

FACING A PASTORAL VACANCY

Advice for Churches during a Pastoral Vacancy
BUGB National Settlement Team



The Baptist Union of Great Britain

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INTRODUCTION

A pastoral vacancy is a very significant time for your Church. What happens in this period and what decisions are made will affect its future life. You are entering a time of opportunity and excitement. That can also bring with it fear and concern! The Lord's words in Joshua 1.9 are:

“Be strong and courageous ... do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”

Any change of life may be accompanied by an increase in anxiety. At a time of Pastoral vacancy this can be related to things like:

- ⇒ “Who will take services?”
- ⇒ “Who will help in Pastoral emergencies?”
- ⇒ “How do we continue our outreach?”

However, it can appear in less obvious ways. When a Minister moves there is a sense of loss, a `bereavement`.

Relationships of depth will have been formed with her/him. Care will have been given and received. A Pastoral vacancy will disrupt these and may give rise to a sense of unease.

Recognising this will check rising anxieties. It is important for leaders in the congregation to manage their own anxiety. Their calmness and confidence in God and His care will help the Church to be make progress rather than simply `tread water`.

Taking time

Time to say farewell to the outgoing Minister is needed, as is time for reflection and prayer. Usually it is best to wait until after a Minister's leaving service/ event before the search for a new one begins in earnest.

The process will unfold in a period which can be a matter of a few months or a few years but either way it is a necessary and important time in the Church's life.

Walking together

The Church is not alone in its search. God will lead His people. There is also prayerful and practical support available from the Regional and Ministries Teams of our Baptist Union. These `Guidelines` are part of that support.



THE LOCAL CHURCH

Important things to consider when going through a Pastoral Vacancy.

The task of discerning God's calling to a local Pastorate lies primarily with the local Church. A prospective Minister will have to make a prayerful response to such a call, but the Church has the duty and joy of determining what they believe God wants for them. We believe that God does make his will known to his people and therefore we enter the process of settlement in faith.

Prayer

Prayer launches the process of reflection and discussion. It is also the way we continue to pay attention to what He is saying.

The Scriptures establish the principles of our search. They encourage us to listen to each other's concerns and thoughts as we seek to discern what the Lord is saying and doing.

Through regular and informed prayer, as well as reflection and discussion together, we can understand what God wants and open our lives to his power. The key thing in all of this is a genuine desire to bring about His will in the circumstances.

So, at the outset of a vacancy the Church will naturally be called to prayer. Likewise, throughout the process the Church will continue in prayer as information grows and updates are published.

Continuing care for the Church

Many tasks fall to the Minister of a church. During a pastoral vacancy these will need to be done by others. It is the responsibility of the Church Leaders to oversee these things, although that does not mean they have to do it all themselves!

The tasks are:-

- 1. Vision** Hopefully, the people of every church have a vision of who they are in Christ and what God wants them to do for Him. It is important to help a church stay on target with essential tasks. Pastoral vacancies can be times when certain individuals, groups or even factions in a church may try to promote their own enthusiasms. The Leadership Team will have a particular responsibility for guiding the Church as it makes decisions about new ideas brought forward at this time.
- 2. Wider Church** Much that is good comes from contact with other Christians – e.g. your Regional Association, local Churches Together groups or other networks. The Minister will usually have been a key person in these. Try to keep such contacts flowing, perhaps by appointing members of the leadership team to receive information from these groups and/or represent the Church to them.

3. Mission

Although Ministers are often leaders in mission, it does not have to cease when a Minister leaves! Indeed, many churches find people often realise that mission is everybody's responsibility and get more involved during a pastoral vacancy. It can be a time of real growth. So, make sure that regular activities continue (e.g. 'Alpha' and similar courses, programmes of social care etc.) and also seek fresh opportunities to serve. Someone needs to oversee such things so that opportunities are not missed.

4. Preachers

This must be arranged using the resources available to the fellowship with the help of the wider Church. Care needs to be taken to maintain the preaching and to find appropriate people for special occasions and times in the Church's year. Regular preaching ministry from a small team can maintain a good teaching programme. Whoever is due to preach will need to know that because the Church is in vacancy they may have to step down from an engagement if a prospective Minister needs to be invited. Visiting preachers should be given expenses and a fee since the labourer is worthy of hire (Luke 10.7). It has often been found helpful to appoint someone to be responsible for booking, welcoming and organising preachers (and whoever leads worship – see below). This frees the secretary/ administrator for other tasks.

5. Services

In many churches leading parts of the service is separated from the preaching ministry. Where this is so care needs to be taken to enable good contact between preachers and worship leaders. Their mutual understanding will create a balanced and more appropriate pattern for the whole congregation. In a church where the preacher will also lead worship it is important to get details of hymns/songs etc. to the musician(s) in good time for thorough preparation.

6. Pastoral care

It is wise to give someone responsibility for overseeing this aspect of the Church's life. They should liaise with the outgoing Minister to make sure that no particular or pressing needs are missed. A team of pastoral visitors might be set up to visit regularly those who are 'shut-in' or have special and continuing needs. Consideration of some supportive training for these visitors should be given.

