

NBA

NORTHERN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION



CULTURE REVIEW

2022

A SUMMARY OF THE CULTURE REVIEW OF THE NBA
from feedback from churches & ministers on how the NBA are
performing inline with their values

Introduction

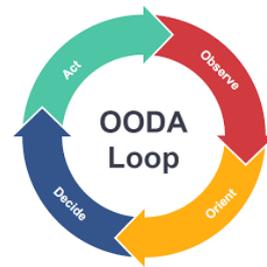
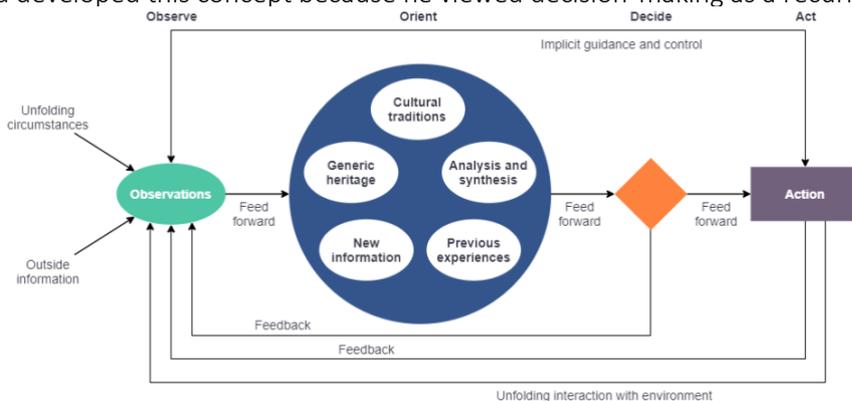
With the appointment of the Regional Minister: Strategy and Transition in September 2021 the Northern Baptist Association (NBA) started a 'in-depth root and branch review of the Team and Association structures.' As a result of this process the NBA committed to reviewing and evaluating annual where the association was at in relation to the churches, ministers and missional communities. This is so that we as an association can be transparent with all our stakeholders.

What is kept in the forefront of this is the purpose of getting the NBA in a place that will be 'a team that will serve our churches into the 21st century, which is pioneering and missional to its core and is:

- Strategic
- Flexible
- Visionary
- Responsive
- Relational
- Imaginative and creative
- Releasing and empowering
- Encompassing of the wide range of gifts given by God to the church'

The method that was used by the Regional Minister: Strategy and Transition for the initial transition period was the OODA Loop, which is a four-step approach to decision-making. It also allows space for a mixture of qualitative and quantitative information gathering.

John Boyd developed this concept because he viewed decision-making as a recurring cycle¹:



Using this method allows us to annual observe our practices as an association and act accordingly.

The Culture Review is not setting out to provide answers or justification but provided a space to hold the feelings and attitudes of where we are as the NBA.

We address our priorities and support with our Annual Gathering of Churches. It is important to note that some of what is mentioned below is raw and contains attitudes and beliefs that we all may not agree with; the NBA is committed to being a place where all God's people flourish and we in particular we are committed to working with Project Violet within Baptist Together (you can read more about this in a separate document on our website.)

