

Churches Together in England

**A HARMONY
OF
CHURCH FINANCE**

(Second Edition)

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This replaces the 1st edition by Basil W Hazledine (CTE 1995)

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1. INTRODUCTION

A NEW EDITION

When I was asked to write a second edition of this book, originally written by Basil Hazledine, I had only a hazy idea of what I might be taking on. It has gradually become clear that the kind of book I am able to write is rather different from the first edition. The new edition concentrates more on the flows of resource between local church, intermediate and central bodies. Actual monetary levels of grants, stipends, etc, have been omitted because these inevitably change with time.

There is also some change in the target audience, in that this book should be useful for a wide range of Christians. Readers will include not only those with responsibilities in a denomination, and those from a Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP) struggling to make sense of denominational systems, but also others interested in understanding how Christians in other denominations, and even in their own, make the wider church work.

Like my predecessor, I have concentrated on the five Churches most involved in LEPs because they most need to relate to each other in ecumenical partnerships. However I hope that members of other churches will be able to fill in the details under the various headings. I apologise to members of other churches who may regret this concentration on the five main denominations.

In seeking to harmonise the wide variety of usages employed by the five churches, some generic terms have to be used to describe comparable entities. This means some Baptists may dislike the word 'Church' applied to their Union, Roman Catholics the use of 'denomination' to describe their church, and some having their priest or pastor described as a minister. Apologies to those of all denominations for whom the words 'area' and 'district' have specific meanings, although they may sometimes have to be used here in a neutral sense.

As in all comparisons between denominations, the geographical boundaries are differently defined. So much ecumenical working together would be so much easier if only we could make our sets of boundaries conform more. The reality is that some of the National Church Bodies relate to England only, whereas other national churches are defined to include Wales and/or Scotland.

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HARMONY

Harmony is different from Unison and from Cacophony. At various times in the writing of music there have been more or less strict rules about what harmonic patterns are acceptable. No such rules have been in existence to provide consistency between the financial patterns of management in different denominations.

Harmony provides a strong sense of unity of construction and purpose, which is absent in Cacophony. Harmony differs from Unison in that there are clearly different strands and lines making up the harmony, so chosen that they fit together to make a, potentially, wondrous whole. Sometimes Harmony is achieved through a series of chords, with the rhythm being the same in each part; sometimes, in polyphony, the different lines move at different times and in different rhythms so that the coming together in harmony is the more surprising and remarkable. The patterns of financial management in different denominations have not been chosen within any overall plan; to the extent that there is a harmony of financial management it must be created through a dedicated presentation of the consistencies and recognisable similarities of the different systems.

The financial and resource management systems within different denominations have many similarities of pattern and some differences. I have sought to identify and emphasise the similarities while also identifying where there are major or minor deviations from a common pattern, or where there are two or more patterns. There is, of course, a plethora of varying titles.

UNDERSTANDING EACH OTHER

Christians have more contact with Christians of other denominations than was the situation a decade ago, and certainly much more than half a century ago. Some of the involvement arises through formal ecumenical arrangements, but much is simply because we are gradually growing less anxious about talking, learning, or even worshipping and working, together. We are more aware than we have ever been of the need to seek positively the Unity of Christ's Church, though we have not an agreed clearer vision of what Unity will look like.

For those involved in running formal ecumenical structures, such as Local Ecumenical Partnerships, where the desire for Unity is often at its

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strongest, there is a need to understand each other's financial and resource structures. For those in less direct contact with other churches, such an understanding can enable profitable discussion of proposed joint activities and avoid unrealistic assumptions about what other local churches can or cannot do or how their use of resources is restricted by their denominational practice. Those who have only a limited perception of other churches can see how the behaviour of other kinds of Christians is linked to their different structures and related to core beliefs.

LOCAL ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIPS AND CONTENTS

When my predecessor wrote the first edition of this book, new LEPs were being developed, and existing LEPs were flourishing and growing. LEPs were still a fairly new part of the church scene in England. Now, a decade later, there are fewer new LEPs, and many established LEPs are a solid part of the Church scene, and must be fully integrated into the financial arrangements of the whole church. It is not much clearer where the ecumenical drive is going, for while the LEPs are an extremely important part of the search for unity, showing that the denominations can be, locally, church together, it is clear that LEPs are not going to become the dominant form in which denominations work together to become one church. The LEPs are now part of the overall tapestry of local churches (quite a large part within some denominations, especially the United Reformed Church) and will remain so, as the whole of Christ's Church seeks to find the road to One Church.

Because the LEPs are, mostly, now well established, many different ways have been developed for dealing with the tricky aspects of finance and resource within LEPs. The wide establishment of LEPs across all areas of England should now be reflected in having a consistent pattern for the treatment of LEPs by the denominations and the Intermediate County Churches Together Sponsoring Bodies, to whom the LEPs in general look for support and episcopal (oversight).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe a great deal to many people. Obviously firstly to Revd Basil Hazledine, who not only showed that such a book is possible, but also collected a large amount of information, much of which survives in this second edition. I have been greatly helped by comments from people from different denominations, Paul Goodliff and Hilary Treavis from the Baptist

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Union of Great Britain, Robin Stevens of the Church of England, Ruby Beech from the Methodist Church, and Cyril Wood from the Westminster Diocese of the Roman Catholic Church, who have given time to work through the initial manuscript to search out errors relating to their denomination, or more generally. I have felt that I was being given expert advice, though some of my advisors prefer not to be labelled as 'experts'. Of course, I take full responsibility for all of the material and information in the book, including any errors which remain. I am also most grateful to John Bradley, on behalf of the Churches' Group for Local Unity, for inviting me to write the book, and for his encouragement along the way.

2. BASIC STRUCTURES OF THE FIVE CHURCHES

WHAT IS IN COMMON?

Each denomination has four potential levels within its structure: the local congregation, a cluster of congregations, a regional body, often covering a county or metropolitan area, and a national structure, sometimes including more than one of the British nations. In most denominations all four levels are apparent and the financial responsibilities within the different levels are clear. There is a parallel division of the decision-making responsibilities between the four levels.

In general in each denomination, financial responsibilities are identified to the different levels of the structure in such a way that is believed to give maximum efficiency in the context of the denominational organisational theology. In most denominations the structure is hierarchical, and the division of responsibilities between different levels of the structure reflects the theologies of the denominations described in the following section. However in the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the hierarchical element is muted, the theology being based strongly on the local churches, with higher-level groupings existing to serve particular needs of the local church.

The numbers of intermediate bodies at each level within denominations change from time to time. Those given here pertain at the time of writing.

BAPTIST

The levels are:

- (i) **The individual local church.**
THIS IS THE DOMINANT LEVEL.
- (ii) **Clusters** of local churches, which may be anything in size from two churches in the same town to a group of churches across several towns.
- (iii) **Regional Associations**, which are large geographical areas, and of which there are twelve, with one Regional Partnership.

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- (iv) **The Baptist Union of Great Britain**, which has only some of the characteristics of a 'Central Church'.

The main decision-making bodies are:

- (i) The Church meeting, usually meeting monthly,
- (iv) The Baptist Union Council, meeting annually,

CHURCH OF ENGLAND

The levels are:

- (i) **The Parish**, which may include more than one church building and congregation. There are 12,887 parishes, some of which are grouped into benefices.
- (ii) **The Deanery**, with between 4 and 25 deaneries per diocese.
- (iii) **The Diocese**. There are 44 dioceses (including the Diocese in Europe).

THIS IS THE DOMINANT LEVEL.

- (iv) **The National Church.**

The main decision-making bodies are:

- (i) The Parochial Church Council, which must meet at least four times a year,
- (ii) The Deanery Synod, meeting as directed by the Diocesan Synod, in practice roughly quarterly,
- (iii) The Diocesan Synod, meeting not less than twice a year,
- (iv) The General Synod, meeting twice a year, with the possibility of a third meeting.

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METHODIST

The levels are:

- (i) **The individual local church.**
- (ii) **The Circuit**, a grouping of local churches. There are between 1 and 32 circuits per district.
THIS IS THE DOMINANT LEVEL.
- (iii) **The District** There are 33 districts in England, Scotland and Wales, becoming 32 from September 2006.
- (iv) **The Conference** Circuits in England, Scotland and Wales form the British Conference. Those in Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic form the Irish Conference.

The main decision-making bodies are:

- (i) The individual Church Council, meeting two to six times a year,
- (ii) The Circuit Meeting, meeting quarterly,
- (iii) The District Synod, meeting twice a year,
- (iv) The Methodist Conference, meeting annually.

ROMAN CATHOLIC

The levels are:

- (i) **The individual local church, or parish.** There are 2,800 parishes in England and Wales.
- (ii) **The Deanery.**
- (iii) **The Diocese.** There are 22 dioceses in England and Wales.
THIS IS THE DOMINANT LEVEL
- (iv) (The Central Church does not really exist since each diocese is autonomous, and reports to Rome)

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The main decision-making authorities are:

- (i) The Parish Priest.
- (ii) The Bishop, acting with advice from his Vicars General and various Councils and Commissions.

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

The levels are:

- (i) **The individual local church.**
- (ii) **The District.** In most Synods there are between four and seven districts.
- (iii) **The Synod.** There are eleven Synods in England, plus one Synod in each of Wales and Scotland.
- (iv) **The Central Church.**

To a greater extent than in the other denominations the organisation of the church is spread between the different levels, with no clear dominant level.

The main decision-making bodies are:

- (i) The Church Meeting, meeting usually monthly.
- (ii) The District Council, meeting four times a year.
- (iii) The Provincial Synod, meeting twice a year.
- (iv) The General Assembly, meeting annually.

Note that under proposals currently being considered, Districts would cease to exist from July 2007.

3. DENOMINATIONAL EMPHASES RELEVANT TO FINANCE

This section, which draws heavily on the material in Basil Hazledine's first edition, considers the question 'How far do the different denominational patterns of financial and resource management reflect fundamental philosophical and theological differences between the denominations?' The five summaries for the different denominations provide my answers to the question.

WHAT DO WE HAVE IN COMMON?

All denominations have, as already observed, a degree of hierarchical structure, and the finance and resource management necessarily fits within this structure. Further, all the components of resource, and all the activities using resource, exist in all denominations. The differences occur in the distribution of authority between different levels of the hierarchy, and consequent variation in the degree of centrality of management patterns for resource. All levels of each hierarchy have responsibility for the management of some component of resource, but the distribution of responsibility between levels is very different in different denominations, and without some idea of these different patterns one can easily make what appear to be foolish assumptions.

Although the scope of this book is confined to the five largest denominations, all the generalities mentioned in the previous paragraph apply to some degree to any denomination. Consequently the structures of other denominations could be related to those described here.

BAPTIST

'Where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I in the midst of them.'

The primacy of the local Church Meeting, which lies at the heart of the Baptist tradition of Independent churches, is clearly reflected in Baptist financial structures. The central bodies of the Baptist Union are given only such resources as are necessary for them to fulfil the responsibilities entrusted to them by the free choice of the local churches. These fall into two categories. First, those common concerns clearly best shared by all, such as accreditation of ministers, and their support in retirement, relations with other ecclesiastical and civil bodies, and Christian witness on behalf of the whole denomination. Second, the use of common expertise of financial

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management to ensure good stewardship, and the pooling of resources to initiate and sustain Christian witness, in areas of strategic need and also where these are beyond the unaided abilities of the local church.

Apart from these 'common' activities, and it may be noted that not all local Baptist churches participate in supporting central activities, each local congregation maintains its own independent financial structure, and takes ultimate responsibility for all aspects of its worship, ministry, buildings and outreach. This emphasis on local responsibility tends to mean that members of local Baptist churches expect to make larger financial contributions, closer to a 10% tithe, than would normally be the case for most members of most other denominations.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND

'Except the Lord build the house, their labour is but vain that build it'

The financial structures of the Church of England stem from the historic partnership of Church and State, expressed in the Church of England being the established church in England.

The practical expression of the lay responsibilities has historically been through the Church Commissioners, and some aspects of the financial costs of the church are still met by them. However, the income of the Church Commissioners is no longer sufficient to meet the full cost of a nationwide parochial ministry. Hence some costs are pooled within Dioceses, and money collected through the parish share system, to help to meet the full cost of the ministry of the clergy.

The Church ensures that every citizen is within the cure (or care) of a parish priest, for whom a house, a stipend and a parish church are provided, in order that he, or she, may be free to proclaim the Word of God for all. Correspondingly, it is upon the church itself that responsibility falls for training and supervising those who carry out this parochial ministry, that is, everything involved with building up the Kingdom of God within the life of the nation.

For hundreds of years endowments and glebe, support from the more affluent members of the community, and the private means of the clergy themselves combined to fund the parish ministry, without direct recourse to the giving of ordinary church members to a very large extent. From this situation arose the common misconception that the clergy, parsonages and parish churches were all part of the State's free provision.

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During the last century, this has completely changed. Growth of population, particularly in new areas with little parish provision, rises in standard of living and inflation, disappearance of private means of the clergy, and the need to provide for a growing number of retired clergy, have meant that the old system, based on the Church Commissioners, can no longer manage.

The emphasis now for funding the Church has shifted to the parishes, with some continuing support from the Church Commissioners. The primary source for funding the full costs of the parochial ministry is now the parish share required from all parish congregations. Parish shares are collected and paid to the Diocese, in many cases through the Deanery.

Each Diocese, under the leadership of the Bishop, is also responsible for a range of activities in education, social responsibility, publicity and mission. The Diocese brings together the budget for its own requirements, with the amounts requested by the National Church, and apportions the total between the parishes to form the Diocesan Budget. By paying its parish share, each parish makes its contribution to the spiritual health of the nation as a whole, though principally the parish share pays for the ministry provided by the Diocese in the parish.

The Church Commissioners continue to play a substantial part in the funding of the Church (about one fifth of the total cost). They help to maintain separate Stipend Funds for the less well-off Dioceses, which enable stipends to be broadly comparable between Dioceses, despite the widely differing resources of individual Dioceses. They also provide finance through the Diocesan Parsonage Funds, for maintaining suitable housing for the clergy, and the Diocesan Pastoral Accounts, used for reallocating resources in response to social change. However the primary responsibility for the use of these funds continues to shift from the Commissioners, in whom the funds were originally vested, towards the Diocese, which predominantly has to make the practical decisions about the use of the funds. The dual source and responsibility has both advantages for maintaining comparability between Dioceses, and disadvantages in increasing the complexity for local churches in the use of the funds.

The parish church, as a building, has always been the responsibility of the parish itself. More recently, assistance from the Diocesan Pastoral Account may be available, particularly in priority areas. Especially for parishes with historic churches, many hundreds of years old, the cost of maintaining their church building can be a major factor in the finances of a local parish congregation.

The church's national responsibilities are focussed in the work of the General Synod, its central authority. The selection and training of the clergy

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form a major element of this responsibility, together with a wide range of activities in education, social responsibility, publicity and mission, which seek both to witness to the church's concern for the spiritual health of the nation, and to inspire church members to more effective Christian witness in their daily lives. The budget for the national work of the Church, including the training of ordinands, (£23 million in 2005) is more than double the total of the central budgets of the other four denominations put together, reflecting the numerical dominance of members of the Church of England in local communities.

METHODIST

'Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature'

The structures of Methodism reflect the circumstances under which the Connexion came into being. Itinerant teams of ministers were sent out into 'darkest England' in the worst years of the Industrial Revolution, to preach the Gospel, and to train lay leaders for the gathered congregations which grew up as a result of their endeavours. Despite its gradual transformation from a society within the Church of England into an institutional church, and despite later division and reunion, the initial pattern is still recognisable, and is reflected in financial terms in at least three ways.

