

Contents

1. Introduction to 9:38

2. 9:38 Apprenticeship Schemes

3. Existing Apprenticeship Schemes

(a) St Ebbe's, Oxford

(b) The South London Apprenticeship Scheme

(c) City Church, Birmingham

4. Setting up an Apprenticeship Scheme

5. Looking for an Apprenticeship Scheme

1. Introduction to 9:38

9:38 is a national evangelical interdenominational body which has been established to help people, particularly those in their 20s and 30s, to consider and train for a lifetime in paid gospel ministry. It is named after Matthew 9:38 where the Lord Jesus Christ, after observing the pitiful condition of the people and the shortage of labourers for the work of the kingdom, urges his disciples to ‘**Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field**’. The vision of **9:38** is that many gifted and godly men and women would be identified, recruited, trained and sent out to take the gospel of Jesus Christ to those living in this country and overseas.

9:38 has two elements which aim to further this vision.

1. **The 9:38 Web:** This is a growing UK network which provides support for those considering paid gospel ministry. Weekend conferences are held during the year for young professionals in secular work and for university students while regional day events throughout the country are occasionally convened. A quarterly newsletter is produced with relevant teaching and news.
2. **The 9:38 Apprenticeship Schemes** (see next chapter)

9:38 is run by an executive committee chaired by *David Jackman*, Director of the Cornhill Training Course, London.

The other members are:

Richard Coekin (Minister of Dundonald and Mayfair Churches, London)

Ian Garrett (Student Minister at Jesmond Parish Church, Newcastle)

Andy Gemmill (Minister of Beeston Free Church, Nottingham)

Chris Green (Vice Principal of Oak Hill Theological College, London)

Vaughan Roberts (Rector of St Ebbe’s, Oxford)

Carrie Sandom (Student Minister at St Andrew the Great, Cambridge)

Peter Wood (Site Manager of Oak Hill Theological College, London)

2. 9:38 Apprenticeship Schemes

In addition to establishing a network between people considering word ministry (the web), **9:38** promotes 1-2 year placements with evangelical churches to provide good practical experience of gospel ministry before entering theological training. There are a variety of fine training scheme already in existence, but **9:38** Apprenticeship Schemes will try to provide a new emphasis. Many churches have employed ‘lay assistants’ to support various church ministries. Some have involved the teaching and discipling of young Christians as well as practical jobs. But such schemes have sometimes focused on the job that the church needs doing. **9:38** seeks to bring a new direction: a focus on people rather than jobs, on the needs of the individual for training rather than the needs of the church for workers. The prime interest is less on cheap labour and more in helping individuals understand and train for the sort of gospel work that is suitable for them. The ideal combination is an apprentice who is keen to serve and a church who seeks to train. Apprenticeships are open to both men and women.

9:38 Apprenticeship Schemes will generally seek to address three principal themes of competence for gospel ministry:

- Character
- Knowledge
- Skills

However each individual is different and this needs to be taken into account when designing roles for each apprentice. Some have considerable experience and can be given more responsibility than others. Some are seeking to explore the possibility of a particular kind of ministry and therefore need specific training e.g. for children’s and youth work.

Each scheme has its own character and emphasis, making aspects of it more transferable than others. They are run and financed entirely by the churches involved. **9:38** seeks to promote and advertise Apprenticeship Schemes, address common areas of training, and facilitate mutual support, such as combined events and occasional residential conferences. **9:38** also wants to encourage the cross fertilization of ideas between Apprenticeship Schemes.

3. Existing Apprenticeship Schemes

Below are three examples of schemes which are already in operation. They aim to show how the principles and ethos behind 9:38 have been worked out in practice.

St Ebbe's Apprenticeship Scheme

We are a church with a variety of different congregations meeting on a Sunday. There is a family orientated service, one attended mainly by students, another for Asians whose first language is not English, a 20s and 30s dominated evening service and then a congregation plant in another area of the city. In addition, we have an inner city parish. This mixture produces a range of different opportunities and challenges. Our Apprentices are encouraged to enter fully into the whole life of the church. As they do, we hope that questions are being raised in their minds that they will continue to think through in the years to come: 'how can we evangelise and edify those from different backgrounds in the same church?', 'how can we change churches from a maintenance to a mission mentality?', how can we reach an unchurched generation that is largely indifferent to Christ?' We don't expect them to leave us with all the answers, but we long for a new generation of church leaders who will ask the right questions and think biblically and radically about answering them.

