

MINISTRY IN LOCAL ECUMENICAL PROJECTS



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First published November 1985

Reprinted May 1986

**Published by the British Council of Churches
on behalf of the Consultative Committee
for Local Ecumenical Projects in England, 1985.
ISBN 0-85169 141 2**

A handbook for those engaged in ministry in local ecumenical projects or with responsibilities for it, written by people with experience of it.

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS AN LEP AND WHAT IS "MINISTRY" IN AN LEP?

"Local Church Unity" published by CCLEPE defines a local ecumenical project (LEP) in these terms: "A local ecumenical project may be said to exist where there is at the level of the local church a formal, written agreement affecting the ministry, congregational life and/or buildings of more than one denomination; and a recognition of that agreement by the appropriate denominational authorities".

In practice each LEP is different from the others, but it is possible to discern four main types of project:

The simplest is one where buildings are shared formally under the Sharing of Church Buildings Act 1969.

The second type is where there is one congregation of Christians from a variety of denominations sharing fully in life and mission, and where sacramental ministry is shared.

A third group may be referred to as an ecumenical parish, where existing congregations of Christians of two or more traditions share in a committed way in mission to their community, having some sharing of ministry and sacrament.

The fourth, though similar to the ecumenical parish is the "Local Covenant" where often there is full Roman Catholic participation but no sharing of sacramental ministry.

It is clear that each type will make particular demands on ordained ministry. In a shared building, for instance, it will be a question of administration and liaison. Where there is one congregation of a variety of Christians, served by one or more ministers, it is necessary for the minister to be aware to a far greater degree than usual of the beliefs and practices of the churches represented in the united congregation. Where there is an ecumenical parish or a local covenant the other qualities already mentioned may also be needed but collaboration is the principal requirement.

Ordination training does not often include the kind of practical considerations we have outlined because, at present, people are trained for the priesthood or ministry in their own church, and there is no expectation that they will be asked to minister to people other than those of their own denominations.

This book arises out of a felt need for a handy tool for use by ministers called to serve in LEPs, people called to share in responsibility for LEPs, and members of sponsoring bodies and denominational bodies charged with oversight, caring, training and appointment.

This work does not claim to be exhaustive, but points to areas of concern and gives some ideas for meeting specific questions. It provides an immediate resource, while indicating where it is possible to acquire more information. The following papers arise out of individual experience, and no attempt has been made to make them uniform because of the variety of LEPs.

This is the work of a group of practitioners of ecumenical experience. Authorship is attributed to each chapter, but the whole was worked through by the group. They were Gethin Abraham-Williams, Bob Andrews, Dennis Corbishley, Hugh Cross, Sheila Finn, Leslie Green, Keith Huxley, Stephen Marr, Margaret Mascall, Ruth Matthews, Elizabeth Mayes, Derek Palmer, David Pink, Peter Poulter, Harvey Richardson and Ivan Selman. Doreen Cross participated by typing much of the revised manuscript as the group worked on it.

Of necessity we have had to deal with matters to do with the ordained ministry, because that is the area where many problems still lie. Nevertheless, we wish to affirm with all the emphasis we can muster that the ministry is Christ's into which the whole people of God enter, and the ministry of the ordained is a part of that wider ministry.

Ministry in Local Ecumenical Projects is published with the authority of the Consultative Committee for Local Ecumenical Projects in England.

Hugh Cross
Secretary, CCLEPE
June 1985

CHAPTER 1

TRAINING

Ordinations are perhaps the most exclusively denominational of the rites of the Christian Churches in this country. During them men and women are commissioned and on them the future well-being and distinctiveness of a particular church depends. Not surprisingly, the training received, particularly in residential colleges, contains a strong denominational quality. Inserting specific ecumenical elements into that training is, therefore, not easy, especially when it is recognised that the colleges are constantly being bombarded with requests for particular topics to be included in the syllabus.

However, sponsoring bodies and church leaders' meetings need to be aware of the possibilities that do exist, and which could be explored with the staff of colleges and courses operating in their area. Three are worth considering:

First, a course of lectures or a sustained project on the ecumenical movement. CCLEPE made an approach to the Association for Centres of Adult Education on this subject in 1983. From this came an outline prepared by John Matthews, which was the base for a pilot course led by Martin Conway at Ripon College, Cuddesdon, in the early part of 1984. (Details of the course, and a report on it, appear in Appendix 1)

Second, the use of Local Ecumenical Projects for the field work and local church placements of students. Clearly there are difficulties that arise because the geographical distribution of colleges and LEPs does not coincide. At the same time sponsoring bodies might be able to circulate lists of LEPs suitable for student placements to colleges in their area. A good experience in such a place can do more to give a vision of ecumenical possibilities than any other type of training.

