



# **CHURCHES TOGETHER IN PILGRIMAGE**

***'The Marigold Book'***

**Including definitive proposals for  
ecumenical instruments**

## **EXTRACTS**



## Introduction

In the mid 1980s the Churches in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales began to discern together how best to co-operate in the ecumenical endeavour.

*Not Strangers but Pilgrims* was a process of prayer, discussion and discernment at all levels in the Churches. 'The Marigold Book', as it became known, is the story of that pilgrimage. It brings together various key documents.

This extract includes the Swanwick Declaration, a definitive statement adopted in September 1987 when the Churches declared their 'readiness to commit themselves to each other under God' and their decision to move from 'co-operation to clear commitment to each other, in search of the unity for which Christ prayed and in common evangelism and service of the world'.

The Marigold book also set out proposals for the ecumenical instruments in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, which have now become Churches Together in England, the Irish Council of Churches, Action of Churches Together in Scotland and CYTUN. These proposals were accepted, although their implementation was adjusted as the needs of successive years demanded.

Since the Marigold book is now out of print, we here reprint the Swanwick Declaration and the proposals for England. They are the foundation documents for Churches Together in England and, as such, undergird but do not confine the way Churches work and live together in England.

Bill Snelson  
General Secretary of Churches Together in England  
26 February 2002

ways of programming need to be modified in order to fulfil the Swanwick vision of churches working together.

The above information is re-printed from the British Council of Churches publication, *The Next Steps for CHURCHES TOGETHER IN PILGRIMAGE. Including definitive proposals for ecumenical instruments* (The Marigold book) which is now out of print.

Extracts (*in italics*) have been taken from the following pages:  
pp 7&8 (*The Swanwick Declaration*)  
pp 27-33 (*Introduction, Basis and Commitment, Aims and Functions, Ecumenical Relations, The Forum*)  
pp 38-42 (*Ex-officio Members of the Forum and the Enabling Group, A Process, The Enabling Group, Co-ordinating Groups*).

specific task is to work in the area of concern.

Recognising the need for complementary agendas in some areas of work, it may be desirable or necessary to work with the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland or other national bodies, especially with CYTUN {Churches Together in Wales) because of the legislation common to England and Wales, for example, in the fields of social responsibility and education (Churches Joint Education Policy Committee already serves England and Wales).

It is proposed that the work of the **Consultative Committee for Local Ecumenical Projects in England (CCLEPE)** will be continued by a **Local Ecumenical Development Advisory Group (LEDAG)**, with the addition of responsibilities for care for local councils of churches and ecumenical officers, matters of liturgy and worship affecting local ecumenism, and acting as a clearing house for information concerning the sale and sharing of church buildings. Initially the membership of this group should follow the same criteria as that of CCLEPE. Thereafter the basis of membership will be reviewed.

It is proposed that the Co-ordinating Groups will continue work already being undertaken in England in the areas of mission and evangelism (including Partnership in Evangelism), youth services and church and society issues within the English context.

As envisaged in the Swanwick Report (p 18), a Co-ordinating Group will be established for Faith and Order matters to deal with practical and theological issues on the way to fuller Christian unity in England.

It will be necessary to explore with the churches, COCBI and the intermediate bodies how best to co-ordinate the concerns of industrial mission, Christian education, adult formation and ministries.

Churches Together in England will need to consider if Co-ordinating Groups are needed for the promotion of prayer, and for worship and liturgy, and it will need to work out its relationship with the Free Church Federal Council and with permanent agencies and other ecumenical organisations.

Individual churches will need to consider to what extent their present

## The Swanwick Declaration

The following 'Swanwick Declaration' was adopted by acclaim and personally signed by those present at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, on Friday 4 September 1987. The Conference asked that it should be read in churches in England, Scotland and Wales on one of the Sundays in October.

*No Longer Strangers – Pilgrims!  
Nid Oieithriad Mwyach – Pererinion!  
Luchd-Turuis – Conhla!*

Appointed by our churches and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit we declare that this, the broadest assembly of British and Irish churches ever to meet in these islands has reached a common mind. We are aware that not all Christians are represented amongst us but we look forward to the time when they will share fully with us.

