

Strategic Priority (4) – People

Aim:

- A healthy organisation supports its staff and people.

Objectives:

- Internal BUC staff
- External BUC staff, including conferences and missions, retired ministers, teachers, caretakers, and so on
- Volunteers

Strategic needs:

- Policy alignment
- Data to establish evidence for decision-making
- Well-being strategy for our people



The good, the bad and the ugly

Too often we underestimate the value of people

'He was never rude, never needlessly spoke a severe word, never gave needless pain to a sensitive soul. . . .'
(Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers*, 1892 edition, p. 392)

Our strategic plan envisions that the British Union Conference will be a healthy organisation that supports its internal staff, external staff, volunteers and other stakeholders.

The standard – the good

Moses is deemed to have been one of the greatest leaders who ever lived. In Exodus 32:9, 10 the Lord's anger was kindled against the Israelites because they had built a golden calf and credited it with bringing them out of Egypt. Moses stepped in and pleaded with God for the people, imploring Him to 'turn away from your fierce anger' (verse 12, NLT) and reminding Him of His covenant (verse 13). Following this intercession, the Lord relented. Perhaps one of the most powerful tools the

Seventh-day Adventist Church has is its people power. Moses understood the value of people . . . but do we? **Too often we underestimate the value of people.** We need to value all our people and treat each of them with love and kindness.

The challenge – the bad

People are the lifeblood of every organisation, yet it is also true that managing people is not easy, and it is one of the greatest challenges that organisations such as ours face. Leading people takes much prayer and diplomacy, as well as the resilience to take difficult decisions when required. As Seventh-day Adventists, we have a responsibility to create healthy environments in our offices, our institutions, and our congregations. As a church, charity, and corporation, we need to demonstrate our Christian values by being equitable, ethical, and just in all our business and charitable dealings.

As a church denomination in the UK, we have 425 employees, more than 400 retirees, and thousands of volunteers. While, like Moses, we have a propensity to feel that we have done enough for the nurturing of God's people, the truth is that, historically, we have not always done enough. We have not been as agile as we could in adjusting our mindset to the latest government policies. Just as we do with our education and finances, we also need to embrace experienced people and specialists in key areas of work. We are developing a robust and responsive culture and environment that governs the BUC. We are spending time developing our personnel. We are updating our policies, and believe this will, in turn, positively impact all of our entities.

The difficult decisions – the ugly

Discerning between good and evil is a difficult task, but there are times when we need to make difficult and maybe even eyebrow-raising decisions, just as Jesus did on occasion (see Matthew 16:22-24; 21:12; 23:27). Difficult decisions are often shelved, because no church leader wants to be branded as unchristian, unloving, or unfair. As such, we might sometimes skirt around issues of bullying, racism, sexism, and unethical behaviour so as not to cause offence. However, the problem with such inaction is that it can lead to greater challenges and increased conflict.

Conclusion

Church, it's time for us to demonstrate that we truly value our people; it's time for us to refresh our people governance and start to address the difficult decisions that need to be made. While seeking to deal with people compassionately, as Jesus would, we must not overlook or disregard our policy, government legislation, and best practice. This is an enormous challenge, and we ask you – our members, retirees, employees, volunteers, and stakeholders – to be patient with us as we position ourselves to serve.