Most of our Apprentices work predominantly with university students although a few have served with our 20s and 30s group and in our parish.

Character

The rigours of the work and the experience of team life usually show up the real person and any areas of weakness which need to be addressed. Each Apprentice is assigned a senior staff member with whom they have occasional one-to-one sessions at which personal matters can be discussed. The personal example of other Christian workers is vital in character building and, as we all work on the church site, we see a lot of each other.

One of the dangers for Apprentices is pride, as they are looked up to as Christian workers. There is an understandable temptation to think that they are something special. Plenty of humdrum jobs provide an important antidote. Christian ministry should not simply be seen as leading Bible studies and giving talks. We want to produce servants who are willing to get their hands dirty even when nobody is noticing. Preparing food, child minding, and chair stacking are all vital parts of the training. These jobs also help them to understand what is involved in putting on a meeting or organizing a service, thereby better equipping them for the future.

Knowledge

- Apprentices attend both the 9:38 Annual and Apprentices' Conferences.
- We run a two year teaching programme for Apprentices. One part covers key doctrines (e.g. revelation, the cross, the church) and church history while the other half deals with practical aspects of ministry such as understanding what the Bible means and teaching it to others e.g. reading the Bible one-to-one with someone, and leading a children's club. Discussion sessions are held on Wednesday afternoons and preparatory reading is given.

"The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." Matthew 9:37-38

- Apprentices also study on the Moore Correspondence Course with three courses covered each year in fortnightly sessions.
- Female Apprentices attend a 7 week Biblical Womanhood course.

Skills

- Evangelism: All Apprentices help chair a group discussion and follow up individuals at our ‘Tavern’ meetings in a local pub. Apprentices are trained in basic evangelistic skills such as leading someone to Christ and dealing with common questions.
- Discipleship: Apprentices meet with individuals one-to-one to study the Bible and encourage them in their faith.
- Speaking: All are given an opportunity to speak in public, e.g. The Annual Student Conference, student events, church meetings. Male Apprentices attend ‘Simeons’, which is a twice termly group teaching the basic principles of preaching.
- Teaching: All Apprentices lead small group Bible studies.
- Leadership: Much of this is learnt by observation. Apprentices attend staff meetings.
- Organisation: They have a number of responsibilities for different aspects of the church’s work.

The South London Apprenticeship Scheme

The South London Apprenticeship Scheme was started in 1997 under the leadership of Richard Coekin in Emmanuel Dundonald Church in Wimbledon, South West London. By 2003 the scheme has grown to twenty apprentices, with ten each in the first and second years, operating out of Emmanuel Dundonald Church, Christchurch in Balham, Fairfield Church in Kingston, The Bible Talks in Mayfair and St James’ in Clerkenwell. The scheme is supported by seven trainers.

The scheme **aims** to:

1. Instill deep convictions of the necessity and nature of word ministry, forged in the context of practical experience
2. Train apprentices in the fundamental principles and skills of various gospel ministries
3. Provide apprentices with an appreciation of their own strengths and weaknesses and of the value of further training so that they can pursue the best training and work for their gifting

Character

The Bible is clear that along with the ability to teach sound doctrine and refute error, the foremost prerequisite for church leaders is godliness. This requires honesty in addressing the following areas of our lives:

- Holiness. Including prayerfulness, personal Bible reading and family life.

- Teamwork. Co-operating with and supporting others in their ministry, loyalty and submission to leaders and a common goal.
- Faithfulness. Commitment to God, his word and his people plus an emotional and theological tenacity and resilience.
- Humility. Including a willingness to be changed by God's word, to accept and receive advice and criticism from leaders and to perform menial and unglamorous tasks.

These areas are assessed in formal and informal review sessions.

Knowledge

Character and skills are best forged in apprenticeship but depend upon knowing God so, although the Scheme is not designed to pre-empt formal theological education, it does provide some theological input.

- principles of Biblical interpretation.
- basic Biblical and systematic theology.
- practice in the application of theology to issues of ministry.
- awareness of the need to distinguish error from truth.
- some awareness of theological issues in preparation for theological college/further study.

