

## **A brief critical analysis of the Baptists Together equality and diversity training resource '*I Am Because You Are*'**

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.<sup>1</sup>

*Ephesians 5:1–2*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Baptists Together are committed to developing a culture where we 'Inspire others— With a generosity of spirit, energise and motivate people to be all that **God created them to be** (Eph 5:1–2)'.<sup>2</sup> The last phrase in the text presupposes an agreement with the Word of God that all people are created by Him; therefore, there is a prerequisite 'as beloved children' to love others as Jesus loved us. This paper seeks to conduct a limited critical analysis on the equality and diversity training course titled '*I Am Because You Are*', exploring to what extent accredited Baptist ministers in the UK can participate alongside God in creating and nurturing a culture that acknowledges the humanity of the other 'and live in love', having being made in the image of God, while working professionally to comply with UK legislation. Within this paper, I will refer to '*I Am Because You Are*' as the 'Course'.

I will aim to elucidate this theme by exploring the Course's focus on the accessibility of language and the skills of effective listening and its continual practical outworking in ministry. This paper is limited in its critique of the Course, which is yet to be evaluated through a survey that I am developing in consultation with the Ministries Team (see Appendix One); at the time of writing, ministers have a deadline for the end of 2023 to complete the Course and submit an electronic confirmation that they have watched and discussed all six videos. It is the focus of my Project Violet research to review data from course evaluations that ministers would submit following completion the Course.

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<sup>1</sup> The Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2011), p.150.

<sup>2</sup> Baptists Together, *Belonging to Baptists Together*, (Didcot: Baptists Together, 2023) p.8 <<https://www.baptist.org.uk/Publisher/File.aspx?ID=323265&view=browser>> [Accessed 31 July 2023]. Emphasis added.

British Baptists have a long history of defending and promoting religious liberty and freedom of conscience both in Britain and abroad,<sup>3</sup> believing that the church should never use power to control or persecute. Baptists believe the church should seek to influence, for example, the state, affirming rather than denying human freedoms. The church is called to protect and not to persecute. Both church and state have a duty to God: the state to work for and promote peace, protecting its citizens against potential and actual harm; with the church bearing witness, declaring without fear the Gospel and advancing the kingdom of God throughout the world. The duty of the church is to be a prophetic voice of God and an institution of justice and righteousness. Baptists have an ongoing commitment to prioritise justice for all, and we are on a journey to ensure that no one is left behind and that we can work together for the restoration of relationships within the movement as we seek to stand in solidarity and in some respects as allies for those who may have previously been excluded.

In this paper the reference to ‘ministers’ includes individuals who are fully accredited ministers, nationally recognised pastors and newly accredited ministers. At present ministers in training receive their equality and diversity training from their respective colleges. Additionally, some of the ministers who have come into ministry later in life have had professional careers where they would have completed equality and diversity training; therefore, the topics are not new to them. A significant theme to explore would focus on how ministers, following training on equality and diversity, will continue to keep themselves up to date, equipped and skilled to address any issues that might occur—this will be explored in my Project Research. Additionally, in this paper, I would like to acknowledge retired ministers and chaplains for their commitment and invaluable service, wisdom and insights to the Baptist movement; though this Course is not mandatory for retired ministers or chaplains, their feedback will be welcomed to help reflect more fully on the accessibility, usefulness, relevance and practical implications following engagement with the course material.

## **LEGISLATION**

The Course on equality and diversity is one that is critical and relevant in the life of the Baptist movement, not only to ensure reduced risks to ministers and churches by enabling both to meet statutory and legislative requirements, but also the Course

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<sup>3</sup> Charmaine Mhlanga, 'The AI of AI: the Authorised Intrusion of Artificial Intelligence' (unpublished essay for Unit 490 Dissertation, Spurgeon's College, 2021), p.5.

provides information and guidance to help support and transform how we treat others, including meeting reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010. The Course seeks to engage ministers in conversations sensitively, in safe and compassionate environments, that foster an attitude of listening attentively, sharing and learning new information and extending grace towards one another when we hold differing perspectives with regards to equality and diversity. Notably, the Course is not the only method of developing awareness or changing behaviours or attitudes, or even improving skill, knowledge and expertise in the subject matter. Coaching, mentoring, research, e-learning, reading books or journaling are other methods that can be engaged with.

