

BRACKENDOWNS BAPTIST CHURCH CONSTITUTION

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BRACKENDOWNS BAPTIST CHURCH

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NOTE:

This Constitution was approved on 15th January 1980 and amended at various subsequent constituted Church meetings.

Date: 28 Jun 2009

1 NAME

The Church shall be known as the BRACKENDOWNS BAPTIST CHURCH (hereafter referred to as "the Church").

2 DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLE

The Church shall consist only of persons who hold and accept the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ and the sole authority of the Holy Scriptures and the interpretation of them usually called Protestant and Evangelical, in contra distinction to that interpretation known either as Unitarian, Sacerdotal or Roman Catholic and have made a confession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We affirm that the Lord Jesus Christ is our God and only Saviour, and that He has absolute authority. The Holy Scriptures are the word of God, and their authority is inextricably linked with that of Christ; they are therefore the final authority for the Church and its members in all matters of faith and practice.

3 STATEMENT OF BELIEF

In the light of this affirmation, we as Baptists believe:

- A) In the plenary verbal inspiration of the Old and New Testaments in their original writings and accept them as the supreme and final authority for faith and life (2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:21, 1 Corinthians 2:13).
- B) In one God eternally existing in three persons - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- C) That Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, and is true God and true man.
- D) That God created man in His own image; that man sinned and thereby incurred the penalty of death - physical and spiritual; that all human beings inherit a sinful nature which issues (in the case of those who reach moral responsibility) in actual transgression involving personal guilt.
- E) That the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins, a substitutory sacrifice according to the Scriptures, and that all who believe in Him are justified on the ground of His shed blood.
- F) In the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus, His ascension into heaven, and His present life as our High Priest and Advocate.
- G) In the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- H) That all who receive the Lord Jesus Christ by faith are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God.
- I) In the resurrection both of the just and unjust, the eternal blessedness of the redeemed and the eternal banishment of those who have rejected the offer of salvation.
- J) That the one true Church is the whole Company of those who have been redeemed by Jesus Christ and regenerated by the Holy Spirit, that the local Church on earth should take its character from this conception of the Church spiritual and therefore that the new birth and personal confession of Christ are essentials of Church membership.
- K) The CHURCH is the whole Company of those who have been redeemed by Jesus Christ and regenerated by the Holy Spirit. The local church, being a manifestation of the universal church, is a community of believers in a particular place where the Word of God is preached and the ordinances of Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper are observed. It is fully autonomous, except insofar as it binds itself through voluntary association.
- L) That the Lord Jesus Christ appointed two ordinances - Baptism and the Lord's Supper - to be observed as acts of obedience and as perpetual witness to the cardinal facts of the Christian faith. That the LORD'S SUPPER is the partaking of bread and wine as symbolic of the Saviour's broken body and the shed blood, in remembrance of His sacrificial death, till He comes. BELIEVER'S BAPTISM is an act of obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ and a sign of personal repentance, faith and regeneration; it consists of the immersion in water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- M) In the principle of CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH GOVERNMENT, namely that a constituted church meeting is the highest human court of authority for the local church; and that each individual member has the inalienable right and responsibility to participate fully in the life and government of the church, including the appointment of its leaders.
- N) In the PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS, by which we understand that each Christian has direct access to God through Christ our High Priest, and shares with Him in His work of reconciliation. This involves intercession, worship, faithful service and bearing witness to Jesus Christ, even to the end of the earth.
- O) In the principle of RELIGIOUS LIBERTY, namely, that no individual should be coerced neither by any secular, ecclesiastical or religious group in matters of faith. The right of private conscience is to be respected. For each believer this means the right to interpret the Scripture responsibly and to act in the light of his/her conscience relative to the interpretation of Scripture.
- P) In the principle of SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE in that in the providence of God, the two differ in their respective natures and functions.

The Church is not to be identified with the State nor is it, in its faith or implementation of that faith, to be directed or controlled by the State. The State is responsible for administering justice, ensuring an orderly community and safeguarding the welfare of its citizens. The Church is responsible for preaching the Gospel and for reflecting and making known God's will and care for all mankind.