More specialised care and counsel may require outside help from other churches or agencies. Your Regional Team should be able to help with issues such as training and finding specialised help if needed. It is also important for elders/ deacons to undertake the care of leaders of the various groups in the Church.

7. Welcoming

Sometimes the Minister has been a key person in noting who is new to the Church (e.g. at a Sunday service) and who needs to be made welcome. Again, someone needs to make sure this aspect of both care and evangelism is not missed. A great asset to a church is a warm-hearted 'welcomer' who notes newcomers and lets the person concerned with pastoral care know they are there, so that proper follow up can be done.

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- 8. Membership** During a vacancy it is often worth revising the membership roll. This will give the Church (and any prospective Ministers) a clear idea of the true strength of the fellowship. After a Minister has been called it is a good idea to update the roll regularly so that it does not become a problem in the next vacancy!
- 9. Manse** If the Church has a manse there will be a number of matters to consider. It needs to be kept secure. The garden will need maintenance. Insurance cover will need to be obtained. If consideration is given to letting the Manse it is essential to get proper advice. The Baptist Union Corporation provides sound guidelines. (Click [here](#) or visit: www.baptist.org.uk/legal-property-a-charities)
- 10. Marriages** Special attention needs to be given to the registration of marriages. If the former Minister has handed over the documents the Church will know what to do next. The local Register of Births, Marriages and Deaths will give full advice that must be followed. This is the only safe way of handling these matters.
- 11. Finance** As a Church you may well have been paying into the Baptist Ministers' Pension Fund. **PLEASE NOTE** that the responsibility to maintain payments does not cease when a Minister leaves. There are legal requirements involved which should be discussed with your Regional Minister and/ or BUGB Pension Office. You may need to employ an Interim Moderator or other worker to avoid a so-called 'cessation event'.
- You may also wish to send 10% of the stipend you would have paid to **Home Mission** in addition to your normal contribution. In this way, you will enhance the mission work of the wider fellowship during your pastoral vacancy

There may well be other things that your Minister has had a part in and attention will have to be given to them. Although coping with all this may bring some concern, it is actually an opportunity to discover fresh gifts in people and give scope for the development of those already known. As already mentioned a pastoral vacancy can be a time of significant growth for many in the Church.

PARTNERS

Baptist churches are interdependent and a pastoral vacancy is a key time when the support of others is both needed and appreciated.

Regional Ministers

Your Regional Minister is the first person to contact when a Minister announces that they are moving on. Throughout the search for a new Minister your Regional Minister will be available for advice and to provide early information concerning prospective Ministers. S/he will have

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experience of the Church and access to the pool of prospective Ministers through the National Settlement Team and be able to help in the following ways:-

1. Exploring ways forward in mission and ministry for the Church at this time in its life.
2. Helping in the search for a suitable Moderator depending on what is needed.
3. Explaining the process of seeking a Minister.
4. Acting as an agent for the Church in seeking prospective Ministers..
5. Providing support throughout the process.
6. Being a personal link with the National Settlement Team.

The National Settlement Team

All Regional Ministers concerned with settlement meet regularly to help the movement of Ministers around the churches. They have profiles of every Minister who believes the Lord may wish them to move to another church. They also have profiles of all students leaving our Baptist colleges. With the knowledge the Regional Ministers have of the churches and in an atmosphere of prayer, the National Settlement Team (NST) seeks to provide profiles of appropriate prospective Ministers for their churches. Names are submitted to the churches in the belief that they are worthy of prayerful consideration, but the churches will make final decisions about who settles in which Pastorate.

The National Settlement Team represents a great deal of accumulated knowledge and wisdom. Home Mission enables its work, so its help is available to all churches and Ministers free of charge.

NST is a tremendous advisory resource, which helps in about 150 settlements each year. However, the Team does not actually "settle" anyone! That is the work of the Holy Spirit discerned by churches and Ministers, who have the final responsibility and privilege of determining what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

Moderators

Experience has shown that it is usually very helpful for a church to find a 'moderator' as it seeks a Minister. Typically, this is usually a Minister of experience, who will at least chair leadership and Church Meetings relating to the Pastorate. Such a person may also be able to do some preaching and cover pastoral emergencies or 'specials' like baptisms and weddings, as well as offer pastoral advice and care to the leadership team. They can also liaise with the Regional Minister about the settlement process, although the Church Secretary (or equivalent) should remain the primary contact.

The Moderator's main task is to help the Church in seeking a new Minister and a major way in which they can help a church is in the preparation of the Church Profile. (See below.)

A Moderator is appointed by the Church Meeting on the recommendation of the leaders and will not normally be a member of the Church. Your Regional Minister can help you find a suitable person but does not appoint them.

Sometimes churches need more help after a Minister leaves and a different kind of Moderator. This is just the kind of thing to talk to your Regional Minister about.

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A Moderator should be paid usual preaching fees, and should have expenses reimbursed. A church will want to give a worthy love-gift to its moderator when the task is finished. If the vacancy becomes lengthy, some interim gift(s) would be appropriate.

(If you need to appoint a Moderator to avoid a `cessation event' they must be a member of the Baptist Ministers' Pension Scheme and under the age of 75.)