In the UK, legislation sets out frameworks to legally protect people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society—for example, the Equality Act 2010. The Equality Act 2010 exists to protect people from discrimination, harassment and victimisation based on nine protected characteristics: Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual orientation. The Equality Act 2010 was introduced on 1 October 2010 and brought together other pieces of legislation into one single Act—for example, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Race Relations Act 1976 and Disability Discrimination Act and the Equal Pay Act 1970.<sup>4</sup> Baptists and other religious institutions are subject to the provisions of the Act, although there are exceptions and exemptions that allow us to act in accordance with our theological beliefs. Notwithstanding compliance to legislation, Baptists believe that ‘our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, is the sole and absolute authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice’;<sup>5</sup> therefore, we are required to pursue and work to greater standards that are just and righteous as we imitate Christ.

Notably, within the health and social care sector in the UK, equality, diversity and inclusion, including unconscious bias training courses, are mandatory. The regulatory body for health and social care, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), carry out inspections where services are reviewed to ensure they are working in person-centred and person-specific ways to meet the needs of individuals from all groups, ‘for example lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people’; additionally services are required to

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<sup>4</sup> Equality and Human Rights Commission, *What is the Equality Act?*  
<<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/equality/equality-act-2010/what-equality-act>>  
[Accessed 31 July 2023].

<sup>5</sup> Baptists Together, *Declaration of Principles*  
<[https://baptist.org.uk/Groups/220595/Declaration\\_of\\_Principle.aspx](https://baptist.org.uk/Groups/220595/Declaration_of_Principle.aspx)> [Accessed 31 July 2023].

meet Accessible Information Standards, which evidence how they identify and meet information and communication needs of individuals relating to disability, impairment or sensory loss, and how those in leadership positions are ‘promoting equality, diversity and human rights in their service, including for their staff’.<sup>6</sup> Dissimilar to the health and social care and other churches—for example, Methodists, Church of England and United Reformed Churches—Baptists have appeared as being unhurried in addressing the need for bespoke training on issues that impact the church and ministers daily—for example, equality, diversity and inclusion. Reflecting on previously developed resources which I will briefly consider (*‘We Belong’* and *‘Just Aware’*) along with *‘I Am Because You Are’*, we appear to have developed these in response to a time of crisis rather than having a planned strategy to proactively address issues that are arising in the contemporary world. Neither this paper nor the research I am undertaking are to be disparaging to us as Baptists, more it is to encourage us to navigate away from a place of comfortable complacency to active participation in engaging with issues that impact us.

## THE COURSE

*‘I Am Because You Are’*, is only an introduction to equality, diversity and inclusion. This is emphasised in the short videos and literature that is available on the Baptists Together website; the videos are also accessible on YouTube.<sup>7</sup> The FuelCast, in collaboration with the Ministries Team at Didcot, have created and developed a quality resource that ministers can engage with. Additionally, ministers have access to other resources on equality, diversity and inclusion that they can explore in more depth on the Baptists Together website.<sup>8</sup> As Baptists we use the language of ministers being in a ‘covenantal relationship’ with the Baptist Union and with one another and therefore ministers have been asked to watch and discuss the videos with other ministers, rather than in isolation. This is to consider the themes together with the hope of exploring feelings, perceptions, motivations and generate new ideas on how we can engage with the topic. I had the privilege of being one of the presenters with Reverend Doctor Tim Judson, minister at Honiton Baptist Church, working with a dedicated and devoted team who prayerfully worked to meticulously to produce this quality resources. In addition, I engaged with the videos together with a group of ministers in the Central Baptist Association (CBA). The CBA was proactive in facilitating opportunities to

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<sup>6</sup> Care Quality Commission, *Equality, diversity and human rights: adult social care services* <<https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/adult-social-care/equality-diversity-human-rights-adult-social-care-services>> [Accesses 31 July 2023].

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/379597/The\\_videos.aspx](https://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/379597/The_videos.aspx)

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/310747/Racial\\_Justice\\_Training.aspx](https://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/310747/Racial_Justice_Training.aspx)

engage with the Course, encouraging ministers to complete a two-day session with the same cohort of participants.

Within the Baptist Union, initial raw data currently being submitted to the Ministries Team indicates that ministers in all 13 Associations have started to engage with the Course. Different approaches to encourage uptake have been facilitated—for example, some Associations have organised face-to-face sessions for ministers to engage, while others have met virtually; other local ministers have chosen to meet with people they know, trust and can be vulnerable to in safe spaces. At a glance, Associations websites have chosen different focus points on the Course: on some of the websites there is no mention of the Course, while on other sites, Justice Hubs that are in operation appear to be spearheading for ministers to engage. It is the scope of my Project Violet research to hone into the data more closely once all the ministers have hopefully completed the training.

