



## NOTICE OF MOTION: PROCESS FOR TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP FROM THE CBAC

The following motion will be brought to the Assembly at the annual business meeting, August 7, 2026, at Oasis:

*That the Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada adopt the proposed "Process for Termination of Membership from the CBAC," as circulated, as a formal process to give fair effect to Section 3.09(c) of the CBAC General Operating Bylaws.*

In this document, you will find.

1. [Rationale for this Process for Termination of Membership from the CBC](#)
2. [The proposed Process for Termination of Membership from the CBAC](#)
3. [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

### **1. Rationale for this Process for Termination of Membership from the CBAC**

The CBAC is a voluntary, covenantal family of churches, connected through Associations and united by shared beliefs, commitments, and responsibilities. Our bylaws already provide for the possibility of termination of membership in limited and serious circumstances. CBAC General Operating Bylaw 3.09(c) states:

*Membership in the CBAC shall only be terminated upon the occurrence of either of the following:*

- (i) *If at a Meeting of Members of the CBAC, upon recommendation by the Council after consultation with the respective Association and following one hundred and eighty (180) days' notice, the Registered Delegates at Meetings of Members, determine by a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote that a Member's Membership be terminated because the Member has departed from the belief and practice of the CBAC, including the Responsibilities set forth in Section 3.04(c), provided that such Member is first offered an opportunity to be heard; or*
- (ii) *On the dissolution, winding up, or loss of visibility of the Member.*

What has been lacking is a clearly articulated process that ensures those bylaws are honoured carefully, consistently, and pastorally. This motion brings forward such a process.

Importantly, this is not a bylaw change. The bylaw language regarding termination remains unchanged. What is proposed is a transparent and intentional process that fills out how the CBAC

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would walk faithfully with a church if concerns arise about failing to uphold responsibilities as a CBAC member, long before anything would ever reach the Assembly floor. The aim is to take concerns seriously while also honouring local church autonomy and expression, and to seek, wherever possible, a path that allows churches to remain within the CBAC family.

### **Reconciliation is the primary goal.**

Drawing from Jesus' teaching in Matthew 18:15–20, the process is intentionally relational, carefully paced, and restorative. Multiple steps are designed to encourage conversation, clarification, and return to shared commitments wherever possible. The goal is to help churches remain within the CBAC family wherever possible.

### **Fairness and clarity for all parties.**

Churches deserve to know what concerns have been raised about them, how they will be addressed, who will be involved, and what timelines apply. This process strives to ensure due process, careful investigation, and respectful communication at every stage.

### **Early and private engagement whenever possible.**

The process is designed to address concerns early, confidentially, and locally, with ample opportunity for explanation, dialogue, and mutual understanding, long before any matter would require Assembly awareness or action.

### **Respect for church autonomy within the CBAC voluntary relationship.**

In a voluntary association, churches are autonomous, but not isolated. In the CBAC, autonomy and interdependence belong together. Churches are members of the CBAC, and therefore the subject of this process. The relevant Association is consulted appropriately along the way.

### **Clarity for the wider CBAC family.**

Should a matter ever reach the Assembly, delegates will be assured that extensive, prayerful, and pastoral work has already taken place. The Assembly's role remains precisely as defined in the bylaws: to prayerfully make a final determination, by a two-thirds vote, on whether a church has departed from the beliefs and practices of the CBAC, as expressed in our shared documents such as the Basis of Union, the General Operating Bylaws, and the Responsibilities of Membership.

The goal is reconciliation and churches remaining within the CBAC family whenever possible. When it's not possible, the process also allows for a clear, respectful, and peaceable parting, recognizing that God continues to be at work in all congregations.

After much discussion, the Council believes that adopting this process strengthens our shared life together as a family of churches. It provides consistency and transparency, reduces confusion or uncertainty in difficult situations, and offers clear guidance to Associations, Council, and churches. It helps protect the unity and integrity of the CBAC, while ensuring that any decision brought to the Assembly is the result of careful, prayerful discernment rather than surprise or haste. In this way, the proposed process reflects who we are as Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada, a covenantal family committed to truth and grace, clarity and compassion, and hope-filled relationships grounded in Christ.

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### 2. The proposed Process for Termination of Membership from the CBAC

Given the seriousness of removal from membership, it is the intent of the CBAC to provide a fair process that shows respect for all parties and gives ample opportunities for restoration to the CBAC.