We came with different experiences and traditions, some with long ecumenical service, some for whom this is a new adventure. We are one band of pilgrims. We are old and young, women and men, black and white, lay and ordained and we travelled from the four corners of these islands to meet at Swanwick in Derbyshire. There we met, we listened, we talked, we worshipped, we prayed, we sat in silence, deeper than words. Against the background of so much suffering and sinfulness in our society we were reminded of our call to witness that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. We affirmed that this world with all its sin and splendour belongs to God. Young people called on us to be ready to sort out our priorities so that we could travel light and concentrate on our goal. Driven on by a gospel imperative to seek unity that the world may believe, we rejoiced that we are pilgrims together and strangers no longer.

We now declare together our readiness to commit ourselves to each other under God. Our earnest desire is to become more fully, in his own time, the one Church of Christ, united in faith, communion, pastoral care and mission. Such unity is the gift of God. With gratitude we have truly experienced this gift, growing amongst us in these days. We affirm our openness to this growing unity in obedience to the Word of God, so that we may fully share, hold in common and offer to the world those

gifts which we have received and still hold in separation. In the unity we seek we recognise that there will not be uniformity but legitimate diversity.

It is our conviction that, as a matter of policy at all levels and in all places, our churches must now move from co-operation to clear commitment to each other, in search of the unity for which Christ prayed and in common evangelism and service of the world.

We urge church leaders and representatives to take all necessary steps to present, as soon as possible, to our church authorities, assemblies and congregations, the Report of this Conference together with developed proposals for ecumenical instruments to help the churches of these islands to move ahead together.

Continuing to trust in the promised gift of the Holy Spirit, we look forward with confidence to sharing with our own churches the joys of this historic Conference. We thank God for all those who, from Lent '86 and before, have been part of this pilgrimage. We feel their presence with us. We urge our churches to confirm by decision and action the hopes and vision on which we have laid hold, and which we shall not let go.

This is a new beginning. We set out on our further pilgrimage ready to take risks and determined not to be put off by 'dismal stories'. We resolve that no discouragement will make us once relent our avowed intent to be pilgrims together. Leaving behind painful memories and reaching out for what lies ahead, we press on towards the full reconciliation in Christ of all things in heaven and on earth, that God has promised in his Kingdom.

*Lord God, we thank you  
For calling us into the company  
Of those who trust in Christ  
And seek to obey his will.  
May your Spirit guide and strengthen us  
In mission and service to your world;  
For we are strangers no longer  
But pilgrims together on the way to your Kingdom.  
Amen.*

General Secretary of Free Church Federal Council	1
Convenor and Deputy Convenor	2
Chaplain	1

## **Meetings**

Careful consideration will need to be given to both style and frequency of the Enabling Group's meetings and some, at least, of these will be residential. At least three meetings per year will be necessary to have continuity of reflection and to build relationships between members.

The Enabling Group may invite consultants (members of Co-ordinating Groups, Agencies or individuals with expertise) to attend its meetings.

## **Casual Vacancies**

The Enabling Group will, after appropriate consultation, be responsible for filling casual vacancies.

## **7 Co-ordinating Groups**

Certain areas of work will be done through CHURCHES' CO-ORDINATING GROUPS.

Currently, there are some groups bringing together people with similar responsibilities within the churches, eg Home Mission/Evangelism Secretaries, Youth Officers. They pray together and compare methods of working and programmes. They decide what can be done jointly, what one church can do on behalf of the rest and what can be applied from one church's experience to current initiatives in other churches. They provide models for churches' Co-ordinating Groups.

This style of inter-church co-operation will be encouraged in a variety of programmes within the churches (see below). This will involve affirming some Groups already in existence, challenging the working pattern of others and considering the setting up of Groups where nothing similar to a Co-ordinating Group is in existence.

