

## **BAPTIST IDENTITY - 9 POINTS**

### **The Lordship of Christ**

Baptists affirm that 'Jesus is Lord'. He is Lord over our individual lives, the life of each church, and the life of the whole world.

### **The Authority of the Bible**

The Bible is described as the 'Word of God' because Baptists believe that its writers were inspired by God's Spirit.

As such, it has authority to guide both what we believe and how we live our lives.

### **Baptism for Believers**

From the example of the New Testament, Baptists claim that baptism is for those who believe and able to declare that Jesus is Lord.

As a symbol of Jesus' claim on our lives, baptism by immersion is practised, representing a desire to die to self and to live for Christ.

### **A Believers' Church**

Baptists understand the church as a community of believers gathered in the name of Jesus Christ for worship, witness and service.

There is no set Baptist liturgy. Each local church and community is free to determine its own pattern, though prayer and praise, listening and reflecting on scripture, and sharing Holy Communion will always be

### **The Priesthood of all Believers**

Baptists believe that everyone that attends a Baptist church has a role to play and can use their God-given skills and talents for the good of the church and the community.

These gifts include teaching, evangelism, social action, pastoral care, prayer, healing, taking part in worship, administration or hospitality.

### **Church Members and Church Meetings**

When a person is baptised in a Baptist church, they normally become a church member.

Church members are called to prayerfully discern God's will for their shared life. Final authority does not rest with the ministers, deacons or any other local, national or international body, but with the members meeting together under God's guidance.

Church meetings will make significant appointments including ministers, and agree financial policy and mission.

### **Interdependence**

Baptists believe that churches should not live in isolation from one another but rather be inter-dependent.

Our Baptist churches are linked regionally, nationally and internationally for support and fellowship.

### **Sharing the Faith**

Baptists believe that each Christian has a duty to share their faith with others.

We recognise that mission is not just evangelism, but also includes promoting justice, social welfare, healing, education and peace in the world.

### **Religious Freedom**

Religious freedom for all has always been a keystone of Baptist understanding.

Acceptance of differences of outlook and diversity of practice is encouraged within Baptist churches, as well as in our wider world.

Headings and text gleaned from the Baptist Union web site - [www.bugb.org.uk](http://www.bugb.org.uk)