually such

other officials and Standing Committees as it may deem expedient.

- g)** Unless otherwise herein provided voting on all matters before the Assembly shall be by show of hands subject to the right of any ten members to demand a ballot.
- h)** Notices of motion shall be submitted to the General Secretary of the Union or his deputy in writing, signed by the proposer, at least 75 days prior to the Assembly. The proposal contained in these notices, together with any proposals then available from the Executive, shall be sent out to the churches at least 65 days prior to the Assembly.

Notice of motion not so submitted may be considered upon permission of the Assembly granted without division.

Notwithstanding the above the Executive shall have full right at any time to bring any proposal to the Assembly.

No vote, however, shall be taken upon any matter introduced without notice of motion as defined above, which is considered by the Assembly to be a major matter.

- i)** The Assembly may, in order to facilitate specific business thereat appoint Committees to deal therewith. The conveners and quorum of committees shall be fixed by the Assembly. Each Committee shall elect its own Chairman and minutes of business shall be recorded and upon a majority vote of the Assembly be available for use in the Assembly. Reports of each Committee shall be submitted in writing signed by the Chairman.

## **5) The Executive**

- a)** The Chairman of the Executive shall be the President of the Union who shall preside at its meeting during his term of office. The Chairman shall have both a deliberate and a casting vote.
- b)** Seven members of the Executive shall form a quorum.
- c)** Any elected member or member nominated by an Association who shall fail to attend any two consecutive meetings without leave shall forfeit his seat.
- d)** On the requisition of any seven members of the Executive the General Secretary of the Union or his deputy shall summon a special meeting by notice setting forth the business to be transacted thereat.

## **6) Duties and Powers of the Executive**

- a)** Without derogation from the Executive powers by the Constitution conferred, the Executive shall -
  - i)** Prepare the business and arrange the agenda of the Assembly.
  - ii)** Prepare and present to the Assembly audited financial statements and general and statistical reports of the year's work which after adoption by the Assembly it shall have printed and circulated together with a digest of the proceedings of the Assembly.
  - iii)** Appoint Honorary Examiners to audit the several accounts of the Union and of the South African Baptist Missionary Society.
  - iv)** Keep a register of Ministers, Probationer Ministers, and Student Ministers, Churches, Associations, Lay Preachers and personal Members.
  - v)** Appoint arbitrators or advisers for the settlement of differences submitted.
  - vi)** Control and administer the Trust Funds in terms of By-Law No. 9.
  - vii)** Take such initial steps for the formation of Churches, Associations, and other Bodies as it may deem necessary for the better fulfilment of the objects of the Union as in the Constitution defined.
- b)** The Executive may in its discretion:
  - i)** In the event of any emergency arising between Assemblies do all such acts,

matters and things and authorise the signing and execution of all such deeds and documents as it may deem necessary in the best interest of the Union, and any resolution passed pursuant to the powers hereby vested in the executive shall be deemed to be a resolution of the Assembly. Any action taken hereunder shall be reported to the next Assembly.

- ii) In order to facilitate and expedite the transaction of business, appoint committees to meet and deal with matters within terms of reference given, which may include specific delegation of power to act. In all instances where power to act is delegated at least 2 out of 3 Committee members shall be Executive members. When such power to act is exercised the Executive member ratio shall be maintained in voting on such an issue.
  - iii) Fill any vacancy occasioned between Assemblies by the death, retirement or incapacity of any officer of the Union or other Official or Committee member appointed by the Assembly. Any person so appointed shall hold office until the next Assembly
  - iv) Fill any vacancy in itself that may occur in its elected membership.
  - v) Buy in for the protection of the Trust Funds any property mortgaged under the provisions of By-Law 9 (b) hereof and therefore utilise, let, sell or otherwise dispose of the same.
- c) The Executive may initiate discussions with any recognised pastor and/or member church in the event of a conflict situation which could, in the opinion of the Executive, be prejudicial to the witness of a member church, the Union or the good name of the Christian Ministry.
- d) The Executive may initiate discussions with any person on the Ministry List whose conduct is such that it may result in removal from the Ministry List should such behaviour be persisted in.
- e) The Executive may, on its own motion or on complaint laid before it, remove from the list of accredited ministers after due enquiry any Minister, Probationer Minister or Student Minister, found by it to be guilty of misconduct, subject to the right of the Minister, Probationer Minister, or Student Minister concerned to appeal to the next Assembly.
- f) The Executive may remove from the list of accredited ministers the name of any person whose acknowledged theological views are considered by the Executive to be a radical deviation from the Declaration of Principle or from accepted Baptist Principles as enunciated and accepted at the 1987 Assembly; subject to the right of the person concerned to appeal to the next Assembly to appoint a Court of Appeal.
- g) The Executive may suspend any person on the Ministry list immediately upon commencement of divorce litigation for at least one year in terms of 5.4 of the Ministry Regulations.
- h) A resolution approved by signature of all the members of the Executive present in South Africa shall be as valid and effectual as if it had been passed at an Executive meeting duly called and constituted.
- i) In the event of a conflict situation in the local Church where timeous intervention is required between Executive meetings, the Officers shall be empowered to act on behalf of the Executive. A unanimous decision of the Officers shall be binding on the Executive.
- 7) The Appointment, Duties and Powers of the Trustees**
- a) The Assembly shall appoint from time to time, three persons, preferably resident in the same area, as Trustees of the Union and may appoint alternates to all or any such Trustees.
- b) Each Trustee so appointed shall hold office until such time:
- i) As he may resign.
  - ii) As he may absent himself from South Africa for any consecutive period exceeding six months.