## BACKGROUND

In March 2021, following a letter requesting to make equality and diversity training mandatory for all ministers, the BU Council agreed a change to the Ministerial Recognition Rules in that, 'All ministers [...] must undertake equality and diversity training at regular intervals'.<sup>9</sup> The letter was sent to the Ministries Team 'signed by around 250 people, including 170 Baptist ministers, in the summer, in the wake of discussions among Baptists on social media following the murder of George Floyd'.<sup>10</sup> In reflecting on these events, we would need to discuss, with the potential of implementing an equality, diversity and inclusion strategy on how are we held to account as the Baptist movement in how we equip our ministers with regards to compliance to legislation. The training for the Course was determined by the National Ministerial Recognition Committee with input from other stakeholders.

The Course is being engaged with in the wake of another letter which was signed by 70 people, the majority being ministers, requesting a revision be made to Ministerial Recognition Rules (MRR) for what constitutes as gross misconduct. The request if adopted for example 'would mean that a minister who is in a same-sex marriage would

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<sup>9</sup> Baptists Together, *Baptist Council Union March 2021* <[https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/606407/Baptist\\_Union\\_Council.aspx](https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/606407/Baptist_Union_Council.aspx)> [Accessed 31 July 2023].

<sup>10</sup> Baptists Together, *Baptist Council Union March 2021* <[https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/606407/Baptist\\_Union\\_Council.aspx](https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/606407/Baptist_Union_Council.aspx)> [Accessed 31 July 2023].

no longer be committing gross misconduct and lose their accreditation'.<sup>11</sup> This is a challenging and yet hopeful time for Baptists, and initial feedback received about the Course, indicates that some churches through their engagement and interaction with others using this resource, have been able to start having safe listening spaces for churches with their ministers to explore and discern together about other topics, including the proposed MRR change. There has been a readiness with some people that I have spoken with about the need to be authentic in accepting with humility where we have got things wrong and being confident enough to share this as we seek to share truth, loving one another and appreciating each of the voices that are heard.

Before I reflect further on the Course '*I Am Because You Are*', which launched in 2022, I need to explore where we have been in the past 15 years. I joined my local Baptist church in 2005, becoming a member 2006, and have drawn from this timeline, meaning I will not explore all the other foundational work before this time. I will commence with '*We Belong*'. '*We Belong*' was an ecumenical racial justice training programme for accredited ministers, launched in 2007; significant numbers of ministers undertook the training, 'designed to help them reflect on ways in which they might cultivate culturally inclusive churches'.<sup>12</sup> This paper is limited in reporting on actual numbers of ministers who engaged with this resource and its impact in ministry. Our Baptist Racial Justice Group, in partnership with the United Reformed Church, developed this resource, which not only acknowledged how Europe was being challenged to confront xenophobic violence against Blacks, but also acknowledged the 'beauty of humanity'. Relatedly, the equality and diversity resource '*I Am Because You Are*' was triggered to some extent by the murder of George Floyd in 2020. This was 14 years after the vicious murder of a Senegalese student in Russia in February 2006,<sup>13</sup> along with, in Germany, experiences of a near fatal attack on a German of Ethiopian origin in April 2006;<sup>14</sup> these and other incidents of injustice at that time prompted the development of the '*We Belong*' resource.

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<sup>11</sup> Baptists Together, *Listening to National Discernment*  
<[https://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/357129/Listening\\_to\\_national.aspx](https://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/357129/Listening_to_national.aspx)> [Accessed 31 July 2023].

<sup>12</sup> Baptists Together, *Racial Justice Training*  
<[https://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/310747/Racial\\_Justice\\_Training.aspx](https://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/310747/Racial_Justice_Training.aspx)> [Accessed 31 July 2023].

<sup>13</sup> Nick Paton Walsh, 'Student dies in Russia's latest racist attack', *Guardian*, 8 April 2006  
<<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/apr/08/russia.nickpatonwalsh>> [Accessed 31 July 2023].

<sup>14</sup> Spiegel International, *Ethiopian-Born Man Beaten Into Coma*, 18 April 2006  
<<https://www.spiegel.de/international/germany-shocked-by-racist-attack-ethiopian-born-man-beaten-into-coma-a-411820.html>> [Accessed 31 July 2023].

