

Baptist Churches of Tasmania

'STATEMENT ON DIVORCE AND CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP'

Scripture teaches and the Denomination affirms that marriage is a relationship created by God for the benefit and enrichment of mankind and involves a lifelong exclusive and total commitment of each partner to the other. The breakdown of a marriage relationship is a reflection of the sinfulness of mankind.

On the basis of Scriptural teaching, the Denomination expects the highest standards of conduct and faith from those appointed or elected to positions of pastoral office, and those appointed or elected to positions of public office within the Baptist Union.

Recognising the seriousness of divorce, but also recognising the great variety of circumstances underlying divorce and separation, and affirming our belief in the forgiveness and saving work of Christ, divorce of itself should not automatically and irreversibly mean the removal of a minister's name from the Official Ministry List, the removal of a person from public office within the Baptist Union, or the disqualification of a candidate seeking ordination.

In the event of marriage breakdown or divorce of a person whose name appears on the Official Ministry List, or who holds public office in the Baptist Union the Pastoral Committee shall make a confidential review of the situation and make recommendations to Union Council.

In the event of marriage breakdown or divorce of a person whose name appears on the Official Ministry List, or who holds public office in the Baptist Union, it is acknowledged that out of concern for the body being served, the individual involved shall offer a resignation from the Official Ministry List or from public office, pending a confidential review of the situation by Pastoral Committee. The Pastoral Committee shall have power to make recommendations to Union Council for re-affirmation of the individual in his or her ministry.

- (a) The Superintendent / Secretary shall inform the Union Council if an applicant for training or a candidate for ordination becomes divorced or separated, prior to either the time of the recommendation of that person as a Candidate in Training or recommendation for Ordination, and the reasons why the person is so recommended notwithstanding the marital status of the applicant.
- (b) Pastoral Committee in considering an application from a person seeking recognition as a minister on transfer, who is separated or divorced, shall, if recommending a transfer of credentials, report to Union Council or Annual Assembly on the marital status of the applicant.

While the situation of persons who are divorced differs from that of persons who are married to, or marry someone previously divorced, or whom themselves are remarried or remarry, the provision outlined above shall apply to such persons.

Accepted by Mid-Year Assembly
17th June, 1989