

# NORTHERN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

## Recognition of Local Ministries

### 1 INTRODUCTION

This document governs the recognition at a regional / association level of church, sector, and other ministries undertaken by members of the churches of the Northern Baptist Association). It is authorised by the Council of the NBA.

### 2 BACKGROUND

The call to “ministry” is one extended to all believers (Eph.4:1). It constitutes a call to a way of life patterned on Christ (Eph.4:2) and to service on behalf of his body (Eph.4:12). The claims and privileges of this call are laid on all Christians, without distinction. In particular, the New Testament knows of no distinction between “lay” and “ministerial” as designations which confer any power, status or gifting upon any individual.

Within the overall calling, some are given to the church as those carrying out particular works of service/ministry (Acts 6:1-4; 1 Cor.12:27-28; Eph.4:11; 1 Tim.3:1-3; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet.5:1-3). Such people carry out a range of tasks in the church, but all are linked to its leadership in care, teaching and mission. These people are

- a) Gifts to the church from the **Risen Christ** (Eph.4:11). As such they are properly honoured and supported (1 Tim.5:17-20) and valued (1 Tim.3:1; Heb.13:7-8,17). Their “status” as “gift” only derives from their relationship and fidelity to the “Giver”, to Christ. Their lifestyle and way of leadership will be his (2 Tim.2:15; 1 Pet.5:2-4).
- b) Gifts to the **church**, therefore. it too will recognise the gift and receive it. This seems to have two parts. Firstly, discernment of the gift (Acts 6:3; 13:2) is necessary. Secondly, those who are the gift are “set apart” to their new tasks (Acts 6:6; 13:3). This could be held to have two elements i.e. spiritual equipping (context of prayer and fasting) and authorising/recognition (new tasks to be undertaken). Even in the early church it seems clear that this was partly a function of the local church and partly a function of the wider church found in the tasks of an apostolic team (Tit.1:5 – in passing it should be noted that the verb used in Titus for “appoint/ordain” is the same as that used in Acts 6:3 where the whole church participates in discerning who should take on new tasks of leadership).

### The Five Marks of Ministry

- Mature as a disciple of Christ

- Accountable to others
- Relational in approach to leadership
- Kingdom-focused
- Servant-hearted and sacrificial<sup>1</sup>

In the present day, we have a way of discovering who are gifts to the church and of regulating and encouraging their service by the Register of Nationally Accredited Ministers. Such people's calling, competence and conduct are examined, affirmed in the line with the Five Marks of Ministry and commended to our own and other churches nationally. However, there are "gifts to the church" whose ministry is not exercised nationally, but locally. Sometimes the effectiveness of the service of such people has been hampered by the lack of proper recognition. They may be refused opportunities for ministry because they are not perceived as "real" ministers. They may not receive necessary support and encouragement because they lack recognition.

The aim of this scheme is to provide an appropriate way of recognising those who are gifts to the church in the Area by giving **Association Recognition of Ministry**. It aims to provide encouragement and oversight to ministry exercised in the NBA, which does not easily find a place in national schemes. It aims to enhance the effectiveness of the mission of local churches and other centres of service by properly recognising those called to serve them as Christ's gifts to his people.

### **3 TYPES OF MINISTRY WHICH CAN BE CONSIDERED FOR RECOGNITION**

People exercising the following types of ministry can be considered for recognition under this scheme:

- a) Those recognised nationally as local pastors and in pastoral charge of a church.
- b) Those able to provide a portfolio of achievement to a standard determined by the Association Ministry Group and in pastoral charge of a church.
- c) Those exercising a sector ministry (such as chaplains in hospitals, prisons, etc.) where recognition is desirable and appropriate and who can demonstrate levels of achievement to a standard determined by the Area Ministry Group. Other cases of Christian ministry where recognition is desirable and appropriate. (The NBA Ministry Group will decide which other cases can be considered.)

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix

- d) Those engaged in recognised and supported pioneer ministry

#### **4 EFFECTS OF RECOGNITION**

The effects of having recognition conferred will be that the individual:

- a) May consider themselves, whilst living in the area served by the NBA, as equivalent to a minister accredited by BUGB.

- b) Will be treated by the NBA as equivalent to a minister accredited by BUGB.

For example:

- the services of the regional ministers will be available to them,
- they will be included in all Association training
- may make use of the Ministerial Counselling Service (to an extent agreed with the Baptist Union, and as available financial support permits)
- engage in in-service training as agreed by the NBA,
- and will be members of the Association Assembly if in pastoral charge of a church.