Q) That God has ordained marriage as a heterosexual relationship between a natural man and a natural woman

4 THE ORDINANCES

The Ordinance of Believer's Baptism shall be administered to any applicant whom the Minister/s or Assistant Minister/s or the Church Council may deem fit, apart from a question of the applicant's becoming a member of the Church.

The Church shall observe the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper at least once a month at such time or times as may be arranged by the Church Council.

All believers who truly love the Lord Jesus Christ shall be cordially welcomed to the Lord's Table.

5 OBJECTIVE OF THE CHURCH

A) The objective of the church is to propagate Christian teaching, ministry and living.

6 LEGAL STATUS

A) The Church shall be a legal person capable of perpetual succession independent of the members, capable of being sued and suing in its own name, and capable of owning property in its own name.

B) The Church shall be vested with plenary capacities required for or in connection with all activities under this constitution.

7 CHURCH PROPERTY AND POWERS

7.1 General

The Church shall have the power and authority to receive, purchase, or otherwise acquire, invest, hold, hypothecate, sell, donate, lease, exchange and partition all and any movable or immovable property whatsoever.

The Church shall have power to borrow money with or without security in such manner as the Church shall think fit and to pass mortgage and notarial bonds for registration with the proper authorities, and to open, and operate banking accounts and to make, draw, accept, discount, execute and issue promissory notes, bills of exchange and other negotiable and transferable instruments.

The Church shall have power to guarantee the performance of contracts by, and to enter into guarantees or suretyships of every description with any person, or group of persons operating as a fellowship, or any duly constituted Church having objectives wholly or partly similar to the objectives of the Church.

All property that the Church may acquire, whether movable or immovable, shall be held and administered solely for the furtherance of its objectives and the propagation of its principles.

No immovable property whether freehold or leasehold acquired by the Church at any time may be sold or otherwise disposed of, nor may it be transferred or mortgaged, except under the authority of a resolution passed by seventy five percent (75%) of the members present and eligible to vote at a Special Church meeting which said resolution must in turn be confirmed at a subsequent Special Church meeting called for that purpose.

Neither the church's income nor property shall be distributed to members or office bearers, provided that this provision will not prohibit the church from paying reasonable compensation for services rendered or making contributions to members undertaking Christian service. No member or office bearer will have any rights to the assets or property of the church by virtue of their membership or holding an office in the organisation.

Any cash (except petty disbursements) that is received shall be deposited as soon as reasonably possible into a banking account held in the name of church.

7.2 Trustees

A) All immovable property acquired by the Church shall be the separate property of the Church but shall vest in and be held by the Trustees for the time being of the Church for and on behalf of the Church.

B) The Trustees shall deal with property as instructed and authorised in accordance with this constitution.

C) The Trustees of the Church shall be:

- I. The Secretary of the Church.
- II. Any Church member determined by the Church.

Immovable property shall be registered in the name of the "Trustees for the time being of the Brackendowns Baptist Church".

Trustees shall be exempt from furnishing security.

Trustees shall be fully indemnified against all actions, costs, charges, losses, damages and expenses that they or any of them shall or may incur in the

execution of their duties except such as they shall incur by their own wrongful action done intentionally or with gross negligence.

8 CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

A) The Membership shall consist only of:

Foundation Members.

Persons admitted into Membership in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

8.1 Procedure for Admission into Membership

A) All persons desiring membership shall: -

Be provided with a copy of the Constitution.

Make application in the first instance to the Secretary or Minister on the prescribed form.

B) On receipt of the application the Church Council shall make careful enquiry regarding the applicant's qualifications and make a report and recommendation thereon to a Church meeting.

8.2 Qualification for Church Membership

A) No persons shall be admitted into membership unless they:

I. Have given evidence of their personal salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

II. Have professed their faith by submitting to Baptism by immersion except where such Baptism is inadvisable because of physical handicap or medical opinion.