First, there is the importance of the Methodist Conference, which has inherited the responsibility once held by Wesley and his successors for the work of the Connexion. Not only does it oversee the stationing of all ministers, but historically it has kept a tight rein on the stewardship of the church's resources through hundreds of Standing Orders covering every aspect of finance and administration. The latter, conceived in the early days as an essential means of maintaining order and accountability among the burgeoning congregations with often inexperienced leadership, are today kept under constant review in the light of changing circumstances. An example of this is the flexibility of financial action now accorded to a local church once its Circuit and other wider commitments have been met. Nevertheless the Standing Orders form the normal channels within which finance and administration must operate.

Second, the initial missionary impetus of Methodism is maintained, not only in those activities usually associated with home and overseas mission, but also in the strong support given to causes which seek to bring the Christian faith to bear in the fields of industry and work, and which give help to the victims of poverty, hunger, injustice or oppression. Funds sponsored by the Methodist Church connexionally give millions of pounds of such grants in a

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typical year, while the Benevolent Funds held by local churches and many Circuits are an important feature of Methodist finance. The flexibility is also preserved in the Advance and Priority Funds operated at Circuit, District and Connexional level. Resources made available by contraction in one area can be readily deployed in other areas of growth or need.

Third, the original concept of itinerant teams is preserved, not only in the restricted period for which every minister is stationed in a circuit, but also in the fact that ministerial appointments are to the staff of the Circuit, and not to a single church congregation. Thus the Circuit takes responsibility for housing all the ministers on its staff, raising the money to pay their stipends (although the actual payment is made through the central stipends system), and initiating activities which are shared by all the local churches. The costs of the Circuit, including contributions to District and Connexional budgets, are divided among the local congregations in the form of the Circuit Assessment, the first call on the finances of every local Methodist church.

ROMAN CATHOLIC

'That they may be one, ... that the world may believe'

As a visible expression of the unity of the Body of Christ, the Diocesan Bishop and the Parish Priest (under the supreme authority of the Pope) hold a particular place within all the administrative and financial structures of the Roman Catholic Church. One effect of this is that there is no corporate body at national level, which fully parallels the central administrative bodies of the other churches. Thus, while the Bishops' Conference acts as a national focus of unity, expressing the mind of the national church when required, and offering guidance and oversight to the Dioceses and local congregations through the work of its National Committees, its role remains primarily advisory, leaving to the dioceses the initiation and maintenance of most activities which in other churches are undertaken by their central bodies. This accounts not only for the relatively lower levy made on local congregations for the National Catholic Fund, but also for the large number of special collections each local church is asked to take each year on behalf of Diocesan and other funds.

The primacy and independence of each Diocesan Bishop within his own Diocese is shown, not only in the purely advisory or executive nature of Diocesan bodies, but also in the widely differing forms that administration and finance may assume in different Dioceses. While the Commissions overseeing Diocesan activities will be generally parallel, reflecting the

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division of responsibility of the national Committees, the actual titles and terms of reference of individual officers, funds and corporate bodies may vary widely.

One aspect of Roman Catholic practice, which has no parallel in the other churches, and which has important financial implications, is the relationship of a Diocese to its own priests. Once a candidate for the priesthood has been accepted for ordination by the Bishop of a Diocese, he normally remains linked to that Diocese for the rest of his life. Thus it is his Diocese, rather than any national body, which oversees and subsidises his training, his bishop who maintains oversight of his spheres of work throughout his ministry (even though this may include postings to other Dioceses in the UK or overseas), and his own Diocese which continues to take responsibility for him in sickness or retirement until his death. This relationship, known as incardination, explains why almost all aspects of this book relating to the Roman Catholic Church are defined for each diocese, and therefore the entries under 'Roman Catholic' may be summarising different practices in different Dioceses.

The same principle of unity within the body of Christ, which gives a Diocesan Bishop his ultimate responsibility under Canon Law within his Diocese, is reflected in the responsibilities vested in the Parish Priest within his own parish. In terms of Canon law, the Priest is the administrator of the property belonging to the 'public judicial person', which comprises the community of the Baptized within the Parish. Although it is obligatory that he be advised by a Parish Finance Committee and submits accounts to the Diocesan Financial Secretary for audit, his is the ultimate responsibility for directing the financial affairs of his parish as he sees best for the building up of the Kingdom of God.

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

'So we who are united with Christ ...form one body and belong to one another'

It would perhaps be fair to say that, while the Roman Catholic tradition starts with the unity of the Body of Christ, and under this umbrella allows diversity to flourish, the United Reformed Church deliberately set out to join together two, later three, elements of diversity, creating an umbrella under which a unity can be expressed. Both denominations represent aspects of Christian witness vital in today's divided world, though in essence the Roman Catholic tradition implies maintaining an existing unity, whereas the United Reformed Church is committed to the continuing growing together of different strands of denominational diversity.

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The fusing of Presbyterian and Congregational practice (the entry of the churches of Christ and the Scottish Congregationalists took place after most of the basic URC structures had been put in place) is reflected in the different patterns and responsibilities of the Councils of the church at various levels. Thus the central bodies undertake those activities best shared by all, including ministers' training, stipends and pensions, central investment funds, wider Christian witness in the fields of education and social issues, relations with other churches and sustaining a substantial missionary presence overseas. Payments made by local congregations to the Ministry and Mission Fund support these central activities.

The strength of the Independent Congregational tradition, and the corresponding conciliar authority of the Presbytery, are reflected in the structures of the Synods and (in most Synods for the present) Districts, and in the variety of titles used to describe those structures. However, similar responsibilities are usually undertaken at corresponding levels. Thus it is Synod Trust bodies that usually assume the position of trustees for the property and capital funds of local churches, and it is Synod funds which primarily sustain and enhance the material resources of the churches in their region.

The task of Districts, on the other hand, is to maintain primary pastoral oversight of the local churches, managing ministerial resources, arranging their contributions to central funds, and initiating those activities of fellowship and outreach best undertaken by groups of churches. The pattern of District funds reflects these responsibilities.

The independence of the local congregation in the organisation of its own administrative and financial activities, under the authority of the local church meeting, is a treasured feature of the local church's life. It is this which makes the prayerful achievement of a common mind between the four levels, Central, Synod, District and Local, so fundamental to the witness of the United Reformed Church.

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4. INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES and RESOURCE FLOWS

A Church is both the institution, with its structures, and the people who, at the local church level, contribute to the worship and mission of the church. In describing the harmony of church finance, it is important to describe not only the arrangements of the denominational institutions, but also how the money and resource flow between the different components of the church, particularly emphasising the perspective of a member of the local church. It is important not only that members of different denominations understand how each denomination manages their finances, but also that 'ordinary' church members can understand the pattern of finance of the wider church.

THE FLOWS OF MONEY AND RESOURCE

The patterns by which money and other resource move between the various parts of the church are broadly similar in all denominations. The details, inevitably, vary between denominations, and these detailed arrangements are described in the main sections (5 & 6) of this book. The flows of resource can also be viewed from the different perspectives of the local church, the central church, ministers of the church, and even the intermediate bodies of the church (which usually have much the same perspective as the central church).

First we consider the different forms and flows of money and resource.

- (a) **Local church finance and payment of contributions to denominations.** Money is collected by local churches from amongst their members and is paid to the central church, or to ministers, or to intermediate bodies (sometimes en route to the central church), or to external mission activities.
- (b) **Selection, training and initial appointment of ministers.** Ministers provide pastoral ministry to local churches, and also to other organisations in the form of chaplaincy. Each denomination has systems for the selection of candidates for the ministry, for the training of those who are accepted as candidates, and for ordination. In-service training is also provided for all serving ministers.
- (c) **Local appointment and support of ministers.** Different denominations approach the appointment of ministers to local appointments in different ways. Stipends (salaries),

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accommodation and various forms of other normal working support are provided to many ministers by the central or local church, sometimes by or through, intermediate bodies. Other ministers are non-stipendiary, usually serving in a local church appointment, possibly in addition to a paid employment.

(d) **Support of ministers in retirement, and special circumstances.**

There are standard arrangements for the retirement of ministers in all denominations. Retired Ministers receive pensions and may additionally receive housing support. There are also provisions for ministers to receive other help for particular needs.

(e) **Stewardship of the Church's material resources.**

This includes the general care and oversight of Church property. Money for the erection, purchase, modification or maintenance of church buildings, housing for ministers, and other property may be provided by the central church, the local church, or intermediate bodies. Also included are inspection and disposal of property and arrangements for trust funds and trustees.

(f) **Witnessing to the faith, within and beyond the Church.**

Support for various forms of mission may be provided from central churches or intermediate bodies or from local churches, possibly through centrally established organisations of the denomination or through pan-denominational organisations. The support can take the form of training church members for work in outreach, education and youth work, and also involvement in a wide range of social responsibility issues including justice, Fair Trade, peace, poverty, housing, and racial equality. Many ministers also work largely beyond the gathered congregations of the Church and its control.

(g) **Other Forms of Income.**

Money may accrue to central churches, or to intermediate bodies, or to local churches, from investments or other assets, including the sale of buildings and property. There may also be various incomes from donations, legacies and interest.

In providing details of the ways in which different denominations operate these flows, each section will start with an explanation of the common elements found in all denominations, followed by the particular pattern for each denomination.

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INSTITUTIONAL ORGANISATION

In addition to these movements of money and resource between different parts of the churches, there are structures for the organisation of money and of its uses within the central, intermediate and local levels of each church. Again the detailed explanation for each of the levels of church structure will attempt to emphasise first the similarities of all denominations followed by identification of the particular characteristics of each denomination.

- (a) **The central church** uses money to maintain the central activities of the denomination. This includes payment of staff involved in those activities, maintenance of buildings and equipment, support of ancillary bodies to whom the church delegates specific responsibilities, management of central funds, and relations with other churches (including ecumenical bodies).
- (b) **Intermediate bodies** use money to maintain the activities and the staff of the intermediate bodies, fulfilling the roles delegated to them by the central church, and to support the regional mission of the church.
- (c) **Local churches** use money to maintain the activities and the building of the church, including employment of staff, and to support the local mission of the church.
- (d) Finally, the **principal funds** held centrally and at intermediate level are summarised. This is intended to enable members of local congregations to get an overview of the way each church organises its main financial management, and to allow the funding for the various resource flows to be cross-referenced. In this summary, a distinction is made between those funds towards which local congregations directly or indirectly make a contribution, and those which do not call for a direct contribution from local congregations.

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PERSPECTIVES

(1) The local church

From the local church viewpoint, the income of the local church is used to maintain the activities of the local church and the church premises, and to pay denominational assessments. In Baptist churches and in Roman Catholic parishes, the stipends of local ministers and parish priests are paid directly from the income of the local churches. In Church of England, Methodist and United Reformed churches most of the income of local churches is paid in denominational assessments. In return the denomination provides the local church with support in various forms, of which by far the most substantial is ministry.

(2) The central church

Money is collected from the members of local churches, and from other income generating sources to finance the training, stipends, pensions and other costs, of ministers. However, in Baptist and Roman Catholic churches stipends, and most other costs, are paid from local church income. The Baptist Union also does not directly finance training or pensions of ministers. The centrally-collected money also supports the central organisation of the church and the salaries of staff employed in that organisation, and also the various centrally-managed activities and some external contributions of the church.

(3) Ministers

Ministers are appointed to particular ministries, most being in pastoral charge of one or more local churches. They are paid stipends, either from central church funds, by the local church, or by an intermediate body. Other support is provided from various levels of the church, including training and pensions, and a range of forms of expenses.

(4) Intermediate bodies

These mostly tend to have similar perspectives to those of central bodies. In the Roman Catholic Church, and to some extent in the Church of England, the Diocese effectively acts as a central body. Intermediate bodies may also act as a channel for the money coming from local churches and going to the central church; they may also act as a distribution channel for money coming from the central church. They also tend to have much of the responsibility for the selection, training and appointment and oversight of ministers.

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5.1 LOCAL CHURCH FINANCE AND DENOMINATIONAL ASSESSMENTS

WHAT IS IN COMMON?

All local churches gather money from their members/congregations and have systems within the local church for managing the money. All local churches make contributions to some degree to the central or intermediate bodies of their denomination.

The pattern of collecting money in local churches has almost always involved the collection during Sunday worship, emphasising that being responsible for the material needs of the church is embedded within the worship. Increasingly in many churches much of the money collected comes by standing orders and other means not directly involved in worship. Levels of contribution vary widely. Some churches promote tithing (giving 10% of income). Many churches use stewardship campaigns to keep the giving at a viable level. Some small local churches are simply unable to raise sufficient money for their needs and commitments.

There are also special collections within local churches, providing for specific activities within the intermediate or national institutions.

The arrangements for local churches to make contributions to the central or intermediate bodies of their denominations are very similar in the Church of England, Methodist and United Reformed Churches where the major components of expenditure have their sources in the central church or in intermediate bodies. The levels of money required from local churches in these three denominations are broadly similar for churches of similar size and environment, and indeed the basis for calculating the required amount is broadly similar in the three churches with as much variation between different areas of the same church as there is variation between denominations. To some degree the calculations involve the membership of each church, the amount of ministry provided, and the nature of the community in which the church is located.

BAPTIST

As has been already explained, the local church is the dominant level for finances within the Baptist Church. Only a small proportion of the local church's income is contributed to the central institution, typically between

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5% and 15%. The local church uses the major part of the money to support all the costs associated with their minister, premises and activities.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND

The proportion of a local church's income which is paid to the Diocese, usually through the Deanery, has been increasing steadily during the last decade, and is now very much the major part of the local church's income. The proportion of the total income, which is paid to the Diocese, and through the Diocese to the national Church, will now be between 60% and 75% of the total income in some parishes, although the national average is less than 50%.

The local church has the full responsibility for meeting the costs of the various expenses of ministers, for the regular costs of upkeep of premises and for the costs of church activities.

METHODIST

A substantial proportion of a local church's income is paid to the circuit in the annual assessment, and a small proportion of the money so raised by the circuit is paid upward to the District and thence to the Connexion assessment for the **Methodist Church Fund**. The proportion of local church income, which is paid in the assessment to the circuit, is between 30% and 70%. There are also a few regular special collections raised through local churches for particular Methodist funds. There are four main church funds and churches may elect to make contributions to any or all of them. They may make additional payments to the Methodist Church Fund, that is, in addition to the payments made through the District Assessment, or they may make contributions to the **Fund for Home Mission**, the **Fund for World Mission** or the **Fund for Property**. **Mission Alongside the Poor** is a designated fund within the **Fund for Home Mission** and contributions can be earmarked for that purpose. The **Leaders of Worship and Preachers Trust** [formerly the Local Preachers' Mutual Aid Association], **Methodist Homes** [for the Aged], **NCH** [National Children's Homes], and the **Methodist Relief and Development** are independent charities, not administered through the Connexional Team.

Most ministerial expenses and some costs of some manses are paid from circuit funds, the local church being responsible for the costs of local church activities and costs of premises other than manses.

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ROMAN CATHOLIC

A small amount of money is required for the central **National Catholic Fund**, but most of the money passed upwards from the local church is towards the expenses of the Diocese. Much of the money paid from local churches to Diocesan, and central, funds is raised by mandatory special collections taken by all local churches. There may be as many as 15 of these collections annually, forming an important part of Diocesan funds.

The local church is directly responsible for meeting all of the costs of ministerial expenses, of maintenance of premises and of church activities.

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

The major part of a local church's income is paid through the District to the Synod and thence the central **Ministry and Mission Fund**. The proportion of local church income which is paid in the assessment to the **Ministry and Mission Fund** is typically between 65% and 85%.

Ministerial expenses and costs of maintaining premises (church buildings and manses) and of church activities are paid from local church funds.

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5.2 MINISTRY, PART I

SELECTION, TRAINING, ORDINATION AND INITIAL APPOINTMENT

WHAT IS IN COMMON?