- iii) As he may die.
- iv) As he may assign his estate or be declared insolvent.
- v) As he may be removed from office by vote of the Assembly.
- c) In the event of any Trustee ceasing to hold office between Assemblies, the Executive shall fill the vacancy so created. Any person so appointed shall hold office until the next Assembly.
- d) Any two Trustees or their alternates may do any act or execute any deed or other document required to carry out the directions of the Assembly or of the Executive.
- e) A certificate under the hand of the General Secretary of the Union or his deputy shall for all purposes be deemed sufficient evidence of the appointment of the Trustees or of their alternates, if any.
- f) The Trustees of the Union shall hold on behalf of and for the benefit of the Union all property, estate, actions, credits and things of the Union.
- g) All proceeds and income accruing to the Trustees shall be dealt with as directed by the Executive.
- h) The Trustees shall be bound to make, conclude, and accept all such purchases, sales, investments, leases, contracts and agreements whatsoever as directed by the Executive subject always to the terms of the Constitution and By-Laws of the Union and also to sue for and recover all monies, debts, goods and effects whatsoever due or belonging to the Union, and to discharge any securities or investments as so directed by the Executive as aforesaid.

## 8) Finance

- a) A membership fee, as determined from time to time by the Executive, shall be payable annually to the Union by each member Church and member Association.

In the event of non-payment of affiliation fees by any member church its attention shall be drawn to By-Law 8 (b) of the Constitution. Accounts for affiliation fees shall be sent out to churches annually.

- b) The financial year shall be from the 1<sup>st</sup> January to the 31<sup>st</sup> December; all membership fees shall become payable before the 30<sup>th</sup> day of June in each year, and any member of the Union whose membership fees are in arrears shall forfeit its right to representation at the Assembly. The name of any member in arrears shall be reported to the Executive. Where a member church has been in arrears for two years, the church will automatically revert to Fellowship status until membership fees are paid, in which case reinstatement will take place immediately. In the event of ongoing non-payment, a church may be removed by the Executive from the register of members.
- c) Affiliation fees for churches with Fellowship status will be half that of member churches.
- d) It is desired and expected that, in addition to membership fees, every Church and Association will contribute voluntarily an annual sum towards the general revenue of the Union and will notify at each Assembly, either through its delegation or otherwise, the amount for which it is willing to accept assessment for the ensuing year.
- e) All Assembly delegates will pay to the General Secretary a registration fee as determined by the Executive. Such payments shall accompany the required notification under By-Law No. 3

Such fees, or so much thereof as may be required by the entertaining Church or Churches, shall be paid to the Church or Churches entertaining the Assembly as a contribution towards the expense thereof.

- f) The Treasurer is hereby authorised to make the undermentioned payments in respect of Executive meetings: To each Executive member other than an Association representative attending, by any method of transport, any Executive meeting other than the post-Assembly Executive meeting, the equivalent of a return

air fare between his or her place of residence and the place of meeting, plus such out of pocket expenses as may be approved by the Executive. In the event of two or more members of the Executive travelling together by car an amount of 1/2 times the air fare shall be paid.