III. Have subscribed to this constitution in writing.

B) No persons shall acquire membership of the Church if they are members of another Baptist Church, unless there are special circumstances justifying this, in which case the Church Council will make recommendation to the Church for approval.

C) Persons desiring membership shall have been in regular fellowship with the Church for a period of at least six months. The church, on recommendation by the Church council, may waive this requirement under special circumstances. A minister, co-minister or assistant minister and their wives shall become members in terms of clause 14 hereunder.

D) The application for membership shall be:

- I. Accepted.
- II. Rejected.
- III. Referred back to the Church Council

by vote of members present and eligible to vote at a properly convened Church meeting.

8.3 Church Rolls

A) The names of all Church members shall be recorded on the Church Rolls.

B) The Church shall maintain two rolls:

- I. The main roll for active members.
- II. The supplementary roll for inactive members.

9 TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP

A) If any member joins any other Church his/her membership is ipso facto terminated with the Church unless written application is made for consideration of dual membership - refer 8.2 (B).

B) Notwithstanding that all persons desiring membership must comply with Section 8 of the Constitution, persons admitted into membership from any other Baptist Church shall be regarded as members admitted on transfer.

C) When a member is admitted on transfer, the Secretary or Membership Secretary shall request his/her transfer from the other Baptist Church.

D) If any member desires to join another Church, then the Church Council may (subject to 9 (E) below) forward to the Church concerned:

- I. A letter of transfer.
- II. A letter of commendation.
- III. A service profile.

E) The Church Council may exercise its discretion in 9 (A) and 9 (D) above only with respect to the following:

- I. Any Baptist Church.
- II. Any other Protestant Church, but only if so requested by that Church.
- III. Any action taken in terms of 9 (E) by the Church Council shall be reported at a Church Meeting.

10 MEMBERSHIP WITH THE BAPTIST UNION

- A) The Church may be a member of the Baptist Union, but the said Union shall have no authority to interfere or adjudicate in any dispute which may arise in the Church, except with the approval of all parties concerned.

11 CHURCH DISCIPLINE

11.1 Personal Disputes

- A) In purely personal matters members shall in the first instance, act in the spirit of the Lord's injunction, as recorded in Matthew 18:15-17.
- B) If the dispute cannot be amicably settled, the Church Council may make enquiry into the matter and make such report to a Church meeting as the Church Council may deem necessary including a recommendation that a member's membership be terminated.

11.2 Unworthy Conduct

- A) In the unhappy event of any allegations of unworthy conduct or erroneous belief being brought against a member, the Church Council shall make enquiry into the matter. If, after enquiry and unsuccessful effort to bring about restoration, the Church Council deem such an action necessary, they shall present a report to a Church Meeting at which meeting any further action, including removal from the Church Roll, shall be determined by ballot after prayerful consideration.

11.3 Church Attendance

- A) If in the opinion of the Church Council a member is not fulfilling his obligations satisfactorily, that member shall be visited by two members appointed by the Church Council and reminded of his/her obligations. If the member does not reside in the Alberton area, then instead of a visit the member may be communicated with by any other means.
- B) If within six months after such a visit or communication, in the opinion of the Church Council, there has not been any appreciable improvement, the Church Council shall submit the name of such a member to a Church Meeting. Subject to the provisions of Section 11.3 (C) the meeting shall place the erring member on the supplementary roll by majority vote of persons present and eligible to vote.
- C) No person may be placed on the supplementary roll in terms of Section 11.3 (B) unless that person has been duly advised that such an action is contemplated and further advised of the date of the Church Meeting when the matter will be on the agenda.

- D) Members whose name have been placed on the supplementary roll may not:
- I. Vote at any Church Meeting.
 - II. Hold any Church Office.

