

## Strategic Priority (7) – Policy

### Aim:

- Ensure that the BUC remains a hub of legislative development relevant to all stakeholders and parties.

### Objectives:

- Continue to implement relevant training packages for all staff and institutions around key policy.
- Explore the need to expand our organisational policies to cater for the changing needs in the territory.
- Review our policy advisory committee and invite industry professionals to assist us, if appropriate.



## Babies and bathwater

by Pastor Eglan Brooks,

President of the British Union Conference

*'For a Child will be born to us,  
a Son will be given to us;  
And the government will rest  
on His shoulders;*

*And His name will be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty  
God,*

*Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.'*  
(Isaiah 9:6, NASB)

'Policy' – for many, it's a frightening word. It can conjure up images of dictatorial, pedantic, over-reaching bureaucrats demanding their 'pound of flesh' for minor misdemeanours or implementing draconian laws that benefit few. Often, just hearing the word can encourage a level of anarchy and disregard among even the most seasoned conformists.

On 31 March 1990, 'an anti-poll tax rally in central London . . . erupted into the worst riots seen in the city for a century'.<sup>1</sup> 100,000 people took to the streets for what started as a peaceful protest. But 400 were arrested; there were 113 injuries, including 45 police officers and 20 police horses; 4 tube stations were closed for safety; and cars were overturned and set

alight. All this occurred because the then Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, replaced domestic rates and introduced her flagship 'poll tax' policy in Scotland in 1989, and in England and Wales in 1990.

### What is policy?

The nature of a policy differs depending on the organisation. Policies can be guidelines, rules, regulations, laws, principles, or directions. They say what is to be done, who is to do it, how it is to be done, and for (or to) whom it is to be done.<sup>2</sup> In short, *policies guide our actions*. Policies also set roles and responsibilities. They also provide guidance on how these should be executed.

And our policies should reflect our beliefs and values. For example, there are organisations that implement a Kindness Charter. Such a charter (which is often publicly displayed, and not lost in a policy manual) guides the behaviour of the employees.

As a church organisation, we have the Bible as our policy manual. 'The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out and helps us do what is right.'<sup>3</sup> In addition to this, the General Conference also issues a church manual and policies for the smooth and effective running of unions, conferences, missions, and institutions for mission and outreach.

As a charity, we are subject to the policies and guidelines set to us by our regulator, The Charity Commission; and, as a corporation (business), we are subject to policies around finance, safeguarding, employment, and health and safety, to name just a few. Some of the policies are guidelines for best practice, while to ignore others would mean that we lose our charitable status or ability to practise as a business.

Over the next few years, we will review our policies to ensure that all our employees and institutions are not only aware of these policies, but fully trained to execute them. Where necessary, we will hire the services of external experts to advise us regarding policy changes; and, as the church, charity and corporation landscape evolves, we will review our policies to ensure that we are legislatively compliant.

Let's not 'throw out the baby with the bath water' – let's not be frightened of policy or confuse its implementation with dictatorship. Together, let's explore the changes and nuances of policy and ensure that these accurately reflect our values and beliefs. And, finally, let's embrace the benefits that it can bring to the British Union Conference as we seek to fulfil our mission.

<sup>1</sup>[http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/march/31/newsid\\_2530000/2530763.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/march/31/newsid_2530000/2530763.stm)

<sup>2</sup><http://partfood.msuu.ca/section4/4.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Timothy 3:16 (TLB)