

Strategic Priority (11) – Finance

Aim:

- Rationale for the use of income and the need for expenditure should be based on sound business principles that cater for the effective execution of our mission as a church, fulfil the requirements of a charity that can demonstrate ongoing public benefit, and consider our status as a corporate organisation.

Objectives:

- Create a sustainability plan for the effective running of the organisation.
- Continually review policies around the use of income and expenditure to demonstrate jurisprudence in the handling of all finances.
- Demonstrate innovation and creativity in the utilisation of cost-saving, new initiatives, and futureproofing.



Show me the money

by Pastor Eglan Brooks,
President of the British Union Conference

Dr James Frick, a former vice-president of public relations at the University of Notre Dame, said, 'Don't tell me where your priorities are. Show me where you spend your money, and I'll tell you what they are.' Matthew 6:21 states, 'Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also' (KJV).

As I reflect on the quote and the accompanying scripture, I've asked myself the following questions:

- How are the strategic priorities of the British Union Conference evident through the use of its finances?
- In what ways is our use of income and the need for expenditure based on enhancing the mission of the church and fulfilling our charity requirements to demonstrate ongoing public benefit?
- Are we consistent in applying sound business principles to all our financial decisions?

Financial jurisprudence

One of the strengths of the British Union Conference is that our Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Wederly Aguirre, is cognisant that there are the *three faces of Adventist identity* for the BUC: charity, church, and corporation (see his 29 September *MESSENGER* article). In addition to this, under his leadership the Treasury team has been restructured and is working to review policies and introduce more stringent procedures and guidelines for the use of finances.

Wederly is writing a monthly column for *MESSENGER* called 'Faith and Finances' where he provides insight not only into the figures and data, but into the management decisions that underpin the use of the finances.

In addition to this, under the guidance of the BUC Executive Committee, we need to create a sustainability plan to support the operations of the British Union Conference. This complements the current BUC strategic priorities.

Innovation and creativity

Since taking up the reins in December 2021, I have spent much time in prayer and reflection about the members, governance and role of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. Our book membership is approximately 42,000.

If the Gospel Commission is our primary focus, shouldn't this be reflected in how we spend our finances? Evangelism in the twenty-first century requires a different set of tools. As part of our *Reflecting Hope* initiative, 150 people were trained to use their mobile phones as digital evangelists. Dedicated adverts were placed on Facebook to reach a contemporary audience.

As part of that initiative, the Scottish Mission conducted a two-week bike ride through the Shetland Islands, an unentered territory, with more than sixty-eight contacts interested in the Adventist faith. These are only two of the numerous ways in which finances are used in our mission and witness.

Appreciation

Despite the cost-of-living crisis, I thank God for the continued faithfulness of our members who consistently give to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in this territory. From willing hearts, they provide much-needed funds for the work of the Lord. I am reminded of the old hymn by John Greenleaf Whittier:

All things are Thine: no gift have we,
Lord of all gifts, to offer Thee;
And hence with grateful hearts today
Thine own before Thy feet we lay.