

# Baptist Union of South Africa

## A Pastoral Letter to the Families of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa

Concerning the Call to Prayer, and Our Responsibility Before God as Citizens and Believers

### Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ. We write to you in this hour as your shepherds, your co-labourers, and your fellow-citizens, people who, like you, love this nation deeply and who bear in our hearts both the wounds of its past and the hopes of its future. We address you not only as a church, but as the Baptist family of Southern Africa: a people formed by Scripture, grounded in conscience, and called to speak and act in the public square with both conviction and compassion.

*"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land."*

— 2 Chronicles 7:14 (NIV)

### Seeking the Face of God for Our Land

We call first and foremost upon every Baptist family throughout South Africa to pause, to kneel, and to seek the face of God for peace in our beloved nation. We are witnesses to a season of anxiety — economic distress, political tension, social fracture, and a deep yearning in the heart of ordinary South Africans for justice, dignity, and security. We believe, as Baptists always have, that before any march, before any proclamation, before any act of public witness, the Church must first enter the place of prayer. It is from that sacred posture that all righteous action flows.

Let our homes become altars. Let our churches become sanctuaries of intercession. Let our voices rise, not first in the streets, but first before the throne of the Almighty, asking God for wisdom, for

restraint, for courage, and for His sovereign hand to guide this nation through its present turbulence into a future of flourishing and peace.

## **The Constitutional Right to March to March protest of 30 June 2026**

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On the 30th of June 2026, a peaceful and orderly march has been organised in cities across South Africa. We wish to state without ambiguity: the right to protest is not a privilege granted by any government — it is a constitutional right enshrined in Section 17 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, which guarantees every person the right to assemble, to demonstrate, to picket, and to present petitions in a peaceful manner. This right was bought at great cost by those who came before us. We will not be silent about it, nor will we apologise for exercising it.

As the Baptist Union of South Africa, we support the lawful and peaceful expression of this right. We call upon all who participate in the March to March on the 30th June to do so with discipline, dignity, and a spirit of non-violence. Let every Baptist who marches remember that they carry not only a placard but a testimony. Let our conduct be above reproach, that the name of Christ be honoured and the integrity of our witness be preserved.

*"Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare."*

— Jeremiah 29:7 (ESV)

## **The Sovereignty of South Africa and the Rights of a Nation**

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Among the concerns that have moved our hearts and those of many South Africans is the matter of our national sovereignty. We affirm unequivocally that South Africa is a sovereign, independent, and democratic state. Every sovereign nation — and this is true across the length and breadth of the African continent — has the right and the duty to protect its borders, to determine its own policies, and to govern its own affairs free from external political interference, manipulation, or coercion.

We call upon our government, our parliament, our institutions, and every South African citizen to stand firm in protecting the sovereignty of this republic from any quarter — whether domestic or foreign — that would seek to undermine it through improper interference in our internal affairs. The South African nation has fought too long and sacrificed too much to allow its hard-won independence to be eroded. As believers, we recognise that God ordained the nations (Acts 17:26)

and has placed within each nation the stewardship of its own life and future. That stewardship must be exercised with integrity and courage.

## **The Question of Undocumented Persons: A Crisis That Demands Truth and Compassion**

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We acknowledge with honesty and sorrow the complex reality of undocumented persons in South Africa. There are those who entered our country through networks of corruption, their documentation obtained through fraudulent means or forged by the very officials entrusted to protect our borders. This is a governance failure and a moral failure that must be confronted without compromise.

And yet there are others — fellow Africans and indeed people from across the world — who crossed into South Africa without documentation not through corruption, but through desperation. They came seeking what every human being is created to desire: a better life, safety, sustenance, and hope. They are, in the truest sense, the stranger and the sojourner in our midst. We cannot speak of them without remembering what the Word of God says:

*"When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt."*

— Leviticus 19:33–34 (NIV)

As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we have a responsibility to care for the stranger and the foreigner. This is not a liberal political position — it is a biblical mandate. We cannot read the Scriptures on Sunday and discard them on Monday when we meet a foreign face in our street, our neighbourhood, or our workplace. The measure of our discipleship is precisely this: how we treat the most vulnerable among us.

## **Against Tribalism: Reclaiming Our Identity as One African People**

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It has been noted by historians, sociologists, and theologians alike that the tribal divisions which continue to shape conflict in South Africa and across the African continent are, in significant part, the legacy of colonial administration. Colonial powers deliberately categorised, codified, and often invented or exaggerated tribal identities as a tool of governance — dividing the African people into manageable units that could be more easily administered and, when necessary, set against one another. This is not a contested academic footnote; it is a documented and important truth about our collective history.