All denominations have systems for selecting candidates for the ministry, for training the candidates, for ordaining new ministers, and for appointing newly-trained ministers to local positions.

A. Selection

All denominations encourage members of local churches to consider candidating for the ministry, and in particular for the stipendiary ministry. Ordained local ministries may also emerge through this process. Candidates may also explore ordained ministry out of an inner sense of call, rather than because the church is calling them. It would normally be expected that candidates would be supported in their candidature by their local church and/or minister. Once candidates have been identified, there is then a relatively lengthy assessment of the candidate at local, intermediate and central levels, at the end of which successful candidates are accepted for training.

B. Training

Each church has a number of colleges recognised as being appropriate for providing courses of initial training for ministers. The appropriate course and college will be identified during the selection process. Many non-residential training courses are organised ecumenically. Funding to support the student is normally provided from denominational funds, though it may still be possible that students obtain support through LEAs and it is expected that they will try to do so where that is available.

C. Ordination and Initial Appointment

Ordination is at a central, intermediate or local church service. When ordination is local, induction into a local pastorate will usually be a parallel part of the same service. Where ordination occurs at a central or intermediate service, there will usually be a separate local service of licensing or welcome.

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BAPTIST

- A. Selection is shared between the regional associations, the recognised colleges of the Union, and the **Ministerial Recognition Committee of the Union**.
- B. Training is funded from local churches, gifts from the colleges and help from the **Ministerial Training Fund** (partly resourced by the **Home Mission Fund**). Student ministers are expected to follow a period of initial formation at a college affiliated to the Baptist Union of Great Britain. They are able to become members of the BU Pension scheme, and as such they are recipients of its life insurance cover.
- C. The ordination service is normally combined with induction into a first pastorate, and takes place in the local church to which a call has been sustained. There are not normally grants specifically associated with the ordination process.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND

- A. Selection starts at the level of the Diocese, and candidates who are recommended for training by their Bishop attend a **National Selection Conference** organised by the **Ministry Division of the Archbishops' Council**.
- B. Training is financed from the **General Synod Fund**, though candidates are expected to make applications to their Local Education Authority in the first instance. Candidates will normally train at a recognised college close to their home, though travel allowances are available where it is deemed appropriate for candidates to attend a more distant college. Allowances are available during term time and, at different levels for married and single ordinands. During the vacation, these are the responsibility of the candidate's Diocese.
- C. Services of ordination are organised centrally within each Diocese. Candidates will be ordained initially as Deacons and later, usually after one year, as Priests. Ordinands may claim grants from the Diocese in which they are ordained, for removals, resettlement and a first appointment grant. An ordinand will normally be appointed initially as a curate to a parish under the supervision of a training incumbent, and after about three years will be licensed as incumbent in another parish.

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METHODIST

- A. Selection starts at the level of the local Circuit and candidates seek support for their application for foundation training from their Circuit before attending a **District Vocations Committee** which is responsible for giving permission to enter training. At a later stage candidates apply for selection for specific ministerial or diaconal ordination and applications go before the Circuit meeting, and then the **District Candidates Committee**, on their way to a **Connexional Ministerial or Diaconal Candidates Selection Committee**, which makes recommendations to the **Conference**.
- B. Training may be residential at a college, or may be part-time on an approved course. It is also possible for training to be by distance education combined with short residential courses. A fee is required on behalf of each student towards their tuition fees in a similar manner to other student arrangements. If training is full-time then a means-tested maintenance grant can be made available. If training is part-time then travel expenses and a book grant are paid.
- C. Ordination takes place at the Methodist Conference, normally following two years probation in a Circuit. All Methodist ministers are appointed to a Circuit, and there will be a formal Welcome Service for ministers joining the Circuit in the first week of September. An initial grant or loan is available when first taking up a Circuit appointment, and a small resettlement grant is available when moving station and manse.

ROMAN CATHOLIC

All selection, training and ordination is arranged within the candidate priest's Diocese, and procedures may vary between Dioceses.

- A. Selection will normally start with a candidate being identified within their local church, and the selection process organised within the Diocese, with the final decision being made by the Bishop. Some central advice for the selection process is provided from the **Ministerial Formation Committee of the Bishops' Conference**. The **National Vocations Director** provides support, but is not involved in the selection.
- B. Training will normally be at a college within the diocese, and is financed by the **Diocesan Ecclesiastical Education Fund**.

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- C. Ordination is at a centrally organised service within the Diocese, or in the ordinand's home parish. The priest will be appointed to a local church by the Bishop.

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

- A. Selection starts at the local church level with the candidate's papers being forwarded to the District Council for initial interview and assessment. Thereafter candidates' applications are forwarded through the Synod to a **National Assessment Conference**. The appropriate form of training is then determined by the Synod.
- B. Training will be at one of the three colleges providing full-time courses, or at a college providing part-time, usually ecumenically-based, training. Students receive a grant from the United Reformed Church, though it is expected that they will also make use of any other available source of support.
- C. The service of ordination is usually combined with the induction into the Pastoral Ministry of Word and Sacrament at the local church. Loans and initial resettlement grants may be available for initial appointments.

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5.3 MINISTRY, PART II

LOCAL APPOINTMENTS, STIPENDS, ACCOMODATION, EXPENSES, AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING AND SABBATICALS

WHAT IS IN COMMON?

A. Allocation of ministers

Denominations have different systems for deciding which local churches will be allowed to appoint ministers. In some cases the pastorate of a minister will include more than one local church.

B. Local appointments

All denominations have systems for attempting to identify (1) pastoral positions which have become or will become vacant, (2) individuals who are wishing to find new positions, and (3) trying to match the two by providing various forms of information, and processes for organising the matching.

C. Chaplaincies

Chaplaincies were initially dominated by the established church, the Church of England. The diversity of denominational attachment has increased considerably during the last decade, many of the non-Anglican chaplaincy posts being part-time. Some chaplaincy posts are now ecumenical without denominational restrictions or with only partial restrictions. Most chaplaincies are still identified to a particular denomination, or to a group of denominations (e.g 'Free Church'). Chaplaincy vacancies are usually advertised locally or nationally, and are decided by interview.

D. Stipends

Stipends are determined at a national or intermediate level, and are paid from funds at a national, intermediate or local level. Chaplains are usually paid salaries by the employing organisation (such as Hospital Board, School, Armed Forces or Prison Service), but some have stipends paid from denominational funds, or from ecumenical funds towards which several denominations have made contributions.

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E. Accommodation

The responsibility for providing accommodation for pastoral ministers resides at the local or intermediate levels. Increasingly the intermediate bodies have established standards which ministerial accommodation must meet. Some chaplaincies may include accommodation in the employment arrangements.

F. Expenses

The responsibility for providing for the necessary expenses for pastoral ministers rests principally with the local church, except that in the Methodist Church the circuit has the main responsibility for most expenses. Expenses would normally be expected to include costs of manse upkeep, cars and telephones. Chaplains may have their expenses paid under the standard arrangements for staff of their institution.

G. Pensions

In some denominations pensions are contributory; in others they are non-contributory.

H. In-service training and sabbaticals

All denominations encourage ministers to undertake various forms of in-service training, including regular sabbaticals. Chaplains may have arrangements included in their employment package for in-service training and sabbaticals.

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BAPTIST

- A. The local church, through its Church Meeting, has the main responsibility for the decision on whether to seek to appoint a minister. The **Regional Minister** will provide advice to the local church, and will help the church to decide whether it is able to provide the financial means necessary to pay and support a minister.
- B. Monthly lists of ministers seeking a change of appointment, with some detailed information, are constructed centrally and these are available to local churches known to be seeking a new minister, through the Regional Minister. The local church may make contact with those on the list whose details seem to be appropriate to the particular local situation. Negotiations may then continue with one minister only. This may result in a call from the local church, after the minister has 'preached with a view'; the minister may accept or decline the call.
- C. Ministers may apply for appointment as chaplains for those chaplaincies not restricted to other denominations.
- D. Payment of stipends is entirely the responsibility of the local congregation. A 'standard' stipend level is determined nationally; this is a minimum for the payment by local churches. Churches in areas of mission opportunities may apply for, and receive, grants towards the costs of ministry from the central **Home Mission Fund**.
- E. Ministers are entitled to a manse, provided by the local church, appropriate to the family need, and including provision of a study. Where the local church and the minister agree, a housing allowance may be paid in lieu of the manse provision.
- F. All expenses of ministry are normally met by the local church.
- G. Ministers will usually join the **Baptist Ministers' Pension Fund**. Contributions are set at 18% of pensionable income, of which the minister is expected to pay 6% and the local church 12%.
- H. The recommended conditions of service for Baptist ministers advocate a period of 1 – 3 months sabbatical study every seventh year. A grant may be available. The recommended conditions of service for Baptist ministers advocate one week paid study leave per year. Grants are available towards the costs of approved courses and conferences. Ministers seeking to undertake courses of advanced study at Master's or Doctoral level can apply for a grant from the **Scholarships and Ministerial Bursary Committee**.

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CHURCH OF ENGLAND

- A. In 1995 a single deployment formula was introduced for apportioning the total number of full-time stipendiary clergy (men and women) amongst the 43 dioceses. Dioceses determine the number of ministers to be appointed within each Deanery. Deaneries have a Deanery plan, which will define both the number of ministers, and the distribution of ministers within the Deanery.
- B. Parishes can ask for their vacancy to be advertised and ministers who are interested are then invited to apply. Otherwise names of possible candidates are suggested by the Patron of the benefice. Any appointment decision has to be confirmed by the Bishop.
- C. Chaplaincy appointments are normally advertised and appointments are made through the Human Resources office of the institution at which the chaplaincy is to be held.
- D. Payments of stipends are made from the **Diocesan Stipends Fund**. There is a national minimum stipend: Dioceses determine the standard level of stipend for their Diocese, within a range recommended by the **Archbishops' Council as Central Stipends Authority**.
- E. All stipendiary clergy in parochial appointments are entitled to accommodation in an appropriate house, provided free of rent, water rates, Council tax and repairs. Sometimes a housing allowance is paid instead of the provision of accommodation.
- F. Parish expenses are reimbursed by the local church, with a proper claim form available centrally. There are central guidelines about what are 'reasonable' expenses. Telephones are usually provided and arrangements made for the reimbursement for private calls.
- G. There is a non-contributory funded pension scheme, from which benefits in respect of service from January 1st 1998 are paid. Benefits in respect of service accrued before 1998 are currently paid out of the Church Commissioners' investment income.
- H. The Diocese provides encouragement for continuing ministerial education including sabbaticals, and financial support is provided by the Diocese.

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METHODIST

- A. Conference determines the numbers of ministers to be stationed in each Circuit (the ministerial establishment). Ministers are appointed to circuits, and are allocated pastoral responsibility for particular local churches within the circuit. This pastoral allocation may change during the period when a minister is on the circuit staff.
- B. The Methodist system for matching ministers to appointments is the most formalised and operates on an annual cycle. Profiles of the circuits/local churches with vacancies are prepared, as are profiles of ministers whose present term of appointment will end the following August. The circuits and ministers are then asked to express any preferences to their District Chair and Lay Stationing representative. District Chairs and Lay Stationing Representatives meet to match the circuits and ministers, bearing in mind the preferences expressed and the needs of the whole Connexion. Matching interviews are held between November and March, and, where both parties are agreed, appointments to the Circuit staff will be recommended to the Conference, which approves the stationing of ministers to appointments within the control of the Church. Appointments are usually for five years extendable for up to a further five years. Terms of appointment conclude at the end of August (although most ministers actually leave a few weeks earlier). The new appointment begins on 1 September.
- C. Some full-time chaplaincies are available to Methodist ministers who may apply in the normal way, with the permission of the **Connexional Stationing Advisory Committee**. Many chaplaincies are also available on a part-time basis, and may be taken up by ministers. All ministers in local chaplaincies will normally be stationed by the Conference in the appropriate Circuit.
- D. Payment of stipends is made through the circuit, the actual payment being made by the central **Finance Department of the Connexional Team**. The Circuit pays for ministerial expenses, including travel.
- E. All itinerant ministers are entitled to a manse, provided by the Circuit, of a minimum standard set by Standing Orders, and including provision of a study. All manse costs, including internal decorations, water rates and Council Tax are payable by the circuit.
- F. Circuits/churches pay all expenses in respect of telephone, postage, stationery etc. Car mileage is payable to cover motoring costs at a rate approved by the Conference. Car loans can be made available through **Methodist Chapel Aid Ltd**.

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- G. Pensions are managed through the **Methodist Ministers' Pension Scheme**, which is contributory. Ministers pay 6% of basic stipend and circuits pay 13.5%. Circuits also contribute to a fund to give further pensions support for long serving ministers.
- H. Sabbaticals are granted after ten years, and then every seven years. Expenses within certain guidelines to support study are available from a Connexional fund, to which contributions are made via the assessment system.

ROMAN CATHOLIC

- A. All decisions about the appointment of parish priests to local appointments are made by the **Bishop of the Diocese**.
- B. Appointments of parish priests to particular local parishes are made by the Bishop of the Diocese from among the priests available in the Diocese. The Bishop has information on the needs of each parish, and the abilities and interests of all parish priests.
- C. There are some chaplaincy appointments specifically reserved for Roman Catholic priests. There are others for which Roman Catholics may apply. There are also some part-time chaplaincy appointments available. All appointments are made by the Bishop of the Diocese, in the same way as for parish priest appointments. Sector Ministries and Chaplaincies may be funded from the **Diocesan Special Purposes Fund**.
- D. The payment of the stipend for the local parish priest is entirely the responsibility of each local congregation. Some Dioceses recommend a nominal stipend.
- E. All expenses of the local parish priest are the responsibility of the local church.
- F. Accommodation for the parish priest is the responsibility of the local church.
- G. Support for retired Diocesan Priests is provided by the **Diocesan Sick and Retired Priests Fund**. Pensions are not contributory, although a few Dioceses encourage their priests to join pension schemes.
- H. Each Diocese has arrangements for in-service training and the allocation of sabbaticals.

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

- A. The Fair Shares of Ministry system determines how many ministers may be appointed to local pastorates within each Synod, and within

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each District. In a District the decisions about where ministers may be appointed are determined by the **District Council**, on the recommendations of the **District Pastoral Committee**.

- B. The United Reformed Church system for enabling ministers and pastorates to be matched works through the monthly meeting of the thirteen Synod Moderators. At these meetings details of ministers interested in moving are matched to local pastorate vacancies. If the ministers are interested in the local pastorate, introductions are made and the local pastorate will meet with the minister and may invite him/her to 'preach with a view', and may subsequently issue a call to the minister which may or may not be accepted. The call must be confirmed by those Districts, which include the churches to which the minister is going and from which the minister is coming.
- C. Ministers may apply for appointment as chaplains for those chaplaincies not restricted to other denominations. Payments of stipends are made by the secular institutions employing the chaplains.
- D. Stipends are paid, at levels determined by the **Annual Assembly**, from the central **Maintenance of the Ministry Fund**.
- E. All expenses of the minister, including travel, telephone and books, are paid by the local church. A car may be provided by the local church who will meet all running costs, or by the minister in which case the church will pay mileage costs at a level agreed between the church and minister. Removal costs and a Resettlement Grant are paid by the local church to which a minister is called.
- F. The manse will be provided either by the local church, or, increasingly, through the **Synod Finance and Property Trust Funds**. All expenses of the manse, including upkeep, decoration, water rates and Council Tax, are provided by the local church.
- G. Most ministers join the **URC Ministers' Pension Fund**, contributing 3.25% of their basic stipend.
- H. Ministers are encouraged to make use of in-service training opportunities, and to take regular three-month sabbaticals every ten years. Financial support for costs of sabbaticals may be available from Synod funds or from the **Ministerial Training Fund**.