The development and assessment of knowledge takes place at the Apprentice Workshop on Wednesday or Thursday mornings. Apprentices' take it in turn to prepare and give expository talks from Bible passages and Richard Coekin (the senior Minister) leads a feedback session. Bible books studied in recent years have included Numbers, Mark and Titus.

Skills

The main skill areas of the Apprenticeship Scheme seeks to address are:

- Teaching. Apprentices are given a range of teaching opportunities as appropriate. Foremost among teaching responsibilities is one-to-one discipling with other church members or non-Christians.
- Leadership. Opportunities are given to nurture other Christians, prepare, lead and pray in public meetings, organize conferences and regular events and lead on a C.Y.F.A camp.
- Evangelism. This includes caring and praying for the lost, relating to unchurched people including those of other faiths, understanding the gospel and explaining it simply, basic apologetics, knowing how to lead someone to faith in Christ, giving an evangelistic talk including the appeal to repent and believe, and planning an evangelistic enquirers' series.
- Strategy. The ministry review discussions, which form part of the Wednesday workshops, help apprentices to grasp and assess the strategy of the church and be able to work for its progress, consider the 'needs of the hour', and develop an awareness of the importance of people rather than structures and buildings.
- People. The important skills of understanding, listening, encouraging, rebuking, dealing with conflict and success, and personal and corporate decision making are covered.

City Church Apprenticeship Scheme

City Church has been meeting in an independent school in Edgbaston, about a mile from the city centre, since September 1999. We have grown quickly, attracting over 200 people for our main 11am meeting on a Sunday and about a hundred to our evening City Central meeting. A third of our congregation are British undergraduates from the three universities in Birmingham and we also have a busy International Student work. In September 2002 we started a short family service to meet the needs of a growing number of families.

Our apprenticeship scheme started in September 2001 and is currently a one year programme designed for graduates on leaving University. As a relatively new church plant, we do not yet have an office and meeting in a school means we do not have a building to use during the week. Apprentices work from home and have to learn quickly to manage their time and balance priorities, sometimes working without day to day supervision.

Character

Apprentices meet each week for approximately ninety minutes with a mentor to read the Bible together and pray. The trainees find this part of their week invaluable, as it provides an opportunity to reflect on their experiences and understanding of ministry and the encouragements and challenges it raises for their own personal walk with Christ. It also helps them think through how the apprenticeship scheme is preparing them for a lifetime of service to Christ and his church. It also provides opportunity for an apprentice to discover, articulate and then work through how their own personality, character and gifting shape them as individuals. Learning more about ourselves and our strengths and weaknesses can be challenging and unsettling at times, but, coupled with humility and a desire for godliness, can be a real growing-experience.

Knowledge

As a team, the apprentices meet with some of the staff for lunch each Wednesday to talk about ministry among the students, to eat together and pray for one another. We then run an afternoon's 'in-house' training covering pastoral ministry in the autumn term, doctrine of the Church in the spring and then a supervised summer study project through which apprentices look at an issue or subject of their choice whilst getting some direction and advice from a member of the staff team.

As part of their training, our apprentices travel up to Sheffield one day a week to attend the Northern Cornhill Training Course. This provides an opportunity to develop skills in handling the Bible properly and teaching it to others. As part of the NCTC there is an opportunity to give talks or lead Bible Studies and receive feedback and advice. Apprentices also attend three conferences in the course of the year: Fulwood Conference, 9:38 Apprentices Conference and the Evangelical Ministry Assembly.

Skills

Without a building to maintain, practical service makes up a smaller amount of apprenticeship time than is the case with some other schemes. Each week our trainees run a crèche for the mums' mid-week group, and do a number of other behind-the-scenes practical jobs such as tape duplication, photocopying or administration for church days or weekends away. In total, the practical service element of our scheme does not add up to more than eight hours in the week. Meeting in a school does mean

"The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." Matthew 9:37-38

quite a lot of practical work on a Sunday: setting-up and setting-down after services. Here the apprentices come into their own and provide a valuable service to the church as they take on the bulk of the work. As a general rule, they will be first in and last out on a Sunday, staying until all is cleared away.

Ministry opportunity at City comes mostly in the form of student work. Our trainees are expected to meet three times a week with either individuals or small groups to study and learn together. Some of the time apprentices work in pairs, or with another member of the staff team if meeting with groups, so that ministry can be a shared experience and trainees can receive feedback and evaluation. City Church has material on Romans and the sovereignty of God which form the backbone of personal work, but apprentices are encouraged to prepare and use some of their own Biblical material.

