

Finally

Many churches find themselves frustrated by their inability to move forward in mission and often the sympathetic ministry of a consultant can clear a blockage. Churches that are experiencing blessing equally can benefit from consultancy by having someone from outside to help them analyse what is going well and maybe what could go better. Consultancy is a form of fellowship in the gospel, and could become a hugely significant feature of Baptist life in the coming years. Why not put it on your church's agenda?

Once the church has decided to explore consultancy as a way forward, get in touch with your association team.

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Consultancy

A Home Mission
Initiative

Consultancy

a way forward in Mission



**A leaflet for churches
considering consultancy**

Why engage in a consultancy?

At any stage of any church's life it needs to be asking questions like 'Where is the Lord taking us next in mission? What is the Lord saying to us about how we are and how we might be?'

Consultancy is designed to help a church find some of the answers to those questions and then begin to move forward. Consultants do not come into a church and tell anyone what to do, as the definition of consultancy we have adopted makes plain:

- a partnership between church and consultants
- in discerning the call of God
- to a particular church in their local community
- at a particular time
- and in taking steps forward in that mission

If you feel that working with someone in this way would benefit the life and mission of your church, read on.

Who will do it?

The consultancy programme is run through the local association. Association staff and a number of carefully selected people from within the association have been trained to work with churches. Most consultancies will involve two consultants who will work in tandem with the church.

What does it entail?

Once a church has decided to go for a consultancy, and the association has fixed them up with consultants, the church will be asked to complete a fairly detailed questionnaire about its life and work. Information about its community will also be accessed from the internet. The information garnered in this way forms the basis for the consultants' main visit to the church, which is normally conducted on a Friday evening (with a group of leaders) and then the next day with as large a group of people from the church as are willing to attend. From the various discussions and exercises that take place at this visit, the consultant takes away a considerable volume of information and ideas and writes these up as Findings (a written report).

A couple of months or so after the visit, the consultants will return to the church and make a presentation of their findings to go alongside the written report. It remains the responsibility of the church to weigh up the findings and to decide how to turn them into an action plan.

The consultants will remain in touch with the church for a further twelve months in order to lend a hand with the drafting and implementation of the action plan. This is a thorough process and no church should agree to a consultancy without having every intention of making it work.

How long will it all take?

From the initial agreement to engage in a consultancy through to the point where the consultants present their findings should take around six months.

What would it cost?

It is expected that the church will meet all out-of-pocket and travel expenses of the consultants and provide meals and overnight accommodation as appropriate. In addition, the Union is recommending that the consultants chosen for local churches receive an honorarium of £75. It should be stressed, however, that where a church feels it could benefit from a consultancy but is nervous about costs, they should talk to their association staff about this.

There is a further cost, of course in that any changes the church decides to make as a result of the consultancy may have financial implications.

When can we start?

You can start immediately by letting your association team know that you are interested in consultancy. You may have to join a waiting list, depending on how many consultants in your particular association are trained and ready to go. Contacting your association does not mean that you have committed yourself to anything, simply that you want to explore this possibility with your association team.