5.4 MINISTRY, PART III

RETIREMENT, PENSIONS AND OTHER PROVISIONS

WHAT IS IN COMMON?

A. Retirement

The pattern for retirement is increasingly for ministers to retire on reaching the age of 65. Early retirement with a (possibly reduced) pension is usually permitted. Early retirement on the grounds of ill-health is always permitted where appropriate, and pensions paid as if ministry had continued up to the age of 65.

B. Pensions

Pension schemes exist in all denominations, but are contributory in some and non-contributory in others. Almost all ministers are either entitled to join a pension scheme or entitled to a pension automatically. Some grants or lump sums are available at retirement.

C. Retirement accommodation

All denominations wish to help to provide accommodation for retired ministers but this is done in different ways in different denominations. Some provide retirement housing, some provide equity sharing loans, others have a mixture of systems.

D. Other Provisions

There are various charitable funds to help with children's education, holidays, medical needs and other financial exigencies.

BAPTIST

- A. Most ministers retire at 65 although they can continue as a contributing member of the pension scheme up to the age of 70. Ministers arrange their own retirement date with their local church. On retirement a removal grant may be available. Ministers may retire and take their pensions early, subject to an actuarial reduction. Ministers who have to retire because of 'permanent incapacity for remunerative employment' will receive immediate payment of their pension as if they had continued in stipendiary ministry to the age of 65.

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- B. The **Baptist Ministers Pension Fund** is open to all ministers on the accredited list. Contributions are set at 18% of pensionable income, of which the minister is expected to pay 6% and the local church 12%.
- C. The **Retired Baptist Ministers' Housing Society** exists to provide retirement housing for ministers unable to make their own arrangements, provided they have served a minimum of 15 years service.
- D. There are a small number of charitable funds, available in extreme cases of financial need. Paid holidays can be made available for those with health or stress problems.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND

- A. The minimum normal retirement and pension age for clergy and licensed lay-workers is 65. Provisions are made for early retirement, with immediate pensions, enhanced if retirement is on the grounds of ill-health, or reduced if the retirement is voluntary.
- B. Where they have attained the age of 65 and have completed 37 or more years of full-time pensionable service, ministers are entitled to the basic pension, the level of which is related to the national minimum stipend. In addition to the pension, retiring ministers are entitled to a lump sum. For those with less than 37 years' pensionable service, the pension is proportionate to the full rate.
- C. Retirement housing. Equity loans are available from the **Church of England Pensions Board**, at retirement or up to three years before the minimum normal pension age. Those applicants who cannot afford to purchase a retirement property with a loan are eligible at retirement for rented accommodation.
- D. Grants are available from various charities for children's education, holidays, medical needs, etc.

METHODIST

- A. Ministers may seek permission to retire after 40 years 'travel' or 40 years contribution to the pension scheme, after a minimum of 10 years of travel and reaching the age of 60, or at the normal retirement age. They may, however, continue in active work if their invitation is renewed. Ministers may seek early retirement on compassionate grounds, with an actuarial adjustment to their pension. Ministers who

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have to retire on grounds of ill-health have pensions based on actual and potential years of contribution to the pension scheme.

- B. Pensions are paid from the **Methodist Ministers' Pension Scheme**, funded mainly by contributions from ministers and Circuits. The pension is based on years of contribution to the pension scheme.
- C. The **Methodist Ministers' Housing Society** provides rented retirement accommodation subject to certain financial criteria. Ministers and widow(er)s are entitled to remain in the property until the death of the surviving spouse. There is an equity sharing scheme.
- D. Financial assistance is available for educational needs of children, convalescent breaks, etc.

ROMAN CATHOLIC

- A. Parish priests normally retire at the age of 75, though arrangements may be made for earlier retirement when this is appropriate.
- B. Dioceses operate a **Sick and Retired Priests Fund**, which is financed by special collections. As it is the responsibility of the Bishop to care for his sick and retired clergy, the expense ultimately rests with the Diocese.
- C. Accommodation for retired priests is provided by the Dioceses.

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

- A. Unless alternative arrangements have been made, ministers are expected to retire at the end of the month during which they have their 65th birthday. On retirement a Resettlement Grant and removal costs are normally paid to the minister. Ministers may retire and take their pension before normal retirement age, but an actuarial adjustment will be made to the pension. Ministers who have to retire because of ill-health, are paid a basic pension without any deduction for early retirement.
- B. Most ministers entering stipendiary service with the church will join the **URC Ministers' Pension Fund**, which is funded by contributions from ministers (of 3.25% of basic stipend), and from the **Maintenance of the Ministry Fund**. The pension is based on basic stipend and the number of years of stipendiary service. Alternative arrangements may be made for ministers who enter stipendiary service after their 50th birthday.

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- C. Housing for retired ministers is supported through the **Retired Ministers' Housing Society**. Retirement housing is not provided as of right. The United Reformed Church expects to provide retirement housing where this is needed, but ministers who can provide their own retirement housing are expected to do so.
- D. There are a number of welfare funds that are available to provide limited grants for children's education, holidays after illness, medical needs and other emergency costs.

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5.5 STEWARDSHIP OF THE MATERIAL RESOURCES OF THE CHURCH

WHAT IS IN COMMON?

All denominations own church buildings, and provide housing for ministers and other staff; some denominations also own school buildings. There are systems for the maintenance, inspection, acquisition and disposal of buildings. There are also financial systems for support of new and/or large building projects.

In almost all cases the local church has ultimate responsibility for financing the provision and maintenance of its buildings. However there are non-local funds which may either

- A Give support by grant or loan in situations beyond local resources, or
- B Provide finance for buildings needed in new, strategic or priority areas, or
- C Help with the upkeep of Church Schools.

In addition to the funds listed below, the **Historic Churches Preservation Trust** and **English Heritage** may give grants to suitable buildings of any denomination but there are stringent conditions attached.

The formal ownership of buildings is usually placed with an intermediate or central church body, and these must usually be consulted about major alterations or new developments, even if no support funds are being sought.

BAPTIST

- A The local congregation have the first responsibility for the upkeep of churches, halls and the minister's house. Loans may be available from the **Baptist Union Loan Fund**, the **Baptist Building Fund**, or from Regional Trusts, or other particular Baptist funds.
- B In new, priority or development areas, grants may be sought from the **Baptist Strategy Building Fund**, or Regional Building Development and Extension funds.
- C There are no separate funds for church schools.

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CHURCH OF ENGLAND

- A Parishes have ultimate responsibility for financing the provision and maintenance of their buildings, including – at least in principle - rectories, vicarages, and other housing for ministers. **Church Building and Repair Funds** exist in most dioceses (with various titles) offering grants and loans towards the upkeep and repair of churches, and church halls.. The **Diocesan Parsonages Board** handles funds to finance the inspection, upkeep and repair of parsonage houses and develops diocesan policy for upgrading and replacement. There may be other local or regional funds administered by the Diocese. The **Council for the Care of Churches** provide grants for grade I and grade II* listed buildings built before 1850.
- B Additional sources of grants and loans towards buildings in new, priority or development areas may be sought from the **Dioceses**, the **Central Church Fund** or the **Church Urban Fund**.
- C Funds for the upkeep of the buildings of church schools may be sought from funds administered by the **Diocesan Board of Education**.

METHODIST

- A. Initial responsibility is with the local church and the local circuit. Approval for property schemes must be given by the Methodist Property Office (MPO) (also known as the Resourcing Mission Office), and is conditional upon funds being found to finance the scheme. The MPO will help churches and circuits (for manses) assemble a funding package. Details of the various funds available are best obtained from the MPO who can give guidelines on the best approach for a given scheme. Normally, a funding package will include a contribution from local efforts (donations and fundraising; contributions from church general funds, circuit advance funds, district advance funds and bequests); and possible contributions from various Connexional funds, e.g. **Connexional Advance and Priority Fund** and the **Fund for Property**. The **Rank Trust** is an independent grant making body, although its grants are made through MPO. The **Chapel Aid Association** provides loans rather than grants. Increasingly, MPO helps churches obtain grants from external secular sources.
- B. For new, priority or development areas, funds may be available from the **Connexional Advance and Priority Fund**, or **District**, or **Circuit Advance Funds**.

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- C. Support for upkeep of Church Schools may be sought from the **Methodist Board for Schools and Colleges**.

ROMAN CATHOLIC

- A/B. The first responsibility rests with the local church. There are no national grant-making funds, though there are some private trusts. Dioceses may make grants to parishes from **Administration, Special Purpose, or General Investment Funds**.
- C. Funding for the upkeep of Church schools is the responsibility of school governors. Dioceses support schools by making loans available.

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

- A. The local church has the ultimate responsibility for financing the provision and maintenance of its buildings, including manses. Synods, through **Synod Trust Funds** and **Synod Finance Committees**, may provide grants and loans for inspection of church buildings, and for repairs and extensions. Synods may purchase and sell manses, in order to ensure that all manses meet the Synod specifications.
- B. Where churches are closed, the **Synod Trust Fund** will take responsibility for the sale, and proceeds of the sale, of the church buildings and land. Any proposal for the building of a new church would normally require the support of the **Synod Trust Fund**. In some Synods requests for financial assistance are channelled through the **District Finance and Property Committee**. For any major proposed expenditure on church buildings or manses it is appropriate to consult the relevant Synod Officer as listed in the Synod handbook.
- C. There are no separate funds for Church Schools.

5.6 WITNESSING TO THE FAITH WITHIN AND BEYOND THE CHURCH

WHAT IS IN COMMON?

All denominations are actively involved in

- A. **World Mission**,
- B. **Home Mission**, including evangelism and training for church members,
- C. **Education**, including children's and youth work,
- D. **Social Responsibility**, concerned with peace, justice, racism, poverty, homelessness, marriage and family matters, and
- E. **Communications**, including the media and publishing.

There is, however considerable diversity in the manner in which different churches organise such activities, and harmony is more difficult to achieve in this area.

Each church has a wide range of voluntary societies, mostly self-funding, though some receive grants from central, intermediate or local sources, while others receive the proceeds of special church collections, either statutory or voluntary. Some churches require missionary and other bodies to be accountable to their central authorities, whereas others do not. Some churches initiate a range of activities within the spheres of mission, education and social responsibility through ancillary departments of their central bodies; others leave the initiative to voluntary agencies under the general oversight of appropriate central committees, which may on occasion speak on behalf of their church on particular issues of wider concern.

Some of the relevant central bodies within each denomination are listed below to help those searching for information. The listings are inevitably partial.

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BAPTIST

- A. The central body is the **BMS World Mission**, an independent sister body which relates to the three Baptist Unions in the British Isles. Local churches support the Society's work.
- B. The **Mission Department** is funded from the **Home Mission Fund**.
- C. Children's and youth work is organised through the **Mission and Ministry Departments**, funded from the **Home Mission Fund**.
- D. The **Mission Department**, funded from the **Home Mission Fund**, has a small Social Action budget, and the '**Against the Stream**' fund offers seed-corn grants in the area of poverty and homelessness. Grants may be made from Regional funds, but most initiatives are the responsibility of the local churches.
- E. The **Communications Office**, which deals with the media, is funded from the **Home Mission Fund**. The **Publications Office** is now part of the **Finance and Administration Department**.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND

- A. There is a wide range of independent voluntary societies, of which the **Church Mission Society (CMS)**, the **United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (USPG)** and the **Mothers' Union** are the largest.
- B. The Division of **Mission and Public Affairs** (which includes the former **Board for Mission** and the **Board for Social Responsibility**) is funded from the apportionment that each Diocese makes to the **Archbishops' Council**. There are also a number of voluntary societies, such as the **Church Army** and the **Church Pastoral Aid Society (CPAS)**, which raise their income from individual and parish donations. The **Diocesan Board of Mission and Unity** (where there is one) is funded from the **Diocesan Fund**.
- C. **Central Boards of Education** are funded from the **General Synod Fund**. The **Diocesan Board of Education** is funded from the **Diocesan Fund**.

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- D. The **Diocesan Council for Social Responsibility** (where there is one) is funded from the **Diocesan Fund**. However it is not normally a grant-making body.
- E. The **National Communications Unit** (Press & Public Affairs and Broadcasting Departments) and the **Publishing Department** (including Church House Bookshop) are funded from the **General Synod Fund**.

METHODIST

- A. The **Methodist Church Fund for World Mission**.
- B. **Ministry and Mission** grants are administered by the **Local Mission and Unity** (LMU), section of the Resourcing Mission Office. The main sources of funding are the **Fund for Home Mission** (including Mission Alongside the Poor) and the **Connexional Advance and Priority Fund**. London Districts also qualify for contributions from the **London Mission Fund**. In addition there is a small amount of money from the **Fund for World Mission**, for World Mission activities in the UK. The **Epworth Fund** contributes a small amount to Methodist Church purposes not covered by the other funds.
- C. The Children's and Youth work of the **Connexional Team** is funded from the **Methodist Church Fund** and local work from specific local support. Through **Junior Mission for All (JMA)**, funds are raised by children and young people and allocated four-fifths for World Mission and one-fifth for Mission in Britain.
- D. UK and overseas grants are available from the **Relief & Development Fund**. The **Mission Alongside the Poor Fund** is a part of the **Fund for Home Mission**. Multi-Racial project grants are funded by the **Methodist Church Fund**. **Benevolence Funds** help to meet needs at Circuit and local church levels. **Methodist Homes** and the **NCH** also account to Conference.
- E. The **Methodist Publishing House**, including **Epworth Press**, is self-financing, but accounts to Conference. The **Communications Office** of the **Connexional Team** is funded by the **Methodist Church Fund**.

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ROMAN CATHOLIC

- A. There are many independent societies, under the **Committee for Home Mission and Committee for Overseas Mission of the Bishops' Conference**, some with special collections, for example the **Association for the Propagation of the Faith**, the **Apostleship of the Sea**, and many **Missionary** organisations (for the many missionary priests and sisters and others serving abroad). Special collections are also taken for **CAFOD (Catholic Fund for Overseas Development)**.
- B. A wide range of independent societies, some receiving grants from the **National Catholic Fund** or **Diocesan Funds**.
- C. A wide range of National and Diocesan voluntary societies under **National** and **Diocesan Education Commissions**, many with grants from the **National Catholic Fund** or **Diocesan Special Purposes Funds**.
- D. Under the **National Justice and Peace, Community Relations, and Social Welfare Commissions**, and their Diocesan equivalents, and the **Diocesan Apostolate for Marriage and Family Life**, a range of independent societies are active, some with grants from the **National Catholic Fund** or **Diocesan Special Purposes Funds**. Special collections are taken for the **Catholic Children's Society**.
- E. The **Catholic Media Office** is funded by the **National Catholic Fund**, by way of special collections within parishes for **World Communications Day**. The **Catholic Truth Society** is a self-financing organisation and not part of the Church.

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

- A. The **Council for World Mission** (incorporating the **London Missionary Society**, the **Presbyterian Overseas Missions** and **Churches of Christ Missions**) is now a co-operative of thirty worldwide churches united for mission.
- B. The **Discipleship and Witness Committee** and the **Training Committee**, both funded from the **Ministry and Mission Fund**.

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- C. The **Youth and Children's Work Committee** and the **Training Committee**, both funded from the **Ministry and Mission Fund**.
- D. **The Church and Society Committee**, funded by the **Ministry and Mission Committee**. Church and Society Committees also operate at Synod and District levels but, in general, initiatives are the responsibility of the local churches.
- E. The **Communications and Editorial Committee** is funded from the **Ministry and Mission Committee**.

5.7 OTHER INCOME OF THE CENTRAL AND INTERMEDIATE CHURCH

SOURCES OF OTHER INCOME

The major part of the income, providing resources, the uses of which are described in this book, comes from the giving of members of church congregations. However many funds at central and intermediate levels draw a significant proportion of their income from sources other than the contributions of local congregations. These other income sources include

- A **Interest** from **Investments** through deposit and trust funds,
- B **Donations** and **Legacies** from individuals, and
- C **Proceeds** from the **Sale of Property**.