11.4 Termination of Membership

- A) A member's membership may be terminated by the adoption of the Church Council's recommendation. The voting, if disputed by the members, shall be by ballot.
- B) If a member's name has appeared on the supplementary roll for a period in excess of twelve months, the Church Council shall inform the Church of that fact at a Church Meeting and confirm that the person's membership has been terminated.
- C) A member's name may be removed from the supplementary roll without notification to such member that such action is contemplated.

12 REVISION OF CHURCH ROLLS

The membership rolls shall be revised annually.

13 THE CHURCH COUNCIL

- A) The Church shall function through the Church Council.
- B) The Church Council shall consist of:

The Ministers and Elders who shall jointly be known as Eldership.
The Diaconate.

Co-opted members who shall be appointed at a Church Meeting, who shall have the right to participate in all discussions, but not have the right to vote, and who have been elected or appointed in accordance with the constitution.

- C) The Church Council shall act as generally or specifically directed by a Church Meeting in accordance with the Constitution and any other regulations or resolutions framed by the Church.

14 THE MINISTRY

- A) The choice and appointment of a Minister, Co-minister or Assistant Minister is vested in the membership of the Church in meeting assembled.
- B) Such Minister, Co-minister or Assistant Minister shall be a baptised believer and his name shall be on one of the Ministerial Lists of the Baptist Union of South Africa or shall have been approved by the Executive of the Baptist Union of South Africa.

- C) If and when it is necessary to appoint a Minister, Co-minister or Assistant Minister the procedure shall be as follows:
- I. A special Church Meeting called for the purpose shall appoint not less than five (5) members not Church Council members, to act with the Church Council as a special committee whose duty shall be to make the necessary enquiries and to make recommendations to the Church as soon as possible.
 - II. The Committee's recommendation shall be considered at a Special Church Meeting called for the purpose.
 - III. The Committee shall put only one name forward at a time, and no invitation shall be sent out unless at least three-fourths of the members present and eligible to vote, when the matter is considered, vote in favour.
- D) Any such invitation shall be contingent upon the prospective Minister, Co-minister or Assistant Minister accepting in writing the provisions of the Constitution, a copy of which shall be supplied for his perusal.
- E) Any engagement between the Church and a Minister or Co-minister or Assistant Minister, shall be terminable by three months notice by either side, unless otherwise mutually agreed upon.
- F) Any Minister, Co-minister or Assistant Minister shall become a member of the Church as soon as convenient after his appointment. Refer clause 8.2 (C).

15 ELDERS

- 15.1 The Elders shall be chosen from the baptised male membership of the Church who:
- I. In the judgement of the Church possess the necessary qualification for the duties concerned with that office, as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
 - II. Have clearly exhibited the ability to satisfactorily undertake at least one of the following: Preaching, Teaching, Visitation, Soul-winning, Counselling, Encouraging, Exhorting or Shepherding.
 - III. Have been in membership and regular attendance with the Church for not less than twelve months.
- 15.2 The special duties of the Elders shall be:
- I. To share with the Pastor/s in the concern for the spiritual welfare of the Church and individuals.
 - II. To make recommendations to the Church regarding Spiritual policy, opportunities and programmes of the Church.
 - III. Assist with preaching, teaching, planning, training and visitation in the Church as may be necessary and desirable.

15.3 Election of Elders

- A) Any full member shall be entitled to submit in writing to the Eldership, the name of a member proposed for consideration as an Elder.
- B) On receipt of the nomination the Eldership shall give careful consideration to:
 - I. The Nominee's qualifications, having regard to Sections 15.1 (I), 15.1 (II) and 15.4 (H);
 - II. The Church's need for an additional Elder