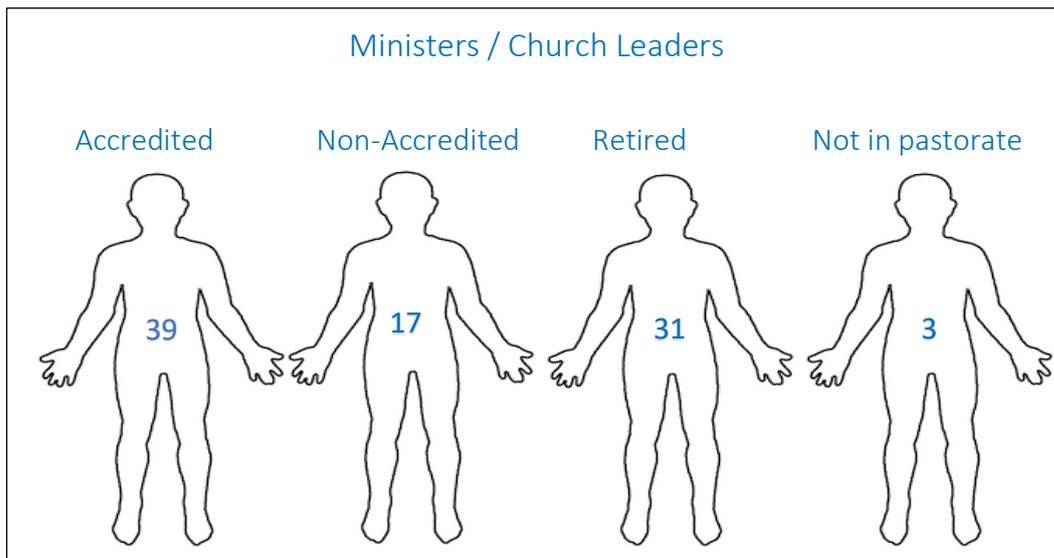
In 2021, the NBA did its first culture review and this year is reflecting the state of the NBA at the end of 2022. We are delighted that we can see the improvements and developments over the year and we are encouraged by the progress we are making. There are still some areas to develop in and more energy, time and resources needs to be given to supporting Children, Youth and Families Work within our NBA churches. We are pleased that churches are growing in depth and number.

We are hopeful the developments and changes made in early 2022 are having a positive impact on most churches and ministers; we recognise that some do not feel the same support and encouragement.

¹ Image from: <https://online.visual-paradigm.com/knowledge/decision-analysis/what-is-ooda-loop/>

Who makes up the NBA: Ministers

Ministers / Church Leaders



Notes

We have a total of 90 ministers/church leaders within the NBA, out of the 56 who are currently leading in a pastoral role there are:

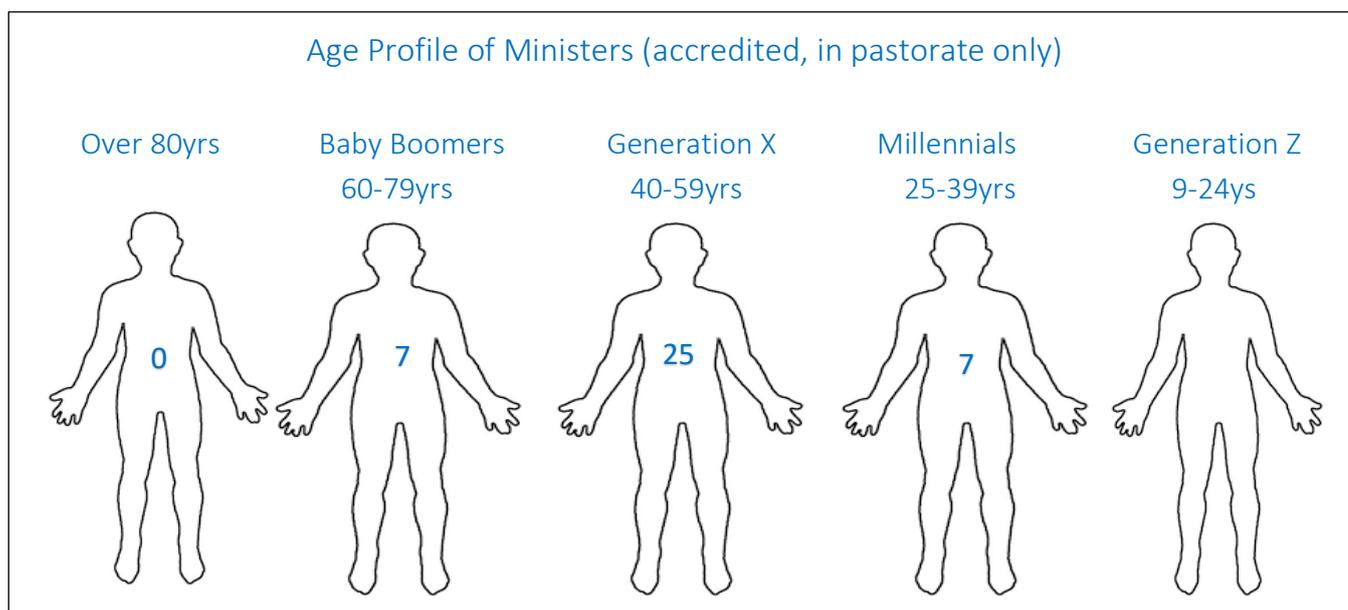
- 16 are female
- 40 are males
- 7 are Newly Accredited Ministers
- 5 Ministers in Training (which come under non-accredited at this moment in time)
- 12 are chaplains
- 3 are Regional Recognised Pastors

We have 5 ordained Baptist ministers serving as chaplains as their sole ministry.

