

# Financial Resource Gifts To Churches

## Baptist Union of Scotland



### 1. Introduction

Since the formation of our network of churches in 1869 we have been committed to sharing financial resources to support the mission of existing congregations and to encourage the planting of new congregations. This remains one of our priorities. This handbook explains what funds are currently available, the criteria by which gifts are made and the application process for any church seeking a gift.

We purposely speak of 'gifts' rather than 'grants'. The resources we share have all been given by Baptist churches (past and present) in a spirit of fellowship and common sharing. It is therefore a privilege and an act of spiritual devotion to bless one another by making gifts to enable churches to fulfil the mission to which God is calling us. This reflects the attitude of the church in Antioch who, prompted by the Holy Spirit, 'decided to provide help for the brothers and sisters living in Judea' (Acts 11.29). As the apostle Paul recognised, gifts received for evangelistic ministry are not just grants to be claimed from others but are 'a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice pleasing to God' (Philippians 4.18).

As a network of churches seeking to distribute our shared resources with discernment and devotion, we only make gifts to churches, not to other charitable organisations or individuals. Resources are released to help a local congregation fulfil a vision discerned communally as the call of Christ to them. The distinctive nature of our mutual resourcing is that it is from, by and for local churches.

### 2. Key Criteria For All Gifts: Transformations, Generations, Innovations

The Council of the Baptist Union has recognised *Transformations*, *Generations* and *Innovations* as strategic priorities at this time. Gifts are made to support initiatives focused on the transformation of lives or communities by the power of Christ, disciple-making among younger generations, and innovative expressions of church and mission.

### 3. What Are Gifts Available For?

- a. Supporting churches to **appoint transformative leaders**, full or part-time, including:
  - i. Leaders in specialised roles with a transformative focus

- ii. Innovators developing church plants and new contextual churches
  - iii. New ministers in existing churches committed to renewing their engagement in mission
- b. *Supporting churches to meet **training and development needs**, in areas such as:*
- i. Training and ongoing support for leadership teams together
  - ii. Habits and skills for transformative leadership
  - iii. Development of younger leaders
  - iv. Equipping innovators and church planters
- c. *Supporting churches to provide **resources for mission**, including for example:*
- i. Rental of space
  - ii. Equipment
  - iii. Pilot projects, that may lead to growth in understanding and development of a full project

#### **4. How Much Can We Apply For?**

- a. Gifts to support Transformative Leaders can be up to 33.3% of the BUS reference stipend plus employer National Insurance contributions for a period of 3 years. This is calculated on a pro rata basis for part-time or co-vocational roles.
- b. Gifts for Training and Development Needs can be up to 66% of the total cost.
- c. Gifts for Resources for Mission can be up to 50% of the total cost.

#### **5. How Do We Make An Application?**

In the first instance, contact a member of the National Team for an informal conversation. Following this, complete an application form and return this with the other documents listed on the form to the Finance Director.

- a. If you are seeking support for a personnel appointment:
  - i. Your application will first be reviewed by the Finance Director, who may request clarification or additional information;
  - ii. A meeting will then be arranged between members of your leadership team and a group representing BUS. This group will

usually be comprised of a member of the National Team and two members of other churches. They will make a recommendation to the BUS Resource Gift Group who will make a final decision. The Resource Gift Group is comprised of the Finance Director, the General Director and three others.

- b. If you are seeking support for training and development or resources for mission, the process is simpler.
  - i. If the request is for £2,000 or less and it is clear how this fulfils the key criteria for gifts, the Finance Director will make a decision and respond to you.
  - ii. If the request is for between £2,000 and £5,000 it will be referred to the National Team for a decision and the Finance Director will respond to you on their behalf.
  - iii. If the request is for more than £5,000 the full process described above for seeking support for a personnel appointment will be followed and a decision will be made by the Resource Gift Group.