In many cases it will be obvious from the description and purpose of any particular fund which of these three forms of sources is relevant. The description 'Other Income' will be used where the funding is from a mixture of sources or from another source.

MANAGEMENT OF OTHER INCOME FUNDS

In most denominations the management of funds is provided by officers with that formal responsibility (**Treasurers, Trustees** or **Fund Managers**). However, in the Church of England, there is an additional group, the **Church Commissioners**, who have an administrative responsibility for the maintenance and use of the church's historic assets (both investments and property).

The **Church Commissioners** are responsible for

- (i) Contributions towards the payment of clergy stipends,
- (ii) The maintenance and improvement of clergy housing, and
- (iii) The costs of pastoral reorganisation in response to changing patterns of urban and rural life.

They are also responsible for the full costs and housing of bishops and some other senior clergy, and the provision of pensions for retired clergy. They also support two particular Diocesan funds, the **Diocesan Parsonage**

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Fund and the **Diocesan Pastoral Account**, which are described in more detail elsewhere.

In the summary of the **Principal Funds** for each denomination (section 6.2) the distinction is made between those funded mainly through contributions from local churches and those funded mainly from forms of other income described in this section.

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6.1 ORGANISATION IN THE INSTITUTIONS OF THE CHURCH

The division of responsibility between national, intermediate and local levels of each denomination varies considerably between denominations. Nevertheless, there is a considerable degree of similarity in the patterns of organisation, even though the levels at which some components of that organisation are managed differ in different denominations.

This section considers firstly the organisation at the national level and secondly the organisation at the principal intermediate levels.

I. AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

WHAT IS IN COMMON?

There is in each denomination a central administrative body with supporting Departments/Boards/Councils/Divisions/ Committees. In all but the Roman Catholic Church these act in an executive capacity. In the Roman Catholic Church the executive responsibility rests almost entirely with the Diocese.

Each denomination has a Central Finance Fund, which provides support for much of the centrally organised activities of the denomination.

Each church has national leaders and officers supported from central funds. Each church makes grants to Inter-Church bodies and to worldwide bodies of the same communion, many of the former being supported by most denominations. The acronyms used for the most frequently occurring of these are:

WCC	World Council of Churches
CEC	Conference of European Churches
CTBI	Churches Together in Britain and Ireland
CTE	Churches Together in England
CYTŪN	Churches Together in Wales
ACTS	Action of Churches Together in Scotland.

In all denominations except the Roman Catholic Church, there is a Central Deposit and Investment Fund.

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BAPTIST

The Central Administrative Body is the **Baptist Union Council**, acting through the **Annual Assembly**, and through 6 Departments. Central finance is primarily managed through the **Home Mission Fund**.

The National Resource for the Union is based at
Baptist House, P.O. Box 44, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxon OX11 8RT.

The Baptist Union's National Leadership, supported from the Home Mission Fund, includes the President (expenses only), General Secretary and the officers of the six departments.

Inter-Church relations are maintained by grants to WCC, CEC, CTBI, CTE, CYTŪN, the Baptist World Alliance and the European Baptist Federation.

The Central Fund for Deposit or Investment is the **Baptist Union Corporation Fund**, which incorporates the **Baptist Loan Fund**.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND

The Central Administrative Body is the **Archbishops' Council**, with 5 Divisions plus a central Secretariat for the General Synod. Central finance is primarily managed through the **General Synod Fund**.

The Headquarters of the Church are at
Church House, Great Smith Street, Westminster, London SW1P 3NZ.

The Church's National Leadership is supported from the resources of the Church Commissioners.

Inter-Church relations are maintained by grants to WCC, CEC, CTBI, CTE and the Anglican Communion.

The Central Fund for Deposit or Investment is the **CBF Church of England Funds of CCLA Investment Management Ltd.**

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METHODIST

The Central Administrative Body of the Connexion is the **Connexional Team**, which includes the office of the Conference. Central finance is primarily managed through the **Methodist Church Fund**.

The main Connexional offices are at

Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR
and

Resourcing Mission Office, Central Buildings, Oldham Street, Manchester M1 1JQ (for property approvals and ministry and mission grants).

The Church's British Connexional leadership, supported from the **Methodist Church Fund** includes the President and Vice-President, the General Secretary of the Methodist Church, the five Co-ordinating Secretaries, and the 33 Chairs of District (32 from September 2006).

Inter-Church relations are maintained by grants to WCC, CEC, CTBI, CTE, CYTŪN, ACTS and the World Methodist Council.

The Central Fund for Deposit or Investment is the **Central Finance Board Investment and Deposit Fund**.

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ROMAN CATHOLIC

The Central Body of the Roman Catholic Church is the **Bishops' Conference**, with 27 National Committees. Central finance is managed through the **National Catholic Fund**.

The Headquarters of the Church are at
39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1BX.

Financial support for the Diocesan Bishop is met by each diocese, and not from a central fund. There are no central deposit funds.

Inter-Church relations are maintained by grants to CTBI, CTE, CYTÛN. The Church of Rome (Peter's Pence) (for the Pope's missionary work) and Holy Places (the support of buildings in the Holy land) receive collections from local churches.

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

The Central Administrative Body of the Church is the **General Assembly**, with 14 Standing Committees. Central finance is primarily managed through the **Ministry & Mission Fund**.

The Headquarters of the Church are at
86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT.

The Church's National Leadership supported from the Ministry & Mission Fund includes the General Secretary and the 13 Synod Moderators.

Inter-Church relations are maintained by grants to WCC, CEC, CTBI, CTE, CYTÛN, ACTS and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

The Central Fund for Deposit or Investment is the **Investment Pool**.

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II AT INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

WHAT IS IN COMMON?

There are great differences between the structures at intermediate level. The Roman Catholic Church has almost all its administration at Diocesan level, and the Church of England has much of its administration at Diocesan level. For both of these denominations, some of their Diocesan organisation is similar to the patterns at the central level in the Baptist, Methodist and URC.

In contrast there is much less structure at the Baptist Regional level. The Methodist District level has an intermediate degree of structure, though in Methodism the main administrative structure is at the Circuit level.

The United Reformed Church Synods also have an intermediate degree of structure, which is likely to increase with the proposed abolition of Districts. The organisational structures and responsibilities currently managed within the Districts will inevitably have to be accommodated within Synods, assuming that the abolition of Districts in 2007 occurs as proposed.

Intermediate level structures in all denominations have varying degrees of autonomy, and one of the consequences of this is that different Dioceses, Districts and Synods often have different names for funds doing similar things. The names included here are, hopefully, the more common, but readers must be prepared to encounter the same activity under different names in different areas of the country.

The only responsibility in common across all denominations at an intermediate level, appears to be that for providing financial support to the Intermediate (County) Ecumenical Bodies, and other ecumenical grants.

BAPTIST

The only intermediate administrative unit is the **Regional Association**. In each Region there is a **Regional General Fund**.

The **Regional Fund** finances the costs of the regional office structure, which is usually not large. As mentioned above, the **Regional Fund** also finances grants for ecumenical activity, in particular providing grants to the County Ecumenical Bodies.

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CHURCH OF ENGLAND

The main intermediate administrative unit is the **Diocese**, led by the Diocesan Bishop, and the central decision-making body is the **Diocesan Synod**. Each Diocesan organisation is different, but will include mechanisms for the oversight of functions that can best be conducted at Diocesan level. The overall decision about the number of clergy to be employed within the Diocese is made by the Synod, using the deployment formula agreed by the Church.

The principal fund in each Diocese is the **Diocesan Fund**. The fund supports the stipends and expenses of some of the senior clergy in the Diocese (sharing this responsibility with the Church Commissioners for the less well-off Dioceses). It also provides the finance for the Diocesan staff and structure.

The **Diocesan Fund** operates through a variety of other funds, often with financial support from the Church Commissioners. These include the **Diocesan Stipends Fund**, for the stipends of Diocesan clergy, the **Diocesan Pastoral Fund** for extending and replacing churches and parsonages, and the **Diocesan Parsonages Fund** and the **Diocesan Parsonages Renewal Fund**, which together deal with upkeep and replacement of parsonages. The **Diocesan Fund** also provides financial grants to intermediate ecumenical bodies and other ecumenical activities.

Some Dioceses operate investment funds for parishes, etc, as a source of income and for grants. The **Diocesan Board of Finance** acts as the responsible body for all calls on the Diocesan Fund, and also as custodian trustee for funds and property.

Within Dioceses, **Deaneries** may provide a lower hierarchical level both for the determination of Parish Share for individual parishes, and for the decisions, through the Deanery Plan, about the distribution between parishes of the resource of stipendiary ministry.

METHODIST

The larger intermediate administrative unit is the **District**, with a **District Synod**, presided over by the **District Chair**, with a range of supporting

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Committees. While Conference determines the allocation of numbers of stipendiary ministers to each Circuit (ministerial establishment), the District allocates contributions from each Circuit to the national **Methodist Church Fund**.

The principal fund in each District is the **District Expenses Fund**, which provides for the expenses of the District Chair and other Officers. The fund is funded by a levy apportioned between Circuits. The **District Expenses Fund** may provide finance for industrial or educational chaplaincies, and will provide the support for Intermediate Ecumenical bodies and other ecumenical activities. Most Districts also have a **District Advance Fund**, financed through levies on property sales and on Circuit Advance Funds. This fund can be used to finance property schemes and Ministry and mission projects.

The smaller intermediate administrative unit is the **Circuit**. As mentioned earlier in this book, the **Circuit** is the dominant intermediate administrative unit, and each circuit is overseen by the **Circuit Superintendent**. The principal fund in each circuit is the **Circuit Fund**.

The **Circuit Fund** is funded by the assessments levied on each church of the Circuit. The fund pays for the Circuit and Circuit Superintendent's expenses, and is the principal fund for the support of the Circuit ministers, (including stipends, expenses and Council tax) and for the provision and upkeep of manses for Circuit ministers. The fund also makes contributions to the **Sabbatical Fund**, the **Ministers' Pension Scheme**, the **Circuit Advance Fund** and the **Circuit Benevolent Fund**.

ROMAN CATHOLIC

The main intermediate administrative unit is the **Diocese**, which, as already noted, is the dominant administrative level. Each **Diocese** is under the authority of its **Bishop**, who has the support of a range of Commissions. All decisions about the allocation of priests to parishes are made by the **Bishop**.

The principal fund is the **Diocesan Administration Fund**, which provides for the expenses of the Bishop and Diocesan officers.

Each Diocese will also have various other funds for particular forms of support for the priests of the Diocese. These will normally include the **Sick and Retired Priests Fund**, the **Diocesan Ecclesiastical Education Fund**

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and the **Diocesan Development Fund**, the latter two being the main sources of support for training of priests and maintenance of Catholic schools and chaplaincies. The Diocese will also provide financial support for the intermediate ecumenical bodies and other ecumenical activities within the Diocese.

Dioceses also usually operate a **General Investment Trust Fund** for parishes and Diocesan funds to provide income and as a source of grants and loans. The Diocesan Trustee acts as custodian trustee for funds, properties, etc.

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

The main intermediate administrative unit is the **(Provincial) Synod**. The Synod determines both the levels of contributions expected from each District towards the national **Ministry & Mission Fund**, and the permitted level of stipendiary ministry in each District.

Each Synod maintains a **Synod General Purposes Fund**, which supports the payment of Synod officers and administration, provides ecumenical grants, including those to the various intermediate ecumenical bodies within each Synod, and particular Synod projects.

Each Synod also maintains a **Synod Trust Fund** and/or **Synod Church Building Fund**. These are funded from the sale of redundant sites, churches or manses, and they provide finance, through grants or loans for buildings in new, deprived or strategic areas, and to aid local churches with work beyond their own resources. Decisions about requests for finance are assessed by the **Synod Finance Committee**.

Within most Synods there are presently about six **Districts**, though it is likely that these will disappear from 2007. The **District** determines the levels of contributions expected from each local church towards the Synod total for the national **Ministry & Mission Fund**, and also plans the most effective use of stipendiary ministry within the District, through the **District Pastoral Committee**. Each District will have a **District Expenses Fund**, and will consider requests for building funds from local churches, the requests being transmitted to the **Synod Finance Committee**.

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6.2 PRINCIPAL FUNDS OF THE CHURCH AT THE CENTRAL AND INTERMEDIATE LEVELS

The aim of this section is to provide a summary of the funds at the central and intermediate levels of each denomination, to enable church members to see the overall pattern of organisation of finances at these levels.

A distinction is made here between those funds funded principally through the giving of local church members (contributory), and those which rely on other sources of funds (non-contributory). This distinction is not always absolute and some funds could be placed in either category.

Contributory funds include all those funds to which local congregations are expected to contribute, as an expression of their commitment to share in the ongoing work of the church of which they are a part. The contributions may be by mandatory assessment, or by regular invitation, or they may be made in response to requests as the need arises. Local churches have to take into account the amounts of such contributions, either known or estimated, in planning their own budgets.

Non-contributory funds do not require direct contributions from local congregations. Their income comes from those other sources of income including those described in section 5.7. While these funds do not rely on regular direct giving from local congregations, it may be useful for members of local churches to know about them because such knowledge will help the understanding of the purposes of funds when appeals for funding are made, and because funding inevitably comes ultimately, either directly or indirectly, from local churches.

WHAT IS IN COMMON?

All denominations have a main central general purpose fund, which finances the central activities of the central organisation.

All denominations also have, at central or intermediate level, or at both, funds to provide for

- A Ministerial training,
- B Ministerial pensions,
- C Church buildings and strategy for providing buildings where they are most needed,
- D Education and training,

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- E Ecumenical activities,
- F Mission, social responsibility and publishing, and
- G Investment.

Some denominations have central finance to provide for clergy stipends, though in others this is provided for at local church or intermediate body levels.

BAPTIST

1. Contributory Funds

Home Mission Fund.

This is *funded* principally by the Annual Appeal directed towards local churches. The national target is determined; regions then set their own targets on the basis of this figure, and suggest local church contributions, usually on a per capita basis.

The fund *finances* the General Secretariat, the six central departments, national ecumenical relations, and part of the costs of ministerial training and the special needs of ministers. The regional network of Associations is also *financed* from this fund.

Baptist Ministers' Pension Fund.

This fund exists to provide pensions for retired ministers, and is *funded* by contributions from ministers (6% of stipend) and the churches in which they are ministering (12% of stipend). The fund *finances* the pensions for retired ministers.

Baptist Missionary Society.

This is an independent society, reporting to an Annual Members' Meeting, and inviting all local churches to contribute to its work.

2. Non-Contributory

Baptist Union Corporation Fund

The Corporation acts as the trustee for property and for endowment and trust accounts, especially for local churches; it also invites investment in its fund by local churches where they do not have their own Trust Corporation Fund.

The fund distributes interest on invested funds and provides *finance* for the **Baptist Loan Fund** which *finances* loans for site purchase, construction

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and maintenance of buildings, especially when these are beyond the resources of the local church.

Baptist Strategy Building Fund

This is *funded* by the proceeds of sales of buildings and sites, and other income.

The fund *finances* loans for sites and new buildings in strategic areas of development.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND

1. Contributory

General Synod Fund

This is the main central fund and is *funded* principally through the Parish Share requested from every local church. On the recommendation of the **Archbishops' Council**, the budgeted total is apportioned between the Dioceses, which in turn assess each local church's contribution to the Diocesan total as part of their Parish Share.

The fund *finances* central administration, divisions, national ecumenical links, home mission, social responsibility, publishing and media, and the selection and training of ordained ministers (the training budget being part of the apportionment on Dioceses).