'*We Belong*' was not only about racial justice training, but it also explored how cultural diversity can be celebrated and that hospitality had a place in bringing people together. Key topics with '*We Belong*', included:

- reading images—this aimed to help participants gain some understanding of how images and other forms of representation deeply influence the way people perceive themselves and others
- exploring identity—this aimed to assist participants to reflect on cultural identity and associated tensions, reflecting on the multifaceted dimensions of diversity
- facing fear explored with participants how fears contribute to the way we see and treat others
- how racism can be challenged

The resource focussed on the significance of welcoming the stranger and living out intentionally genuine hospitality. Biblical roots of racial justice were explored for each of the sessions held.

Following on from the '*We Belong*' resource, '*Just Aware*' was launched, setting out the importance of 'bringing together previously separate Baptist initiatives concerned with race, gender and disability around a single focus on justice'.<sup>15</sup> The aim was for '*Just Aware*' to be 'used across our communities to help groups of Baptists explore and enlarge their understanding of and commitment to justice as a fundamental gospel value'.<sup>16</sup> It was an intersectional training resource focusing on disability, gender and racial justice concerns. '*Just Aware*' was presented by trained facilitators, with a primary purpose to enable participants to reflect on areas of injustice and how they can be addressed. Facilitators additionally signposted participants to other appropriate resources. This resource was to be intentionally engaged with by churches and those in leadership. Similar to '*We Belong*', there is limited evidence within Baptists Together to reflect on how many ministers and churches engaged with '*Just Aware*'. '*Just Aware*', had its starting point rooted in a theological understanding of what underpinned justice; its authors expressed a conviction that 'justice is a central theme in the Christian scriptures, and demands the highest possible profile in the work of Christian mission'.<sup>17</sup>

'*Just Aware*' set out clear educational and practical outcomes, hoping these would be evidenced as participants engaged with the resources. The participants would be

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<sup>15</sup> Baptists Together, *Just Aware* Facilitators Resources Notes.

<sup>16</sup> Baptists Together, *Just Aware* Facilitators Resources Notes.

<sup>17</sup> Baptists Together, *Just Aware* Facilitators Resources Notes.

drawing from personal encounters with relevance to issues of justice; and participants would need to reflect theologically on the issues shared.<sup>18</sup> There was a desire for authentic opportunities for minds and hearts to be transformed through these engagements, evidenced not only by real moments to reflect on experience, but also, the prospect of recording clear markers for future attention within individual learning portfolios, and including participants being invited to think carefully about ongoing implications of issues raised in the sessions.<sup>19</sup> Participants were given additional resources which they were signposted to, including links to the Methodist Church EDI Toolkit, United Reformed Church equal opportunities framework and other resources originated from Baptists Together, which included the 2017 initiative entitled '*Pentecost People*', our 2007 '*Apology for Slavery*', and *Journeying to Justice: Contributions to the Baptist Tradition across the Black Atlantic*, edited by Anthony G. Reddie, with Wale Hudson-Roberts and Gale Richards. '*Pentecost People*' was another resource that churches were able to engage with to help think about what it would be like for strangers, especially people from different languages and cultural backgrounds, to visit our churches for the first time. This paper, however, is limited in reflecting on the impact or effectiveness of the '*Just Aware*' and '*Pentecost People*' resources—these will be subject for other research opportunities in exploring how significant resources that remain relevant for our time and future generations may have been neglected or overlooked within Baptists Together.

*'I Am Because You Are'*

## **LANGUAGE ACCESSIBILITY**

Primarily, language matters, and making language accessible matters even more. Furthermore, using language well requires effective and attentive listening to one another which has been one of the most beneficial impacts of this Course. In the Course we listen to people who are on a journey, some moving away from a narrow aspect of reflecting on equality, diversity and inclusion; and others who have a wider lens of experience, yet are triggered by the lack of awareness and discrimination that continues to happen in society and in our Baptist movement. We discover that the language we use often expresses and shapes our worldview, our culture and our values; and where our language is limited, our worldview, culture and values are deficient. The language we use invokes our emotions, our memories, our thoughts and influences the way we live, feel and think. Out of language flows the knowledge and information that we hold, reflecting our culture, values and traditions. Nevertheless, what if our language is flawed and deficient? How does that impact the environments

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<sup>18</sup> Baptists Together, Just Aware Facilitators Resources Notes.

<sup>19</sup> Baptists Together, Just Aware Facilitators Resources Notes.



we inhabit and how we treat each other? Additionally, as ministers how does our deficiency in language impact the congregations that we lead—for example, are we intentionally or unintentionally a single culture congregation? If we are a multi-cultural congregation, how does the leadership team, including the minister, reflect the language of congregation if they are from a different ethnic and cultural background? Are there groups missing from our congregation leadership positions?