THE PROCESS

Like any system involving people, the National Settlement Process has its limitations! However, God undoubtedly uses it to bring churches and ministers together for His glory and the work of the Kingdom.

Getting started

Your Regional Minister will help you begin the process by meeting with the Church Leadership Team. S/he may also assist the church by leading a `vision day', taking a Sunday service and discussing the way forward with a congregational meeting.

Churches use a variety of means to establish a group of Church Members who will enable the search process to operate smoothly. In most churches this will be the Leadership Team or Diaconate but others call together a range of Church Members, perhaps including those with HR experience and those representing different age groups as well as Church Leaders. The group, whatever its composition, is here designated the `Search Team'.

A Moderator can also play an important role and will be a particular help in preparing your Church Profile. This key document is valuable in many ways and important to work on as a whole Church. There are guidelines on how to prepare a Church Profile on **pages 9-10** and in **Appendix 1 (p.17)**.

How long?

People often ask how long the process of seeking a new Minister will take. Every situation is different of course so it's a difficult question to answer. Once a church's Profile has been agreed and their search team are ready to begin receiving names it may be only a few months before a new Minister is called. However, for all kinds of reasons the process may take a year or so to see through.

Key things to consider are:-

- ✓ It's vital that Church Members are in agreement over the content of the **Profile**, including the kind of ministry being sought. Failure to work things through properly at the beginning can make it very difficult when it comes to issuing a call.
- ✓ **Prayer** is essential throughout the process as you seek God's will together. Make this a priority over the coming months and set aside regular times to bring people together for the specific purpose of praying about future ministry.

- ✓ **Patience** is needed as you wait on the Lord and seek His will. It may seem slow at times but experience has shown that attempts to speed up the process or circumvent it usually produce more difficulties not less. The call of God is being discerned, rather than an employee interviewed. That needs focussed prayer, reflection, discussion and ... time!
- ✓ Recognise that you are engaging in a **Process**. Churches sometimes call a Minister from the very first list of names they receive. It happens! However, you may find that the Lord has things to do in and among you as the months go by. This might include refining your ideas about the kind of ministry needed, dealing with some tensions within the fellowship or simply teaching people to trust Him for the future. In His time, which is not the same as ours, the Lord will provide!

STIPEND AND OTHER SUPPORT

Considering the Settlement Package for a prospective Minister.

We trust that every church will want to take to heart the biblical principle of generosity (2 Cor. 9.11).

The Church will need to determine what level of stipend it can provide. No church will wish to offer less than the standard stipend recommended each year by our Baptist Union. It will also consider the health and well-being of the Minister's family and provide adequate accommodation and holiday provision. It will want its Minister to keep growing spiritually, professionally and intellectually, and so will make attendance at Ministers' Conferences and study weeks possible.

For your guidance the currently recommended **Terms of Appointment**, together with a suggested **Budget** are available from the BUGB website [here](#) or visit: www.baptist.org.uk/useful-information-for-churches

PREPARING THE MAIN PROFILE

The main things to keep in view as you prepare a Church Profile and an outline of its value and purpose.

The point has arrived when a Church Profile can be prepared. This will help to bring the Church together in identifying a vision for the future and also provide information for prospective Ministers. It does not need to be lengthy but it should convey something of the ethos of your Church. How it is produced and what is included is a matter for local decision. However, the Profile should address three main questions:-

1. What are we like as a Church now?

Present membership, worship style, social setting, theological outlook and current mission will be the sort of things covered here.

2. Where does God want us to go in mission and ministry?

Answering this question will determine something of God's vision for your Church. Trying to see the future He has for the Church and grasp through prayer and discussion some of its detail will shape an understanding which is vital as the process of seeking a new Minister unfolds.

3. What sort of ministry do we need to take us into that future?

Among the emphases to be considered are teaching, evangelism and team leadership. In this process of reflection a picture of a potential Minister begins to emerge, which will help in the search. This picture will not be set in stone. God leads during the whole process and the Church may discern his will differently as time moves on.

The document itself

In **Appendix 1 (p.17)** you'll find a suggested pattern for a Church Profile and the sort of review of a church's life that will make it possible to produce a useful document. Being part of a wider fellowship of Christian people needs recognition. Why not ask other Baptist churches and those of other traditions you have fellowship with to pray for you and offer their insights as you look to the future.

It is important that the Profile should be endorsed by the Church Meeting, although a smaller group will need to do the work of preparing it. It is worth spending time in prayer and discussion to get the Profile right. The exercise of producing it can do a great deal to help a church gain an understanding of itself and God's vision for its future. It can provide a helpful and agreed way forward for the future ministry. An essential element in discerning a call is that the prospective Minister's personal vision relates well to that of the Church. The Profile helps at precisely this point. Some churches have found it a great help to hold a 'vision day', 'church conference' or even a weekend with the express aim of producing a profile together. Your Regional Minister may well want to help with this as will your Moderator. Whatever is done, encouraging the whole Church to pray as the process of preparing the Profile goes ahead is vital!

Please note

Finally, please note that among those things to consider when preparing your profile are the church's Trust Deed (see **Appendix 6, p.34**) and current legislation about age discrimination (see **Appendix 7, p.35**).



