



A letter to the Baptist Churches of North West Tasmania from Ivan Jordan, Northwest Regional Minister

December 21st, 2011

Warm Christmas greetings to you all.

As we conclude 2011, I want to thank you all for the opportunity to be your regional Minister throughout 2011. I have particularly appreciated being able to share in worship with some churches and to meet with the leadership of some churches. I was also really encouraged by the representation from virtually all of our churches at the regional forum at Ulverstone.

You will be aware that following the retirement of Garry Billing as Superintendent of the Baptist Churches of Tasmania, rather than appoint a single successor it was decided that John Smith, Jeff McKinnon and myself (known as the Mission Leadership Team) would share that ministry, with a deliberate focus on mission rather than maintenance. In that previously we had each been the Regional Minister for our particular area (John in the South, Jeff in the North and myself in the North West,) there were of course other responsibilities. It was agreed that John would be the leader and that he would also be the member of the team who would be responsible for involvement in Baptist Union of Australia matters and would also represent us at the BUT Council. Both Jeff and myself had other responsibilities. Regarding time allocated, John's involvement is two and a half days per week, Jeff's one and a half and mine 1 day. This allocation of time was partly due to the amount of time each of us was able to commit. Initially my time was half a day per week but later increased to 1 day.

You will also be aware that BUT is currently doing a review of the MLT, and consequently we are uncertain of the longer-term shape of MLT. I trust that you will be contributing to that review.

In some ways, we have a problem in that the North West area has the greatest number of churches and the least amount of time input. Recently MLT met with Ivan James and David Richardson and it was agreed that for the remainder of my time as a MLT member (concludes in July 2012) that John Smith will be responsible for the Devonport, Ulverstone and Wynyard churches.

I have tentatively spoken to some churches about a proposed regional forum to focus particularly on possible alternatives for the future ministry of smaller churches that for various reasons are unlikely to be able to continue to have a 'full time' accredited pastor and continue to function in a traditional way. My thinking here is that this scenario probably applies to all churches with a membership of less than 80.

I am happy to advise that I have arranged for a forum to take place on the afternoon of Sunday, April 1st, 2012 and I ask that all churches will please mark this in the church diary now. I also ask that churches will prayerfully prepare for this forum and I assure all that it will be an open forum where contributions will be welcome. The forum will commence at 2.p.m. but our hosts, Bruce and Debbie French, invite you to come early and barbecue or picnic for lunch, and if required, to do the same for

tea following the afternoon forum. The venue is a delightful situation on the slopes of Mount Roland that I can warmly recommend. The venue is 235 McCoy's Road, Claude Road.

This property is a retreat owned by the French family.

In Jesus' name

Ivan Jordan