

How Does Baptists Together Work?

Movement and Charity

Baptists Together is a movement of local churches, regional Associations/Networks, Colleges and Specialist Teams who covenant together in order to grow healthy churches in relationship for God's mission.

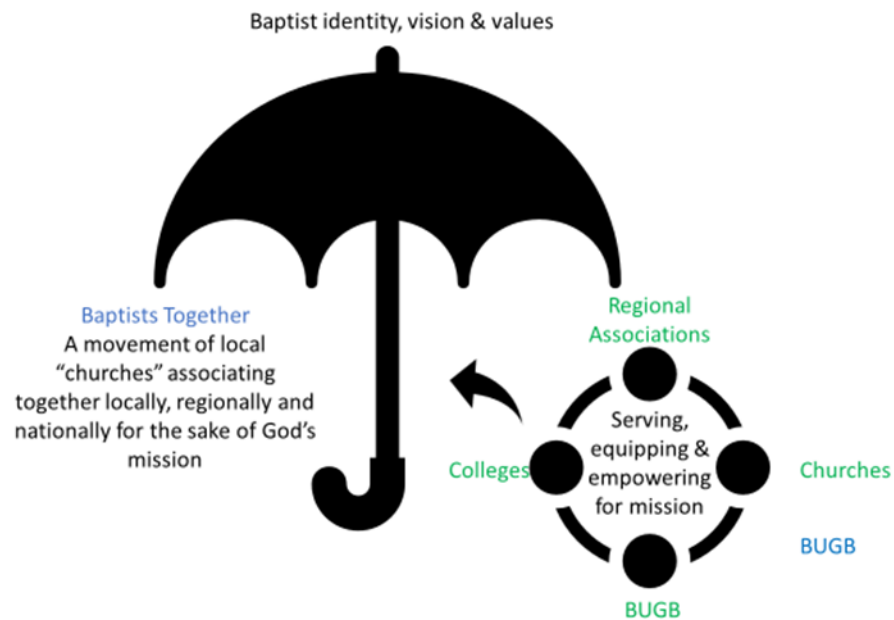
We are a *movement* with deep roots and a precious heritage. Originally an informal and grassroots network of local Baptist churches who wanted support and encouragement in the midst of a hostile context, we have grown, developed and adapted as we have followed Jesus over the centuries. Today we are not only a movement of local churches, Associations and Colleges, we also operate as a *charity* with all the privileges and responsibilities that that brings. As Tim Keller writes, "I am not suggesting simplistically that movements are good and institutions are bad – rather, that organisations should have both institutional characteristics and movement dynamics, though there are some tensions and trade-offs in the balance." (Centre Church, Chapter 27)

As Tim Keller points out, having these two main ways of relating together can sometimes cause confusion and lead to misplaced expectations and frustration. Sometimes we long for the security and clarity that a "top down" hierarchy provides. Other times we long for complete independence and the freedom to do our own thing. Being part of Baptists Together requires a commitment to inter-dependence and we do this because we want to maximise the potential of our being a movement, whilst also benefiting from the strengths of centralising certain things.

On the one hand, **Baptist Together** is a movement. As a collaborative peer movement, we share a common DNA and purpose, and we covenant together because of that. We freely relate together to pray, worship and seek God together. We share stories and discern how we see God at work across our movement. We build relationships and we encourage each other in discipleship and mission so that we are empowered, connected and inspired. This fuels our sacrificial commitment and we feel like one "team". Life and innovation bubbles up right across our Movement and we are able to be flexible and responsive to make room for what God is doing. We nurture, celebrate and commend our identity as Baptists and offer our gifts to the wider church. Ministry and missional leaders relate together locally, regionally and nationally. This way of relating is focussed on authentic relationships and could also be understood in terms of covenant and family.