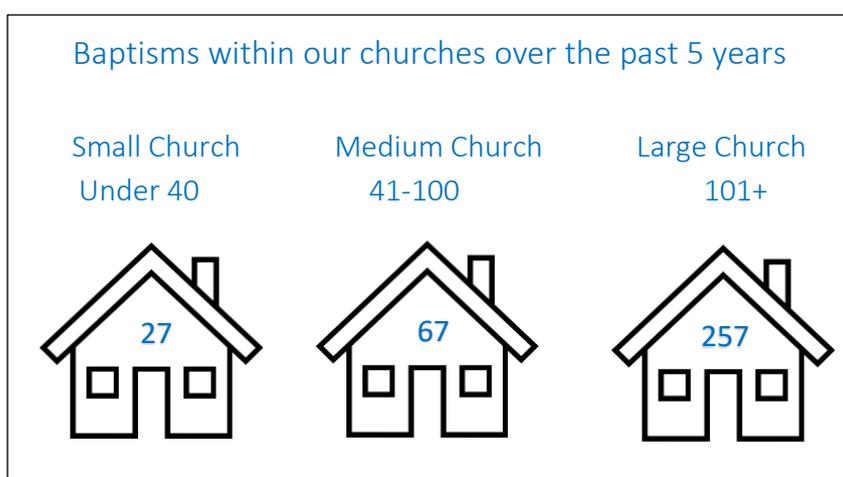
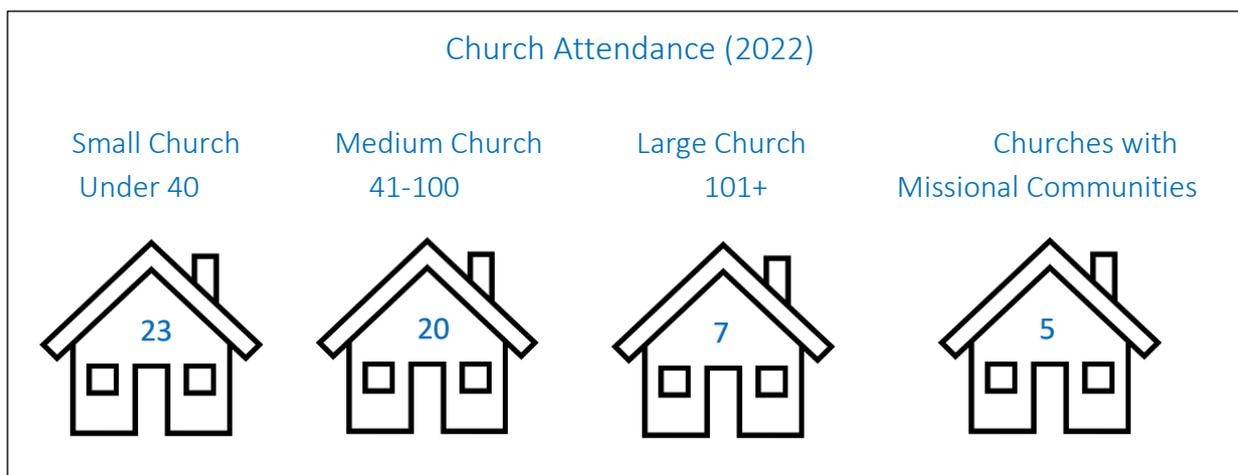
The average age of an accredited minister in the NBA is 52; with the average age of a Minister in Training being 41.

	2021	2022
Accredited Ministers	27	39
Un-Accredited Ministers	27	17
Chaplains (accredited)	5	5
Chaplains (un-accredited)	3	5
Chaplains (Regional Recognised)	2	2
Regional Recognised Pastors	1	1
Ministers (Female)	12	16
Ministers (Male)	42	40
Retired Ministers	34	31

Age Profile of Ministers (accredited, in pastorate only)



Who makes up the NBA: Churches



	2021	2022
Baptisms across the NBA	18	76
Church Attendance across the NBA	2,680	2,970
Church Membership across the NBA	2,413	2,412

Notes – update for 2022

We have highlighted above the church attendance figures as membership often follows attendance.

