

British Baptists face budget shortfall

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SWANWICK, England (ABP) - The Baptist Union of Great Britain faces likely cutbacks as leaders project that financial support from Baptist churches will continue to decline.

The Baptist Union Council heard March 12 about a deficit of 685,503 British pounds - nearly \$1.1 million in U.S. currency - in the BUGB Home Mission fund. That's good news compared to November, when leaders projected a shortfall of 1 million pounds in the fund that supports 13 associations, national resources and grants to churches and ministries.

Treasurer Malcolm Broad said the decreased deficit "does not take away the need for urgent restructuring," according to the March 14 [Baptist Times Weekly Digest](#), an online newsletter delivered as a pdf file, launched after the 156-year-old Baptist Times newspaper ceased publication at the end of 2011 because the Baptist union could no longer afford to subsidize it.

British Baptist leaders expect the budget deficit to grow in 2012. The union recently produced a promotional DVD challenging churches to imagine what could be done if all churches sacrificed to give the suggested 5 percent of their general fund offerings to Home Mission. A Futures Group, meanwhile, is assessing organizational values in anticipation of future discussions of reorganization of the Baptist union.

"We have lots of facts and lots of opinion," said General Secretary Jonathan Edwards. "But amidst these opinions we need wisdom."

-Bob Allen is managing editor of Associated Baptist Press.