On the other hand, the **Baptist Union of Great Britain** is a network of c. 2019 distinct charities which operate locally, regionally or nationally. Each charity fulfils its appropriate legal requirements with regard to charitable objects, people, property and finance. Each charity operates with the stewardship of trustees, the management of an "executive"/staff team and robust participation and consultation of members. Each sister charity operates in a collaborative, covenantal, spirit and maintains the appropriate

standards of transparency and accountability to one another and to statutory authorities. *This charitable way of relating must always serve and equip the movement of local “churches”.*

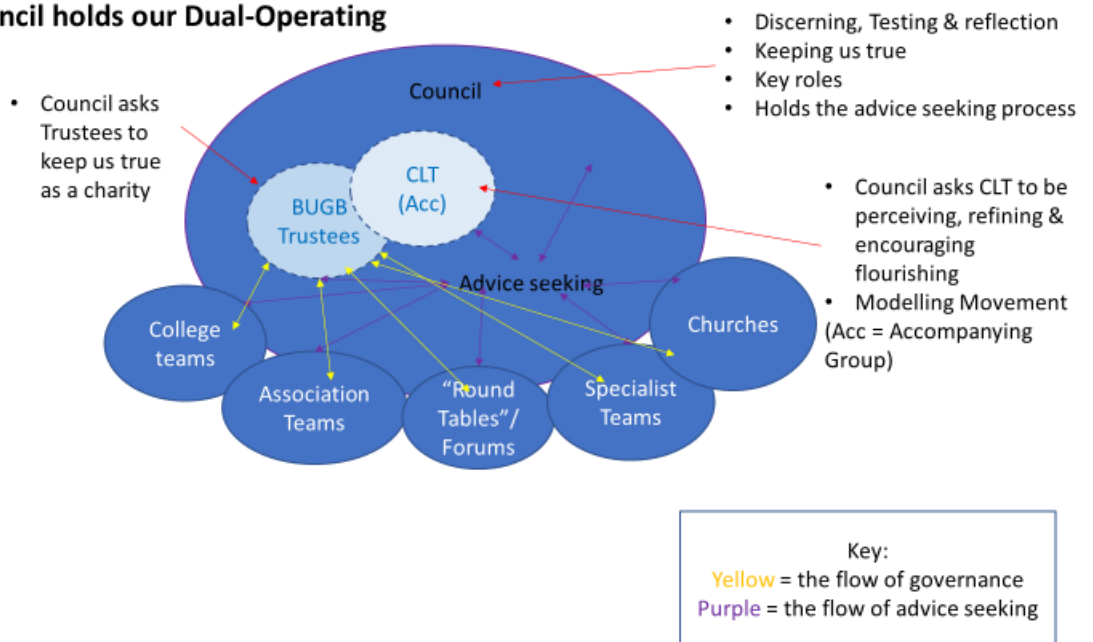


The Advice Seeking Process

The advice seeking process is a discipline of our life together and helps us to nurture freedom, release our potential and also enhance our communications and listening. An advice seeking process avoids the rigidity of hierarchical decision making and also the slowness and frustration of consensual approaches. The advice seeking approach, “is very simple: in principle, any person in the organisation can make a decision. But before doing so, that person *must* seek advice from all affected parties and people with expertise on the matter. The person is under no obligation to integrate every piece of advice; the point is not to achieve a watered-down compromise that accommodates everyone’s wishes. But advice must be sought and taken into serious consideration. The bigger the decision, the wider the net must be cast – including, where necessary, the CEO or the board of directors. Usually the decision maker is the person who noticed the issue or the opportunity or the person most affected by it.” (Reinventing Organisations, F Laloux). The integrity of this approach is upheld through the reality that we will all be advice seekers and advice givers at different points. When we are operating as movement, the advice seeking process invites and takes into account peer input whilst respecting autonomy. When we are operating as charitable organisations, the advice seeking process will enable the voices of stakeholders to be expressed and heard in decision making whilst minimising conflict of interest /loyalty.

How do the different parts of Baptists Together relate?

How Council holds our Dual-Operating



The Core Leadership Team

The Core Leadership Team draws together leaders from across Baptists Together, not as representatives of a particular constituency but, to seek to enable leadership for our whole Movement.

Regional Minister Team Leaders

College Principals

Specialist Team Leaders

Current Priority Area Leaders –

1 x Mission Forum Facilitator

1 x Ministries Advisor for Ministerial Development

1 x CYF Round Table Facilitator

1 x Young Adults Round Table Facilitator

1 x Digital Revolution "leader" (tbc)

Moderator of Council

Moderator of the Trustee Board

President

Treasurer

General Secretary

Lynn Green

3 June 2020