

Assembly 2023 - Motions for Voting

MOTION 5

BAPTIST UNION CHURCH MEMBERSHIP EXIT POLICY

Resolution from the National Leadership Council.

Preamble

For the background to the notice of motion reference is made to item 13.9.3 of the minutes of the Executive Meeting held at the Grahamstown Baptist Church from Thursday 28 September-30 September 2017 as indicated below:

13.9 BU Constitution and By-Laws

13.9.3 Church Exit Policy: The General Secretary stated that we have a clear entry policy for churches choosing to join the Union, but we do not have an equivalent exit policy.

As a consequence of subsequent discussions by the then BU Executive and then thereafter, by the BU National Leadership Council it is proposed to introduce a Baptist Union Church Membership Exit Policy into the BU By-laws as indicated below. There are three concerns surrounding the potential exit of a Baptist Union Member Church from the Union, namely loss of fellowship, loss of reputation and loss of property.

These three are addressed in the proposed Exit policy to be added to the By-Laws of the BUSA Constitution.

Resolution:

Proposed addition to the By-Laws of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa

Withdrawal from Membership of the Union

The following procedure and criteria shall be used when considering removal of churches from membership of the Baptist Union in terms of Article 4.2 of the Constitution – Dismissal of Members.

- 1. Removal by the Executive on the grounds of an unsatisfactory constitution or amendment thereto.***

Governed by Clause 2(2) of the By-Laws.

- 2. Removal by the Operational Leadership on the grounds of leadership misconduct.***

It is resolved the following be inserted into the By-laws as Clause 2(2)(a)

Where the Operational Leadership become aware that a member church has a person in a pastoral or other leadership role in the church who, in their reasonable opinion, is engaging in unethical conduct and/or acting against the precepts and/or provisions of the church's own constitution, the Operational Leaders, or their representatives, shall investigate the matter.

If after the investigation the Operational Leaders are satisfied that the person in the pastoral or other leadership role is engaging in unethical conduct or acting against the precepts and/or provisions of the church's own constitution and that the intention of the member church is to retain the person in a position of leadership in the church, the Administrator or his delegated representative(s) shall engage with the person in the pastoral or other leadership role, provide him or her with the reasons of the unethical conduct or acting against the precepts and/or provisions of church's own constitution, and afford him or her an opportunity to make representations on the matter. If, after considering the person's representations the Administrator or his delegated representatives is still of the view that the actions concerned warrant sanction, he shall notify the member church that if within 3 months, the person is not biblically disciplined, which may include removal from leadership the National Leadership Council will move at the next Assembly a resolution that the church be removed from membership of the Union. The Operational Leadership shall be entitled, if they in their discretion deem it appropriate, to suspend the church from membership of the Union, pending the convening of the next Assembly at which the motion for the church's removal from membership is to be tabled.

If the church within 3 months of having received this notification has not instituted biblical discipline against the person concerned which may include removal of the person from his or her position of leadership in the member church and if the person continues to engage in unethical conduct, then the National Leadership Council may bring a motion to the next Assembly that the church be removed from membership in terms of clause 3.2 of the constitution of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa. At least one (1) months' notice of the motion to be tabled at the Assembly shall be provided to the church concerned.

At the Assembly, the church shall be provided with an opportunity to be heard or make written representations when consideration of the motion to disqualify the church from membership with the Union is being considered.

At the Assembly, after the motion has been presented and discussed, the Assembly shall be entitled to dismiss the motion, remove the church from membership of the Union or take such other action as it shall determine as appropriate.

3. *Withdrawal by the church*

It is resolved the following be inserted into the By-laws as Clause 2(2)(b)

Should a member church wish to voluntarily withdraw its membership of the Baptist Union, the church shall give written notice of at least ninety (90) days of its intention to the National Administrator.

The Operational Leadership, or their appointed representatives, will make enquiry by means of an interview with the pastor of the church and with the elders and/or deacons of the church as to the reasons for this intended decision. Any correspondence, leaders meeting agendas and minutes and church meeting agendas and minutes shall be made available to the Operational Leadership.

Where the reasons for the proposed withdrawal are within the power of the Operational Leadership to resolve, so preventing the church from withdrawing from the Baptist Union, they are empowered to so act.

Should the intention to withdraw by the church concerned remain, and not be preventable, any loan finance granted to the church by or on behalf of the Union together with accrued interest, if any, will become immediately due and payable.

The Operational Leadership shall also make enquiry into the facts and circumstances surrounding the acquisition and registration of any church property by the church. Where the property was acquired as a result of any assistance or finance provided by the Baptist Union and unless agreed to otherwise by the Operational Leadership and the church, all such acquired property or rights to property at such time shall ipso facto vest in and become the property of the Baptist Union which shall hold, administer or deal with it in such manner as the said Union, through its National Leadership Council, may deem best fitted to secure the objects in Clause 3 of the constitution of the Baptist Union.

If the church property had been fully paid for before the church first joined the Baptist Union, then no such vesting will occur.

The Operational Leadership will notify the church of the terms and conditions of withdrawal of membership, and upon acceptance by the church, membership of the Baptist Union shall terminate at the end of the first complete calendar month following such notification.

The withdrawal of membership by the church shall be communicated by the Operational Leadership to the next Assembly.