At the end of 2022 we have churches in the following situations:

- 7 with more than one minister
- 8 with a paid CYF pastor(s)/workers(s)
- 8 with no pastoral lead
- 8 lead by unaccredited ministers (including 3 LEP's & Independent Methodist Churches)
- 2 lead by Ministers in Training
- 2 lead by retired ministers acting as moderators

In 2022, 5 churches that were in settlement called a minister, 4 of these ministers were accredited ministers from outside across the UK (and never served in the NBA before.)

Our churches are seeing growth at numerical and discipleship level; and more missional communities than the previous years.

Children, Youth and Families Pastors/Workers across the NBA

We currently have 15 people who have specific responsibility within their church from CYF; 10 of these have theology qualifications within children and youth work.

Annual Review to Church Ministers/Leaders

At the end of 2022 (November/December) a survey was sent to all ministers and church leaders to ask for feedback on how the NBA was doing in terms of relating to them and in relating to the NBA vision and values. The survey also asked questions about future direction of the NBA.

This was designed to follow on from the feedback received in the 2021 culture review; while we tried to mirror some questions so that we could compare we also recognise that new questions had to be asked in order to measure the new focus of the NBA.

In 2021 36 out of 54 ministers engaged in the listening process, in 2022 32 out of 56 engaged.

In 2021 37 out of 50 churches were engaged; in 2022, 31 out of the 50 churches engaged. The difference was in 2021 the consultation was more than a survey approach.

Engagement in the NBA is an important aspect for churches, ministers and missional communities:

- 76% feel engaged with the NBA
- 6% don't feel engaged
- 18% only feel a moderate amount engaged

This compared to 2021 where as a result of this listening and observing there are three views of the NBA:

- Everything is brilliant and nothing needs to change (25%)
- Disengagement with association because it is not relevant (62%)
- Hurt and pain caused by people within the NBA (13%)

Out of the churches that responded 90.3% feel supported by the Regional Team; and 9.7% feel they are not supported at all.

Out of the ministers that responded 12.5% do not feel supported by the Regional Team; 87.5% feel supported by the Regional Team.

In 2022 the churches responded that the NBA reflects its values really well or well:

- Centred on Mission: 92%
- Creative in Approach: 72%
- Relational at the Core: 89%
- Spirit-Led in Practice: 62%
- Committed to Justice: 53%
- Seeking Well-being: 62%

5% of churches in the NBA feel that the NBA is not relational; and the reasons given for this they believe:

- It seems to me that the NBA has lost its way
- The NBA, is now run so badly, that I am ashamed to be part of it
- People forced out of their roles, and it is now a dictatorship

9.7% of churches and ministers feel that the NBA does not communicate well with them. The 90.3% have positive interactions with the communication of the NBA; through emails, Facebook, Instagram and twitter.

In 2022 we announced our priority areas and the churches and ministers feel we are engaging well with them:

- Developing and Investing in leadership: 90.3%
- Children, Youth and Families: 86%
- Mission and Pioneering: 90.3%
- Communication: 90.3%

The following are our comments that were made within the culture review; for ease of reading the following job titles have been abbreviated:

- Regional Minister: Mission Enabler: RM:ME
- Regional Minister: Transition & Strategy &: RM:TS

- Hub Tutor: HT

We asked what support has been like for churches in the NBA over 2022 here is their responses:

- Informative and helpful: changing direction but it's too early to see were
- Support with recent redundancies was very helpful indeed
- None really... despite being in an interregnum the support has felt distant
- I've seen a lot on social media. Seems to be lots of change. Hopeful it will bring positive change.
- Very supportive and encouraging
- Excellent, very supportive!
- Really positive, we have been supported as a church leadership by the RM:TS
- Positive
- The RM:TS dropped in at our cafe... so good!
- Seen a great deal of new ideas being introducedbigger table encouraging more openness and acceptance of Everyone instead of pushing people away from churches
- Encouraging
- Issue with women in leadership. Dismissal of godly men from posts.
- We are frequently kept informed of what is going on. We were well supported during our vacancy and ministerial search.
- It has been dismaying to see people who were doing a good job thrown on to the scrap heap.. At our church we received great help and support from the RM:ME over the last two years, but now he has been very sadly removed, even though he had helped us plan and look forward to the future in this area. Our request to perhaps have another man to help us was declined as only a female, RM:TS, was on offer. Instead, RM:TS brought along another female minister, apparently, by her dress, promoting Gay Pride. This was offensive to us , because, according to the Bible, it is offensive to God².
- Encouraging and supportive
- Ok
- Really good! Enjoying the changes being made and the vision for the future is very exciting!
- Negligible
- Great
- The NBA are going through changes, which I'm trying to get to grips with
- Appreciate the support.
- As a council member I am aware of the huge challenges the NBA has, and how it is trying to address these. In the church we may not be seen, and this may need to be addressed
- Positive, though aware of many tensions during the transition period
- Much improved--some very positive signs of adapting and being visionary
- I appreciate the efforts that the NBA team are making to support local churches: RM:TS took time to visit our church and speak at a Sunday service, RM:ME was part of a Zoom meeting with BMS links to see how communication with BMS could be developed, HT has been very supportive of our NAMs.
- Been happy with the changes and new appointments that have been made. Feel the NBA is more accessible, interested in individual churches and definitely more relational.

We also asked the ministers and church leaders what support form the NBA Regional Team has been for them over the past year, here are their responses:

- It has been a 180 change for the positive. I finally feel as though I can pick up the phone to the NBA and find people who understand the needs of ministry in the 21st century. There is a new integrity being created and it feels like a firmer footing. Well done RM:TS and the NBA council!
- Positive; I think the RM:TS has been a helpful presence for the association.

² This is refereeing to a coat that had lines of colour (red, yellow, pink, green) on the sleeves – this was not a symbol of Gay Pride

- Very positive, and the church has been blessed.
- Good to see significant transition. Generally, the changes have been positive However there are times when the NBA has come across as frustrated and defensive. We need to continue to ensure all voices are heard.
- Encouraging: hopeful that real change may be in the air.
- Apart from the appalling Trustee meetings, not had any contact pastorally or in any positive way
- It is rather hard to answer this question because I can't say that I have had much connection, interaction or support with/from the NBA. I've watched the Vision updates on Zoom, but with no minister's gatherings and not having met in person with the RM:TS, I feel very out of the loop. It sounds like a lot of good stuff is going on, but my personal experience has been that the care and support of ministers has been completely missing. I organise and facilitate a meeting with other NBA churches in the Sunderland area, the RM:ME has popped along to a few of them. But with the RM: ME moving on I'm genuinely worried that I'll have no support or connection with the NBA at all.
- I have had no real experience of the NBA save a safeguarding training event at which everyone was given different times and understanding of how the course would be spread over the day, some understood it to be two days! On arrival at the course the download information which we should have received no one had and no packs had been printed and made available. A pretty unprofessional experience.
- Transition time handled well with good communication
- With the retirement of the excellent two previous Regional Ministers it seems to me that the NBA has lost its way
- Mostly good
- I think there's been stuff happening behind the scenes but not much in front of them
- I think I've had the most personal pastoral concern and support and affirmation/encouragement expressed than I've ever had by the RM:TS. I've appreciated the meetings I've attended and found them helpful and thought provoking. I can see that there's a real attempt to grow and make positive changes that will benefit the churches.
- Dynamic, refreshing, forward thinking, pioneering, engaging, present.
- It appears to be re-inventing itself in order to be contextually relevant, lighter in its feet and better engaged with pioneering and creativity.
- Having not experienced it beforehand, the changes that have been discerned and brought in have been timely and very creative. This is very encouraging for those of us that feel bold moves are called for. well done.
- It has been great
- Very positive and supportive
- Brilliant, really supportive team
- Amazing, the RM:TS helped us in getting funding for projects which was above and beyond, she showed a real care for the church and the leadership teams - I really appreciate the texts I get to check in with how I am doing.
- Really positive, the team really care about me and my ministry
- The RM:TS has been personally supportive which has been great, I have felt that CYF are now being heard and treated like a valued part of the NBA. it was the first time a regional minister visited our youth group
- Things are progressing and that seems positive; the RM:TS has been in regular contact which has been nice
- it has been good
- The RM:TS has made contact which has been welcomed
- Having just moved into the NBA, the RM:TS has been warm and welcoming, she has connected me with others and made sure I am settled into the church and community
- That things are changing. Not a lot that I could engage with as yet but positive changes
- Really good! Enjoying the changes being made and the vision for the future in very exciting!
- Great
- Appreciate the support
- Support for children's pastors started to improve but then no contact followed