#### A. For this reason, we acknowledge:

1. God alone is the source of all truth (Isaiah 40:6; John 16:6; II Timothy 3:16) and He alone judges with complete knowledge and perfect righteousness (Hebrews 4: 12 – 13; Rev. 20:11-15; 1 Cor. 4:3-5);
2. The fellowship of the CBAC rests on the unity of Members drawn together by beliefs as stated in the Basis of Union (1905/06) as well as resolutions adopted from time to time at annual assemblies wherein Members have sought to faithfully interpret and apply Scripture and thus give direction for the CBAC common good and mission, recognizing the fallibility of human understanding and respecting the freedom of others in the wider Church to interpret Scripture as they are persuaded;
3. Members within the CBAC may no longer desire to adhere to or abide by beliefs as stated in the Basis of Union or the resolutions as adopted by Members in assembly and thereby fail to fulfill Responsibilities and Expectations as set forth in the CBAC General Operating Bylaw, Section 3: 04; (c) and (d);
4. Care of dignity is essential throughout the process, and therefore, the CBAC resolves the Member will not be spoken of in a disrespectful way for failure to uphold the teachings or practices of the CBAC, before, during, or after this process.
5. The desired goal of all disciplinary action in Scripture is reconciliation (Rev. 3:19-20; James 5:19-20; 2 Cor. 2:6-7). Recognizing that all disciplinary action in the New Testament involves individuals and not whole churches, the CBAC, nonetheless, considers the wisdom of Jesus expressed in Matthew 18:15-17 to set a pattern of three attempts to “win over” any Member of the CBAC subject to this process before the Member is removed, and in addition give opportunity for the removed Member to potentially re-apply for membership at a later date after being removed from membership by this process. The CBAC considers this essential to maintaining reconciliation as the desired goal.

#### B. The process for removal of a church from membership in the CBAC shall be as follows:

1. No complaint against a church of the CBAC will be considered unless:
  - a. It is sent in writing to the President and Executive Minister of the CBAC.
  - b. It is made by at least two of the following (2 Cor. 13:1): a credentialed CBAC pastor, CBAC Council member, CBAC staff member, or Association Moderator or Vice-Moderator.
  - c. The complaint must clearly identify the specific responsibilities the Member has allegedly failed to uphold (General Operating Bylaws 3.04(c) and (d)).

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2. Upon receipt of a valid complaint, the President and Executive Minister of the CBAC shall decide whether the complaint has merit for investigation.
  - a. If so merited, they will inform the CBAC Council that a complaint has been received within fourteen (14) days of receiving the complaint.
  - b. Within thirty (30) days of receiving a merited complaint, they will call together an Investigative Review Committee (IRC).
3. The Investigative Review Committee (IRC) shall consist of:
  - a. The President of the CBAC. In the event of the absence of the President, the Vice President will assume this role.
  - b. Three Council Representatives, at least one of whom is a CBAC credentialled pastor currently serving in ministry.
  - c. The Executive Minister of the CBAC. In the absence of the Executive Minister, a Senior Staff member designated by the Executive Minister will assume this role.
  - d. A Senior Staff member of the Executive Minister's choosing.
  - e. As far as possible, efforts will be made to ensure diversity in age, gender, and ethnicity on the IRC.
4. Initial Investigation
  - a. Upon formation, the IRC will inform the Member within thirty (30) days that a complaint has been made. Once the Member has received the complaint, the IRC will commence the investigative process that will not exceed one hundred and twenty (120) days. The Member will be encouraged to respond upon receipt of the complaint but may respond at any time within the investigation process, either in writing or with a request for an in-person meeting with the IRC.
  - b. The IRC will examine Member business meeting minutes, material published publicly by the Member under review, or any other appropriate evidence to ascertain if there has been a failure to uphold the Member responsibilities and expectations laid out in the CBAC bylaws.
  - c. Before the end of one hundred and twenty (120) days, the IRC shall inform the Council in writing and with evidence of one of two decisions:
    - i. There is no credible evidence of failure to uphold responsibilities and expectations, OR
    - ii. There is evidence of failure to uphold responsibilities and expectations.
  - d. In a decision of "No evidence," the persons who made the complaint will be informed, in addition to the Council. If unsatisfied with the decision of the IRC, the persons who made the complaint may appeal to the Council and provide what they consider to be evidence. The Council may overrule the decision of the IRC and change it to the decision "Evidence of failure," at which point the process will continue as described

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below. If the Council upholds the decision of the IRC, the complaint shall be formally dismissed in writing to the persons who made the complaint.