15.4 Special Procedures regarding the Voting on Matters Pertaining to the Election of Elders

- A) Any member who is recommended as an Elder shall withdraw from the Church meeting while the election is under consideration and during the voting.
- B) The voting at the Eldership meeting and Church meeting shall be by ballot.
- C) The Eldership shall not make a recommendation for acceptance to the Church unless at least three fourths of the full Eldership (excluding co-opted members) votes in favour that the conditions as outlined in Section 15.2 (II) above have been met. In addition, they shall obtain the consent of the nominated member.
- D) The office of Elder shall be tenable by any person so elected for a period of two years, but such persons shall be eligible for re-election. An Elder may remain in office for a maximum of three consecutive periods, after which he shall stand down for a minimum period of 12 months.
- E) The election of Elders shall take place at the Annual Church Meeting.
- F) Nominations shall be submitted in writing to the Church Secretary at least sixty days prior to the Church Meeting at which the elections are to be held.
- G) Every Member shall be entitled to submit as many nominations as he or she feels led, provided the member signs the nomination form.
- H) The Eldership shall only consider nominations in respect of members who have been nominated by at least ten per cent of the members who are eligible to vote.
- I) If in the opinion of the Eldership a member is not eligible for the office of Elder; the nomination shall be referred back to the nominators. It shall not be encumberent upon the Eldership to state the reasons for the referring back of the nomination.

- J) If the nominators referred to in Section 15.4 (I) above are dissatisfied with the action of the Eldership in referring the nomination back, then the nominators:
 - I. Shall give written notice to the Secretary that he/she intends submitting the name of the nominee to a Church meeting.
 - II. He/she shall obtain the written consent of the nominee.
- K) A list of Elder nominations, for prayerful consideration of all members, shall be displayed on the Church Notice Board. Notice shall also be given if a member proposes a nomination in terms of Section 15.4 (J) above, although it is not necessary to specifically state the nominators' names. Such notice shall be displayed at least thirty days prior to the date of the election.
- L) No one shall be declared elected at the Church meeting unless three fourths of the members present and eligible to vote, vote in favour of the person so recommended.
- M) In the event of the death, resignation or dismissal of any Elder, the vacancy or vacancies may be filled at a subsequent Ordinary Church Meeting.

16 DEACONS

- A) Deacons shall be chosen from the baptised membership of the Church who:
 - I. Are of honest and good report.
 - II. Possess in the judgement of the Church the necessary qualifications for the duties connected with that office, as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
 - III. Have been in membership and regular attendance with the Church for not less than twelve months.
- B) The number of Deacons shall consist of one for every 20 church members or part thereof, and in addition each properly constituted Branch Fellowship or Mission of the Church may elect one member thereof, subject to the confirmation of the Annual Church Meeting, to serve on the Church Council in a representative capacity with full powers concerning the branch work.
- C) The office of Deacon shall be tenable by any person so elected for a period of two years, but such persons shall be eligible for re-election. A Deacon may remain in office for a maximum of three consecutive periods, after which he or she shall stand down for a minimum period of 12 months
- D) The election of Deacons shall take place at the Annual Church Meeting.
- E) Nominations shall be submitted in writing to the Church Secretary at least sixty days prior to the Church Meeting at which the elections are to be held.

- F) The Church Council shall only consider nominations in respect of members who have received a minimum of three nominations from members who are eligible to vote.
- G) Every member shall be entitled to submit as many nominations as he or she feels led, provided the member signs the nomination form.
- H) The Church Council shall consider all nominations in respect of eligible members. The Church Council shall, if possible, obtain the written consent of the nominee.
- I) If in the opinion of the Church Council a member is not eligible for the office of Deacon, the nomination shall be referred back to the nominator. It shall not be incumbent on the Church Council to state the reasons for the referring back of a nomination.
- J) If the nominator referred to in Section 16(I) above is dissatisfied with the action of the Church Council in referring the nomination back, then the nominator shall give written notice to the Secretary that he/she intends submitting the name of the nominee to the Annual Church Meeting for acceptance for eligibility to the office of Deacon.
- K) A list of Deacon nominations, for prayerful consideration of all members, shall be displayed on the Church Notice Board. Notice shall also be given if a member proposes a nomination in terms of Section 16 (J) above, although it is not necessary to specifically state the nominators' name. Such notice shall be displayed at least thirty days prior to the date of the election.
- L) Before the election of Deacons at the Church Meeting, the eligibility of nominees in terms of Section 16 (J) above shall be voted upon.
- M) The election of Deacons shall be by ballot and no one shall be declared elected except by the approval of the majority of the members present and eligible to vote.
- N) A minimum number of 5 (five) Deacons should hold office at all times, subject to receiving the minimum number of votes as indicated in clause 16(M).
- O) If the total number of elected Deacons is less than 5 (five), further elections will take place at subsequent church meetings