- g) The Union's income and property may not be distributed to its members or office bearers, except as reasonable compensation for services rendered. Members or office-bearers have no rights in the property or other assets of the Union solely by virtue of their being members or office-bearers.
- h) The Financial Secretary shall be responsible for the control of the day to day finances of the Union. The Financial Secretary shall arrange for a bank account to be opened. Withdrawals will be made under those signatures as directed by the Executive. The Financial Secretary shall be accountable to the Executive.

## 9) The Baptist Trust Funds

- a) **Committee:** The Committee shall be called the Baptist Trust and Special Purposes Funds Committee. The Committee shall consist of the Trust Funds Secretary, the General Secretary, the Financial and Administrative Secretary and five members who shall be appointed annually by the Assembly of the Union, on the recommendation of the Executive. This Committee shall administer the Baptist Trust Funds, plus such special purpose funds as may from time to time be entrusted to it by resolution of the Executive. A clear distinction shall be maintained between Trust and Special Purposes Funds within the accounts of the Committee.
- b) **Baptist Trust Funds:** These shall comprise trust funds of the Baptist Union, the South African Baptist Missionary Society, and the Missions Department of the Union. In the application of such trust funds, priority shall be given to the granting of loans, with or without security, to Baptist Churches or Institutions in membership with the Union or under the direction of the Union with a preference for the purchase of sites and/or the erection of church/multipurpose buildings rather than the church manses and community facilities. The Committee shall endeavour at all times to secure the capital of the trust funds and honour the donors' intention in relation to the application of income on the capital of the trust.
- c) **Baptist Special Purposes Funds:** These shall comprise:-
  - i) Such special Purpose Funds of the Union as shall by Executive resolution entrusted to the Committee from time to time to be applied as directed by the Executive.
  - ii) the Baptist Union Extension Funds, the Baptist Union Centenary Fund, and the South African Baptist Property Investment Corporation (SABCOR), which shall be administered in terms of their specified purposes as follows:-
    - The Baptist Union Extension Fund shall grant at its discretion loans to new churches for assistance in the acquisition of fixed property. As far as possible such loans shall be guaranteed by a mother-church or an Association of the Union. Loans shall be free of interest for such period as the Committee may determine but thereafter be subject to interest as the Committee may decide. Interest received shall be capitalised. Preference will be given to the purchase of sites and/or the erection of church / multipurpose buildings rather than church manses and community facilities.
    - The Baptist Union Centenary Fund shall be invested to provide income for bursaries and study loans to theological, missions and ministry students, as provided in the Fund/s Trust Deed. Loans may also be made, at market related interest rates, for Baptist Union departmental or Baptist Associational purposes.
    - SABCOR shall give priority to granting loans to Baptist Churches and Baptist Institutions as specified in section (b) above. Income of SABCOR shall be capitalised. Preference will be given to the purchase of sites

and/or the erection of church/multipurpose buildings rather than church manses and community facilities.

- Proper accounts of the Baptist Trust and Special Purposes Funds shall be maintained so as to retain identity of participating funds with regard to capital investment and to income earned. Disbursement shall be in accordance with the purpose for which the fund was originally established.
- The Committee shall have power to operate banking accounts, and unless otherwise expressly directed by the creator of a trust or a donor of monies which form part of any fund, to invest funds not immediately needed for priority loans as provided above, in any bank, registered deposit-taking or investment company of good standing and in government or municipal stocks.

**d) Annual Accounts:** Annual accounts shall be prepared to coincide with the financial year of the Union as determined from time to time. Audited accounts shall be submitted to the Executive with an annual report of the Committee to the Union Assembly.

**e) Trust Funds Secretary:** The Trust Funds Secretary is an honorary position but the incumbent shall be entitled to reimbursement of expenses incurred on behalf of the Baptist Union.

#### **10) The BUSA Pension and the BUSA Provident Fund**

The BUSA Pension Fund and the BUSA Provident Fund (successors to the Baptist Union Pension Fund established by the Union in October, 1910) shall be managed in accordance with the provisions of their respective Rules and Regulations.

#### **11) South African Baptist Missionary Society**

The South African Baptist Missionary Society established by the Union in the year 1892 shall be managed in accordance with the provision of the Constitution and By-Laws thereof adopted at the Annual Assembly held at East London in 1937 and amended at the Annual Assembly held at Port Elizabeth in 1938, with such further amendments as have been adopted or may be adopted hereafter.

#### **12) Churches**

- a) All Churches shall report annually by the end of March to the General Secretary of the Union giving such statistical figures as may be called for by the Union and in the case of aided Churches a general report on the year's work.
- b) Any application to the Union for a grant in aid by a Church shall be accompanied by an audited financial statement.