Additionally, trainees serve on our Student weekend away, an Easter conference, summer reading week and student lunches. Where possible, we also aim to involve our apprentices in a local University mission. Other opportunities to gain experience of wider church ministry include: door to door work in the local community, assisting in our City Krew club for unchurched kids from the local estate and participation in a homegroup.

4. Setting up an Apprenticeship Scheme

Below are the answers to some frequently asked questions about how to set up an apprenticeship scheme.

1. Are the schemes only for certain types of churches?

It is often assumed that larger churches are the only ones who can run apprenticeship schemes. This is not the case and it is possible to have only one or two apprentices. However a church may feel, because of its size, it is unable to offer an adequate level of training. This can be overcome by mixing service at the local church with training from another scheme run by a larger church or a separate organisation (e.g. the Cornhill Training Course). **9:38** is keen for larger and smaller churches in a region to work together to provide opportunities for training and service for apprentices.

2. What is the aim of the scheme?

Apprentices are not cheap labour, although their service can be a great help to a church. The scheme requires a considerable investment of time, and possibly money. A church will want to ask itself is it prepared to give that time and energy, especially as this will be primarily for the benefit of the kingdom in the long term and not so much for that particular church.

3. Who should a church choose to join a scheme?

The experience of **9:38** is that there are always more churches seeking apprentices than men and women available. It may be right to look elsewhere, but churches also have a responsibility to look harder in their own congregations for potential apprentices. The recruiting and training of the next generation is a key task for elders to be engaged in (2 Timothy 2:2). The majority of the apprentices are in their 20s and 30s, but churches should not limit themselves to this age group only.

4. How much should apprentices be paid?

Again there is no definitive system and a number of factors need to be taken into account, such as the age of the apprentice, work experience, amount of savings/debt, nature of the apprenticeship, standard of living in the locality. Potential workers should expect to live at a reasonable standard, but not be able to save during the time of training. Some churches may cover all costs while others will expect the apprentice to pay for all or a proportion of the scheme.

5. What are the financial practicalities of setting up a scheme?

It is vitally important, whatever approach is taken, that it is legal and honouring to the Lord. If an inspection is made by the Inland Revenue, they will make a judgement on the circumstances in use in that particular church and act accordingly. The models which follow are only guidelines, with the advantages and disadvantages outlined.

Model 1: No payment at all from the church with the trainee finding all their own support and looking to the public authorities for benefits.

Model 2: Paying trainees in full as if they were an employee of the church.

In this approach the individual has an employment contract with the church. Both the church and the individual are liable to National Insurance (NI), and the individual to tax. The church also is liable to all the obligations of an employer to the individual. The most significant of these is the minimum wage legislation. This is £4.50 an hour

“The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” Matthew 9:37-38

(October 2003), and thus the minimum for a standard 37.5 hour week is £168.75 a week or £731 per month approx. The figures are lower for under 21s. If your trainees are managed as employees this is what you must do. There is no getting round the legislation by agreeing lower figures, so unless this is what you definitely intend to do, this is not an approach to be recommended. You should use a properly constituted employment contract if going down this route. This can be acquired from Stewardship Services for the payment of a small fee. The more onerous and prescriptive the contract or job outline and management structure, the more likely this route will be appropriate. Using the term 'job outline' in itself leads you down this route, so if the emphasis is on work in the church rather than training, you should treat your trainees as employees and pay them the minimum wage, or you will be breaking the law.

Model 3: Paying trainees as part-time employees of the church and treating some of their time as their own, as volunteers.

The individual has an employment contract covering part time hours at the minimum wage level. Therefore a payment of £6000pa would be the equivalent of 25 paid hours per week. The rest of the time is their own and, although they might be doing things in connection with their scheme within that time, the contract with the individual must explicitly state that this is their own time, and they are 'volunteers' within it. This ensures that the minimum wage regulations are met, but the risk is that that Inland Revenue might form the view that the hours over 25 are still 'working' and that the contract was a device to get round the regulations. Therefore it is very important to explicitly state that the hours over 25 (for example) are not compulsory and to clearly outline the duties to be done and the number of hours to be worked within the contract. In this scheme the church has the full responsibilities of the employer, must meet NI and tax obligations, and all other employer responsibilities.