These Groups would vary in size, frequency of meeting and length of life. They will mainly be drawn from people in the churches whose

policy as enable the initiatives to be carried out by the churches in consultation with each other, often through co-ordinating groups or agencies established by the churches.

## Membership

Recognising that the Forum will meet only biennially, the Enabling Group will be a large enough body to represent a wide spectrum of church life. All members of the Enabling Group will be participants in the Forum. They will be drawn from 4 categories: National (15); Intermediate Bodies (10); elected by the Forum (12); Ex Officio (12). Initially the total membership will be 49.

**(a) National:** These will be appointed by the appropriate authorities within the following churches and associations of churches from those who have direct access to the decision-making structures of their churches:

Church of England	3
Roman Catholic	3
Methodist	2
Baptist	1
United Reformed	1

The following will be appointed by the participating bodies in the Forum representing the categories listed below:

Other churches in England in membership of the FCFC	1
Black-led churches	2
Other member churches	2

**(b) Intermediate Bodies:** Elected via regional groupings 10

**(c) Elected by the Forum:** 12  
At least 4 of whom are aged between 18-30

**(d) Ex Officio:**

Moderator and Deputy Moderator of the Forum	2
Honorary Treasurer, General Secretary	2
Executive Staff	3
General Secretary of COCBI ( <i>now CTBI</i> )	1

## England

### 1 Introduction

The Swanwick Conference of 1987 said, 'Ecumenical instruments should serve the churches by enabling them to grow together in unity and to act together in such areas as evangelism, worship and social responsibility'.

We are grateful for the ninety-one responses received which we have carefully considered. It has to be said that many were contradictory. In the light of these we have produced proposals which are as modest as we think possible consonant with the Swanwick vision.

Here we set these out as the way by which churches in England may be supported and resourced as they 'grow together' and 'act together' at national, intermediate and local levels.

England has never had a national Council of Churches as its neighbours have. However, it has developed a number of ecumenical bodies at other levels and the Ecumenical Officer for England of the British Council of Churches has supported and encouraged inter-church co-operation at all levels. These proposals reflect both continuity and newness.

The body will be known as CHURCHES TOGETHER IN ENGLAND, a new title which reflects the new life-style of ecumenical relationships of the churches in England. The Working Party considered a very wide range of possible names and finally decided on this one.

They did not believe the word 'commission' was a suitable description for the instrument being proposed. They had difficulties also with 'council', 'congress', 'synod', 'assembly', all of which have technical usages in the churches which were not suitable for this new form of ecumenical instrument.

The use of the word 'English' was discarded in favour of 'in England' in order to reflect the fact that a number of the expected member

churches do not have their origins in England but are located there, whilst others cover a wider geographical area than England alone.

## **2 Basis and Commitment**

**Churches Together in England** unites in pilgrimage those churches in England which, acknowledging God's revelation in Christ, confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures; and, in obedience to God's will and in the power of the Holy Spirit commit themselves

- to seek a deepening of their communion with Christ and with one another in the Church, which is his body, and
- to fulfil their mission to proclaim the Gospel by common witness and service in the world,

to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

## **3 Aims and Functions**

The aims and functions of Churches Together in England have been developed and adapted from those in the Swanwick Report and are as follows:

'To be a visible sign of the churches' commitment to one another, in obedience to our Lord's prayer 'that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you; may they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me'. (John 17.21) (NIV).

To promote the theological reflection necessary to support the ecumenical movement and to enable continuing discussion of Faith and Order issues, especially of the nature and purpose and unity of the Church in the light of its mission.

To encourage shared worship and prayer, learning, service and evangelism, with each church sharing with others the treasures of its tradition.

## **Chaplain**

In addition there will be a Chaplain who will be responsible for planning and arranging worship at meetings of the Forum and the Enabling Group. This will be a role of encouraging and facilitating others to participate.

He/she may develop a pastoral role in relation to the staff of Churches Together in England, in particular acting as an independent source of support.

He/she will normally be ordained and will be appointed by the Enabling Group for a term of office of two years, renewable for a further two years, and will serve both it and the Forum.

