



The evolution of church operations

by Wederly Aguiar, *BUC Treasurer*

The adage 'If it's not broken, why fix it?' doesn't always hold true. Take Henry the vacuum cleaner for example, a durable and affordable vacuum cleaner loved by many for years. However, newer models like Dyson and Shark, which are more versatile, user-friendly, and powerful, have become household favourites. While Henry remains largely unchanged, competitors like Dyson have innovated to better meet customer needs, leading to their market dominance.

In the same way, some church practices have persisted simply because 'that's how it's always been' – the wheels of this well-oiled machine keep turning, at times impeding innovation that could make a profound impact for the sake of consistency. These church practices have allowed the church to operate diligently for years, but the digital wave has conjured something on the market that can help it function and perform better, more efficiently, which is why this adage is outdated, and why considering a pre-emptive approach when it comes to church operations could be a prudent option.

In the last year, the British Union Conference (BUC) has identified a way of integrating resources to offer church members a streamlined, more accessible option of accessing resources and their personal data that allows the administrative burden to be eased from local church treasurers who volunteer their time. Previous articles in the 'Faith and

Finance' section have highlighted the Treasury Department and BUC's goals to enhance transparency, empower members with regular reporting and data access, optimise resource use, and upskill members to embrace change. The 7me app can meet those goals.

For years, treasurers have been using physical tithe and offering reports sent to them by conferences and unions, along with bank deposit books. While paperwork will always be necessary in treasury for audit purposes, many charities have digitised and automated their processes while treasurers continue to diligently fill out the reports and remit them by post, an onerous task, which is greatly appreciated by the conferences and missions, but often eats into personal time, leading conferences and churches to actively seek solutions and modernise this process, making it more accurate and efficient for all parties involved.

Over time, several solutions have been tried and tested. Frustrated churches have sometimes bought or built their own financial management systems to assist them with these weekly tasks, and conferences have adopted software for churches to use to ease the burden of these manual processes. The 7me app, used globally for years, had its first UK roll-out in May 2023. On 17-19 May 2024, the app and its financial management system were launched nationwide across BUC churches.

Treasurers gathered at Leonardo Hotel in Hinckley Island to train themselves on the Adventist Church Management System (ACMS) module, which allows them to create and manage budgets, process reports, disseminate reports, and continuously have oversight of records.

As with any new system, teething issues are expected, but the more people download and use the app,



the more treasurers can utilise their new skills and simplify their tasks.

But what does the app offer members?

Members have instant access to a wealth of resources with a click. Whether travelling and looking for nearby churches, needing prayer support, or seeking inspiration through daily devotionals, podcasts, articles, and Bible studies, 7me meets those needs. It serves as more than just a financial management tool – it's your church in one click. Members can view donation history, request membership transfers, and stay updated on BUC events, fostering a global community accessible anytime, anywhere.

The adage 'If it's not broken, don't fix it' is often used as a barrier to thwart change by people who consider themselves to be guardians against wasteful efforts and being ensnared by trends. However, as 7me continues into its second phase, let us question how we can continuously improve and grow the functionality and practices of the church to better serve its members and community in today's fast-paced and ever-changing landscape. Let us continue to 'use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms' (1 Peter 4:10, NIV).