Model 4: Treating trainees as volunteers with an explicit training contract and paying them an Inland Revenue approved training bursary, if required.

The Inland Revenue is prepared to agree that individuals can be engaged on a training contract. The St Helen's, Bishopsgate, and Beeston Free Evangelical Church contracts have all been agreed by the Inland Revenue as being examples of these. It is vital to be careful, if drawing up one of these contracts, as they will be tested to make sure that they are what they say they are. The schemes must be wholehearted training schemes and not employment contracts by another name. The St Helen's/Beeston approach is for a third of the trainees' time to be spent in theological study, a third in ministry training, and a third in practical service and training. The schemes must be voluntary in nature, and explicitly state that there is no payment for any 'work' done for the church. The church may then make tax and NI-exempt training bursary payments, at subsistence level. St Helen's provides means-tested grants up to £4000 + housing. Beeston has agreed, with the Inland Revenue, to pay up to £515 per month (ie up to £6180 pa). The amount can vary depending on the costs of living in a particular location. The individuals are not employees of the church and so none of the obligations of employer and employee exist.

Other individuals may make designated gifts to support the trainee in their training through an organisation like Stewardship Services, and this can be done tax effectively. Stewardship Services have an individual account scheme to facilitate this exact situation.

It is unlikely that close relatives will be able to make tax effective donations to support trainees under current Inland Revenue rules. These do not apply to more distant relatives and friends.

Council tax and Housing benefit

It is unlikely that a trainee would be exempt from council tax. The only way this is possible is if the training scheme on which the person is engaged is recognised as a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ). Those under 25 on the programme (not everybody) could be exempt from Council Tax. It might be possible for trainees, depending on what they earn, to qualify for council tax benefit or housing benefit depending on their own personal circumstances. Each individual has to apply for these through their local authorities.

Conclusion

Each approach has its merits, but, given what the schemes are seeking to achieve, it seems the Training Contract (Model 4) is the most cost-effective route. It minimises costs to the church or individual, eliminates individual tax liability, and focuses on training for ministry rather than being employed within it.

5. Looking for an Apprenticeship

This section is for those who are considering full-time or part-time paid gospel ministry and would value the opportunity to gain some experience in a local church setting.

1. Pray

This should be integral to the whole process and not an afterthought.

2. Local church support

9:38 works in partnership with local churches and is not seeking to undermine its role or poach its members in any way. Therefore the first step in looking for an apprenticeship is to discuss the issue through with the leaders of your local church. They will be able to assess your gifts, areas of strength and weakness and general suitability for this sphere of service and offer advice. They will also pray for you.

3. Where to go

Your church leaders will be able to make suggestions and it may be possible to undertake an apprenticeship at your current church. There are positive and negative aspects about staying and they should be thought through. If not, other churches run such schemes and information on them can be obtained from contacting the church directly, through friends or by looking on the jobs section of the **9:38** website. Most apprenticeships fill up before Easter so it is probably worth looking before Christmas or soon afterwards. However there are always churches looking for people right up to September.

It is important to think through the components of an apprenticeship scheme. For example if you are considering missions work overseas, it would make sense to go to a church in a culturally and religiously mixed area, or to join a short-term programme overseas organized by a missions agency.

Fundamentally your attitude should be one of service. Your primary expectation should be of giving rather than getting. The local church does not exist for your benefit. You are joining it to serve the wider body.

4. How to pay for it

There are a variety of ways of raising finances:

- Sending church
- Church which is running the apprenticeship scheme
- Family and friends
- Trusts (consult the *Directory of Grant Making Trusts 2003-2004*, CAF, 2003)
- Savings

9:38 has some information on raising support.

5. Different combinations

It is possible to be a part-time apprentice and work for the rest of the week in order to support yourself. Apprenticeships can also be combined with study, e.g. the Cornhill Training Course, (London or Sheffield), the North West Partnership as St Andrew's, Leyland, or the training scheme at Highfield's Church, Cardiff. It is worth being as flexible as you can.

6. What next?

"The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." Matthew 9:37-38

Apprenticeships are usually springboards to further ministry and it is important to think, discuss and pray about what you will do after the one or two years have finished. For some more formal theological training is appropriate while others may go straight into a church position. For others, an apprenticeship will have shown that they should delay for a few years of that they are not suited to paid gospel ministry. There is no shame in this; there are no second class Christians. All believers are called to serve the Lord Jesus wholeheartedly wherever they are, whatever they are doing.