## **A Process**

The Forum will be seen as part of a continuing process of prayer, reflection and growth. Thus:

- a Forum participants will be kept in touch with the life and work of CTE by the Secretariat.
- b Participants should be appointed at least nine months ahead of a Forum so that they can take part in any preparatory meetings and receive appropriate mailings.
- c In order that continuity and enthusiasm be maintained, participants will be encouraged to meet between Forum meetings in groups, such as: regional meetings of intermediate bodies, and national meetings (for example: participants from one church, and young people).

## **6 The Enabling Group**

### **Functions**

The Enabling Group will be a reference point partly serving the Forum and partly enabling the churches to make decisions in common. It will respond to initiatives from the churches and will not so much carry out

## **Ex Officio Members of the Forum and the Enabling Group**

### **Moderator and Deputy Moderator of the Forum**

- i They will be elected by the Forum for a period of four years, one being a lay person and one being ordained.
- ii They will preside at sessions of the Forum and prepare its agenda with the General Secretary following consultation with the Enabling Group.
- iii They will be aware of all aspects of the work of Churches Together in England.

### **Honorary Treasurer**

He/she will normally be a lay person with financial expertise coupled with proved commitment to the ecumenical cause. The appointment will be made by the Enabling Group for four years and he/she will serve on the Enabling Group and the Forum.

### **General Secretary and Other Executive Staff**

The General Secretary will serve both Enabling Group and Forum. In addition there will be three other executive staff members (as defined in section 9 below).

### **Convenor and Deputy Convenor of the Enabling Group**

- i They will be elected by the Enabling Group at their first meeting which will take place during the Forum and will serve until the next Forum. The appointment is renewable for two subsequent terms. One will be ordained and the other lay.
- ii They will be responsible for chairing the Enabling Group and preparing the agenda for meetings along with the General Secretary.

To enable the churches to develop growing and changing relationships, as pilgrims, together, in the living and sharing of the gospel, and to facilitate further steps towards fuller unity in England, including consideration of theological and practical questions, especially those arising from local ecumenical projects.

To enable the churches, as they grow together in unity, to seek a common mind and to share decision-making in common.

To enable the churches to respond to the needs of society at all levels, to explore church and society issues within the English context and, when appropriate, to make approaches to secular authorities independently or with others.

To promote, co-ordinate, support and service intermediate bodies in England,

assisting them in their care for local ecumenical activity and representing their concerns at the national level.

To seek to ensure that the departments, divisions and boards of the churches at national and intermediate levels work together as closely as possible so that their work may be coordinated.

To promote the appointment and support of full or part-time ecumenical officers or their equivalents at the intermediate level throughout England.

To encourage the review of ecclesiastical boundaries in England so that they may be aligned as closely as possible with each other and with the civil boundaries in order to promote the shared mission of the churches.

#### 4 **Ecumenical Relations**

(at local, intermediate and national levels in England)

##### **LOCAL**

An outstanding feature of local ecumenism in England is its rich diversity. Prayer groups, community care, evangelistic exercises, and much more are to be found in many places. Many of these activities are relatively informal and have only the minimum of structure. It is from this kind of activity that a deeper, more permanent commitment is growing among Christians. It is in this fertile soil that local ecumenical projects including local covenants are rooted.

One of the aims of Churches Together in England is to affirm, support and service local ecumenism whether it be formal or informal, structured or unstructured. In this it reflects the concerns of the Swanwick Report which said, 'There is a heartfelt desire for this local dimension to be affirmed and continued; and for resources to be identified in order that lay Christians may be equipped to share their faith in the secular world with those of other faiths and those of none'.

In its supportive role Churches Together in England will be concerned to service the following formal structures which have been developing over many years.

**Local councils of churches.** These vary in size from three to over one hundred member bodies, and provide a forum, a mouthpiece and a tool for inter-church co-operation. They are autonomous bodies and vary not only in size but in effectiveness, and they attempt to enable their member churches to relate to issues affecting their own locality. Many associate with the British Council of Churches while a number are related more closely to the large councils of churches covering a metropolitan area or a county.