- e. In a decision of “Evidence of failure,” in addition to the CBAC Council, the IRC shall inform the Lead Pastor and the church Council/board of the Member under investigation in writing of the complaint and the evidence supporting it.
  - f. All communication, in writing or verbal, shall be written in such a way as to encourage the Member to return to a position of upholding the responsibilities and expectations of membership with kindness and respect. This is the first attempt to win over the Member.
  - g. The Member shall have ninety (90) days to return to a position of upholding the responsibilities and expectations, or to reply with a decision not to uphold them. No response after ninety (90) days will be considered a decision not to uphold the responsibilities and expectations.
  - h. If the Member returns to a position of upholding the responsibilities and expectations, the complaint will be considered resolved.
  - i. If the Member continues to fail to uphold the responsibilities and expectations, the complaint will be directed by the IRC to the CBAC Council for further action.
5. CBAC Council Review of Complaint
    - a. Upon receiving a report from the IRC that, after ninety (90) days of being informed in writing, the Member investigated remains in a position of failure to uphold responsibilities and expectations, the Council shall review the report at a duly held meeting, no later than sixty (60) days from receiving the IRC’s report.
    - b. Two leaders from the Member under investigation will be invited to the meeting to express their dissent, should they desire to do so.
    - c. Having read the report of the IRC and having heard the dissent of the Member under investigation, the Council shall then vote whether or not to bring a motion to an Assembly meeting of the CBAC that the Member be removed from membership for failure to uphold the responsibilities and expectations of a Member as outlined in the bylaws. A Council vote must pass by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Council.
    - d. If the Council vote fails, the persons who made the complaint will be informed. If they are not satisfied, they may appeal by submitting a motion to the Assembly to remove the Member. This motion will be listed as an appeal to overturn the decision of the Council.
    - e. If the Council vote passes, the Member under investigation will be informed in writing using respectful and kind language and given a further ninety (90) days to return to a position of upholding the responsibilities and expectations. This is the second attempt to win over the Member.
    - f. If the Member changes to upholding the responsibilities and expectations within the ninety (90) days, the complaint will be considered resolved.

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- g. An invitation will be extended to the Executive of the involved Association for consultation in accordance with General Operating Bylaw 3.09 (c) (i).
  - h. If the Member continues to fail to uphold the responsibilities and expectations after ninety (90) days, the matter will be brought to the CBAC Council for a decision to proceed to the final step of the termination process as explained in the following section.
6. Council and Assembly Decision
- a. Upon completion of the Council's review of the complaint and the Member's continued failure to uphold the responsibilities and expectations, the Council will communicate in writing to all the Members of the CBAC that the Member under investigation is considered to be in failure of upholding the responsibilities and expectations of membership in the CBAC and that a motion that the Member be removed from membership in the CBAC will be presented at the next Assembly in accordance with the CBAC bylaws. This notice will include a description of the action of the Member on which the motion is based and why the action constitutes a failure to uphold the responsibilities and expectations of Members.
  - b. The Council shall put forward the motion to remove the Member from membership according to the bylaws of the CBAC.
  - c. Delegates from the Member under investigation will be given the opportunity to speak to and vote on the motion. The deliberation of the Members at Assembly is the third and final attempt to win over the Member failing to uphold the responsibilities and expectations.
  - d. The motion must pass by a two-thirds (2/3) majority.
  - e. Members of the CBAC will be reminded at the time of notice for the Assembly and again at the Assembly that the decision being made is on whether or not the Member has upheld the responsibilities and expectations of the CBAC as they currently stand. A decision to change the responsibilities and expectations in the bylaws in order to bring the Member back into compliance must be done by putting forward a separate motion, to be considered in advance of the motion to remove from membership, that changes or rescinds the section of the responsibilities and expectations of a Member in the bylaws that the Member has failed to uphold.
  - f. If the Assembly motion to remove from membership fails, the Member under investigation will be considered by the CBAC to be in a position of upholding its responsibilities and expectations.
  - g. If the Assembly motion to remove from membership passes, the following will occur:
    - i. The membership of the Member under investigation will be terminated immediately. The status of all delegates and pastors from the now-terminated Member will be reduced to the status of guests, and they will lose all voting privileges.

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- ii. News of the Member's removal from membership will be communicated in writing to all the Members of the CBAC within sixty (60) days, as well as to the Atlantic Baptist Foundation.
- iii. The CBAC credentials of all pastors still serving at the involved church will be handed over to the BMSE for investigation.
- iv. Participation in the comprehensive CBAC Pension and Benefit Plan will be terminated effective the last day of the month in which affiliation ends. Any outstanding premium and/or final pension contributions must be submitted to the appropriate plan administrator in advance of this date.
- v. Any title held in trust by the CBAC will be returned to the terminated Member. Any fees related to returning title will be paid by the terminated Member.

### C. Re-Applying for Membership

At any time after having either resigned from membership or having been removed from membership in the CBAC, a church may reapply for membership under the process described in General Operating Bylaw 3.02 (a) and (b) entitled "Membership Process for Local Churches." A church whose membership was removed, not resigned, must demonstrate that it now upholds the responsibility(ies) for which it was removed from membership for failing to uphold before its re-application will be considered.