#### **13) Associations**

- a) Each Association shall forward an annual report to the General Secretary of the Union at least five months prior to the Annual Assembly. Failure to do so will debar the Association from appointing nominees to the Executive.
- b) Each Association shall notify the General Secretary of the Union of the name of its Nominees, if any, to the Executive of the Union.

#### **14) Alterations of By-Laws**

Amendments to these By-Laws saving By-Laws 10 and 11 hereof shall be effected by Resolution of the Assembly in pursuance of a notice of motion in writing given to the General Secretary of the Union at least one month prior to the Assembly.

**(E-mail changes to: handbook@baptistunion.org.za)**  
**REGULATIONS GOVERNING**  
**RECOGNITION FOR MINISTRY**  
**(As revised by the 1998 Assembly)**

**INTRODUCTION**

Baptists believe in "the priesthood of all believers". In particular, they believe that no inherent distinction exists between Christians such as that underlying the use of the words "priests" and "laymen". A church may appoint any one of its members at any time to perform any of those functions usually undertaken by its pastor.

At the same time, we believe that God calls some to undertake a recognised ministry, for which the Union requires theological training and vocational equipping. It remains the prerogative of the local church to appoint whom it will to undertake such ministry roles and to lay down whatever conditions are deemed appropriate. However, for the guidance of the wider Baptist family, where such a call is more widely recognised, and following an interview to ascertain that the applicant is adequately qualified for the kind of ministry being exercised, the person's name may be placed on the Ministry List.

**1 DEFINITIONS**

- 1.1** "Ministry List" (hereinafter "the List") is a record of those persons granted status by the Union because of:
- a)** their membership of a church affiliated to the Union; and
  - b)** their call to a recognised pastoral position in a church affiliated to the Union; or to a ministry which is directly related to the extension of the Kingdom of God (in the opinion of at least two-thirds of the members of the Executive present when the vote is taken); and
  - c)** their adequate theological training and vocational equipping.
- 1.2** "College" shall be "The Baptist Theological College of Southern Africa," or "The Cape Town Baptist Seminary"
- 1.3** "College Council" shall mean either the Council of the Baptist Theological College of Southern Africa or that of the Cape Town Baptist Seminary, according as the context may indicate.
- 1.4** "Seminarium" shall be "Die Teologiese Seminarium van die Baptiste".
- 1.5** "BBI" shall mean the Baptist Bible Institute, formerly at Fort White.
- 1.6** "The Union" shall be the Baptist Union of Southern Africa.
- 1.7** "Assembly" shall be an annual Assembly of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa.
- 1.8** "Executive" shall be the Executive Committee of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa.
- 1.9** "Ministry Board" shall be a committee set up by the Executive in order to deal with ministry matters, including the interviewing of applicants who wish their names to be included on the Ministry List.
- 1.10** "Advisor" shall be a person appointed by the Executive to guide and advise persons with probationer or student status.
- 1.11** "Misconduct" shall include all conduct which is prejudicial to the good name of the Christian Ministry or the witness of the Union.

**2 RECOGNISED MINISTRY**

**2.1 Fully-Accredited Ministry**

- 2.1.1** Persons serving in a recognised ministry within the Union

Fully-Accredited status may be granted on the List (signified by an "F"), after receipt of the completed application form prescribed by

the Executive, on the recommendation of the Executive confirmed by an Assembly:

- I. to a Probationer who has completed, to the satisfaction of the Executive and after receipt of a report from an Advisor, at least two years in recognised ministry within or outside the Union subsequent to the granting of Probationer status.
- II. to a Fully-Accredited person of another Baptist Union recognised by the Executive provided the secretary of such Union has confirmed in writing the applicant's good standing.
- III. to a Baptist pastor whose name does not appear in the Fully-Accredited List of any other Baptist Union, but who is deemed to have had adequate theological training, and whose record in the ministry is fully satisfactory to the Executive.
- IV. to a pastor in good standing in any other denomination who applies for recognition as a result of Baptist convictions; who has satisfied the Executive as to adequate theological training and knowledge of the Scriptures; and who, if so required by the Executive, has satisfactorily completed a course of study in Baptist principles and polity.
- V. to an applicant over 45 years of age, who has been serving in a recognised ministry within the Union for at least the six consecutive years immediately prior to application and has given evidence of spiritual integrity, intellectual ability, and adequate knowledge of the Scriptures, Baptist Principles and polity.

