Tasmanian BAPTIST CHURCHES

Report from Council

Monday, 28 November 2011

The new Council met for the first time on Saturday, and approved a number of major initiatives to help Tasmanian Baptist churches.

A new Healthy Church/Pastor Relationships (HCPR) Manual has been approved

A new manual was approved to implement the decision of Assembly to adopt the HCPR Program. All the union's current policies and procedures relating to church/pastor relationships have been rescinded, and replaced by a new code of ethics, and new guidelines for HCPR, professional development, pastoral transition, and complaints.

This new manual will be issued to pastoral leaders, secretaries, administrators, and treasurers of all churches.

A seminar will be held on the Northwest Coast on Saturday, 4 February 2012 from 10am to 3pm to explain how HCPR works and suggest ways for pastors and churches to take advantage of this new material.

As part of this process, the classification of "Unofficial Pastoral Leader" has been deleted and two new categories introduced, "Retired Pastoral Leader" and "Interim Pastoral Leader". Any pastor who is not accredited or recognised by the Union will be encouraged to apply for recognition.

New Remuneration Guidelines

Council has approved new remuneration guidelines for 2012 based on the decision of Assembly, and copies will be provided to pastoral leaders, secretaries, administrators, and treasurers of all churches.

Review of Mission Leadership Team

The chairperson of the Union, Ivan James, will conduct a review and evaluation of the effectiveness of the new arrangements (as approved by 2009 Assembly).

Ivan will be asking churches and pastors to provide submissions for this review by 29 February 2012, and he will be providing the opportunity for anonymous feedback by churches and individuals. Ivan will present his report to Council in May 2012 and Mid-Year Assembly in July 2012.

Strategic Plan

Council plans to engage a consultant to conduct a workshop for all key church leaders in the State.

This consultant would help prepare a state-wide strategic plan and regional plans that would be supported by the majority of churches in each region.

More details will be available after February Council.

NW Regional Minister

Council has invited Ivan Jordan to extend his appointment to 31 July 2012.

The review of MLT will explore the views of churches regarding the options for supporting the NW Region after July 2012.

Red Book

A number of churches have not completed their Annual Maintenance Statement (Form 56) for 2010 and the same form will be due at the end of December 2011. Our Insurers provide a 5% discount on insurance premiums to our churches based on the understanding that Redbook or a similar program is being used.

Council has decided that this discount will only be made available to those churches that have submitted a copy of their Form 56 for 2011 and can demonstrate they are meeting their legal obligations with regard to Essential Safety Measures.

I will be contacting the churches concerned to make sure they are complying with State law.

Persons of Concern

Council has approved a new procedure for dealing with a Person of Concern in a congregation. John Smith will be writing to churches to provide details of this new program.

Safe Churches Program

Most major evangelical churches in Australia are moving to adopt Scripture Union's ChildSafe Program, now called "Safe Churches". Council hopes to introduce this program into Tasmania in the last quarter of 2012 in partnership with BUV, and we plan to bring a recommendation to Mid-Year Assembly to adopt this program.

Baptist Union of Victoria

BUV has agreed to provide the Union with additional support for professional development, Safe Churches, Persons of Concern, youth work, Red Book, and advisory board for 2012.

The details and costing for this support will be finalised in the next month.

Finance

The result for the first four months was a surplus of $2,673. Two-thirds of churches are now paying their support for the union at the budgeted rate, and the office will be issuing reminders to those churches whose contribution is below budget at the end of November 2011.

I will also be writing to all church treasurers seeking details of any secured loans taken out by them that are still outstanding. This information is required to establish the extent of the Union's contingent liabilities.

Baptist Financial Services

Along with all other Australian Baptist unions, we have received a request from BFS for a capital contribution to enable them to finance church building programmes in the next decade. Council is considering this request and seeking advice from the finance committee and the union's auditors.

Council Membership

Council received and accepted with regret, resignations from Laurie Rowston (Southern Region), and Tim Hayman (NW Region). Both men resigned for personal reasons. Unfortunately, these positions cannot be filled until Mid-Year Assembly.

As at the date of this report, the members of Council are Ivan James (chairperson), Bryn Parry (vice-chairperson), John Smith (leader of MLT), David Richardson (administrator), Stephen Baxter, Patrick Brown, Wendy Marston, Brent McKillop, Vivian Morse, and Kevin O'Loughlin.

Priorities for 2012

Council and MLT have agreed that our main priorities for 2012 should be:

- Mobilisation of our churches to pray for revival and evangelism
- Development of a committed, qualified, and experienced Council that is prayerful, strategic, and works well as a team
- Successful implementation of the HCPR program and the development of improved working relationships between pastors, churches and the union
- Completion of a comprehensive review of MLT, resulting in the development of a strong leadership team for the future
- Appointment of a suitably qualified and experienced regional minister for the NW region
- Development of an effective state-wide strategic plan for evangelism and church planting in Tasmania that would be owned and supported by the pastoral leaders and churches in each region
- Development of spiritual leaders for all churches (including the identification and mentoring of young people with potential as future pastoral leaders)
- Provision of training and support for churches to become mission-shaped
- Commencement of the implementation of the Safe Churches and Persons of Concern programs, with Safe Churches starting in the fourth quarter of 2012
- Definition of the roles and responsibilities of delegates to Assembly
- Development of a sustainable funding model for the union

Next Meeting

The next meeting of Council will be held in Launceston on Saturday, 18 February 2012.

More information

Further details about HCPR, remuneration guidelines, the review of MLT, and the Persons of Concern program will be released within the next two weeks.

David Richardson
Administrator