THE MINI PROFILE

Each church can also produce a 200-word 'Mini Profile' to provide an introduction to the kind of ministry being sought.

Pastoral Vacancy List

The National Settlement Team compiles a list of churches seeking a new Minister, full-time and part-time, paid or non-stipendiary. This 'Pastoral Vacancy List' is sent to all those actively seeking a new pastorate or beginning to consider a move. It includes the 'Mini Profile' of all churches currently engaged in looking for a new Minister.

Prospective Ministers can ask for their names to be sent to specific churches on the Pastoral Vacancy List. Unless there is good reason not to do so (e.g. the Church already has someone preaching with-a-view to the pastorate or there is a serious mismatch that would lead to severe disappointment), the request will be forwarded to the Church. This amounts to a limited form of advertising and serves to give Ministers access to all openings. It also helps the Church to put its needs before all those Ministers seeking a Pastorate.



PROSPECTIVE MINISTERS

What to expect when a Minister is nominated by the National Settlement Team and a suggested pattern for handling nominations from initial contact to issuing a call.

Each Minister who believes God may be calling them to a fresh Pastorate gets in touch with their Regional Minister. After prayer and discussion together they will be asked to prepare a personal Nomination Profile, which will detail, in their own words:

- Personal gifts and skills
- Theological principles
- Conversion and Christian experience
- Education and work experience – i.e. work prior to entering Baptist ministry and churches they have already served
- Interests – i.e. hobbies, community activities etc.
- Further useful information
- Personal details – family, how to contact etc.

Each member of the National Settlement Team has a copy of every ministerial Nomination Profile, together with a Commendation from the relevant Regional Minister. This commendation will have been agreed with the Minister concerned. When a Minister is nominated to a church a copy of the profile and commendation will be sent. Thus, the Nomination Profile forms the first introduction upon which discernment of the Lord's will rests.

Handling Ministers' Profiles

The process is designed to provide as much openness as possible in settlement, whilst maintaining necessary confidentiality. Leadership teams are asked to respect this and ensure churches are aware of the need to be discreet. These Ministers are testing out a possible move of Pastorate. If confidentiality has not been maintained and if they discover the Lord wishes them to remain in their present Pastorate, their work there could be compromised. For this reason it is not a good idea to send people to hear a prospective Minister preach in her/his present Church. It is wise that names of prospective Ministers are not included in bulletins and magazines when they come to preach. Although your Church will need to know the purpose of their visit, wider publicity might be unhelpful.

All those on the settlement list to be commended by the National Settlement Team 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.

(Any Accredited Minister commended by the National Settlement Team will have a recent Disclosure & Barring Service Enhanced Disclosure.)

Particular consideration needs to be given to Ministers in their first pastorate. Please see **Appendix 5 (p.33)** re. **Newly Accredited Ministers**.

There may be others, not accredited by the Baptist Union of Great Britain, who will also be nominated by the Regional Minister - such as lay pastors or those in the process of seeking accreditation. 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 and ensuring that a DBS Disclosure is in place.

The Leaders or Members of the Church may also come up with names of possible Ministers themselves. This should not be discouraged, but please seek the advice of your Regional Minister before making contact. A Profile or information may be available which will help in discerning the wisdom of approaching such a person.

If an Accredited Minister (or Minister-in-Training) should, for any reason, contact the Church directly and not through the National Settlement Team please advise them to talk to their Regional Minister.

A Suggested Pattern

Please keep your Regional Minister informed of what is happening at **each** stage. In **Appendix 4 (p.31)** is a form you may wish to use to help do this. Your Church will not be the only one seeking a Minister. It is important for the National Settlement Team to know what is happening so that commendations can be made are based on accurate information about the availability of Ministers and churches.

As a Search Team, please respect the need for confidentiality when handling Nomination Profiles etc. and destroy/ delete all documents when no longer needed. (A designated person, e.g. Church Secretary may keep one copy. If no progress is made with future lists

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you may care to look again at some of the people you had earlier decided not to consider. They might still be available.)

The following approach to meeting prospective Ministers has proved helpful:-

- i. Following the meeting of the National Settlement Team the Regional Minister sends Nomination Profiles and Commendations to the Church Secretary or other designated person via e-mail.
- ii. Forward the Nomination Profiles and Commendations to the Leaders/ Search Team for them to read and pray about before meeting together.
- iii. It can also be helpful to ring all nominees on receipt of the Nomination Profiles to check Ministers are still available and also willing in principle to consider your Church. They may well ask to see a copy of the Main Profile at this point.
- iv. Alternatively, send all nominated Ministers your church's Main Profile via e-mail and ask them to reply before your Leaders/ Search Team meeting if they would like to come and meet with you.
- v. Hopefully, when the Leaders/ Search Team meet they can then make a decision based on the known availability and openness of prospective Ministers.

(An alternative pattern is to meet as soon as possible, i.e. before any initial contact with a prospective Minister. This means you don't have to wait to hear from them before the Leaders/ Search Team get together. Decide who you want to approach and contact them to arrange a date to meet.)

