

# Help! We need a minister!

## Engaging in the Settlement Process

The process of searching for a ministers involves a partnership. Primarily we are seeking God's leading for the person he would have as the minister of a particular church. As we engage in this we do so together involving the church, the Regional Minister and the National Settlement Team. This leaflet is designed to help us to be clear about what we expect from each other as we give ourselves to this important process.

Churches use a variety of means to establish a group of church members that will enable the search process to operate smoothly. Most commonly this will be either the Deacons or Elders, or a combination of both. Others use a group convened from a range of church members, including those with appropriate skills and experience, together with church officers. In this leaflet we are referring to this group, however it is composed as 'The Search Committee.'

Ultimately the call to the pastorate is the responsibility of the church, not the Regional Minister, but we do engage together in the seeking God's will. The Settlement process is one of introduction, of a minister by the Regional Minister serving on the National Settlement Team, but after that the responsibility for perceiving a call lies with the church meeting and the minister.

### **The Regional Minister will seek to:**

- Explain the process to the Church Leadership
- Provide a copy of 'Facing a Pastoral Vacancy'
- Discuss the church's profile and needs with the search committee.
- Supply the church with the names and profiles of those ministers/ministerial students whose profiles might match the requirements of the church

- If no suitable names are available in any given month, to inform the church of the situation following the meeting of the NST.
- Inform the search committee of any confidential material that might materially affect the church's decision to call that minister, such as serious ill-health, personal relationship breakdown or concerns relating to the minister's conduct in other churches. This will normally take place after any initial approach to the minister by the search committee has taken place, and will be overseen by the Regional Minister according to the agreed protocol on confidential information.
- When requested, to discuss with any candidate for the pastorate those aspects of the previous pastorate or the church's current concerns that might materially affect the decision of that minister to accept a call
- Support the search committee with advice and counsel during the process.

All those on the settlement list to be commended by the NST will also be on the Register of Covenanted Persons Accredited for Ministry and therefore would not normally require separate references, nor would Regional Ministers normally supply these, their commendation being based upon their status as a Baptist Minister. Confidential advice would be offered, however by Regional Ministers where appropriate.

There may be others, unaccredited by the Baptist Union, who will also be nominated by the Regional Minister, such as lay pastors, or Locally Accredited Ministers. Because these persons have not been through the full process for accreditation, it is important that the church takes full responsibility for any additional enquiries into their suitability for ministry, such as requesting the names of referees.

**The church would be expected to:**

- Provide the Regional Minister with a person specification, church profile and any other information helpful to the Regional Minister in commending names to the church.

- Consider the names presented to it in reasonable time, so as not to prejudice the attempts for settlement elsewhere by the ministers whose profiles the committee was considering.
- Inform the Regional Minister of the progress of the search at least once a month prior to the meeting of the NST by letter or Email.
- Contact every person nominated by the Regional Minister with the decision of the search committee, whether to initiate a conversation, to rule out the candidate or to retain their name for later consideration.
- Inform the Regional Minister of any other approaches or search modes adopted.
- Give permission to the Regional Minister to discuss the church context and immediate history with any candidate for the pastorate who makes enquiries.
- Where an unaccredited minister is commended, to take all due care to take up references and to undertake an enquiry into the suitability of the person for the post.
- In all cases to make any appointment to the office of a minister to be dependent upon the candidate holding a current CRB disclosure.

MAY THE LORD BLESS AND GUIDE YOU AT THIS  
IMPORTANT TIME