A probationary period will normally apply.

- c) Will be able to call themselves a “Recognised Minister”.

- d) Will, with the blessing of the NBA, be able to style themselves “the Reverend”.

## **5 LIMITS OF RECOGNITION**

To retain the recognition and individual must:

- a) Remain in a post or role acceptable to the NBA as agreed with the Ministry Group.
- b) Remain a member in good standing of an NBA church or recognised ministry role.
- c) remain living within the NBA area
- d) Not be subject to a disciplinary procedure implemented by the NBA or BUGB

Recognition is not transferable to another Association without the agreement of that other Association.

## **6 DISCIPLINE**

The discipline arrangements for recognised ministers should reflect those applying to accreditation by BUGB. Appeals against a decision will be heard by an Appeal group appointed by the Association Council.

## **7 COVENANT WITH THE AREA**

In accepting recognition, a minister will be deemed to have made a covenant with the Association which relates to calling, competence and conduct as understood in the case of a minister recognised nationally by the Baptist Union of Great Britain and demonstrate the Mark of Ministry as discerned by that Union.

Therefore, the minister will affirm the Declaration of Principle of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and give evidence of sound knowledge of Baptist History and Principles.

## **8 QUALIFICATIONS FOR RECOGNITION**

The qualifications for recognition are as follows:

- a) The call must be recognised at local level, which will normally mean a local church, but could be a pioneer or chaplaincy ministry
- b) The call must be ratified by the Association Ministry Group (see below)
- c) The candidate must have achieved specified academic qualifications (no lower than Level One or equivalent) or be able to offer a portfolio of prior learning which will be considered by the Ministry Group
- d) The candidate must have made a self-declaration in regard to criminal record and court orders etc. and obtain a satisfactory DBS for working with minors and vulnerable adults ,
- e) The candidate must give evidence of sound knowledge of Baptist History and Principles.
- f) The candidate must affirm the position adopted by BUGB regarding sexuality and the ministry.

## **9 OPERATION OF THE SCHEME**

Operation is wholly in the hands of the NBA Ministry Group, and the procedures to be applied will be exactly the same as for the other candidates it sees. Where the Ministry Group is unsure that a particular type of case can be the subject of recognition it will refer the circumstances (not the acceptability of the individual) to the Council for a decision. Recognition ministers are reported to the NBA Council.

**Probation Arrangements for Locally Accredited Ministries.**

- It was felt that 2 years was a suitable period
- In order to encourage appropriate reflection on their ministry, at the end of each year the person should submit a 'position paper' which would form the basis of an interview with visitors who would report to the Ministry Group.
- Mentors should be appointed.
- It was decided to recommend that mentors should receive from the NBA an annual honorarium of £100.

**Agreed 13<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

## Appendix: The Five Marks of Ministry

The five Marks of Ministry can be expanded to include the following areas as examples.

### **Mature as a disciple of Christ**

- Deepening relationship with Christ and clear love for God
- Rooted in scripture
- Practising spiritual disciplines
- Living an authentic life
- Continuing sense of call to Baptist ministry
- A resilient faith which copes with the reality of ministry
- Clear self-identity; reflective and open to constructive criticism

### **Accountable to others**

- Intentional accountability to develop as a disciple of Christ and as a Baptist minister
- Engaging in peer support, watching over and walking with one another
- Committed to continuing ministerial development and training
- Accountable to the local church
- Accountable to and supportive of the wider Baptist family
- Providing oversight and accountability for others

### **Relational in approach to leadership**

- Good level of self-awareness and personal understanding
- Collaborative approach
- Inspirer, encourager and enabler of others
- Good interpersonal skills
- Ability to bring about transition and change

- Team builder
- Valuing and responding appropriately to diversity and difference
- Working with others beyond the local church

### **Kingdom-focused**

- Resident theologian or “God thinker”
- Drawing others into an awareness of God’s presence
- Committed to engaging in the mission of God in a post-Christian context
- Building/maintaining authentic and diverse communities of faith
- Ability to read context to see opportunities, challenges and potential
- Willing to take risks and move beyond the familiar where necessary
- Holy discontent with the status quo, leading to action
- Heart for justice and a prophetic voice
- Representing the church in wider society

### **Servant-hearted and sacrificial**

- Modelling Christ-like godly leadership
- Humble
- Faithful
- Generous spirit
- Exhibiting grace in trying situations