- vi. When the Leaders/ Search Team meet please pray, listen to one another and seek the Lord's will together – i.e. don't merely ask individuals for their 'vote'. Please look at the first page first! This is the one that tells you the important things about a Minister. Let it be the page on which you base your initial judgements before looking at personal details and qualifications. An important question to ask is "Will this Minister meet our needs as a Church?" However, it is also very important to ask, "What will this Minister bring to our situation that we haven't thought of before?" Always be open to God's surprises!
- vii. Churches are encouraged to meet with more than one prospective Minister for an initial conversation, especially from the first list sent by the National Settlement Team. This meeting will usually be mid-week, providing some confidentiality and informality. (An invitation to lead a service should be limited to one Minister – see below.)
- viii. Each Minister will be aware that their name has been sent to you. Please make sure that you contact them as soon as possible, either inviting them to meet you or letting them know in a gentle way that you do not wish to consider them further. (A 'phone call or letter of thanks is best. Please avoid using e-mail to decline further contact.)
- ix. A list of possible questions which may be asked is in **Appendix 2 (p.28)**. The Church should cover the travel expenses of the Minister.
- x. If a positive reaction is felt in the leadership team, the Minister is invited to lead worship and preach on an agreed Sunday.

- xi. The leaders/ search team meet as soon as possible after this to consider reactions to the visit.
- xii. At its next meeting, a recommendation is taken to the Church and is prayerfully considered. If there is a positive outcome, the Minister is invited to 'preach with-a-view to the Pastorate'. It will be helpful if as large a number of people as possible can meet the Minister in as many varied settings as possible. Informal as well as formal gatherings can help discern the reality of a call. So, a visit over a weekend is advisable. This also gives opportunity for the prospective ministerial family to see the manse and get a feel for the area. It should be noted that a church is perfectly at liberty to invite a Minister to preach with-a-view to the Pastorate on the first visit. Alternatively, some churches invite prospective Ministers to lead a mid-week Bible study on their first visit and use that as the basis for making the decision whether or not to invite the candidate to 'preach with-a-view'.
- xiii. A **Special Church Meeting** will be required to consider a call to the Pastorate. Usually, at least two weeks notice of this is needed. Check your own Church Rules. The meeting should be timed so that it can be held in the week immediately following the weekend when a prospective Minister has visited.

This is an important meeting. God's will, not personal preference, is being sought. Prayer is vital and the Moderator should encourage an atmosphere in which all can share their thoughts, hopes and concerns. Some churches have found it appropriate and beneficial to do this by setting the meeting in small groups with a deacon or other leader in each. After prayer and sharing, the deacon reports back to the whole fellowship the thoughts of the group. Then the whole gathering reflects and considers together whether or not to issue an invitation to the Pastorate. What the Church discerns as the way ahead is found through a secret paper ballot. It is vital that as many members as possible attend the meeting. Since the decision to be made is one of the gathered community of the Church, thought should be given to the best way of achieving that, including the best day and time of day, and the provision of childcare. Members should be encouraged to be present to share in the prayerful decision making because they need to listen to each other in God's presence.

- xiv. The Minister will be informed of the outcome immediately, with the voting figures, and an invitation to the Pastorate given (if that was the result). A letter is also sent with the details. If no invitation is being issued this telephone call can be difficult. It is best to give the information straightforwardly with the assurance that the process was carried forward carefully and prayerfully. If there were particular issues that determined the decision not to invite, it is best to consider these before making contact. If the Minister then asks for some insights into understanding the decision, these can then be shared. However, the Church believes that it has sought and found God's will, and this is the main reason for no invitation.
- xv. If the invitation is declined, there will be some prayerful reflection on what this means. The Moderator and possibly the Regional Minister should be of help here in discerning what God is saying to the Church.
- xvi. If the call is accepted, it should be agreed together when any public announcement is made.

- xvii. Once made public, the call can be celebrated!
- xviii. The broad outlines of the Terms of Settlement will have been thought through when you prepared your Profile. These will need to be finalised with the Minister-elect.
- xix. You will need to discuss a date for the commencement of the new ministry. A Minister in post usually has to give three months notice and a leaving student will have to complete her/his course.
- xx. There will be practical matters to put in hand concerning the manse and the welcome of your new Minister (and family). Think through what information they will require and have it prepared (e.g. information about local schools, shops, amenities).

In conclusion

There is no such thing as a perfect Minister - nor a perfect Church for that matter! By God's grace imperfect people who trust him can do amazing and wonderful things for the Kingdom. Let God give you the next Minister and treat that person as the gift they are. Appreciation always improves ministry.



THE INDUCTION

The Induction service is a joyful celebration and an acknowledgement of God's goodness.

If it is the Minister's first pastorate then the service may include their Ordination, though this may well be conducted at their home/ sending Church on an earlier, separate occasion.

Usually the Church invites the Moderator to preside and the Regional Minister to conduct the act of induction and ordination.

In consultation with the Deacons/ Leaders, the new Minister is usually invited to choose the preacher and may well be the 'prime mover' in shaping this important act of worship. (By-the-way the Church should cover travel expenses for visitors and any appropriate fee in the usual way.)

Suitable wording and orders of service for Inductions and Ordinations can be found in our Baptist Union publication 'Gathering for Worship: Patterns and Prayers for the Community of Disciples' (Canterbury Press).