17 CHURCH SECRETARY AND TREASURER

- A) The Diaconate shall appoint annually, or as the necessity arises, from its own number, a Secretary and a Treasurer of the Church, who shall hold office for one year, but shall be eligible for re-election. Should Deacons not fill either or both of these offices, suitable persons may be co-opted from the membership of the Church, subject to confirmation at the next Church Meeting.

18 CHURCH MEETINGS

Two Ordinary Church Meetings and an Annual Church Meeting shall be held during the course of the year.

The Church year shall end on a date decided by the Church at an Ordinary Church Meeting and an Ordinary Church Meeting shall be held no later than one month prior to this date. This meeting shall be known as the Annual Church Meeting.

At the Annual Church Meeting reports and Financial Statements for the year under review shall be submitted and officers of the Church shall be elected as necessary.

Extraordinary Church Meetings may be held as often as the proper conduct of the Church's affairs may require.

Special Church Meetings shall be called, as occasion may require, to deal with the following business:

- I. Ministerial appointments or vacancies.
- II. Vacancies on the Church Council.
- III. Amendment and revision of the Constitution.
- IV. Church discipline.
- V. Property transactions.

F) Extraordinary and Special Church Meetings shall be called either:

- I. By the Minister and/or Church Council, or
- II. By the Secretary of the Church, within one month of the receipt by him of a valid written requisition by not less than ten members of the Church, such requisition stating the business it is desired to bring before the Meeting.

G) Only members of the Church shall be permitted to attend Church Meetings, unless non-members are invited by the Church Council and then, subject to the confirmation by that meeting.

19 NOTICE TO CONVENE CHURCH MEETINGS

Notice of Special Church Meetings shall be given at both morning and evening services held by the Church on each of the two Lord's days immediately preceding such meetings, or by written notice posted at least fourteen days before the date of such meetings to every member at his or her last known address.

For all other Meetings, announcements at both services on the preceding Lord's Day shall be sufficient.

Notices of Extraordinary Meetings and Special Church Meetings shall clearly state the business to be transacted thereat.

Failure of any member to receive notice shall not invalidate the proceedings of any Church Meeting.

20 TRANSACTION OF BUSINESS

- A) Except where otherwise herein specifically provided, all matters shall be declared carried when approved by the vote of the majority of the members present and eligible to vote at any Meeting at which such matters are discussed. A member will not be eligible to vote until he/she has reached the age of eighteen.
- B) Voting shall be by show of hands unless otherwise herein provided, or if at least six eligible members present request it, by ballot.
- C) If at an Ordinary Church Meeting, at least one third of the eligible members present so request, any matter brought forward without notice beforehand, either by notice of motion or in the announcement of the Meeting, shall be postponed for consideration at a subsequent Meeting.
- D) At Extraordinary and Special Meetings only those matters that have been specified in the Notice of the Meeting shall be dealt with.
- E) The Church may at any Church Meeting frame and enact such Standing Resolutions and/or Regulations as it may deem necessary for the management of the affairs of the Church, and for any Branch Fellowship and/or Mission that may be under its control.
- F) Any resolution passed at any Church Meeting shall be binding upon the Church unless and until such resolutions shall have been rescinded at a subsequent Church Meeting.
- G) Proper minutes shall be kept of all business transacted at Church Meetings, Church Council Meetings, Eldership Meetings and Deacon Meetings, and such minutes shall be submitted to the next succeeding Ordinary Church, Church Council, Eldership of Deacon Meeting, as the case may be, for verification.
- H) Members are to regard all matters of business transacted at the Church, Church Council, Eldership, Deacon and Committee Meetings as confidential.
- I) All communications during Church, Church Council, Eldership and Deacon Meetings are privileged.