In many parts of England there exist local Free Church Councils which are a further expression of churches sharing together. Over recent years a number have moved into closer relationship with local councils of churches either as a department or a committee or by total absorption.

servants of their participating churches especially in the area of promoting local ecumenism.

- c To share its reflections on the activities and future programmes of the Enabling Group, Co-ordinating Groups and Agencies of Churches Together in England in the fulfilment of their role of servicing the churches.
- d to elect: its Moderator and Deputy Moderator and other members directly elected from it to the Enabling Group (as described in Section 6 (II) on membership of the Enabling Group) and such other appointments as may be necessary.

##### **Representation**

The Forum will comprise about 360 participants who will be appointed from three categories: (a) **national** comprising about 1/2 of its membership; (b) **intermediate** comprising about 1/3 of its membership; (c) **others** comprising about 1/6 of its membership. It is hoped that the participants in the Forum will be as representative as possible. Allocations of places will be kept under review in consultation with the Enabling Group.

##### **Meetings**

The Forum will meet every two years over a long week-end.

Since it will only meet every two years and the dates are fixed well in advance it is hoped that there will be strong lay representation. Churches are encouraged to find ways to reimburse lay representatives who may have to take unpaid leave to attend the Forum and/or the Enabling Group.

The style of the meetings will lay stress on: working in small groups; the possibility of sub-sections of the Forum to reflect upon major issues; the opportunity for the different churches, and the intermediate bodies to meet. All this will be within the context of worship which was so enriching at Swanwick.

Some of the work of the ecumenical officer is advisory, giving counsel to church leaders or to LEPs or to committees on inter-church and Faith and Order matters. Some of their work is pastoral, providing support to clergy and ministers, enabling officers of local councils of churches, encouraging people in LEPs or local covenants who are trying to make sense of church rules in areas of uncertainty. Sometimes they have to handle correspondence or covenants and sharing agreements, or be the go-between on behalf of the churches, or be secretary of a sponsoring body or ecumenical council with all the attendant 'office' work. Some of them deal with social responsibility and youth work and are aware of the agenda of the churches in specialist areas. It is clear that in the future their role will take on a greater significance as the churches seek to initiate, affirm, and support local ecumenical activity.

The Field Officers of Churches Together in England will continue the work currently done by the Ecumenical Officer for England in liaising with and resourcing these intermediate bodies and their officers.

The appointment of denominational ecumenical officers at intermediate level has been a crucial factor in response to a real need. Sometimes they work as a team for their area.

## **5 The Forum**

### **Purpose**

A Forum will be established whose purpose will be to provide an opportunity for people representing the churches at local, intermediate and national level to meet.

### **Functions**

The Forum will be the 'eyes and ears' of the churches. It will meet to worship, share and listen, and have the following functions:

- a To recommend to the churches such matters as it believes should be addressed jointly.
- b To support and encourage intermediate bodies in their role as the

The BCC service to local councils of churches has been to provide the quarterly publication, *Vision One*, and the advice and specialised input available from its staff. Local councils of churches have looked to the BCC for help in constitutional matters such as the constitution itself, or whether or not to admit a particular body to full or associate membership. They are often the channel by which the BCC has been able to service local congregations in such matters as, for example, Christian Aid, Keep Sunday Special, race relations, peace issues and so forth. They provided much of the organisation for study groups in Lent '86.

How may these be serviced in the future? The following proposals for future structures will still enable local councils of churches to call on the advice and help of people with wider experience of councils of churches and of the churches generally. It is suggested that local councils of churches at present related to an 'umbrella' council such as Birmingham or Cleveland or Merseyside should continue to do so. Where no such relationship exists it is recommended that they relate to the ecumenical council or sponsoring body for their area (see below). The subscription they currently pay the BCC (in 1988 £3 per member congregation per annum) would then be paid to the ecumenical council or sponsoring body for their area, and this would go some way towards providing support at the intermediate level. There are proposals in this report for personnel at both the intermediate level and for the north and south of England.

