

# Unitarian Fellowship, Durban

## Constitution

Approved and adopted at a Special General Meeting on 19 March 2006.

### 1. Name

The name of this religious association is the **Durban Unitarian Fellowship**, affiliated spiritually to the British General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches and to the *International Council of Unitarians and Universalists*.

### 2. Objectives

The object and purpose of this Fellowship is to teach and practise the principles of Unitarianism, which draw on the world's great religious and spiritual philosophies:

- the inherent worth and dignity of every human being;
- justice, equity and compassion in all human relations;
- free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- acceptance of one another and encouragement of spiritual growth in our fellowships;
- honest, open discussion, the right of conscience, and the use of democratic processes in our fellowships and in society at large;
- promoting world peace, liberty and justice for all; and
- respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which all living things are a part.

### 3. Legal status

The Fellowship is a body corporate with its own legal identity which is separate from its individual members. The Fellowship may own property, enter into contracts, and sue or be sued in its own name.

### 4. Non-Profit Distributing Character

4.1 The income and property of the Fellowship shall be used solely for the promotion of its stated objectives. No portion of the income or property of the Fellowship shall be paid or distributed directly or indirectly to any person (otherwise than in the ordinary course of undertaking any public benefit activity) or to any member of the Fellowship except as reasonable compensation for services actually rendered to the Fellowship, or reimbursement of actual costs or expenses reasonably incurred on behalf of the Fellowship.

4.2 Upon the dissolution of the Fellowship, after all debts and commitments have been paid, any remaining assets shall not be paid to or distributed among members, but shall be transferred by donation to some other Fellowship or religious association which is considered appropriate and which has objectives the same as or similar to the objectives of the Fellowship.

### 5. Membership

5.1 Membership of the Fellowship is open to any person of 12 years of age or more, who is in sympathy with its activities and willing to contribute through service or in other ways.

5.2 Founding members become members by publicly signing the Membership Book at a regular meeting, witnessed by those present. Thereafter, subject to the approval of

the majority of members at a meeting, a person becomes a member of the Fellowship by publicly signing the Membership Book, witnessed by those present.

5.3 The responsibility of the member is to

- \* uphold the principles and constitution of the Fellowship in the spirit of its intention;
- \* show support by involvement in Fellowship affairs;
- \* make regular modest donations, if possible; and
- \* contribute by way of individual particular talents and knowledge.

5.4 . Members are entitled to enjoy freedom in their words and belief as long as they do not expressly or by implication indicate that they speak for the Fellowship, unless authorised to do so, and provided the words do not infringe on the rights, dignity and sensibilities of others.

5.5 An active member is one who has participated in at least six meetings in the preceding calendar year. Active members are entitled to vote and represent the Fellowship as mandated to do so

5.6 The active members may, at their discretion, elect an executive of office bearers, as well as any other task-oriented or interest groups.

5.7 A member may resign his/her membership by notifying the Fellowship in writing. Active members may remove, at their discretion, after consultation, any member who has not participated at all for two consecutive calendar years.

## **6. Meetings and Office Bearers**

6.1 A decision-making meeting is any gathering of five or more active members, for which notice of at least fourteen days has been given, either at a previous meeting or by other communication, to all active members.

6.2 The quorum for all decision-making at a meeting shall be five active members, or at least two-thirds of active members, whichever is the larger number.

6.3 An Annual General Meeting will be held in the first quarter of every year to review the activities and finances for the previous year. At the AGM, office bearers including those of Chairperson, Secretary, Development Officer and Treasurer shall be elected, with three such office bearers being designated as a decision-making Executive Team.

6.4 If the income and/or assets exceed R10,000 in any particular financial year, an independent accounting officer shall be appointed to prepare an annual report of income and expenditure, together with a balance sheet of assets and liabilities.

6.5 As a general principle, all important decisions shall be referred to the general membership for ratification. The views of the minority shall be respected and protected.

6.6 Should any general meeting have been properly convened but no quorum be present, the meeting shall stand adjourned to another date, which shall be within seven days thereafter. At such reconvened general meeting the members then present shall be deemed to constitute a quorum.

## **7. Finance**

- 7.1 The finances of the Fellowship shall be managed by the Treasurer, responsible to the Executive Team.
- 7.2 The financial year shall be 1 January to 31 December.
- 7.3 The Executive shall report to the membership, from time to time and as required, on income received and expenditure incurred.
- 7.4 The Fellowship shall open a bank account in the name of the Fellowship with a registered bank or building society. The Treasurer shall ensure that all monies received by the Fellowship are deposited in the above-mentioned bank account.
- 7.5 The Executive shall decide at which financial institutions the Fellowship's funds will be banked and invested. Members of the Executive shall be regarded as the appointed signatories for all bank accounts and investments, which decisions shall be communicated to such institutions. Two signatures will be required for any investment withdrawals.
- 7.6 The Treasurer shall at the end of a financial year prepare an annual report of income and expenditure together with a balance sheet of assets and liabilities for presentation to the annual general meeting.

## **8. Property**

The Executive shall have the power, in the name of the Fellowship, to purchase, hold, sell, lease, exchange, mortgage, pledge or otherwise turn to profit, any property, moveable or immovable, whether acquired by purchase, bequest or otherwise.

## **9. Religious Officers of the Fellowship**

The Fellowship may appoint an accredited minister and/or other persons to act as religious mentor or counsellor or otherwise officiate at religious ceremonies such as naming ceremonies, marriages, funerals or other occasions. The religious officers appointed shall make no declaration of their religious belief other than that required in terms of general membership and, within the limits of that declaration, shall have full liberty to express their own interpretations and opinions, within the principles of Unitarianism.

A religious officer may be asked to relinquish his/her position if requested to do so by two-thirds of the active members at a purposefully convened meeting of the Fellowship.

## **10. Amendments to Constitution and/or Dissolution**

The Constitution may be amended, and/or the Fellowship may be dissolved by resolution of the members in a general meeting, provided that proper notice of the meeting is given in terms of clause 6, and such notice states the nature of the resolution to be proposed, and that not less than two-thirds of the members present, or represented by written proxy at the meeting, vote in favour of the resolution.

**11. Indemnity**

Office bearers shall be indemnified by the Fellowship for all acts done by them in good faith on its behalf. It shall be the duty of the Fellowship, as a body corporate, to pay all costs and expenses which any such person incurs or becomes liable for as a result of any contract entered into, or act done by him/her in his/her said capacity, in the discharge, in good faith, of his/her duties on behalf of the Fellowship.

Signed in Durban on this 19<sup>th</sup> Day of March 2006.

Chairperson: \_\_\_\_\_

Treasurer: \_\_\_\_\_

Witnesses: 1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_