Diocesan Fund

This is *funded* by the Parish Share assessed to each local church. The final figure of the parish share is essentially the sum of the Diocesan and General Synod elements of the assessment. Some dioceses allocate a total assessed amount to be raised by each Deanery, which is then responsible for the division between local churches.

The fund *finances* the Diocesan administration and structure, grants for ordinands, removals, vacancies etc., ecumenical grants within the Diocese, grants and loans for local churches' needs, and grants and loans for the selection and training of Readers.

The Diocesan Fund also provides finance, together with moneys from the Church Commissioners (in some less well-off Dioceses) for

1. The **Diocesan Stipends Fund**. This *finances* the payment of stipends of all Diocesan clergy, including some chaplains, but excluding those senior clergy paid directly by the Church Commissioners.
2. The **Diocesan Parsonages Fund**. This *finances* inspection, upkeep and repair of parsonage houses.

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2. Non-Contributory

CBF Church of England Funds

This invites investment from the Church and pays interest on the investments.

Diocesan Investment Funds

These are operated by some Dioceses in a manner similar to that of the Central Fund.

Diocesan Pastoral Fund

This fund, held by the Church Commissioners, is *funded* by the sale of redundant churches, parsonages etc.

The fund *finances* the extension or replacement of churches and parsonages, and meeting the costs of pastoral schemes in response to social and pastoral changes.

Diocesan Parsonages Renewal Fund

This is *funded* by occasional grants from the Church Commissioners.

The fund provides *finance* to Dioceses towards the cost of replacing unsuitable parsonages.

Church of England Pensions Board

CHARM (Church's Housing Assistance for the Retired Ministry)

CHARM *funding* has moved from the Church Commissioners to the apportionment on Dioceses.

The **Church of England Clergy Funded Pension Scheme** *finances* the pensions for retired ministers and their spouses accrued from January 1st 1998.

The Scheme is funded by Dioceses from the Parish Share.

The management of both funds is the responsibility of the **Church of England Pensions Board**.

Redundant Churches Fund

This is *funded* jointly by the State and by the Church Commissioners, in agreed proportions.

The fund *finances* the preservation of selected historic churches, which are no longer required/suitable for active church use.

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METHODIST

1. Contributory

Methodist Church Fund

This is the main central fund of the Church and is *funded* by assessments made on the Districts, which in turn raise assessments from their Circuits, which assess the contribution to be asked of each local church. The fund *finances* central Connexional administration, ecumenical links, social responsibility, media services and a substantial part of the budgets of most of the **Connexional Team**, including the following:

- Training, formation and oversight of ministers, deacons, lay workers and church officers,
- Pastoral care and Christian Education, inspiring and supporting lay people in their discipleship, including young people and children.
- Co-ordinating and representing the Methodist Church's social witness in challenging injustice
- Strategic development of chaplaincy.
- Resourcing mission through property, ministry and mission grants mainly from the **Fund for Property** and **Fund for Home Mission**
- Support for local property schemes
- Promoting and supporting ecumenical relationships and those with partner Churches overseas (the latter mainly supported from the Fund for World Mission),
- Provision of training and resources to support other areas of mission including evangelism.

The **Connexional Team** also provides services in relation to governance, oversight and Human and Financial Resources as well as a range of administrative and specialist support.

Ministers' Pensions Scheme

This is the main pension system for retired ministers; it is funded by contributions from Circuits and members of the scheme and from Other Income.

Auxiliary Fund

This is *funded* by contributions from Circuits, local churches and other income. The fund provides grants to retired ministers and deacons and their widow(er)s, including meeting the removal expenses of ministers on retirement.

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There are also **District Expenses Funds** and **Circuit Funds**, which are *funded* from the assessments apportioned between Circuits and local churches. **District Expenses Funds** *finance* expenses of officers, committees and some chaplaincies. **Circuit Funds** primarily provide *finance* for the expenses of ministers within the Circuit and the upkeep of housing in the Circuit.

2. Non-Contributory

Central Finance Board Investment and Deposit Funds

Offers investment and deposit facilities to all Methodist funds and churches.

Connexional Advance and Priority Fund

This is *funded* by a percentage levy on all sales by local churches of sites, buildings and manses. The fund *finances* building and ministry grants to support new and strategic developments in mission and outreach. (There are also **District** and **Circuit Advance Funds** operating in a similar manner.)

Methodist Relief and Development Fund

This is *funded* mainly from Other Income. The fund *finances* a wide range of grants to meet need and distress mainly overseas, but also in the UK.

Methodist Ministers Housing Society

This is *funded* from strong Other Income elements, but also from the **Auxiliary Fund**. The Society *finances* housing for retired ministers and their widow(er)s.

ROMAN CATHOLIC

The distinction between contributory and non-contributory funds is less helpful for funds in the Roman Catholic Church, and will not be used here.

National Catholic Fund

This is the only major central fund. It is *funded* through allocations to the Dioceses, which in turn assess the contributions due from local churches. Many Dioceses call for a special collection to be made in each church for this purpose, any shortfall being made up from local church funds.

The fund *finances* the Central Secretariat and staff of the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales, expenses of the Bishops' Conference, the National Conference of Priests, the various National Committees, national

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ecumenical links, the Catholic Media Office and grants in support of national groups and societies working with the deaf, youth, families, workers, etc.

The **Dioceses** of the Roman Catholic Church enjoy autonomy under their bishops. This results in an apparently wide variety of methods of structuring administration and finance. However the underlying structure is broadly similar (because the needs are similar) and will typically look somewhat like the following:

Diocesan Administration Fund and Bishops' Expenses Fund

These are *funded* by special collections and other income sources.

The funds provide *finance* for the costs of central Diocesan staff and administration.

Diocesan General Investment Trust Fund.

This is *funded* by investment of Diocesan and parish institutions and trusts.

The fund provides regular income for investors, the excess being available for grants through:

Diocesan Special Purposes Fund

This is *funded* by interest from the Trust Fund and other income sources.

The fund *finances* grants to maintain a wide range of Diocesan activities, from Marriage Tribunal expenses to Diocesan Commissions, from chaplaincies to youth and family groups.

Sick and Retired Priests Fund.

This is *funded* by income from investments, Other Income sources and from Parish collections.

The fund *finances* support of diocesan priests in sickness or retirement.

Diocesan Ecclesiastical Education Fund

This is *funded* by Special Collections and by Other Income sources.

The fund *finances* the training of priests, and in some Dioceses this may include post-ordination training.

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Special Collections

These are mandatorily taken by local churches and form an important part of diocesan finances; they vary between Dioceses and a typical list could be:

For the wider Church

Peter's Pence (Church of Rome)

CAFOD

Holy Places

National Catholic Fund

World Communications Day

Apostleship of the Sea

Catholic Education Council

Children's' Society

Catholic Association for the Propagation of the Faith, SPUC, Day for Life, and Missions

For Diocesan needs

The Bishop's House

Sick and Retired Clergy

Ecclesiastical Education Fund

Diocesan Administration Fund

Bishop's Administration Fund

Cathedral Maintenance Fund

Missionary Endeavour of the Diocese

(for priests serving overseas)

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

1. Contributory

Ministry and Mission (M&M) Fund

This is the general fund of the Church, through which most income and expenditure passes. It is *funded* from contributions offered from each Synod, made up from contributions from each District, which collect contributions from each local church. There are also income contributions from investments, legacies and other income sources.

The fund provides *finance* for most of the Departments of the Church, including ministry, training, other mission activities and support activities.

Ministry

The fund provides *finance* for the stipends for local and special ministries, the stipends and expenses for Synod Moderators, pension grants and the Ministries Committee.

Training

The fund provides *finance* for college and other training for stipendiary and non-stipendiary ministers, for Youth and Children's Work trainers, for lay training and for the Training Committee.

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Other Mission Activities

The fund provides *finance* for the Ecumenical Committee and international grants, for Council for World Mission, for the Commitment for Life programmes, for Racial Justice programmes and for committees including Church and Society, Life and Witness and Youth and Children's Work.

Support Activities

The fund provides *finance* for the costs of central administration and support activities and for the work of other central Departments.

Synod General Purposes Fund

This is *funded* by a contribution from the moneys collected for the **M&M Fund** and from Other Income.

The fund provides *finance* for payment of Synod officers, and the expenses of the administration of the Synod, ecumenical grants and grants to aid synod projects and local churches.

District Expenses Fund

This is *funded* from the money collected from local churches.

The fund provides *finance* for the expenses of District officers and other District Council activities.

2. Non-Contributory

Investment Pool

This is a type of unit trust, inviting investments and deposits by central bodies, Synods and local churches. Many investments represent former Presbyterian and Congregational trusts, some still subjects of negotiation between Continuing Congregational Churches and the United Reformed Church.

Ministers' Pension Fund

This is *funded* by a grant from the M&M Fund and from Ministers' own contributions.

The fund provides *finance* for the payment of Minister's pensions.

URC Church Building Fund

Synod Trust Funds

These are *funded* from the sale of redundant sites, churches or manses.

The funds *finance* grants or loans for buildings in new, deprived or strategic areas, and aids local churches with work beyond their own resources.

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7. LOCAL ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIPS

Variety and Diversity

A Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP) exists in any situation where congregations from different denominations share anything, with a formal agreement about working together. There are different kinds of Local Ecumenical Partnership, and within them many different patterns of working. In this book we shall be primarily concerned with two basic forms of LEP.

Single Congregation

The form of LEP, which most requires discussion, is that of a local church, with a single worshipping congregation, where two or more denominations are formally working together, with a signed covenant and a formal constitution. In the pure form of such an LEP everything is organised in the same manner as in a single denomination church, except that the LEP church must relate to each of its parent denominations, and has to conform, as far as is possible, to the principles, practices and procedures of all the parent denominations.

Shared Building

The second form of LEP is that where two separate congregations, belonging to two denominations, share a single set of buildings. Again in the pure form of such an LEP everything is organised separately by the two congregations with only the building in common. In this situation the two congregations are each organised as independent churches, except that they share premises.

There is a third form of LEP, Congregations in Covenanted Partnership, in which churches of different denominations covenant to act together in particular ways without necessarily sharing a single building, and, inevitably, retaining separate worshipping congregations. For these and other kinds of LEP, see *Travelling Together* by Elizabeth Welch and Flora Winfield (CTE 2004).

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Relationships with Denominations

Local ecumenical partnerships have been evolving, in formal or informal ways, for a third of a century, and there are many different patterns. Each LEP tends to see itself as unique, and is seen by the authorities in the respective denominations as demanding individual, and unique, attention. Inevitably there has been a great deal of independent thinking and of ad hoc definition of procedures and structures for dealing with the needs of LEPs. Each LEP has its own constitution, recognising their original designation as 'Areas of Ecumenical Experiment' but the further it moves from the agreed model, the longer it can take to secure the approval of each of the sponsoring Churches.

Some areas of the country, and some parts of some denominations have more LEPs than others and are consequently more co-ordinated in the ways they have evolved in managing, and relating to, their LEPs. A range of systems has been developed in different parts of the country, and there have been a variety of guidelines issued locally, and nationally, both by **Intermediate Sponsoring Bodies**, and their **County Ecumenical Officers**, and in particular by **Churches Together in England** through the **Churches Group for Local Unity**.

Many denominations appear to regard the existence of LEPs and their appropriate support as a considerable burden. There is a tendency to regard LEPs as something of an embarrassment, particularly when it comes to financial matters, with denominational authorities showing little flexibility or willingness to allow for the particular circumstances of ecumenical congregations. There is a tendency to invent yet more ad hoc procedures, thereby setting up further and different problems not far into the future.

Understanding Finance and Resource Variation between Denominations

The financial and resource arrangements within shared churches of all kinds require a high level of mutual patience and understanding, both in their inception and their operation, if they are not to become a source of tension, and even resentment, within the congregation, and more widely in the councils of the parent denominations. The keys to success lie in the LEP church officers and the relevant officers of each denomination being aware of the differences between denominations and also aware of the impact that such differences have on an LEP. Finally all parties need to be

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willing both to recognise that their knowledge of other denominations' methods is incomplete, and to continue to learn about the different ways in which decisions are made and things are done.

This process can often prove to be a revelation to all those who start with an assumption of apparent unfairness, or of the slow pace at which other people make decisions. It can be quite a surprise to discover that other people are not just being difficult when they fail to recognise the intrinsic superiority of one's own way of doing things; indeed their ways may have much to be said for them too.

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LOCAL ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIPS

7.1 WHAT IS THE SAME? WHAT IS DIFFERENT?

These questions will be discussed in terms of the seven aspects listed below: -

Worship	Ministry	Membership
Decisions	Finance	Property
Involvement in the Wider Church.		

The discussion of these seven aspects will be based on two forms of Local Ecumenical Partnerships, namely the **Single Congregation LEP**, and the **Shared Building LEP**. There will be some emphasis in the discussions of these seven aspects on the three denominations participating most frequently in Single Congregation LEPs, that is the Church of England, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church.

Worship

In Single Congregation LEPs worship can be wonderfully diverse, benefiting from the range of forms of worship normally experienced in the parent denominations, and beyond. The structure of regular worship will often tend towards a common pattern, which will have broad similarity with patterns in the separate denominations. However individual services may follow set liturgies from any of the parent denominations, sometimes incorporating additional elements from other sources. Some LEPs have developed their own liturgies as a deliberate ecumenical form of worship. Others use the diversity, and the resulting variation from week to week, to express their ecumenical witness.

Communion services are one particular aspect of worship where the range of alternative liturgies from the different denominations is very rich. LEPs usually discover that some of the liturgies set by different denominations are remarkably similar, so that members of the congregation from different backgrounds find no difficulty in feeling at home, though when a new liturgy is being used some guidance from the Minister leading the service is helpful.

In LEPs which include the Roman Catholic Church, most communion services are separate for each denomination. LEPs including the Roman

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Catholic Church are most commonly Shared Building churches with the two denominations usually being the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Churches..

There are particular requirements in LEPs in which the Church of England is involved for a minimum number of five communion services following an Anglican rite to be included within a year. These must be presided over by a minister of the Church of England. This was challenged by a vote of the General Synod in 2005 but it is not yet clear how this affects the canons of the Church of England in practice. In general, ministers of the Anglican, Baptist, Methodist and United Reformed church may use any of the set liturgies of any of the four denominations, but when an Anglican rite is used by a minister of another denomination, the communion service is defined by the Church of England to be a service of the denomination of the minister presiding and not an Anglican communion service. This requirement for Anglican liturgy services presided over by Church of England ministers is the normally the only restriction on the planning and leading of communion, or other services in LEPs.

One aspect of worship that needs careful thought is the balance of worship leaders between the different parent denominations. In many of the alternating and rotating patterns of stipendiary ministry, there will be a resident stipendiary minister from one denomination who will tend to lead a majority of services. There will sometimes be other members of the ministry team from other denominations, and these will also take their turns in leading worship, providing some degree of balance of denominational leadership of worship. It is important that the denominations not represented by the stipendiary minister, or within the ministerial team, are invited to provide either ministerial or lay leadership of worship on a regular basis.

When the LEP includes a Methodist component, it may be the case that part of the arrangements for the preaching plan will be managed from the Circuit office. This can be very helpful, but it will usually lead to a preponderance of Methodists among the worship leaders from outside the local Ministry Team, and in this circumstance it is particularly important that worship leading from the other denominations is not squeezed out. This problem is less commonly experienced when there is more than one stipendiary minister, but there can still be denominations which are under-represented in the worship leading.

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Ministry

The ministry in LEPs follows similar patterns to those in single denomination local churches. There will usually be at least one stipendiary minister, with a range of other ministries to support and maintain a ministry team. In Shared Building or Covenant LEPs ministry is supplied to each separate congregation by the minister of the denomination of that congregation, normally using the procedures and patterns in place for single denomination local churches. There would normally be expected to be some involvement of the ecumenical partners in the processes for appointing stipendiary and other ordained ministers.