- 2.1.2** Persons serving in a recognised ministry outside the Union
- a) When a person whose name is listed under section 2.1.1 above subsequently occupies a position outside the Union, the Executive may on application retain that person's Fully Accredited status on the List provided the new position is declared a recognised ministry by the Executive.
  - b) Fully-Accredited status may also be granted, on the recommendation of the Executive, confirmed by an Assembly, to persons who are serving in a recognised ministry outside the Union, who have completed the prescribed form, and who fulfil the requirements of any of the section 2.1.1 (ii), (iii) or (iv).

- 2.1.3** Persons having retired from a recognised ministry within or outside of the Union.
- a) The names of Fully-Accredited persons who retire from recognised ministry on or after reaching retirement age, or before that age for reasons of ill-health (duly certified and accepted by the Executive), shall be retained on the List (signified by a §)
  - b) Should a person whose name appears on the List retire before the requisite retirement age and take up full-time employment other than in a recognised ministry, that person's name shall be removed from the List, unless an Assembly shall decide otherwise after a recommendation from the Executive.

## **2.2 Probationer Ministry**

- 2.2.1** Persons serving in a recognised ministry within the Union

Probationer status may be granted on the List (signified by a "P"), on the recommendation of the Executive, confirmed by an Assembly, to

an applicant who has completed the prescribed form, who is serving in a recognised ministry and who has;

- I. obtained from one of the colleges or the Seminarium, internally or externally, or from BBI, a qualification acceptable to the Executive as adequate theological training;
- II. or has obtained what the Executive, after consultation with the College Councils or Seminarium Raad, shall deem to be adequate theological training;
- III. or has applied for recognition under sections 2.1.1 (a) (ii), (iii), (iv) or (v).

**2.2.2** Persons serving in a recognised ministry outside the Union

- a) Probationer status may be granted on the List, on the recommendation of the Executive, confirmed by an Assembly, to an applicant who has completed the prescribed form, who is serving in a recognised ministry outside the Union, and who conforms to the conditions set out in sections 2.2.1 (i), (ii) or (iii) above.

**2.2.3** No Probationer on the Ministry List shall be eligible for the Presidency of the Union.

**2.2.4** A Probationer shall be required to meet regularly with his/her appointed Advisor and to attend meetings for Probationers convened by the Territorial Association and to familiarise himself/herself with Baptist life and practice through regular attendance at national and associational events (e.g. Assemblies, council meetings, fraternals).

**2.3 Student Ministry**

**2.3.1**

- a) Student Ministry status may be granted on the List (signified by an "S") on the recommendation of the Executive, after interview, confirmed by an Assembly, to an applicant who has accepted a call to a recognised ministry within the Union.
- b) Notwithstanding any requirements of the Colleges or Seminarium, the Executive may require the College Councils or the Seminarium Raad or any other Training Institution recognised by the Executive to set such applicant a course of studies.
- c) In the event of a person with Student Ministry status no longer serving in a recognised ministry within the Union, such person's name shall automatically be removed from the List after the expiry of twelve months.
- d) If a person with Student Ministry status, studying under the College or Seminarium external course fails to write the required year-end examinations and does not reapply to the College or Seminarium for the course to be continued, such Student Ministry status shall be withdrawn at the next Assembly.

**2.3.2**

- a) No person with Student Ministry status shall be eligible for the Presidency of the Union.
- b) A person with Student Ministry status shall be guided by an Advisor.

### **3. PREPARATION FOR RECOGNISED MINISTRY**

#### **3.1. Candidates for Recognised Ministry**

- 3.1.1.** Those internal or external students of the College, Seminary or other training institution recognised by the Executive for this purpose, who have been satisfactorily interviewed by the Ministry Board in their final year of study shall be accepted as Candidates for Recognised Ministry.
- 3.1.2.** Subject to graduation, these names shall remain on a separate list of Candidates for Recognised Ministry until the following Assembly. Subsequently these names may remain on that list by annual decision of the Executive, for a period not exceeding three consecutive years.
- 3.1.3.** The names of candidates (other than those referred to in 3.1.1 above) accepted by the Ministry Board, shall be placed on this separate list until they serve in a recognised ministry within the Union, whereupon the Executive shall recommend to the Assembly the list on which such names shall appear. Names thus added may remain on this list, by annual decision of the Executive, for a period not exceeding three consecutive years.
- 3.1.4.** As with the Ministry List, acceptance on to this list does not necessarily imply suitability for the pastorate, but acknowledges adequate training, equipping and spiritual maturity for some form of recognised ministry.
- 3.1.5.** Admission to the list of Candidates for Recognised Ministry shall be subject to the candidate being in membership with a church affiliated to the Union.

