

## The Centre for Baptist Studies at Regent's Park College Oxford

### *Summary*

1. The Centre for Baptist History and Heritage will be relaunched as the Centre for Baptist Studies, and a Directorship created tied to a Tutorial Fellowship;
2. The newly reformed Centre would be launched on 1 October 2019.

### *Background*

The Centre for Baptist History and Heritage was established in 2000 to build on the remarkable resources of the Angus Library and attract researchers, especially research students. Prof Paul Fiddes was appointed Acting Director in 2013, and Dr Larry Kreitzer has headed up the Centre's publication programme since that time.

The aims of the Centre are currently articulated as follows:

1. To develop research and scholarship in Baptist history and theology;
2. To relate Baptist history and theology to Baptist life and principles today;
3. To cultivate awareness of resources for Baptist studies that exist in the Angus Library and elsewhere;
4. To share stories of Baptist life with the wider world.

The College will want to continue to pursue these aims, but it seems appropriate now to reflect upon the nature of the Centre's presence in College, its staffing provision, and the research supported by the Centre. The importance of the Angus Library should be re-affirmed in any future arrangements.

### *Aims*

The aims of a new Centre for Baptist Studies will incorporate those of the current CBHH but broaden them somewhat. The CBHH focuses on history and theology and has a concern for Baptist life and practice today. Working with the Angus Library as a major resource there will still be an emphasis on Baptist history, identity, and practice, but 'Baptist Studies' can include a wider range of scholarship – including, for instance, sociological studies of movements and congregations, congregational studies, practical theology, and more. The new Centre will be led by a College Fellow and canvas for Research Students (who will always be subject to the admission criteria and processes of the relevant Faculty) as well as inviting a network of scholars to be attached to the Centre in meaningful ways – perhaps for research using the Angus as a base or collaborating with other scholars through the Centre's relationships.

### *Director*

The Director will have 0.25FTE of their time as a Tutorial Fellow allocated to the work of the Centre. They will be a scholar in one of a range of appropriate disciplines – e.g., church history, any theological discipline (including biblical studies, systematics, missiology, etc), sociology of religion – and have a good research record relevant to Baptist Studies.

The Director will have close links to the Angus Library and help in making both that resource, and the Centre itself, more visible in College and University life, as well as beyond Oxford. Depending on their discipline, they will engage in appropriate teaching of BA undergraduates and ministerial students, as well as supervise PGs (subject to the relevant Faculty).

The new Director will be given some discretion, in consultation with colleagues, in shaping the character and activity of the Centre.

#### *Centre Research Community and Activity*

Alongside the Director, the College may look to appoint two Non-Stipendiary Research Fellows and, say, four to six Research Associates, in order to build capacity in Baptist Studies research.

The successful publication activities of the CBHH will be reviewed and – if found to be making a worthwhile contribution to scholarly work – continued along the current lines. It may be that the Publications Manager should have a certain amount of their time designated to this activity for clarity, and also to make costs more transparent. For clarity, the new CBS will have a designated ‘allowance’ or budget for room bookings, meals, etc so that current ad hoc arrangements can be made more transparent.

It is suggested that a number of current activities within the College be brought under the umbrella of the CBS. A programme of Day Conferences and / or Colloquia may be staged, though the new Director will want some freedom of movement to put their own stamp on things.

It is proposed that the new Centre for Baptist Studies be created on 1 October 2019, alongside the appointment of a new Director. In the meantime, some preparatory work will be done.

*RE  
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