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### 3. Frequently Asked Questions – Process for Termination of Membership from the CBAC

#### **Is the CBAC trying to remove churches from membership?**

No. This process is not about removing churches, it is about keeping churches within the CBAC family whenever possible. The proposed process is intentionally designed to encourage early conversation, clarification, and reconciliation long before termination would ever be considered. Removal from membership is a last resort, only after multiple opportunities for dialogue, response, and restoration have been offered, and only in accordance with the existing bylaws.

#### **Does this process encourage churches to report or “police” one another?**

This process is not about surveillance, accusation, or tattling. It exists to provide a responsible and orderly way to respond when serious concerns are raised, particularly when informal or relational efforts have already failed. Any concern must be specific, written, and brought forward by recognized leaders within the CBAC family as defined in the process, and it is assessed carefully before any inquiry begins. The goal is not blame, but faithful accountability within a covenantal family. It also aims to create a process so that it is not a sudden discussion or debate on the Assembly floor.

#### **Why is this being brought forward now?**

This process is being brought forward now because the CBAC already has bylaws that allow for termination of membership, but no clearly articulated process to guide how those bylaws would be honoured in practice. On occasion, CBAC leadership has been asked about the process for terminating membership. Rather than leaving Council, Associations, or churches uncertain, or placing something suddenly before the Assembly without preparation, this motion ensures clarity, fairness, and pastoral care. It is a proactive step towards working better together as a family of churches.

#### **Is this process aimed at particular churches?**

No. This process is not targeted, and it is not being introduced in response to any single church. It applies equally to all member churches and exists so that, if questions ever arise, they can be addressed consistently, respectfully, and without surprise. Having a clear process in place protects churches as much as it protects the CBAC. It helps the Council carry out its responsibilities with integrity by providing clear guidance, shared accountability, and appropriate safeguards, rather than relying on quick decisions or informal approaches. In this way, the process supports thoughtful discernment, reduces the risk of inconsistency or misunderstanding, and strengthens trust across the CBAC family.

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### **Couldn't a church simply choose to leave the CBAC instead?**

Yes. The CBAC bylaws clearly affirm the voluntary principle. Under Section 3.09(b) of the General Operating Bylaws, a church or Association may resign its membership at any time, for any reason, by passing an official motion and giving ninety (90) days' written notice. No approval vote of the Assembly is required for resignation.

The proposed termination process is not meant to prevent a church from leaving if it chooses to do so. Rather, it addresses situations where a church wishes to remain a member while no longer upholding the beliefs or responsibilities of CBAC membership. In such cases, the process provides a structured and pastoral way to seek clarity, reconciliation, or, if necessary, an orderly conclusion to the relationship.

### **How does this process reflect our Baptist and biblical commitments?**

This process reflects autonomy, interdependence, and covenant relationships within the CBAC family. It is shaped by the biblical pattern of patient, relational engagement found in Matthew 18:15–20 and by the CBAC's commitment to truth, grace, and unity. At every stage, the emphasis is on listening, mutual understanding, prayerful discernment, and preserving relationships wherever possible.

### **Will a member ever be brought to the Assembly without having gone through this proposed process?**

No. Delegates can be confident that no issue will come to the Assembly quickly or lightly and will follow this process. By the time a matter reaches an Assembly vote, extensive private conversation, investigation, pastoral engagement, and Council discernment will already have taken place over many months. The Assembly's role remains exactly as defined in the bylaws, that is to make a careful, informed decision grounded in prayer, not urgency or pressure.

### **Haven't Associations historically handled church issues and terminations?**

Historically, Associations often played a more direct role in addressing serious church concerns, and their relational proximity to churches remains deeply valued. In recent decades, however, many Associations have indicated that they feel ill-equipped to carry the weight of formal termination processes on their own, particularly without a clearly defined framework, legal clarity, or their own consistent process. This proposed process recognizes that reality while continuing to honour the vital role of Associations. As outlined in the process (5.g.), the Executive of the involved Association is invited into consultation, ensuring that local knowledge, relationships, and pastoral insight are part of the discernment, while responsibility for the formal process rests with the CBAC in accordance with CBAC bylaws.

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### What happens to the Pastor who is in a church that is terminated from membership in the CBAC?

This process is focused on churches and their membership in the CBAC, not on pastors as individuals. It is important to distinguish between concerns related to a local church's beliefs or practices and concerns related to a pastor's conduct or ethics. Matters involving alleged violations of CBAC pastoral ethics by credentialed pastors fall under the authority of the Board of Ministerial Standards and Education (BMSE), which continues to provide oversight, care, and accountability for pastors.

If, during the course of a church-related inquiry, information comes to light that raises concerns about a credentialed pastor's conduct in relation to CBAC pastoral ethics, that information will be formally referred to the BMSE. Any such concerns would then be addressed through the BMSE's established pastoral and procedural processes, separate from the church membership process. This distinction helps ensure fairness, appropriate oversight, and care for both churches and pastors within the CBAC family.