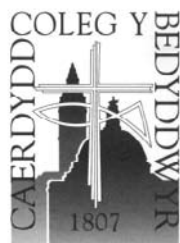


TRAINING FOR LAY PASTORS AND PREACHERS

Over the years, Baptist churches around our country have depended upon the faithful ministry and service of Lay Pastors and Preachers. Whether it has been through an itinerant ministry Sunday by Sunday, or through the regular oversight of a congregation, these women and men have been an integral part of the ongoing life and witness of Baptists, and we owe a debt of gratitude for the work that they have done and continue to do week by week.

It is therefore important that we seek ways of supporting the vital ministry of Lay Pastors and Preachers, and of nurturing those who will fulfil this calling in the future, and this is the aim behind a new training course that is being developed and delivered by our Baptist Colleges, in cooperation with our Associations and Baptist House. It is a course that we hope will be of assistance to many in our churches who serve in a variety of ways or who simply want to find out more about their faith. But it is especially designed to equip those called to serve as Lay Pastors and Preachers.

We want to introduce this new training course and try to answer the questions you might have about it ...



bristol
**BAPTIST
COLLEGE**



What is special about this training course?

This is training designed by Baptists for Baptists! It is designed, firstly, to be **manageable**. Those who serve as Lay Pastors and Preachers often do so alongside many other commitments, and so it is important that training expectations are realistic as well as providing the help and guidance needed. Secondly, it is designed to be **flexible**. Our Lay Pastors and Preachers often bring with them a broad range of skills and experience and have very varying needs, so the aim is to deliver training that as far as possible reflects individual circumstances and requirements. Thirdly, it is designed to be **practical**. The purpose of this training course is to equip women and men for the urgent task of ministry and mission in today's society, and so the content of the various modules is rooted in practice.

Those who successfully complete the training, and whose calling has been discerned and tested by the local Baptist association, will receive national recognition from BUGB as those equipped to serve as Lay Pastors and Preachers within our Baptist churches.

What will I study?

Lay preachers will need to complete eight modules and lay pastors twelve modules. Some of these will be fixed, while for others there will be options, which may vary from college to college. All the modules put an emphasis on biblical study and seek to ground that study in the practice of ministry and mission.

Lay preachers must complete:

- o Two Bible modules
- o Leading Worship
- o Preaching
- o Baptist Belief and Practice

The other three modules must be one from each of the following categories:

- o Theology and History
- o Mission and Culture
- o Personal Development and Formation

Lay pastors must complete:

- o Two Bible modules
- o Leading Worship
- o Preaching
- o Baptist Belief and Practice
- o Pastoral Care
- o Leadership Skills
- o Doing Theology

The other four modules must include at least one from each of the following categories:

- o Theology and History
- o Mission and Culture
- o Personal Development and Formation

The colleges will provide details of what modules they can offer together with further details of the content of each module and the expected outcomes. Lay Preachers and Pastors will also have to undergo child protection training and this

will be provided by the colleges, associations or Baptist House.

How will I study?

Each of our Colleges is delivering training in the way that best suits both the College and the participants. So it may take place on Saturdays, for example, or on weekday evenings, and some Colleges also offer distance learning. Whichever College you approach, you can expect twelve hours of teaching for each module.

It will be possible to begin study at any time, taking advantage of whatever module is currently being taught by the College. Participants can then proceed to study further modules as and when they are offered, at a time and pace to suit their particular needs, until the course has been completed.

Where will I study?

Participants will often attend the College to study, though in some places modules are delivered more locally.

All our Colleges are following a generally agreed curriculum and working to similar standards, so if participants find a module is not being delivered by their College in the immediate future, the first step will be to see if another of our Colleges can offer the teaching required. If this is not practical, then the College together with the Ministry Department will look for another deliverer.

The advantage of this kind of portfolio system is that participants can slowly build up their training, taking whatever time they need and using different deliverers as necessary, with a College to guide them through this process.

How much work will I have to do?

Each module will be assessed and participants will normally be asked to complete two assignments. One of these will be a straightforward piece of written work, while the other may be more creative, such as a journal. Modules taught by distance learning may be assessed in different ways. The training provided is expected to correspond to 'A' level standard and the assignments will be assessed accordingly.