Your Regional Minister will be happy to give further advice and it is wise to provide a draft order for her/him to look over before final arrangements are made.

Local churches should be invited to send representatives. Local civic leaders (including the local MP) may also be invited, since this provides a new Minister with contacts in the community. It also expresses the Church's concern for and willingness to serve its community. Such people may wish to bring greetings (which should be brief) to the Church

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and Minister. This is best at the end of the induction service or during refreshments afterwards and is usually chaired by the moderator.



Appendix 1

Producing a Church Profile.

It will be of great help if your Church Profile includes the following information:-

General Information about the Church

- Membership and congregation - numbers and make up
- History

Information about the Area

- Social history and mix
- Particular needs

The Church as it is now

- Theological stance of the Church (including attitude to the Bible, ecumenical involvement, charismatic renewal and community activity)
- Worship style
- Activities of the Church in terms of fellowship and prayer, evangelism, community action, work with specific groups (e.g. youth, elderly) etc.

The Church as it may be in the Future

- What you believe God wants of you in each area of church life.
- What sort of ministry the Church needs now.

Practical Matters

- The Manse
- Availability of schooling, social/cultural opportunities, employment prospects, sports facilities etc.

You might also want to include some **photographs**.

Template

The following pages may be of help as you put your Church Profile together. The guidelines are provided to help you gather the necessary basic information for a profile. They are not meant to dictate to you or be slavishly followed. Use what helps you! Your moderator can be of help in this process.

It would be wise for a small group of people to work on gathering information with the finished profile being approved by a Church Meeting. When it comes to matters of interpreting what the information means for your search for a Minister, then the wisdom of the fellowship as a whole will be needed.

It will also be important to make sure that the expectations of a Minister that are set out in the profile are clearly understood by everyone. This can avoid many problems later!

Your Moderator will be happy to find appropriate help if you need it.



CHURCH PROFILE

(1) Name of Church

(2) Date founded

(3) Membership

This table will cover your whole church community
(m = member; a = attendee)

	Age range	Male (m)	Male (a)	Female (m)	Female (a)	Total
A	0-5					
B	6-13					
C	13-18					
D	19-25					
E	26-40					
F	41-50					
G	51-60					
H	61-70					
I	71-80					
J	81 +					
Totals						

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(4) Indicate the approximate number of households in each category:-

a.	Single parent with one or more children at home	
b.	Single adult not living with parent/s	
c.	Married couple with no children at home	
d.	Married couple with one or more children at home	
e.	Separated/divorced with no children at home	
f.	Single adult living with parent/s	
g.	Widowed with one or more children at home	
h.	Widowed living alone	
i.	Couple living in sheltered accommodation	
j.	Alone living in sheltered accommodation	
k.	Living in care home	
l.	Children whose parents are not connected to the Church	
m.	Other (please specify)	

(5) Indicate the approximate number of people who are:-

a.	Employed full-time	
b.	Employed part-time	
c.	Home maker full-time	
d.	Retired	
e.	Students	
f.	Unemployed	
g.	Shift work at weekends	

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(6) Indicate the approximate number of people in the following employment categories. (You may want to add to the list.)

a.	Agriculture	
b.	Computing	
c.	Education	
d.	Emergency services	
e.	Financial services	
f.	Health care	
g.	Industry	
h.	Legal services	
i.	Local government	
j.	Management/administration	
k.	Office worker	
l.	Agriculture	
m.		
n.		
o.		
p.		

(7) Do the figures in your answers to questions 3-6 reflect the situation in your local community?

Yes [] No []

If "No", what differences are there?

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Can you explain these differences?

--

(8) Which of the following best describes your local community. (More than one response may be appropriate.)

a.	Rural	
b.	Village	
c.	Market town	
d.	City	
e.	Town/city centre	
f.	Urban priority area	
g.	Suburban	
h.	Ethnically varied	
i.	Developing economically	
j.	Declining economically	
k.	Increase in housing stock	
l.		
m.		
n.		
o.		

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(9) Approximately how many people in the general population live within the following distances of your church building?

a.	within 1 mile	
b.	1-2 miles	
c.	2-5 miles	
d.	over 5 miles	
e.	5-10 miles	
f.	over 10 miles	

(10) Which of the following describes your Church?

a.	<i>Worship</i>	Traditional	
b.		Contemporary	
c.		A blend of the above	
d.		Charismatic	
e.			
f.	<i>Theology</i>	Evangelical	
g.		Mainstream	
h.		Reformed	
i.		Charismatic	
j.			
k.		<i>Ecumenism</i>	Formal commitment
l.	Informal engagement		
m.	Like-minded churches only		
n.			

Facing a Pastoral Vacancy

(11) Worship style

a.	Worship group only	
b.	Organ only	
c.	Organ & group	
d.	Choir	
e.	Singing group	
f.	Youth/ children's choir	
g.	Preacher leads worship	
h.	Preacher only preaches	
i.	Common prayers & responses	
j.	Open prayer/ worship	
k.	Variety of people lead services	
l.	Projector used regularly	
m.	Which hymn/ song books do you use?	
n.	Musicians regularly practise together	
o.		
p.		
q.		

