

SUMMARY OF CURRENT PRACTICE REGARDING MINISTERS OF OTHER DENOMINATIONS SERVING IN LOCAL ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIPS WITH PASTORAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR BAPTIST MEMBERS

- I There are over 200 Baptist churches in local ecumenical partnerships of many different kinds. A significant number involve the sharing of worship life and ministry. These guidance notes are primarily intended for such situations.
- II The Baptist Union of Great Britain does have an important role in the accrediting of Baptist ministers whose call to the ministry has been recognised by a local church and an Association; who have been properly trained; called to the pastorate of a local Baptist church (or other qualifying office) and assent to the Declaration of Principle.
- III However, the ability of ministers, properly called by a local congregation to pastoral oversight, to participate in the wider life of the denomination is not determined, in principle, by that accreditation, but by the local calling.
- IV It does not seem appropriate for ministers of other traditions to apply for accreditation whilst continuing to maintain recognition as a minister or presbyter of another tradition as it would not seem possible to assent to the Baptist Union of Great Britain Declaration of Principle and maintain, with integrity, faithful obedience to other denominational requirements (e.g. the thirty nine articles of the Church of England; Methodist constitution, practice and discipline; the Basis of Faith of the United Reformed Church.)
- V Given the ecclesiology of the Baptist Union it also seems unnecessarily cumbersome to create a category of 'Recognised and Regarded' ministers or 'Authorised' ministers as has been accomplished by the Methodist Church. It appears to the appropriate committees of the Baptist Union that all, and more, of the benefits of such recognition are already provided consequent upon the call of a local church to pastoral oversight.
- VI If an LEP including a Baptist church calls a non-Baptist minister who is a presbyter or minister in good standing of another denomination participating in the LEP to pastoral oversight the following rights are automatically conferred subject to the Baptist Union of Great Britain being notified that such a person has been properly called and inducted.
- 1 To be placed on the ministers mailing list and receive all mailings.
 - 2 To be appointed by the church to attend the Annual Assembly as their pastor and participate in the business sessions of both the Baptist Union and BMS World Mission (if the church is a subscribing church).
 - 3 To be included amongst those who may be nominated to the Regional Association for election to the Baptist Union Council as a Regional Association representative or to be nominated for co-option to the BU Council.

- 4 To preside at services of Infant Presentation/Thanksgiving, Believers Baptism, the Eucharist, the celebration of Christian Marriage and Funerals according to Baptist rites and practice.

- VII A list of names and addresses of ministers of other traditions serving in LEPs is maintained by the Baptist Union of Great Britain Ministry Department from information supplied by local congregations and is published in the Baptist Union Directory.

- VIII We believe the above makes clear that the Baptist Union of Great Britain is able to offer equivalent access to denominational life to ministers of other traditions as contained within the Methodist Church 'Recognised and Regarded' Facility. The access of ministers of other traditions serving within LEPs to Baptist structures is, we believe, as good, if not better, than that offered in parallel circumstances in some other traditions.