

Baptist Historical Society: Local Church History Review

United and Free: The story of Leytonstone United Free Church 1979-2004 with an Epilogue by the Rev. Alison Mackay, pp.108.
Raymond Vincent

Raymond Vincent, the minister 1980-2001, has written a fascinating history of this church, formed by the merger of the Baptist and United Reformed Churches in Leytonstone. He shows how the church has sought to respond to the needs of a changing community. The merging of two churches with differing views on baptism was resolved by deciding that the church would not 'normally' baptize people who had already been baptized as infants unless the person had a strong conviction that this was the right thing to do. Likewise, the church would 'normally' baptize a baby only if one of the parents regularly attended the church and so would be expected to keep the vows made on behalf of the child. When the church was formed it was envisaged that 'normally' the pastorate would be filled alternatively by Baptist and URC ministers. However, by 2001 the URC was obliged to 'ration' the number of full-time ministers in the Thames North Synod Area and so it was decided that the church might call another Baptist. Alison Mackay, who was a student at Regent's Park College, Oxford, preached there on 'College Sunday' in 2002 and was subsequently called to the pastorate.

Michael J. Collis, Minister, Sarn Baptist Church, near Newton, Powys, Wales