(12) Describe how your Church typically engages in evangelism, e.g. Alpha, visiting homes, guest services etc.

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(13) Outline the ways in which your Church is serving the local community, e.g. advice/ listening centre, toddler group, food bank etc.

(14) Details of work with Children & Young People

Name of Group	Ages	Purpose	Numbers Attending

How are the groups staffed?

Does the Church operate a “Safe to Grow” policy?

Facing a Pastoral Vacancy

(15) Other work - e.g. among women, men, the disabled, retired etc.

Group	Purpose	Numbers

How are the groups staffed?

(16a) In what areas is the Church strong?

(16b) In what areas is the Church weak?

(17) What does the Church need in its next Minister?

The following can be used on more than one occasion and with different groups in the church:-

		Essential	Desirable	Optional
1.	close relationship with God			
2.	mature and emotionally secure			
3.	visionary			
4.	strong leader			
5.	a safe pair of hands			
6.	inspiring worship leader			
7.	gifted preacher and teacher			
8.	regular pastoral visitor			
9.	encourages others to use gifts			
10.	a team builder			
11.	wise counsellor			
12.	relates well to children and teens			
13.	evangelist			
14.	community minded			
15.	competent administrator			
16.	musical			
17.	commitment to justice issues			
18.	ministers well to people in crisis			
19.	handles conflict well			
20.	helps people develop spirituality			

(Continued overleaf. You might want to add a few things to the list.)

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21.	mentor			
22.	commitment to the Baptist family			
23.	ecumenically minded			
24.	hospitable			
25.	chairs meetings well			
26.	good writing skills			
27.	competent with IT			
28.				
29.				
30.				

Now list all the areas which you identified as essential. Rank them in order of importance to give some idea of what sort of Minister the Church might need.

Summary



Appendix 2

Some questions a church might ask a prospective Minister.

It is important to remember that your meeting with a prospective Minister is not like a job interview. Together you are seeking to discern God's will for the future.

Most people don't find it easy to talk in depth with relative strangers, so do all you can to help the potential Minister (and spouse if present) feel welcome and try to put them at ease. Put some thought and prayer into the meeting. Have some organised plan of how the group will cover the questions it needs to ask so that everything is covered properly.

Start with questions that should give the Minister an opportunity to speak of enthusiasms and strengths. This helps establish a relationship with the group. More difficult issues can be tackled later in the conversation.

1. Tell us a little about your general background and how that has shaped your life.
2. How did your Christian journey start and what have been significant steps on the way?
3. Tell us about your family. Are there any particular needs that should be considered in relation to a possible move of pastorate?
4. What led you into the ministry?
5. What do you consider the essential elements of pastoral ministry?
6. Where do you see your particular strengths lie?
7. Tell us a little about your previous ministries. What do you consider to be your successes and failures, and what have you learnt from them?
8. How would you expect to share out your time between the different aspects of ministry?
9. Has your faith and theology developed over the years?
10. Do you have a special emphasis in ministry?
11. How do you cover those aspects of ministry that are not your speciality?
12. What is your personal vision for the future?
13. What part do relationships with other Christians, inside and outside of the denomination, play in your ministry?
14. What do you think are the most important issues facing Christians?
15. Ask questions about any issues that are of particular importance to your local church (of ministry, mission, social concern, theology etc.).
16. What would be the Minister's approach to dealing with one of these issues?
17. How do you keep healthy spiritually, emotionally, socially and physically?
18. How do you safeguard time with your family?
19. What interests do you have outside of ministry and family life?
20. What steps do you take to maintain your professional skills?
21. What gives you most joy in being a Minister?

Appendix 3

A summary of the responsibilities of Regional Ministers and local churches during the Settlement Process.

The role of Regional Ministers

In keeping with our Baptist understanding of the local church, it is important to recognise that the responsibility for calling a Minister lies with the Church and not the Regional Ministry Team. The settlement process aims to bring together a local church and the Regional Minister serving on the National Settlement Team (NST) in a prayerful, supportive partnership. However, the Regional Minister can only introduce and advise. Perceiving a call lies with the Church Meeting and the prospective Minister.

Regional Ministers undertake to:-

- discuss the church's Profile and needs with the Search Team.
- explain the settlement process to the Church.
- supply the Church with the names and profiles of those Ministers/ Ministers-in-training whose profiles might match the requirements of the Church.
- inform the Church of the situation following a meeting of NST if no suitable names are available at that point in time.
- inform the Search Team 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 Team has taken place and will be overseen by the Regional Minister according to the agreed protocol on confidential information.
- discuss with any candidate for the pastorate, when requested, 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 Team with advice and counsel during the process.

Church responsibilities

The Church also undertakes the following:-

- provide a church Profile which includes a person specification and any other information helpful to the Regional Ministers and National Settlement Team in commending names to the Church.