It is a profound tragedy — and a spiritual failure — if the same divisions that were engineered to subjugate us continue to drive our responses to our African brothers and sisters who now live among us. We must not allow colonialism to continue to win in our hearts long after it has been formally dismantled in our politics. To turn against our foreign African brothers and sisters out of ethnic fear or cultural resentment is to hand the coloniser a posthumous victory over the soul of the African people.

We are told that approximately 75% of South Africans identify as followers of Jesus Christ. If this is so — if three in every four of our neighbours confesses the name of Christ — then what we do to the foreigner among us, we do in full view of that confession. Let us not allow tribalism, nativism, or ethnically-charged hostility to be the defining feature of a nation that calls itself Christian.

*"There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."*

— Galatians 3:28 (NIV)

## **Ubuntu: Sharing Resources in a Season of Scarcity**

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We are deeply aware that South Africa faces a severe and ongoing crisis of service delivery — in housing, in health care, in education, in employment, and in basic infrastructure. The anger that many South Africans feel is real. The scarcity that families experience daily is real. We do not dismiss it, and we do not ask our people to pretend that it does not exist. The burden of unemployment, of load-shedding, of crumbling clinics and crowded classrooms falls most heavily upon the poor — and the poor are precisely those most likely to compete with the foreigner for the same scarce resources.

And yet the African philosophical tradition — and more importantly, the teaching of the Gospel — calls us to a different logic. *Ubuntu* — "I am because we are" — is not merely a philosophical sentiment. It is a vision of community that resonates deeply with the New Testament picture of the body of Christ: a body in which the strong bear the burdens of the weak, in which no part thrives at the expense of another, and in which the prosperity of one member is the prosperity of all. Ubuntu calls not for the exclusion of the other, but for the expansion of our circle of care.

We call upon our government to address with urgency and seriousness the failures of service delivery that leave our communities vulnerable and our people frustrated. We call upon our churches to be active agents of community restoration — feeding tables, skills programmes, job-creation initiatives, and advocacy before government. And we call upon all South Africans to resist the temptation to make the vulnerable foreigner the scapegoat for systemic failures that are the

responsibility of governance, not of the refugee or the migrant. **Our Call to You on the 30th of June**

### **A Call to Every Baptist Family**

We call upon every family of the Baptist Union of South Africa to observe, in the days leading up to 30 June 2026, a time of dedicated prayer and fasting for peace, justice, and sovereign dignity in our land.

We call upon those who choose to participate in the peaceful constitutional march of 30 June to do so as people of faith — peacefully, lawfully, non-violently, and with a spirit of prayer, not provocation.

We call upon all Baptists — those who march and those who do not — to speak against xenophobic violence wherever they encounter it, and to extend practical, Christ-like hospitality to the stranger in their community.

We call upon our nation's leaders — in government, in parliament, and in civil society — to listen to the voice of the people, to honour the Constitution, to protect our borders with integrity, to address corruption with resolve, and to govern for the flourishing of all who dwell in this land.

### **Conclusion: We Are Called to Be a Healing People**

South Africa is at a crossroads. The decisions made in this season — by our government, by our churches, by our families, and by every individual citizen — will shape the moral and spiritual character of this nation for a generation. We are not spectators in this moment; we are participants. And as Baptists, as followers of Jesus Christ, as citizens who love this land, we choose to be participants on the side of peace, of justice, of dignity, of sovereignty, and of compassion.

Let the march of 30 June be not merely a political event but a prophetic act — a declaration that the people of this nation refuse to surrender to despair, to division, or to domination. Let it be an act born not of hatred but of love: love for this country, love for its Constitution, love for the dream of the freedom our forebears gave their lives to secure, and love — above all — for one another.

We go forward believing that the God who brought this nation through the darkness of apartheid is not absent from its present struggle. He hears our prayers. He sees our suffering. And He remains — as He has always been — a God of justice, a God of mercy, and a God of restoration.

*"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."*

— Micah 6:8 (NIV)

In Christ's service and in solidarity with this nation,

Yours in the bonds of the Gospel,

**On Behalf of the Pastoral Leadership**

*Baptist Union of South Africa*

*18 June 2026*

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