Language accessibility also refers to the intentional inclusion of communication and information for all individuals with different language abilities, including technology that enables engagement by all people who may have limited language or require alternative forms of communication, such as Braille, sign language or assistive technologies. At present, the Course is in video format with subtitles, and the Ministries Team were exploring the possibility of the resource including sign language. The survey that I am creating, once agreed, will explore further on the topic of language accessibility for people with differing language needs (see Appendix One).

Secondly, the language of ‘Ubuntu’ may have been problematic to some ministers—for example, initial feedback from a group of ministers highlighted that the Course needed to be underpinned by ‘sound biblical theology’ rather than an African cultural concept or philosophy. Within the African context, words like Ubuntu create a world in which our insights are expanded and our knowledge deepened around the interconnectedness of our humanity—‘I am because you are and we are’—and this interconnectedness transcends physical human created borders and sees the other as part of the whole network, nature and spirituality included. Harvey Kwiyani notes that ‘when British Christians engage with foreign Christians in theological conversations—with the intention of learning from one another and not to teach and convert one another—both their theologies are enriched’.<sup>20</sup> In agreement with Kwiyani, there is more that we can learn from each other as Baptists and from the concept of Ubuntu.

In an article I wrote on Ubuntu, I stated that ‘the African philosophy Ubuntu demonstrates the interconnectedness of our humanity’;<sup>21</sup> we are reminded in the Bible that all humanity was created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) and in agreement with Dr Dennis Kilama from Uganda, ‘Ubuntu [...] philosophy that says people exist in

<sup>20</sup> Harvey C. Kwinyani, *Mission-Shaped Church in a Multicultural World in Grove Mission and Evangelism* Mev118 (Cambridge: Grove Books, 2017), p.18.

<sup>21</sup> Charmaine Mhlanga, *I am because you are, and we are*

<[https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/634988/I\\_am\\_because.aspx](https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/634988/I_am_because.aspx)> [Accessed 31 July 2023].

community not isolation'.<sup>22</sup> If we are to participate alongside God in creating and nurturing a culture that acknowledges the humanity of the other having being made in the image of God, perhaps we need to embrace the 'beauty of our humanity' which is found in the language, culture and ethnic diversity of the Baptist movement in the UK. Furthermore, we can then communicate the language of unity and manifest Psalm 133:1: 'How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity'.<sup>23</sup> While Ubuntu speaks to the language of African culture, some might argue, nevertheless, how can we as Baptists be enriched by a language that speaks of a spirit of togetherness, of oneness, of solidarity, of community, interconnectedness and interdependency while still having an intentionality of seeking the good of others? Verbal feedback expressed about the Course enabled some ministers to share about what they are feeling and experiencing while being reassured that they are not on their own, especially when Regional Teams have facilitated engagement with the Course. Ministers that I have spoken with have felt a connectedness and sense of belonging which was previously hindered to some extent by the pandemic, so coming together physically in itself has been beneficial as ministers have encouraged one another and helped build strength and resilience.

Thirdly, in language accessibility, we appear to have omitted the word 'inclusion' in the training narrative and on the Baptists Together website, only opting for equality and diversity. By nature, inclusion seeks to create an environment of welcome to all, yet we are all too aware of our unconscious biases that may choose to leave other people outside. While the Course is a useful resource, there are, however, other issues that need scrutiny and introspection when we reflect on the limitedness of diversity that currently exist within our Baptist structures, including limited representation in leadership from Black and Brown people, women, young people, and people with disability. As the word 'inclusion' has been omitted, perhaps unintentionally, what does this communicate in the perceptions of our reality and what does the omission create for people within in Baptist movement who might feel excluded? Who is invited and who is not? Our outgoing President, Reverend Hayley Young, focussed on 'building a bigger table', stating 'the table to which Jesus welcomed people was a diverse table: he gathered with priests and prostitutes, with the religious elite and the common street rabble, with his disciples and his adversaries. They are all treated with equal dignity:

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<sup>22</sup> Dennie Kilama, *Christians In Community: Redeeming The Concept Of Ubuntu* <<https://africa.thegospelcoalition.org/article/redeeming-ubuntu/>> [Accessed 31 July 2023].