Facing a Pastoral Vacancy

- consider the names presented to it in reasonable time, so as not to prejudice attempts for settlement elsewhere by the Ministers whose profiles the Search Team were considering.
- keep the Regional Minister informed of progress and provide an up-to-date summary prior to each NST meeting.
- contact every person nominated by the Regional Minister with the decision of the Search Team, whether to initiate a conversation or not to proceed with that candidate. Whenever possible, contact should be made by telephone or letter rather than e-mail.
- inform the Regional Minister of any other approaches or search modes adopted. (S/he may be able to help or advise on aspects of this.)
- give permission to the Regional Minister to discuss the Church context and immediate history with any candidate for the pastorate who makes enquiries.
- take all due care to take up references, where an unaccredited Minister is nominated, and to undertake an enquiry into the suitability of the person for the post.
- make any appointment to the office of a Minister, in all cases, to be dependent upon the candidate holding a current DBS disclosure.



Appendix 4

PASTORAL VACANCY PROGRESS CHART

(See overleaf for template.)

Please indicate what action is being taken regarding the nominations sent to you and give some explanation if possible for the decisions made.

Let your Regional Minister know where things are up to in good time for the next NST meeting and whether or not you require further nominations at this stage.

Don't forget to let candidates know of your decisions as soon as possible and keep your Regional Minister up-to-date. Thanks!

Name of Church

Nether Springs Baptist Church

Key: IT - In touch awaiting reply
 NP - Church not proceeding
 D - Minister declined to proceed
 L8R - May be considered later

NST date	Name of Minister	IT	Date when meeting Minister	Date of first preach *	Date of preach with-a-view *	NP	D	L8R
		/				/	/	/
2/9/13	<i>Charles Spurgeon</i>	/	14/9/13	20/10/13	8/12/13	/	/	/

* *nb* - It is not essential to follow these preaching options.

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PASTORAL VACANCY PROGRESS CHART

Name of Church

--

NST date	Name of Minister	IT /	Date when meeting Minister	Date of first preach *	Date of preach with-a-view *	NP /	D /	L8R /

Minister	Comments

Appendix 5

When a Minister comes to a church from a Baptist college or through the Residential Selection Conference s/he is Newly Accredited and will have a probationary period to serve before being Fully Accredited.

Newly Accredited Ministers

The probationary or 'NAM' period is usually for three or four years. In that time the new Minister is given particular support.

Your Regional Association and the BUGB Ministries Team will link them with a Mentor. This is a person with proven pastoral experience who will meet them regularly (e.g. monthly in the first four months and quarterly thereafter). Using a journal kept by the new Minister, they will reflect together on the work of ministry.

The Newly Accredited Minister (NAM) will also be required to complete an annual 'Learning Contract' during this period, under the guidance of one of our Baptist Colleges.

In each region a Theological Reflection Group will also bring NAM's together to provide support and a place for prayerful reflection on their ministry.

Once during the probationary period the NAM is also expected to attend a special conference, designed to inspire and inform their progress in ministry.

Their Regional Minister will maintain close contact throughout this period, offering support and advising the Regional Review Group which monitors the progress of Newly Accredited Ministers towards full accreditation.

Churches need to understand that a Newly Accredited Minister will need to be given the time to go to any necessary meetings and undertake particular study. Some additional expense will also be involved. However, this will be a valuable investment in present and future ministry, as well as a blessing to the Church. The provisions made for NAM's are designed to establish healthy patterns for future ministry and are certainly not 'hoops to jump through'! It is all about a partnership which will bear fruit for the Kingdom and in the lives of both Minister and Church.



Appendix 6

The Trust Deed.

Behind each church constitution lies a Trust Deed. This may lay down certain conditions about who can be called as a Minister. Among these may be the requirement that anyone invited is an Accredited Minister of the Baptist Union. (This would include a Minister-in-Training or Newly Accredited Minister.)

Churches in receipt of financial support from the Baptist Union ('Home Mission') are normally required to have an Accredited Minister.

There is much wisdom in calling someone whose ministry has been validated and is supported by the wider fellowship. In this way acceptable standards of ministry are maintained for the good of Church and Minister.

Ultimately, under God, churches may call whoever they decide to be their Minister. However, if this means stepping outside the provisions of the Trust Deed, a church must first obtain a 'waiver' from their custodial trustees. This will usually be a corporate Trust body such as the Baptist Union Corporation or a Regional Association. Your Regional Minister can help you contact the right people.



Appendix 7

Avoiding age discrimination.

Recent Government legislation has been introduced, prohibiting various forms of discrimination on the basis of age. This has a direct impact on the settlement process, and you are asked to observe the following:

- When preparing profiles etc. you should not specify that potential Ministers should fit within a particular age bracket, nor should you include the issue of age in your discussions as a search team. The criteria by which you assess the suitability of a potential Minister should not include their age.
- You should not make age-related assumptions when considering candidates - i.e. that individuals in a particular age-bracket will have or lack particular experience or abilities.

It is illegal to decline candidates on the basis of age (either being too old or too young) and you should refrain from this.



Appendix 8

Seeking advice when appointing a second Minister – e.g. Associate, Youth Pastor, Evangelist, Community Pastor.

When a church is first considering the appointment of an additional stipendiary Minister it would probably be wise to consult with churches that have experience of multiple ministry.

Careful consideration needs to be given to the title and role of someone who may be the second Minister, to whom that Minister will be responsible, and what will happen if the 'Senior Minister' leaves.

Please contact your Regional Minister who will be able to offer further assistance.



(Updated September 2013)