In Single Congregation LEPs the pattern of ministry provision is often much more complicated, but also more diverse, and richer. There may be two or more ministers from different denominations simultaneously in joint pastoral charge. Usually these ministers will have other pastoral responsibilities in other local churches, and the amount of ministry from each denomination may be quite small, typically 25% or 50% of a full-time minister.

Another system which is increasingly common is that there is one minister, necessarily from one denomination and usually stipendiary, in pastoral charge at any particular time. There will be a pattern for a rotation of ministry between the denominations, and it is essential that this pattern has been agreed by appropriate representatives from the denominations involved. In this rotational system there will often be non-stipendiary ministers from denominations other than that of the stipendiary minister making up an ecumenical ministry team.

In general, the pattern of multiple ministers simultaneously in pastoral charge occurs most usually during the earlier time in the development of a Single Congregation LEP (for between five and fifteen years), with a change to the rotational system later when the Single Congregation LEP is well established. There are usually a smallish number of church members who find the prospect of being without 'their own' minister worrying, but such worries are usually short-lived.

Membership

There are rather different approaches to the definitions of local church membership between the parochially-based churches (Church of England and Roman Catholic) and the Free Churches (Baptist, Methodist and United Reformed). The 'Free Churches' define local church membership as

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those who have made a formal commitment to the particular local church. This commitment may be part of the Baptism service, or at a service for the confirmation of baptismal promises, or it may be made when a member transfers their membership to a different church as a result of moving from one area to another.

In the Church of England, all those who live in the parish are potentially members of the parish church, and may expect, or even demand, to be baptised, or married, or buried in that parish. This is the sense of the appointment of the vicar as having 'the cure of souls'. A more informative and representative measure of the size of the congregation is the number of those who choose to have their names added to the Church Electoral Roll, which is re-written every five years. The Electoral Roll is not a list of church members but of those confirmed people who have indicated they wish to have a vote in electing the Parochial Church Council and Deanery Synod. It is not assumed that all members on an LEP's membership roll will choose to be included on the Church Electoral Roll, and persons not on the church membership roll may ask to have their names placed on the Church Electoral Roll.

In the Roman Catholic Church, the concept of a local church being set within the local parish, and the responsibility of the local parish priest has a similar force to that pertaining in the Church of England. However, because the Roman Catholic Church is not established, as the Church of England is, there is no formal and legal requirement for a Roman Catholic priest to assume formal responsibility for marriage or burial, or more generally for the cure of souls.

Another measure of membership which is sometimes used, and which applies to all kinds of churches, is the numbers of those worshipping in church on Sundays. Some denominations have systems for estimating the size of worshipping congregations on particular Sundays. Some external organisations also attempt to collect statistics of the sizes of worshipping congregations, though the methods used, and consequently results obtained, can be called into question.

In Local Ecumenical Partnership churches, the definitions of membership have to attempt to reconcile the different approaches of their parent denominations. In Single Congregation LEPs, it is normal to have a single Membership Roll within which the denominational membership of individuals is separately recorded. Those confirmed within the LEP are 'multiple members' of all the participating denominations. Baptist, Methodist

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and United Reformed Churches have procedures by which their members, who are also members of an LEP, can opt for 'extended membership' of other partner denominations in the LEP. This does not normally extend to 'membership' of the Church of England, though LEPs including the Church of England may have a single Membership Roll within which extended membership is assumed.

Where the LEP does not include the Church of England, it would usually be expected that most members would opt for 'extended membership', signifying that they were to be regarded as members of all the denominations involved in the LEP, while a few members would prefer to be listed under the denomination from which they came. In calculating a formal membership for each separate denomination, it is appropriate to divide the number who have opted for 'extended membership' equally between the denominations and add the number on the separate roll for that denomination.

In Single Congregation LEPs which include the Church of England, in addition to the LEP Membership Roll, there will also be a Church Electoral Roll. If the LEP is a parish it will have its own Church Electoral Roll; if it is part of a larger parish, those members wishing to be included in the parish Electoral Roll will have their names added to the Electoral Roll of the whole parish. Members of other partner denominations who worship regularly in the LEP and who are happy 'to declare themselves to be *also* members of the Church of England' may have their names entered on the Church Electoral Roll.

In Shared Building and Covenant LEPs, normally each church congregation maintains its own membership lists, in the same manner as single denomination churches.

Decisions

In single denominational local churches the decision-making rests with one of

- (i) The Church Meeting (Baptist or United Reformed),
- (ii) The (Parochial) Church Council (Methodist or Church of England) or
- (iii) The local parish Priest (Roman Catholic).

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In an LEP the pattern for decision-making should be defined in the constitution of the LEP, and will usually require some adjustment of normal denominational practice. This may often involve multiple levels at which decisions are made.

An example of this multiple level pattern for decision-making is found in many Methodist/United Reformed Church LEPs where the ultimate decision-making body is defined to reside in the Church Meeting, with executive responsibility delegated to the Church Council. In such a situation, the Church Meeting will typically meet less frequently than might be expected in the URC, and will have more authority than in a Methodist Church. In other situations the responsibility for decision-making may be shared between a church council and an individual priest.

In any LEP situation what is obviously important is that the procedures for making decisions about routine matters, and also about the more major issues facing LEPs, are clearly defined, preferably in the LEP's constitution, agreed by the parent denominations, and are fully understood by the members of the church congregation, and by the relevant authorities within the parent denominations.

Finance

The two alternative patterns for the management of finance within an LEP are,

- (i) A single finance system with a single account, and a single set of annual accounts, or
- (ii) More than one finance system with multiple accounts for different groups within the LEP.

Normally in a Single Congregation LEP a single finance system would pertain, and this pattern does also occur in some Shared Building or Covenant LEPs. However, most Shared Building and Covenant LEPs will have separate systems and accounts for the separate congregations meeting in the church.

If the LEP is sufficiently mature, then having a single finance system is a considerable simplification. There is no need for decisions on how various payments are made, whether from this account or that, or whether the payment should be split between the accounts, and, if so, in what

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proportions. In contrast, where the integration of the two or more communities is at an early, and incomplete stage, keeping the accounts separate may protect the sensitivities of those who may not wholly trust members and activities from a different denomination.

If the property is jointly-owned, with responsibility for maintenance and development vested in different groups, it is more difficult to operate with a single set of accounts. It is not however impossible, and there are examples to demonstrate this. Similarly there are LEPs, which appear to be naturally suited for a single financial accounting system, which have continued happily with separate systems. What is important is that each LEP has thought carefully about which form of accounting is the most appropriate for the responsibilities, activities and general structure of the church.

Property

There are two aspects to consider with regard to the responsibility for the physical property of an LEP. There is the maintenance and upkeep of church and manse buildings, and there is the decision-making and finance for new building or major developments of existing buildings.

The maintenance aspect should not cause much confusion, since, in an LEP, as in almost all local churches, it is expected that the local church is responsible for keeping its buildings in good order. Sometimes there may be financial assistance available from one or more of the denominations, particularly when the costs of inspection or repair become substantial, and in such situations the relevant intermediate body funding systems may be able to help.

When new building or major developments of existing buildings are concerned there are possible sources of support from all denominations and there are also some requirements for consultation with the parent denominations in the planning of such developments. The arrangements are not, in general, different from those that would apply in a single denominational church, though they can become more laborious for the LEP because each denomination may expect that the other denomination will provide support in the same way as themselves, and consequently each denomination reduces the level of that support, which it would normally provide.

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It is important that a Local Ecumenical Partnership church should establish a Joint Church Council which will formally take responsibility for all decisions about new church buildings or major extensions. The membership of the joint Church council will include both lay members of the LEP, ministers of the LEP and representatives of the parent denominations. Normally a Joint Church Council will be recognised by all the participating denominations and can act as an effective channel for obtaining necessary denominational approval for major building projects.

One other aspect of the ownership of Church buildings is the need for Sharing Agreements. This is outside the brief of this book, and is covered in other CTBI/CTE publications such as *Under the Same Roof*.

Involvement in the Wider Church

It is clear that LEPs are established as part of the ecumenical search for the unity of the Church, and consequently it is very important that LEPs remain very clearly committed to being part of the wider Church. An LEP, or even a whole class of LEPs, must avoid becoming another new denomination, an 'ecumenical church'.

However, there are difficulties for an LEP in being strongly part of the wider Church when there are several networks to which an LEP and its membership belong. Each of the LEP's parent denominations has its various councils to which the LEP is committed, and each parent denomination expects that the LEP will show its continuing allegiance to their denomination by fully supporting all its wider church activities. Since this expectation will be true for all the parent denominations, the load on members of an LEP can be heavy. In addition, it is reasonable for the LEP to be expected to be a strong supporter of the local Churches Together group.

This is the essential dilemma of an LEP in respect to its relations with its parent denominations. It must not become separated from the rest of its parent denomination's local groupings, but the resource needed to maintain all the links is greater than is the case for a single denominational local church, simply because there are more links to maintain.

LOCAL ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIPS

7.2 ASSESSMENTS AND OTHER FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Determining the Levels of Assessments Payable to Denominations

The question of determining the appropriate assessments, which should be made by an LEP to each of its parent denominations, has exercised many people in LEPs, their parent denominations, and ecumenical bodies. The determination of correct levels of assessment has been a source of much disagreement and not a little acrimony, and there is a need to produce a clear set of principles and rules, which can apply to all LEPs. Even with such a set of rules, there will continue to be situations where either denominational officers, or LEP treasurers, believe that the rules do not work to their advantage, or are unnecessarily cumbersome, and consequently try to modify them, or simply to ignore them.

Not surprisingly, there have been, at local or intermediate levels, many forms of ad hoc arrangements, and many attempts to solve this problem. There are now many formally-defined systems in existence. Some of these systems can become very complicated, and I believe that it is essential that a system is based on simple principles and is easy to understand and to operate. I shall present and advocate a single system, and argue that it should form the basis of the calculation of assessments. Not surprisingly, the system I shall present was developed within the area, Berkshire, for which I was the County Ecumenical Officer.

Different Forms of the Problem

The problem is particularly acute in single congregation LEPs, where there is a single common church account. Where there are separate congregations with separate accounts, either sharing a set of church buildings or in a covenanted LEP, each congregation behaves as if it were a separate church, and the assessment for each part of the LEP is determined with the denomination of which it is a part. Where separate congregations share a common account, it should be possible to treat the assessment for each congregation separately, though the system, which I shall develop for single congregation LEPs, may be helpful in these situations also.

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For single congregation LEPs with a common account it is necessary to devise a system, which is clearly distinct from, though related to, the systems used in each denomination for single denomination churches.

The three denominations for which the problem, and the solution proposed, is most directly relevant are the Church of England, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church. This is because they are the three denominations most frequently involved in single congregation LEPs and because their systems are most similar. The Roman Catholic Church is rarely, if ever, a part of a single congregation LEP, and in Baptist local churches the payment of the minister's stipend and of all ministerial expenses is directly from the local church. Hence, in an LEP with a Baptist stipendiary minister, the major part of the 'assessment' is in fact money paid to the minister, and is handled entirely within the local church's finances. Nonetheless the system proposed here can accommodate single congregation LEPs including the Baptist denomination, both when ministry is provided by a Baptist minister, and when no Baptist minister is included in the ministry team.

Principles

The major principles that should apply to any system are:

- (i) The local church should pay a total assessment, which should be broadly at the same level as that which a comparable single denominational church would be asked to pay. That is, being an LEP should usually attract neither subsidy nor unusual burden.
- (ii) The total assessment should be calculated along broadly similar lines to those used by the parent denominations.
- (iii) Assessments paid to individual denominations should broadly reflect the amounts of stipendiary ministry provided to the LEP by each denomination at the particular time the assessment is calculated.
- (iv) The total assessment should not fluctuate much through time, even though the pattern of provision of ministry may change, except for changes to adjust for inflation.

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Denominational Assessments

Denominations have procedures for determining the assessment expected from each church designed for local churches of a single denomination. The procedures for different denominations have some similarities, but are not equivalent. (There is also some variation between different Dioceses, different Circuits and different Districts or Synods.) The calculation of assessments for local churches is based in various ways on the 'size' of the local church, where size is defined in varying degrees in terms of membership, community, and ministry.

Because, as has been explained in the previous section (7.1), the definition of membership is different in the Church of England from that employed in the Methodist or United Reformed Churches, it is difficult to use the membership size as a direct component of a system for calculating part assessments for an LEP. Furthermore, the way of defining denominational 'memberships' within LEPs also varies.

Although the methods of different denominations appear to be substantially different, when the calculations are performed for the same church, treating the church as a single denomination church (ignoring which denomination(s) the church belongs to) the results are frequently found to be broadly similar. Within this broad similarity, there is a general tendency for the assessment from the Church of England to be the largest and that from the United Reformed Church the smallest, with the Methodist Church assessment intermediate.

LEP ministry patterns

Some LEPs, particularly those in the early stages of development, are provided with ministry from more than one parent denomination. Others, mainly the more mature, have an alternating or rotating system of ministry, with stipendiary ministers provided from the different denominations in turn. The division of the total assessment for an LEP must reflect the amount of stipendiary ministry provided to the LEP by the different parent denominations.

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The Proposed System for Assessments

The Policy is in two stages.

1. Determine the total assessment for an LEP. This should approximate to the assessment that each parent denomination would calculate for the whole LEP (that is for the total membership and total stipendiary ministry) if the LEP were a single denomination church. Ideally each denomination would calculate the assessment for the whole LEP that it would regard as appropriate; the range of results would be examined and an average value used. (It is not appropriate to use the largest value). If the calculated values are very different the reasons why there are large differences should be discussed, to enable an agreed total assessment to be reached. This method of reaching an agreed common figure for the total assessment may not be easy, particularly when the LEP is new, or is a part of a larger Church of England parish. (Each denomination expects every local church or parish to contribute its share, even during an interregnum. This contributes to the overall provision of ministry.) In those circumstances it may be easier to consider what level of part assessment each denomination would wish to receive, and to add them up to achieve a total assessment, taking care to ensure that the total is not larger than would be expected from an equivalent single denomination church.
2. Divide the overall assessment determined in (1) between the denominations in two parts.
 - (i) The major part (90%) of the total to be divided between the denominations in proportion to the amounts of stipendiary ministry provided to the LEP by the denominations.
 - (ii) The remaining 10% to be divided between all the parent denominations on the basis of locally appropriate needs, which may take into account other contributions to denominational funds.

To illustrate the proposed policy, if an LEP has a pattern of rotating ministry, the denomination of the minister currently appointed to the LEP would receive the 90%, and, usually, the remaining 10% would be split equally between the other parent denominations. If an LEP receives 50% of a stipendiary minister from one denomination, plus 25% of stipendiary

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ministry from two other parent denominations (a typical pattern in early development of a new LEP) then the 90% would be split 45% to the denomination with the 50% ministry, and 22.5% to each of the other denominations providing stipendiary ministry; the remaining 10% would be divided equally between all parent denominations.

It may be objected that the assessments, which denominations require from their local churches do not cover exactly the same elements of church activity, but the differences are only a very small proportion of the whole. By far the largest cost for all denominations is that for the ministry of the church, and many other elements of the total cost of church activity are also in common to all churches, as is clear from the earlier sections of the book. If there is real concern about the different elements covered by the denominational assessments, the division of the remaining 10% should allow ample scope for reflecting those differences.

Other Financial Contributions to Denominations

LEPs should so manage their other contributions to special Funds and Collections within their parent denominations that the contributions are broadly comparable. The principal components of denominational activities for which additional contributions are sought are those related to mission, both overseas and at home. Some denominations have many separate Funds and Collections; others have fewer. Broadly, the total effort and work is probably similar in different denominations, when expressed pro rata to their total budgets, and so it is reasonable that LEPs should take some care to be even-handed in their support for additional requests for money.