Addendum: Apprentices/trainees and the National Minimum Wage

The way that apprentices/trainees have been paid over the years has been varied and a bit of grey area. The Inland Revenue in various locations has approved some trainee contracts and others have been turned down. There are the issues of having to pay National Insurance (NI) and now the National Minimum Wage (NMW). It can feel like we are always trying to get round the law and find loopholes because the government and the law have no category for church-based apprentices/trainees. But rather, although it is hard work, it should be seen as glorifying God by obeying our rulers and authorities.

For a number of years the Inland Revenue has approved some schemes that have been based on the contract used at Beeston Free Church, Nottingham and St Helen's, Bishopsgate. The Inland Revenue has *now withdrawn approval for some of these schemes*. These schemes were training contracts, where churches could pay a bursary which was below the National Minimum Wage and exempt from tax and National Insurance contributions. The decision means that some of *these schemes are now illegal*. There has been some sort of national decision (it seems a local office queried one such contract nationally and this is how they ruled); some contracts seem to have had approval withdrawn but some seem unaffected. It may be worth a church producing a training contract (on the model in the booklet) and sending it to their local Inland Revenue office to see what they rule. If they do not approve it there are still options available to churches with apprentices/trainees but there is the likelihood that they will incur more expense.

There are now the following options for paying apprentices/trainees when a training contract is not an option:

1. Full-time employee

Give the apprentice/trainee a full employment contract and pay them as such. This would involve paying the apprentice/trainee at the NMW for all hours worked – which would be agreed either by working out average hours worked in a day and paying them this figure or paying a salary (*see below on 'Working Hours'*). It would have to be a realistic figure that they actually did work. This would work out to be expensive.

For example an apprentice/trainee who works for ten months of the year, has one day a week off and works for six days at the NMW (£5.35 per hour) working eight hours per day would cost £10,272 + £816.80 in NI contributions = £11,088.80 per annum (*The NMW 'accommodation offset' can also be taken into account – see below for details*).

2. Volunteer

The apprentice/trainee is a volunteer. This means they are paid nothing but can receive non-monetary subsistence – training, accommodation, food and expenses and it is possible, although not clear, that tax and NI may be payable on these benefits. Because churches are charities, the volunteers can receive this non-monetary subsistence and have a 'Volunteer Agreement' (*see below for details*).

A genuine honorarium which has no obligation and is a gift could be given (but it can not be a regular gift as that would give the volunteer the right to the NMW). However, honorariums are normally only a few hundred pounds and are often paid in recognition of work done (i.e. after the work has been done). Honorariums which are paid in advance or as the work is being done or which are combined with another benefit (such as accommodation) are much more likely to be seen as a wage for work done and therefore subject to the NMW, as well as tax and NI.

3. Part-time employment, part-time volunteer

a) Part-time employment: practical jobs and Bible ministry. Voluntary: formal training

This would involve paying the apprentice/trainee at the NMW for work they do (Practical work and Bible ministry) (agreed either by working out average hours worked in a day and paying them this figure or paying a part-time salary (*see below on 'Working Hours'*)) and then the apprentice/trainee would volunteer for the formal training.

If there is an expectation that they have to be at the formal training, then this is very likely to be regarded as time for which the apprentice/trainee should be paid. If there is no such expectation and the apprentice/trainee would not normally work on that day, then it is much more likely that the apprentice/trainee will not need to be paid for the time spent on the training. Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) enforce the law on behalf of the government and would not see 'Bible ministry' as voluntary, if it was a required element of their work. This means that the practical and Bible ministry (for example, leading a small group, or doing a one-to-one) parts of the apprenticeship would be considered as work and therefore the apprentice/trainee would have to be paid at the NMW. But any formal training that the apprentice/trainee is engaged in would be considered as voluntary (if it is clear that there is no expectation for them to be there and they would not normally work on that day – it would be 'offered' to them).