What will I achieve by the end of the course?

The aim is to provide training that meets the real needs of those who seek to serve our Baptist churches as Lay Pastors and Preachers. Thus there is no intention to work towards any formal qualification with the limitations this would inevitably impose on both Colleges and participants (of course, all our Colleges offer this opportunity for those who wish it).

However, those who complete the course will be able to seek national recognition from BUGB as Lay Pastors and Preachers, and this will enable them to serve as such in any of our churches. And most important of all, the training should equip all those who complete it with the necessary skills and understanding to fulfil their calling.

What will it cost?

All training costs. It requires a considerable investment of time and expertise from those who serve as trainers, and this needs to be recognised and acknowledged. Each College will be able to provide details of the fees charged for the training course, and every effort is made to ensure costs are reasonable.

It may be that the church or churches that benefit from the participant's training might be asked to contribute towards the fees.

What if I have already done some theological training?

This modular form of training means that recognition may be given to any training that has already been completed. A participant would give evidence to the College of recent work already completed satisfactorily, and together they would then identify any further work that needed doing in order to complete the training course and receive national recognition.

What happens if I do not live near a Baptist College?

As this training is designed for Baptists the places that can best deliver it are our Baptist Colleges, and all participants will be expected to register with one of the Colleges. It is clear, however, that parts of the country are some distance from the nearest Baptist College making it difficult for some to access training. In these circumstances, the registering College, together with the Ministry Department, will seek other more local ways in which training can be delivered (perhaps through a comparable course offered by another institution). The registering College will continue to have oversight, but the intention is to provide the training in a way that is as responsive as possible to the needs of the participant.

What happens if my circumstances change?

Again, the advantage of this training course is that participants can complete modules as and when they are able, and so build up a portfolio of completed work over time. If a participant completes one or more modules but then finds they need to take a break due to work or family commitments, then they can do so and resume training when they are next able to. If a participant moves from one part of the country to another, they can easily transfer to another of our Colleges to continue training as all are offering the same core curriculum. If a participant finds they have additional time and wish to complete the course as soon as possible, the College and Ministry Department will look for ways of making this possible.

How do I begin?

The training is a partnership involving the Colleges, the Associations and Baptist House. Anyone wanting to access this training should begin by approaching the nearest College to find out details of the way they are presently delivering the course and how to register.

At the same time those who want to seek national recognition as Lay Pastors and Preachers should have an early conversation with their local Baptist association. Those seeking such recognition will need the support and commendation of their local church as well as association, and a formal interview should take place at the beginning and the end of training.

Our colleges can be contacted as follows:

Course: **Prepare for Service**

Contact: Ken Stewart, Bristol Baptist College, The Promenade, Clifton Down, Clifton, Bristol BS8 3NJ

Tel: 0117 946 9206

Email: ken.stewart@bristol-baptist.ac.uk

Course: **Together in Mission and Ministry: a course for disciples on the move**

Contact: Anne Phillips, Northern Baptist College, Luther King House, Brighton Grove, Rusholme, Manchester M14 5JP

Tel: 0161 249 2513

Email: anne.phillips@northern.org.uk

Course: **Growing in Service: training in local church life**

Contact: Anthony Clarke, Regent's Park Baptist College, Pusey Street, Oxford OX1 2LB

Tel: 01865 288120

Email: anthony.clarke@regents.ox.ac.uk

Course: **Listen, Learn and Serve**

Contact: Simon Woodman, South Wales Baptist College, 54 Richmond Road, Cardiff, CF24 3UR

Tel: 029 2025 6066

Email: sw@swbc.org.uk

Course: **Equipped to Minister**

Contact: Tony Rich, Spurgeon's College, 189 South Norwood Hill, London SE25 6DJ

Tel: 020 8653 0850

Email: enquiries@spurgeons.ac.uk

Our Colleges and Associations will be glad to answer any further questions you may have about this training course.

In addition, you are welcome to contact:

Viv O'Brien in the Ministry Department about the formal recognition procedures
(Tel 01235 517706 or email vobrien@baptist.org.uk)

February 2007