<sup>23</sup> The Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2011), p.446.

even if he sometimes had some harsh words for them, as they left Jesus' presence he continued to love them'.<sup>24</sup>

It is important that we create environments where individuals are treated fairly, equally and equitably, regardless of their protected characteristics. We are to challenge discriminatory practices and promote within the Baptists a movement in which all individuals have the opportunity to participate fully—and where actual and potential barriers are acknowledged, these are reviewed and reflected upon as we seek to repair where hurt and damage has been caused. We are blessed as the Baptist movement to have Reverend Jane Day engaging with the recognised significant challenges still existing today for Baptist women in ministry and our slowness in addressing the issue of inequality and inclusion within our practices and structures. This paper is limited in exploring fully the impact of the theme of inclusion from a practical and theological perspective.

Lastly, titling the equality and diversity as a 'Course' might be problematic to ministers engaging with it. The aim of any training 'course' is to support and help improve individuals' level of awareness by increasing knowledge, skill and expertise—in some respects, to motivate people to do their jobs professionally and satisfactorily. Most courses will have a form of assessment after completion and if satisfactory grades are achieved, participants are awarded with a certificate, or some courses are associated with promotions within the organisations—this is not the case for this Course. In 2020, the Ministries Team introduced a framework for Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD) and as part of engaging with the Course, ministers can reflect on this resource as part of ongoing development. Notably, the Ministries Team have emphasised that this Course is just the beginning and they would be looking forward to receiving feedback from ministers to help improve the next module. The Course would need to be benchmarked against other training courses offered on equality, diversity and inclusion in other churches and in other non-religious institutions to ensure foundational and legislative requirements are met.

Nevertheless, the Course appears to be effectively facilitating conversations around the issues of equality, diversity and inclusion, asking participants to pause and reflect on a series of questions. Given the current developmental format of the Course, it may

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<sup>24</sup> Hayley Young, Building a bigger table  
<[https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/634999/Building\\_a\\_bigger.aspx](https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/634999/Building_a_bigger.aspx)> [Accessed 31 July 2023].

be a challenge to assess whether the Course achieved its intended learning outcomes. In comparison with other churches or professional standards the Course still requires work on capturing legislation, further theological reflections and communication with participants to ensure it meets the relevant benchmarks. The Ministries Team will continue to ensure a continuous cycle of planning, learning and improving the Course. It is the hope that ministers can proceed to engage with '*Visions of Colour*' once they have completed '*I Am Because You Are*'. '*Visions of Colour*' is a resource designed for Baptist ministers and Baptist ministers in training to develop an awareness of, sensitivity to, and action towards issues of racial, ethnic, and cultural discrimination in Baptist churches in Britain.<sup>25</sup>

## CONCLUSION

'*I Am Because You Are*', is building on existing high-quality yet fragmented frameworks that we have developed as the Baptist movement. As a movement we are committed to loving and serving God, acknowledging Him as the Creator of humanity and that everyone is worthy of being treated with love, dignity and respect. Yet, we are also fallen humanity and continue to treat one another with contempt, hating one another, discriminating against one another; excluding some while including others. What is evident is that we all need the grace, mercy and power of God to live in peace with one another while engaging in areas of disagreement from a place of grace and humility. Although the legislative requirements exist for us to comply with, our behaviours and our attitudes, including our professionalism, need to transcend human created laws so that we can live in love and be faithful, authentic, imitators of Christ. What the Course has done is that it has re-ignited the discussion around equality, diversity and inclusion from a place of equipping ministers with the information, knowledge and resources needed in contemporary Britain.

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<sup>25</sup> Baptists Together, *Visions of Colour*

[https://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/379637/Visions\\_of\\_Colour.aspx](https://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/379637/Visions_of_Colour.aspx) [Accessed 31 July 2023].

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## APPENDIX ONE

### POTENTIAL QUESTIONS TO BE EXPLORED IN THE SURVEY

1. Did you feel encouraged to actively participate in discussions?
2. Did the Course promote critical thinking and intellectual engagement?
3. Please share any aspects of the Course that you found particularly valuable or well-executed.
4. What have been the practical implications for you as you engaged with the resources?
5. What aspects of the Course do you think could be improved to enhance the learning experience?
6. Are you aware of the Visions of Colour resources?

The survey will be completed on Google Forms and I will be collaborating with the Ministries Team to formulate the survey and hopefully they can send these out to all the ministers that have completed the Course. Target date for all ministers to have completed the Course is the end of 2023. At the time of writing, I would hope for the survey to go out in early September giving a deadline of the end of October 2023.