21 CHAIRMAN

- A) The Minister, or in the event of there being more than one, the Senior Minister, shall be Chairman of all Meetings of the Church, Church Council, Eldership and Diaconate, except when any matter affecting him personally, or the appointment of his successor, is under discussion, or when he shall

elect to vacate the chair, in which case, the Meeting shall appoint from those present a Chairman for that particular meeting.

- B) In the event of there being no Minister, a member of the Church Council elected from the floor shall be Chairman of the Meeting of the Church, Church Council, Eldership or Diaconate.
- C) The Chairman shall have a casting vote, but not a deliberative vote.

22 QUORUMS

- A) One fifth of the membership eligible to vote shall constitute a quorum for all Church Meetings.
- B) At Meetings of the Church Council, Eldership or Diaconate, fifty per cent of the membership thereof shall constitute a quorum.
- C) In the event of any Church Meeting failing to procure a quorum, the Meeting shall be automatically adjourned to the same time and place seven days later, and the eligible members then present shall constitute a quorum.

23 ORGANISATIONS AND DEPARTMENTS OF THE CHURCH

- A) All organisations and departments of the Church shall be subject to the Church in all their operations, and the appointment of the officers of such organisations and departments shall be subject to confirmation by a meeting of the Church Council.
- B) All such officers, together with any others appointed for specific duties by a Church Meeting or by the Church Council shall be accountable to the Church for the proper carrying out of the duties of their several offices.
- C) The Minister, or in the event of there being more than one, the Senior Minister shall, ex officio, be the President of all organisations and departments of the Church, unless he shall elect otherwise.
- D) The Minister, Co-minister and Assistant Minister and any Elders appointed by the Eldership, shall ex officio, be members of committees appointed, except the committee elected in terms of Section 14 (C) above.

Departmental Rules

- A) It shall be permissible for any Department to draw up and amend its own rules. However, these rules (including amendments) shall have no force or effect until approved and signed by the Church Secretary on behalf of the Church Council.
- B) The Church Secretary shall keep the original signed copy of all Departmental Rules.

24 DISSOLUTION OF THE CHURCH

- A) Should Divine Services of the Church be discontinued, whether by reason of paucity of members or for any other cause, for a period of six months, then all movable and immovable property received, purchased or otherwise acquired or held and/or hereafter received, purchased or otherwise acquired by the Church, shall vest in and be held by the Baptist Union of South Africa, and notwithstanding anything to the contrary herein contained, the said Baptist Union may sell, mortgage, or in any other manner whatsoever deal with and/or alienate the same and authorise any Registrar of Deeds having jurisdiction, to register the transfer or hypothecation of any of the property of the Church. Any funds resulting from such course of action shall be held by and become the property of the Baptist Union of South Africa.

25 INTERPRETATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

- A) If in any Church Meeting any doubt shall arise as to the interpretation of any clause of this Constitution, or of any resolution or regulation framed and passed by the Church, the power of deciding the same shall be vested in that Meeting.

26 ALTERATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

- A) It shall be lawful for the Church at any time or times by a resolution passed by two thirds majority of the members present and eligible to vote at a Special Church Meeting, convened for the purpose, to revoke, vary, add to, amend, revise or alter all or any of the provisions of this Constitution, subject to the following provision:
- I. The Declaration of Principle (clauses 2 (A) and 2 (B)) shall not be subject to alteration.
 - II. The Statement of Belief (clause 3) shall not be removed or amended except by a ninety per cent majority vote of members present and entitled to vote at a duly constituted meeting of which at least three months notice has been given.
 - III. Any change within the Church structure or organisation which is in conflict directly or indirectly with one or more of the stated Baptist Principles (clause 3) will be invalid unless approved by at least ninety per cent of the members present and entitled to vote at a duly constituted church meeting of which at least three months notice has been given.