### **4. PROCEDURES**

- 4.1.** Prior to the date of admission to the Ministry List, all persons (except for those in 2.1.1(ii)) shall have been in membership for not less than the preceding twelve months with a church affiliated to the Union.
- 4.2.** The Executive or the Ministry Board (including not less than eight Executive members of whom at least six must be present when the Board convenes) shall interview all applicants for:
  - a) Fully-Accredited status under 2.1.1 (a) (ii), (iii), (iv), (v) or 2.1.1 (b) and, in its discretion, for Fully-Accredited status under 2.1.1 (a) (i).
  - b) Probationer status under 2.2.1 (a) (i), (ii), (iii) or 2.2.2 (a), always providing that the Executive may elect to except applicants under 2.2.1 (a) already satisfactorily interviewed in terms of 2.3.1 (a) or 3.1.1 or 3.1.3.
  - c) Student Ministry status under 2.3.1 (a) or (b).
- 4.3.**
  - a) The recommendations of the Ministry Board for acceptance or non-acceptance of applicants shall be submitted to the Executive for ratification.
  - b) A quorum for the Ministry Board shall be eight and a two-thirds majority of those present and voting shall be required for a candidate to be accepted.
  - c) The Executive may, in its discretion, decide to re-interview any applicant.
- 4.4.** No recommendation shall be made to an Assembly unless the Executive approves the application by a two-thirds majority of the members present when the vote is taken, a quorum of twelve being required for this purpose.
- 4.5.** All applicants are required to declare in writing their acceptance of, and undertaking to abide by, the Statement of Baptist Principles adopted at the 1987 Assembly.

### **5. REVISION OF RECOGNISED MINISTRY LIST**

- 5.1.** The name of a person shall automatically be removed when such a person:
  - a) joins another denomination; or
  - b) resigns from the Ministry Lists of the Baptist Union; or
  - c) has not served in a recognised ministry within or outside the Union for a consecutive period of three years.
  - d) is regarded by the Executive as permanently resident outside the geographical

areas served by the Union.

- 5.2. The Executive shall remove from the list the name of any person who has acknowledged theological views considered by the Executive to be a radical deviation from the declaration of Principle or from accepted Baptist Principles as enunciated and accepted at the 1987 Assembly. In conducting an enquiry, a fair process shall be followed which affords the individual concerned the opportunity to be heard. Such a person may, however, appeal to the Assembly to appoint a Court of Appeal.
- 5.3. The Executive may, on its own motion or on complaint laid before it, remove from the list, after due enquiry, the name of any person found by it to be guilty of misconduct. In conducting an enquiry, a fair process shall be followed which affords the individual concerned the opportunity to be heard. The person concerned shall have the right to appeal to the Assembly to appoint a Court of Appeal. A person found guilty of misconduct shall not be eligible to apply for reinstatement to the ministry lists for a period of five years or for a lesser period if so determined by the Executive in the light of the circumstances.
- 5.4. Since an Assembly has ruled that divorce constitutes a major, though not insurmountable obstacle to inclusion on the Ministry List, and in order to facilitate spiritual recovery and wise judgement:
  - a) any person on the list shall be suspended immediately upon commencement of divorce litigation for at least one year.
  - b) The Executive shall fully investigate the circumstances surrounding the divorce;
  - c) After one year has elapsed:
    - I. the person shall be interviewed, wherever possible, by the Executive or its Ministry Board or by a delegated subcommittee.
    - II. the Executive shall decide whether to lift or extend the suspension, or to place the person's name on another list, subject to the right of the person concerned to appeal to the Assembly to appoint a Court of Appeal.
  - d) Alternatively, the Executive may act in terms of 5.3 of these regulations.
- 5.5. The Executive may, after full investigation, suspend from the list the name of any person who has been separated from his/her spouse for a period of at least one year and, in the opinion of the Executive, is unlikely to be reconciled. The subsequent procedure adopted by the Executive shall be the same as in clause 5.4 c) and d). The purpose of this clause is to treat a long marital separation which is unlikely to result in reconciliation in the same way as a legal divorce.
- 5.6. The Executive shall report to the Assembly the names of those who have been removed from the lists

**(E-mail changes to: [handbook@baptistunion.org.za](mailto:handbook@baptistunion.org.za))**