For example an apprentice/trainee who works for ten months of the year, has one day a week off and has one day a week at a ministry training course and 'works' for five days at the NMW (£5.35 per hour) working eight hours per day would cost £8,560 + £601.60 in NI contributions = £9,161.60 per annum. (*The NMW 'accommodation offset' can also be taken into account – see below for details*).

b) Part-time employment: practical jobs. Voluntary: Bible ministry and formal training

There is a possibility that HMRC would consider the Bible ministry as voluntary if there was no requirement or expectation that they must do it. It could be suggested and encouraged, but there could be no repercussions to their employment if they did not (they would be treated as any normal congregation member doing the same thing as a volunteer). This would involve having a part-time employment contract and a 'Volunteer Agreement' (see below) (which is exempt from the NMW because a church is a charity). Any advert, contract or letter explaining the post and what it entails would have to be worded in an honest way showing what is expected of them in their employment and what the volunteering involves.

"The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." Matthew 9:37-38

It is likely that it will be difficult to convince HMRC that the Bible Ministry is genuinely voluntary given that the opportunity for this volunteering will be advertised at the same time as the contract for the practical jobs. There is a real risk that the Bible ministry might not be regarded as genuinely voluntary work because advertising the voluntary work and the employment at the same time could well create an impression that it is expected that the employees would take on this extra work. Real care would therefore be needed in the wording of an advertisement and in dealing with interviews. However, it is possible that HMRC will accept the arrangement at face value.

For example, an apprentice/trainee who works for ten months of the year on a two and half days a week part-time employment contract. They would have one day off, and volunteer one day a week at a ministry training course and two and half days per week doing Bible ministry.

They would be paid for their two and a half days per week at the NMW (£5.35 per hour) working eight hours per day. This would cost £4,280 + £53.60 in NI contributions = £4,333.60 per annum. (*The NMW 'accommodation offset' can also be taken into account – see below for details*).

For their volunteering, they cannot be paid, but can receive non-monetary subsistence - training, accommodation, food and expenses. It is likely that HMRC will regard the accommodation as taxable (because they may well regard it as a benefit of the employment rather than the volunteering) and possibly also the provision of food.

Important note

The tasks that the apprentice/trainee would do could be split in other ways between an employment contract and a volunteer agreement as the church saw fit. But it must be clearly in writing what each part involved so there could be no confusion between the church, the apprentice/trainee and the law. If the law saw the volunteering as just a continuation of the work, they would rule that they should be paid the NMW for it. The tasks that the apprentice/trainee is being asked to do should be different for their work and their volunteering.

Volunteer Agreement

A 'Volunteer Agreement' can be useful in making the expectations of both the church and the apprentice/trainee clear, whilst avoiding the apprentice/trainee being seen as an employee in the eyes of the law. There are sample Volunteer Agreements on the Volunteering England website (see below), they finish with words such as:

‘This agreement is binding in honour only, is not intended to be a legally binding contract between us and may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party. Neither of us intend any employment relationship to be created either now or at any time in the future.’

Volunteer agreements are not legally required but it does help in making all aspects of the apprenticeship clear to the church, the apprentice/trainee and the law.

4. ‘Contract of Apprenticeship’

The apprentice/trainee is not classified as a worker at all but has a ‘contract of apprenticeship’. This will only be a suitable option for a handful of churches because of the way ‘apprenticeship’ is defined. It is defined as the apprentice/trainee following or shadowing the ‘master’ and are ‘educated and trained’ by that master. Most apprenticeships with churches do not follow this pattern, and the apprentices work fairly independently from the church leader or leaders, apart from perhaps a regular specific period of time which is used to check how things are going.

A few small churches with only one apprentice/trainee may be able to have this sort of arrangement. For example, if the staff team consisted of a head pastor/vicar, an assistant pastor/curate and a secretary, the apprentice could shadow the assistant pastor/curate and this would be one of his main responsibilities. They would need to draw up a contract which specified the rights and obligations of both the church/assistant pastor/curate and the apprentice/trainee, what training is to be provided and to what level; the length of the apprenticeship and the rates of pay.

The advantage of this arrangement is that, provided that the form of apprenticeship meets certain requirements, the NMW would not be payable, although tax and NI would be. The downside of this is if there is a dispute that it was in fact a ‘contract of apprenticeship’ – by an auditor or one of the government agencies (Inland Revenue or HMRC), or the apprentice themselves – it would have to go to the courts to decide.