We asked our churches and ministers if they wanted to give any other feedback, this is what they said:

- You're doing a great job, keep going!

- We are so grateful for all the help that we have received over the last year, and for the encouragement that has been given to us.
- Thank you for all your hard work.
- Keep going. I am the longest serving minister in the NBA (42years!) and not since 1990 have I felt so encouraged, hopeful and feel a sense belonging to the association.
- I think as a result of structural changes and the RM:TS being busy nationally the NBA has felt like a sender of emails this year. I trust the investment this year will reap benefits next year
- I think that we have reached the point that we have is remarkable and is testimony to the RM:TS vision, passion, and commitment to excellence. Such change is not possible without cost, some of which is personal and therefore unacceptable. We need to remember to care for and support those at the forefront of leadership. Thank you
- In my time as minister, I've found the NBA to be totally disengaged, there was an absence of care for ministers during the pandemic. The plough was needed to break up the hard ground of 'this is the way we've always done it' even though not fit for purpose. In the last few months, I've begun to see seeds emerging of a new season that is fresh, innovative, relational and kingdom centred.
- Thank you
- The new focus for next year on mission and pioneering is really exciting.
- Thank you for all you are doing
- Thank you for your support and encouragement
- it's been good to be in contact with the RM:TS, she seems to really care about me and my church
- it's hard to focus on the NBA and the church with a family, more local groups and online things would be welcomed
- Thank you for your sacrifices!! We are grateful for you! Your heading in the right direction and the vision in AMAZING
- Thank you
- Looking forward to more support and interest in children's ministry going forward now that a new role to cover this is in place.
- We will not be in Church when the RM:TS visits, as I may something to upset.
- The RM: TS's enthusiasm is infectious (and Godly) in her manner. She is a pleasure to have around and is so inspiring!
- Well done RM:TS and Team!
- Excited about the fresh new movement that is happening in the churches.
- We are very thankful to you all, and particularly to the RM:TS for helping us through our vacancy and leading our induction service, also to RM:ME for the part they played in the past.
- Re the Reflecting Values Question: I don't know what you mean by 'relational' in this context. I don't know how Spirit led you are because you seem to allow practices which are not scriptural. Re Support from NBA. While the RM:ME and others before him were in office we have felt well supported, but because of our views re. women ministers, we do not think we will be supported anymore, as we do not want to be overseen by women. (1 Timothy 2 v12)
- Thank you for your sacrifices!! We're grateful for you! Your heading in the right direction and the vision is AMAZING!
- Keep up the good work!
- Over the last few years, we have had 2 MiT's move into and through the NAM process and now have another MiT. The training sometimes seems inflexible and burdensome. Maybe this is mainly from the colleges rather than NBA but any influence to improve that would be good. Increasingly MiT's and ministers start training at an age when they already have really beneficial life experience but also family and other commitments to balance with the training.

Governance in 2022

During the review that happened in 2021 we observed systematic issues with the way the NBA was functioning. Governance and accountability across the council and committees was weak and policies had either not been put in place or were outdated. There was not robust challenge in meetings.

The skills audit of the trustees shows that there was a lack of members with experience in human resources, CYF ministry, change management, project planning, IT or finance. There was a great strength of commitment to the vision of the NBA, a willingness to learn, safeguarding, missional listening, working with people and knowledge of Baptist Together.

In 2022 we set to put right the governance of the NBA and now have relevant and up to date policies; at the AGM in April 2022, this gave the opportunity for some trustees to step down or not be nominated for re-election, this allowed space for new people with the skill sets required to join the team.

We are still lacking in knowledge in the trustee board of HR, however we now have people with experience in CYF, IT & communication, project planning and change management.