Denominations should be helpful to LEPs in allowing them to be even-handed between the denominations in their support for special Funds and Collections, by not putting unfair pressure on the LEPs to conform to the normal contributions for single-denomination churches. This is not to argue that LEPs should receive special treatment by having less pressure, but that when pressure is being applied, each denomination must recognise that theirs is not the only pressure of this nature to which the LEP is vulnerable. It is very easy for a denomination to wrongly regard an LEP as not being a proper church of the denomination because, for its total size, the LEP does not perform as well as other comparable single denomination churches.

LOCAL ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIPS

7.3 PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINING MINISTERIAL ALLOCATION

Provision of Ministry to Local Churches

The major resource provided to Local Ecumenical Partnership churches, as is true for all local churches, is Ordained Ministry, and in particular Stipendiary Ministry. As in non-ecumenical local churches, the amount of ministry provided is determined by the appropriate intermediate authority. This is the Deanery or Diocese for the Church of England, the Circuit for the Methodists, the Diocesan Bishop for the Roman Catholics or the District for the United Reformed Church; the Baptist Regional Superintendent provides advice and support for the local church when they are making their decision about ministry.

Increasingly, the more traditional pattern where each local church had either a minister, or a vacancy, is being replaced by a pattern in which two or more local churches share one minister. Sometimes the amount of a minister's time is formally allocated between the different churches of his or her pastorate; sometimes the sharing arrangement is less formal. However, in all denominations the concepts of local churches sharing a minister, and of dividing a minister's time and resource between churches, are becoming part of the framework within which the provision of ministry to local churches is discussed.

In this new situation, the rather different circumstances of Local Ecumenical Partnership Churches, who might expect to have ministry from more than one denomination, needs careful, and co-operative consideration. How shall the decisions about amounts of ministry be made? What systems are appropriate, and does the appropriate system change with time? How are the decisions to be implemented in practice? And how does the pattern at a particular time relate to the local assessments paid by the local church to its parent denominations?

These questions are most apposite for Single Congregation LEPs and the discussion in the remainder of this section will concentrate on these. For Shared Building and Covenant LEPs the decisions about ministry are predominantly made by each denomination for the congregation of that part of the LEP, which is of that denomination. As is the case in other respects,

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the consideration of amounts of ministry for Shared Building and Covenant LEPs may slightly resemble the procedures for the Single Congregation LEPs and therefore this section should be of interest to all LEPs.

The discussion of 'ministry' in this section is concerned with the ministerial staffing for an LEP where ministry is understood to take many different forms. The major concern in the philosophy described here is with stipendiary ministry provided by the parent denominations. However, this is but part of the total accredited ministry provided by the denominations. Further, the total accredited ministry is only a part of the total ministry in an LEP (or any local church) because many lay members of the LEP contribute ministry within the church. There will usually be a ministry team in the LEP, which will include the licensed and accredited ministry provided by the denominations, and may also include some lay members of the church.

How shall the Decisions be made?

All decisions about patterns of ministerial staffing for Single Congregation LEPs should be made through ecumenical discussion. Ideally there should be a **Staffing Consultative Group** for each LEP, which should include representatives from the relevant denominations who have the authority to make decisions (e.g. Circuit Superintendent, Area Dean, District Pastoral Committee Convener, Regional Superintendent or the representatives of the Roman Catholic Bishop). The Staffing Consultative Group should also include representatives from the LEP, both lay and stipendiary ministers, and the County and relevant Denominational ecumenical officers.

Formally a Staffing Consultative Group is a consultative Body, since the ultimate power for resource decisions rests with the denominational representatives. However, in establishing an LEP the denominations should accept that the exercise of that power must be within a framework of genuine ecumenical consultation, seeking to provide appropriate and agreed ministerial resource, such as might reasonably be expected with the ecumenical establishment of the LEP.

In particular any proposals for changes to the patterns of ministerial levels and timings should be discussed, and hopefully, agreed by the Staffing Consultative Group. Inevitably external circumstances, such as finance or available ministerial resource, will have a moderating influence on the arrangements agreed to be appropriate. Also the appointments of ministers

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must follow the normal pattern of the denomination concerned, and cannot be changed because the local church is an LEP.

When no Staffing Consultative Group has been established, it will be necessary to discuss ministerial provision ecumenically in a group whose membership is similar to that described for an SCG. Developing an SCG or an equivalent structure for an LEP should be part of the care of an LEP, which the Sponsoring Body of the relevant Intermediate County Churches Together Body exercises.

A Basis for Allocating Stipendiary Ministry to LEPs

There are two parts to the determination of the amount of ministry provided to an LEP by the parent denominations,

- (i) The allocation of stipendiary ministry for the LEP, and
- (ii) The total amount of licensed and accredited ministry for the LEP.

The two decisions should be made jointly.

There are also two contrasting philosophies for the provision of stipendiary ministry for a Single Congregation LEP.

- (A) A simple philosophy for determining the appropriate provision of stipendiary ministry for a Single Congregation LEP is that the decision process should reflect as closely as possible the ways in which the separate denominations would determine the appropriate level of ministry for a similar single denomination church of their denomination. Hopefully if all the denominations involved make an assessment of the appropriate level of stipendiary ministry, there will be sufficient agreement of the results for it to be quite simple to reach agreed level of provision. This approach inevitably ignores the ecumenical situation of the LEP.
- (B) Typically, where there is an LEP, there will not be other local churches belonging to the parent denominations, and the ministry at the LEP will be the only ministry for any of the parent denominations in the community. In contrast, for single congregations it would normally be assumed when considering ministry for one local church that there would also be ministry

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of other denominations in the same community. Essentially the LEP is replacing more than one local church, and there is a legitimate argument that the total ministry at the LEP should be compared with the total ministry that would be provided for a set of local churches, one for each denomination.

In general it should be expected that for a mature, established, Single Congregation LEP, the basis for the provision of ministry would lean more towards the first approach. In contrast, for the earlier stages of development of an LEP it would be more appropriate to base the provision of stipendiary ministry on the second approach, essentially adding together the amounts of ministry thought appropriate for the community by the denominations. The first approach means that an LEP will tend to provide resource profit for the denominations; the second means that an LEP will tend to require resource subsidy.

Patterns of Stipendiary Ministry Provision

At any time the provision of stipendiary ministry may be through

- (i) Whole-time or part-time ministry continuously from all denominations; the proportion of ministry provided may vary between denominations.
- (ii) Alternating ministry between two denominations, with a minister from only one of the denominations in post at any one time; the minister may be full-time or part-time.
- (iii) Rotating ministry from three or more denominations, with a minister from only one of the denominations in post at any one time.
- (iv) Some combination of (i), (ii) and (iii).

The advantages of stipendiary ministry from more than one denomination at a time are that the ecumenism is more up-front, and the ministry is visibly a team activity. The advantages of a single stipendiary minister are that the individual minister spends a greater proportion of his or her time in the LEP, and the existence of a ministry team leader is more obvious.

The appropriate pattern of stipendiary ministry for a particular LEP at a particular time must be considered for the situation of that LEP. However, there has been a tendency, as LEPs mature, for a switch from multiple ministers to a single minister in an alternating or rotating pattern. The maturity is necessary before a single denomination ministry can be effective, because members of the congregation have to grow to trust the validity and practical experience of a minister from a different denomination

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from that which they may still think of as their own denomination. This tendency to move towards a single stipendiary minister in an alternating or rotating pattern should be expected to become the normal pattern in more mature LEPs.

The time pattern for the stipendiary ministry must be clearly defined, particularly when alternating or rotating patterns are adopted, with clear definitions about the length of each period of ministry, and of the rotational pattern.

Provision of Other Licensed and Accredited Ministry

In considering the total ministry required for a mature LEP it is important to recognise that in the community area served by the LEP there will not be other stipendiary ministers from the denominations involved in the LEP. This is in contrast with consideration of stipendiary ministry for a single denominational church where there will be some stipendiary ministry in the same area from other denominations. It is essential that in parallel with the decision about the amount of stipendiary ministry there should be a decision that the denominations should ensure the provision of total ministry sufficient for the purposes of all the parent denominations in the whole community area. This provision is obviously particularly important when an alternating or rotating system of stipendiary ministry is proposed.

In broad terms, for rotating systems of ministry, the amount of total accredited ministry should be about 1.5 times the amount of stipendiary ministry. The composition of the total accredited ministry should ideally reflect all the denominations involved in the LEP, and will ideally include a wide range of forms of ministry. It is very important that, within the alternating or rotating system for stipendiary ministry, the denominations other than that currently providing the stipendiary ministry do accept the need to support the total ministry of the LEP by helping to supply non-stipendiary ministry or other accredited ministry.

Practical Implementation of Appointments

The first question is whether the agreed amount of ministry can be provided. The second is how the appointment of a minister is made.

The first question is obviously crucial and will be a regular theme in the deliberations of Staffing Consultative Group. All denominations are under pressure, from higher authorities, to reduce the amount of stipendiary

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ministry in their Deanery, Circuit or District. However it is important that the decisions about what would be an appropriate level of staffing be considered to a degree separately from the question of provision, so that there should be a structure for decision making in principle, in parallel to the practical achievement of the agreed objectives.

Once the decisions about the desirable level of ministerial provision are agreed, the denominations will work with the LEP to achieve the practical implementation of the decisions. It is recognised that all denominations may sometimes require an interregnum or gap between the departure of one stipendiary minister and the arrival of the new stipendiary minister, but it is particularly desirable that in alternating or rotating systems such interregnums will be short. Similarly there may be practical problems in providing non-stipendiary ministers at the precise point envisaged in the timetable.

It is generally accepted in LEP constitutions that all appointments of ministers from specified denominations must

- (i) Follow broadly the normal pattern of the denomination concerned, but
- (ii) Reflect the ecumenical nature of the appointment, and therefore involve a strong element of both the LEP membership, and the partner denominational authorities, and
- (iii) Involve the County and Denominational Ecumenical Officers.

Such procedures are essential for the appointment of stipendiary ministers to LEPs, but should also apply for other forms of ministry within the total ministry team.

Arrangements for the Minister when in post

The Minister of any denomination remains a minister of that denomination when he or she is appointed to an LEP. All the usual arrangements for a minister in a particular denomination, as described in sections 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4, will apply when the minister is working in an LEP. Also, the authority and the discipline of the denomination in which the minister is trained and ordained will apply.

Ministers working in an LEP are usually recognised in various ways by the other denominations, so that in varying degrees they are enabled to feel themselves to be part of the other denominations. It is important, though,

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that this recognition does not impose too many additional burdens on the minister. Being a minister in an LEP requires considerable effort to be put into understanding the traditions and expectations of the other denominations involved in the LEP, and it is inevitable and proper that the minister will become partially involved in the affairs of the other denominations. However, it is important that the other denominations do not expect from the minister all the involvement in denominational affairs which they would expect of their own minister. Indeed, the denomination to which the minister belongs must also reduce its expectations, to balance the extent to which the minister will be spending time and effort in the affairs of the other denominations.

Notwithstanding the comments in the previous paragraph, ministers who have held appointments in an LEP seem to believe that they have benefited from, and enjoyed, the experience, probably because of the greater breadth of Christian witness that an LEP affords. There is no doubt that being a minister in an LEP is a challenging appointment, but it is right that it should also be seen as a great opportunity, and of course, challenges are always stimulating.

LOCAL ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIPS

7.4 INVOLVEMENT IN THE WIDER CHURCH

Representation

Each Local Ecumenical Partnership Church should expect to be represented on the intermediate councils of all the parent denominations. In practice this means that the LEP will be expected to provide ministerial and lay members of Church of England Synods, of Methodist Circuit Meetings and District Synods, and of United Reformed Church District Councils and Synods, and of equivalent activities in the Baptist Union and Roman Catholic Church. All these councils will expect both ministerial and lay representation.

It is up to the LEP to determine which lay people they ask to be representatives. It is probably a good idea not always to send church members with backgrounds in a particular denomination to a council of that denomination. Part of the ecumenical experience should involve church members from one denomination being representatives on councils of other denominations, because this will increase ecumenical understanding of denominational behaviour, and because the denominational council may well derive benefit from having a member from another denomination observing and becoming involved in their activities. Where councils invite more than one lay representative, it will be helpful to send church members from different backgrounds.

The pattern of ministerial representation will depend on the denomination and also on the current pattern of stipendiary appointments at the LEP. In the United Reformed Church, all ministers of any denomination in pastoral charge at a Single Congregation LEP will normally be invited to be full members of both the District Council and the Provincial Synod. This will be true whether a minister is the sole stipendiary minister or is part of a ministerial team. In a Shared Building or Covenant LEP, where there will normally be separate congregations, each with their denominational minister, ministers from all denominations will normally be invited to join their District Council, but may be associate members rather than full members; similar arrangements would apply for membership of Synod.

In the Methodist Church, all ministers of any mainstream denomination in pastoral charge at a Single Congregation LEP will normally be invited to be

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full members of their Circuit meetings. However they would not normally be invited to be full members of the District Synod. In a Shared Building or Covenant LEP, ministers from other denominations would not normally be invited to be members of Circuit or District meetings.

In the Church of England, ministers from partner Churches in an LEP will normally be welcome as full participants in the life of the Deanery Chapter. Under current Church Representation Rules, however, they will not be able to vote or stand as candidates in synodical elections as they cannot formally be members of the House of Clergy.

Contribution and Responsibility

Members of an LEP should normally be expected to be strongly involved in their local Churches Together Group; often they play prominent roles. Members of an LEP will often also be found to be suitable members for a range of activities and contributions within their own or other denominations. By being active members of an LEP, it sometimes seems as if Christians declare themselves to be appropriate persons for a whole stack of other responsibilities within the Wider Church.

Members of an LEP, whether ordained or lay, might be asked to take on responsibilities within their local intermediate denominational organisation. This might involve being part of a working group or committee, leading training activities, or participating in leadership of joint services. In this respect they should expect to be treated as full members of any of the parent denominations of their LEP. However, because members of an LEP might be called on by any of the denominations involved in the LEP, each denomination should be sensitive to the potential demands from the other denominations, and take care not to overload the burden on them.

Involvement in wider activities of the church

There are many other activities which are organised by various parts of the wider church, in which members of an LEP should consider being involved. It is difficult for an LEP to respond to all the invitations to be involved, in local mission, in charitable activities for overseas charities, in Away Days or Conferences or Retreats. As noted earlier, members of an LEP often appear to be suitable people for such invitations, just because they are intensively involved in their LEP. Each LEP has to take the number and

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variety of these invitations into account when planning their activity beyond the confines of their local church, and should deliberately try to spread their response reasonably equally between the invitations from the different denominations.

Overall, then, members and ministers in LEPs should probably expect to be rather more involved in the wider church than might similar Christians from single denominational churches. This can be very rewarding, but also can contribute to the pressures, particularly on ministers, and part of the denominational support for LEPs should be to recognize that they should avoid over-loading the ministers and members in those LEPs.

What we really believe is shown as much by our agendas and budgets as by our hymns and creeds. If that is true, it is vital that we understand how other Churches manage their finances and why. ***A Harmony of Church Finance*** is a helpful guide in a puzzling area for all those who are trying to make local ecumenism work and it will be an essential tool for Ecumenical Officers .

This new edition of ***A Harmony of Church Finance*** replaces the highly regarded work by Basil Hazledine. Since that was published in 1995, the ways in which the Churches organise their local finances have seen major changes. Roger Mead has brought to the task his professional skills as a retired Professor of Statistics and his considerable experience as a former County Ecumenical Officer for Berkshire.

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Registered Charity No. 1110782
Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee No. 5354231

text © Churches Together in England May 2006

ISBN 1 874295 28 X

£4.95

