

Background the Future

During the ministries of David Coffey and Keith Jones, in the latter part of the twentieth century, the Baptist Union was on a journey to becoming a movement for mission. This was.....

to meet the challenge of a “post-Christendom” society.

to witness to the way of Jesus in all aspects of life.

to support churches as they engage with their local communities.

As part of this in 2001 the 29 Associations were restructured to produce 13 regional associations. This was to bring more support to churches in their mission to their local communities. The new associations were funded by being given a sum equal to the funding of an Area Superintendent plus a return of 25% of the money raised for HM by the association in the previous year.

This situation has been kept under review particularly by a full financial review in 2006 and a functional review (“Roles and Tasks”). In 2010 the cost of running the 13 Associations was £1,900,000 and the cost of running the national resource was £2,380, 580. The cost of the Associations averages at £146,153 but there are regional variations in this.

In recent years the giving to HM has risen, but has not reached the targets agreed by the BU Council. With the economic situation reducing the value of investments, a significant deficit of £1,000,000 is projected for 2012.

In the light of this the Council set up the Futures Group to find ways to manage this situation. A range of scenarios are possible which could include significant cuts for all or some of the three major areas funded by Home Mission i.e. church grants, Associations and the National resource. We need to discern what God is saying to us about our life together as Union of churches.

So we need to ask the question.....

What functions of the Union are best done where?

So , for example, is ministry best managed and supported nationally or regionally or in some combination of the two, and if the last one, in what sort of combination?

The same questions need to be asked for mission, legal and financial matters, ecumenical contacts, communications, contacts with civil authorities etc..

The Futures Group is seeking to be informed by the insights of all churches and ministers, hence the survey on the BUGB website as a first step

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FuturesGroupSurvey>.

Please respond to this as you are able through deacons and/or church meeting by 30th January and also, and most importantly, please pray for all involved in seeking to discern the way forward to have.....

clarity of thought

wisdom in decision-making

sensitivity in making any changes

openness to God in all things that his will and purpose might be known and the mission of the churches enhanced.

EBA