**Local ecumenical projects (LEPs).** The experience of commitment gained in LEPs has contributed towards the climate which has enabled the Inter-Church Process to develop in England. LEPs, of which there are now about 550, exist at the level of the local church where relationships have moved on from the co-operation of a council of churches to a formal, written agreement making it possible for Christians of more than one denomination to share buildings or congregational life or sacramental ministry or a combination of all three in a closely committed way, founded on mutual trust, and approved by their respective church authorities. Into this category also come local covenants where separate buildings and church life continue denominationally but a commitment is made to do everything together that conscience will permit and to do separately only what cannot be done together. LEPs are pioneering at the boundaries of ecumenical

relations and so need support and reassurance from their parent denominations.

Currently they are serviced by sponsoring bodies (see below) and by the Consultative Committee for Local Ecumenical Projects in England (CCLEPE). It is not suggested that there should be any change in these arrangements. The work of CCLEPE will be continued within Churches Together in England.

## **INTERMEDIATE**

In England the churches have developed a network of ecumenical bodies which serve them at an intermediate level. Ecumenical relations in England have therefore to be seen as the sum of the local, intermediate and national expressions of Christian sharing.

The intermediate bodies, sometimes called ecumenical councils, sometimes sponsoring bodies, sometimes church leaders' meetings, have worked out useful ways of covering various areas of work.

**Sponsoring Bodies** provide pastoral care and supervision for LEPs on behalf of the churches. Examples may be found in Dorset, South Yorkshire, Derbyshire, and Somerset and South Avon.

**Ecumenical councils** and **metropolitan councils of churches** are ecumenical bodies whose agenda include evangelism, church formation, adult Christian education, youth work, social responsibility, industrial mission, ministerial training, world development and overseas aid, ecumenical affairs and communication. Some, like Birmingham Council of Christian Churches, Merseyside and Region Churches Ecumenical Assembly, or Greater Manchester County Ecumenical Council divide their work into specialist sub-groups. Greater Bristol Ecumenical Council acts as the enabler for its member churches to work ecumenically. Cleveland Council of Churches and Sheffield Council of Churches provide a forum for representatives of their member churches to meet and address issues of church and society.

Birmingham, Merseyside, Manchester, Milton Keynes, Lincolnshire, Telford and West Yorkshire employ full-time executive officers. Bristol, Cleveland, Cumbria, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire, Kent, and

Lichfield Diocesan Area Liaison group employ half-time paid officers. In Cumbria the post is combined with that of the churches' Radio Officer.

**Church leaders' meetings.** Church leaders (by which is meant those in leadership as senior representative officers of the churches), meet regularly. They share together their understanding of church life within their constituencies and in some cases have developed a common approach to mission in their area. In East London, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, and Merseyside, church leaders have made covenants together. Where church leaders have covenanted, signifying their commitment to one another, this is a visible sign to their churches of their own ecumenical priorities, as well as an encouragement to congregations to enter into covenanted relationships. It is hoped that successors will sign the covenant.

**Ecumenical officers.** Before examining the role of ecumenical officers it is important to recognise that ecumenical development throughout England is not uniform nor is it expected to be. Ecumenical bodies vary in size, structure and agenda. They will continue to do so.

If sharing between local churches is to be adequately supported there needs to be at the intermediate level a strong ecumenical body to provide that support. Employing an ecumenical officer whose expertise and time are available to local churches and to church leaders is one means of ensuring that the intermediate bodies can fulfil their role more effectively. This lay behind the Swanwick proposal for ecumenically appointed ecumenical officers, 'full-time if possible'.

At present there are ten full-time, ecumenically appointed ecumenical officers or executive secretaries of ecumenical councils. Each is a key person in their own area. They are in Birmingham, Cumbria, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Manchester, Merseyside, Milton Keynes, Telford and West Yorkshire. All are in the midlands and the north.

It is clear that resources will not be possible in every case for a county to have its own full-time, paid ecumenical officer. In some situations, such as Telford, for instance, the circumstances require a full-time officer appointed by the churches together to serve an area smaller than a county.