(5. Monetary subsistence volunteer

It is possible to pay monetary subsistence to an apprentice/trainee if they are ‘placed’ in a charity (like a church) by another charity. This would have to be actually carried out, not just in words only. Some Gospel Partnerships may be in a position to place apprentices/trainees with churches within their region. The GP would have to become a charity with the placing of apprentices/trainees as one of its ‘objects’ with the Charity Commission (if it was already a charity, the object would have to be added). The GP would have to advertise the post (perhaps stating the placements on offer at different churches and asking applicants to state a preference), recruit (could have the church leader from the apprenticeship church on the interview panel) and then place with a church in their region. The apprentice would then be able to receive money for subsistence to a reasonable level (i.e. to cover living expenses) but not money for the provision of accommodation, although it would be possible to provide accommodation. Again, tax and NI may be payable on the subsistence.

For many GPs this option is too soon, with the partnerships being more informal links with churches, rather than being in a position to become a charity and deal with the administration of placing apprentices. But it could be an option for some GPs now, and perhaps others in the future.)

NMW ‘accommodation offset’

Included in the NMW there are allowances if accommodation is provided for free – this can go towards the amount a church is paying the apprentice/trainee. The ‘accommodation offset’ is currently set at £3.90 per day, which works out as £27.30 per week (£3.90 x 7).

For example, if the apprenticeship were 10 months long this would add up to £1,186.25 (£3.90 x 365 / 12 x 10) to the amount the church pays the apprentice/trainee. So if a church wanted to pay an apprentice/trainee for 30 hours per week, taking into account the accommodation offset:

30 hrs per week x 52 / 12 x 10 = 1300 (hours per year)
 1300hrs x £5.35 (NMW) = £6,955 (per year)
 £6,955 + £352.30 in NI contributions = £7,307.30
 £7,307.30 - £1,186.25 = £6,121.05

The church could legally pay them just £6,121.05 for 30 hours per week on a ten-month employment contract, and give them a volunteer agreement for any other time they spend on the apprenticeship (such as the formal training and some Bible ministry).

Working Hours

To work out the amount of hours that should be paid, one of four approaches must be used. There are four different types of ‘hours’ for which the NMW must be paid. Apprentice/trainees are likely to fall within the ‘unmeasured work’ category or the ‘salaried-hours’ category (see below for a brief description of other categories).

Unmeasured work includes work where there are certain tasks to be done but not necessarily at a certain time when it has to be done (like having the chairs set up for a meeting the next day – it can be done at any time the previous day). To work out the number of hours that must be paid under the NMW a ‘daily average’ agreement can be arranged. This should be an agreement between the apprentice/trainee and the church in writing, arranged before the pay period starts. The only other way to work out the hours to pay is to record every hour the apprentice/trainee works. A daily average seems the best way. The figure must be a realistic reflection of the number of hours that are worked.

Salaried-hours work is paid according to a contract for a set basic number of minimum hours in a year. The apprentice/trainee will receive an annual salary and is paid in equal weekly or monthly instalments. It does not matter if the apprentice/trainee works less than the basic hours one month, or more in another, as long as they do their set hours. If they work more than their set hours, they must be paid for it.

The other two categories are very unlikely to be suitable for paying an apprentice/trainee. They are ‘Time work’; paid according to the hours the worker is at work and ‘Output work’; paid according to how many items the worker produces, or tasks completed.

Useful resources

1. Government websites have a host of vital information on them:

www.dti.gov.uk

www.hmrc.gov.uk

The following booklets are particularly useful:

- A detailed guide to the National Minimum Wage – fairly readable and comprehensive document from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) website. Includes the exemptions to the NMW.
www.dti.gov.uk/files/file11671.pdf
- National Insurance Tables – useful booklet which gives help on working out how much in National Insurance Contributions an employer should be paying.
www.hmrc.gov.uk/nitables/ca37.pdf

2. www.businesslink.gov.uk has a wealth of useful resources and information.

- A particularly good section can be found under ‘Employing People’ and then ‘Paying your staff’.

3. www.volunteering.org.uk (the website of Volunteering England) has useful information sheets; the following two are particularly relevant:

- Guidance notes on whether someone is an employee or a volunteer. Includes information on the NMW. www.volunteering.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/2B0EB674-8BD9-48D3-8553-1AA24288EDF1/0/NationalMinimumWageVE06.pdf
- Volunteer Agreement samples gives a useful sample agreement that is free to adapt and use. www.volunteering.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/6D546B6C-1A93-4A42-B815-9D4B9F2CC870/0/sampleagreementVE06.pdf