## **6. Are Gifts Available For Church Buildings?**

The BUS Church and Manse Building Fund offers *loans* for the purchase, improvement or repair of church buildings and manses, up to 50% of the project cost and a maximum loan of £100,000. More information about this is available from the BUS office or website.

## **7. How Are Applications Assessed?**

- a. Applications will be considered from churches in membership of the Baptist Union of Scotland or from church plants resolved to seek membership of our Union within the period of support or by an agreed date.
- b. Churches seeking support must fully complete the Application Form, provide all requested supporting documents and co-operate with the Finance Director and Resource Gift Group in the application process.
- c. The following factors will be taken into account when deciding the size of specific resource gifts: the number of church members and regular participants, the number of wage earners, the community which the church

serves, the potential for growth and the evidence of fruitfulness in the present ministry of the church.

- d. A gift will not be made unless the Finance Director is satisfied that the church itself is raising an amount commensurate with its resources.
- e. Existing churches will only be eligible to apply for a gift if they have given the full per capita amount to the Scottish Baptist Fund in the preceding 3 years.
- f. When a church's contributions to other causes exceed 50% of the combined total amount of giving to the Scottish Baptist Fund, Scottish Baptist College and BMS World Mission, gifts will not normally be available.
- g. The awarding of a gift and the determination of its amount will be at the absolute discretion of the Resource Gift Group.

#### **8. How Is Progress Reported and Evaluated?**

- a. Each church in receipt of a gift will take part in an annual review with the Finance Director or a person appointed by the Finance Director. This will be an opportunity to demonstrate how the gift is being used to meet the aims set out in the application and reflect on the progress of the project.
- b. The Finance Director will report to the Resource Gift Group following the annual review. If the Resource Gift Group is not satisfied that the gift is being used wisely and strategically for the agreed aims, the gift may be discontinued.
- c. Churches in receipt of a gift must also produce a short written report each year to be included in the reports to the Annual General Meeting. This is to enable our whole network of churches to see how financial gifts are being used, to celebrate your progress and to pray for you. If this report is not submitted by the required date, the Resource Gift Group reserves the right to discontinue the gift.

#### **9. What Special Conditions Apply to Gifts To Support Personnel Appointments?**

- a. Applications for a gift to support a personnel appointment must be made and approved before a call is extended or appointment made. Should a church call a minister or worker in anticipation of a gift without first gaining

the consent of the Resource Gift Group, an application will not be considered.

- b. The maximum gift normally available to churches is 33.3% of the BUS reference stipend plus employer's National Insurance contribution pro rata for a three year period.
- c. Churches must demonstrate clearly how they aspire to continue the ministry beyond the years of this funding.
- d. Churches in receipt of gifts are not permitted to exceed the BUS reference stipend for the post funded (though any housing allowances provided by churches may vary according to local property prices).
- e. A church in receipt of a gift will not engage in any financial undertaking exceeding 25% of the gift without the prior agreement of the Resource Gift Group.
- f. When a full-time ministry is supported by a gift, a minister should not undertake any additional paid work.
- g. Where a church is appointing a sole minister, it is expected that this person will be accredited by BUS or have been approved by the Board of Ministry.
- h. Extension funding for two further years, at a reduced level, may be considered when there is tangible evidence of achievement of the purpose of the gift and the people being served are not likely to become financial supporters of the local church in the near future (eg due to poverty, addiction, or other social marginalisation). Extension funding will only be granted where there is a clear plan for the continuation of the work beyond the extension period.

## **10. Payment of Gifts**

- a. Gifts will normally be paid monthly in instalments at the agreed rate for that year.
- b. No gift towards a stipend will be payable until such ministry has commenced.
- c. The gift will cease immediately on any breach of the agreed conditions, or otherwise at a pre-agreed time or when the particular ministry ends.

- d. Each church receiving a gift is expected to do its utmost to increase its contribution towards the ministry each year so that there can be a corresponding reduction in the gift.