Third, the inclusion of an 'ecumenical awareness' element in all student fieldwork and placements. Even the simple requirement for a student to make contact with the ministers of other churches working in the area served by a particular local church might have unexpected long term results, apart

from providing an opportunity to remove some of the more immediate myths that thrive in inter-church relations!

Further opportunities arise in the training provided for clergy and ministers after ordination. Since such training is planned by the churches on a county or regional basis, a Church Leaders' Group is ideally placed to ensure that ecumenical elements are included. This is particularly true of the in-service training which is expected to be undertaken in the first years after ordination. It is already being organised in a number of areas on an ecumenical basis. The fact that it is obligatory makes it a particularly useful opportunity for ecumenical training.

The in-service training of those who have been in the ministry for a longer period provides further openings which have been taken up by some Church Leaders' Groups. One example is provided by the North East Ecumenical Group (N.E.E.G.) which brings together Church leaders and ecumenical officers from the counties of Durham, Northumberland, and Tyne and Wear. The churches involved provide the stipend, housing and expenses of a Theological Consultant. The consultant is, at the moment, an Anglican priest. He is generally available as a resource to the churches of the area, providing a range of theological training – from a known ecumenical base.

More particularly, he has been involved in training clergy and ministers. The first was a three-day residential course which studied "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry". It was housed in a Roman Catholic Monastery, and involved six Roman Catholic, seven Anglican, three Methodist and two United Reformed Church clergy and ministers of some years experience.

For all the participants, whose ecumenical experience varied widely, the opportunity to live together with those of other traditions, and to engage in a thorough exploration of theological issues which affect local churches considerably, was a major step forward. The effectiveness of the course was in no small way due to the united backing of the Church leaders involved in N.E.E.G.

The second initiative arose out of a series of meetings for those responsible for the in-service training of the clergy and ministers in the North East. This was a proposal to hold an ecumenical in-service pastoral theology course. Directed by a

Roman Catholic priest and assisted by clergy of other churches, it is aimed at established clergy in their thirties. Sessions are held on one whole day a week during three terms, usually in Durham, but sometimes on a visit to a “pastorally-significant” site.

While it is true that initiatives such as these do not offer specific training for ministry in LEPs, they do provide for a considerable growth in relationship and understanding. Out of such a base can come a willingness to encourage local churches to take the risk of establishing an LEP in one form or another. Although it is true that these initiatives owe a great deal to the working of the Theological Consultant, neither depends on the presence of a full time organiser. This is particularly the case of the meetings of people responsible for in-service training. Such a group is quite capable of running itself but it may well only come into existence if a Church Leaders’ Group or sponsoring body takes the first step.

Specific training for those appointed as ministers within LEPs ought to be a high priority for sponsoring bodies. It should be seen as an important element in their support for those involved in local projects. One example is the Bristol Regional Sponsoring Body which has established a regular induction course. This is residential lasting from the morning of the first day to the early evening of the second. The actual contents have evolved over the years, but have included reflections on the theology of local ecumenism, discussion of some of the sticking points – such as membership and differing traditions of worship – and a certain amount of information about the ecumenical scene. (A copy of the programme of the most recent course appears as Appendix B.) Such a course lies well within the capabilities of the larger sponsoring bodies. The holding of such courses in more areas would not only play a part in making the ministry of those appointed to LEPs more effective, but would also provide useful opportunities for clergy and ministers who would like to explore the possibility of such work to do so.

Finally, sponsoring bodies, perhaps in regions, need to consider whether they should encourage the holding of occasional training days or weekends in their area. These provide an opportunity for involving both ordained and lay people in exploring some of the issues which arise in local

ecumenism. The majority of the topics dealt with will arise out of the needs expressed by those in the projects. In addition, there will be matters of information on new developments in local ecumenism in other areas and nationally, and the opportunity for encouragement and increasing the self-confidence of people who may at times feel isolated from other parts of the Church. Above all, this and every other form of training needs to underline the conviction that working ecumenically is not an odd activity for those who like that sort of thing. It is rather an attitude to the life and mission of the Church that should be part of the thinking of every Christian.

Keith Huxley

CHAPTER 2

APPOINTMENTS

Appointments of new staff members can be crucial in an LEP. They remain in the hands of the individual denominations. The standard procedures of the five major denominations in England are as follows:

1. Baptist churches. In the event of a vacancy, the church secretary informs the Area Superintendent who consults the deacons about the type of ministry needed and sends a list of suitable ministers with curricula vitae. From this, or elsewhere, the deacons select and invite one person from the list to an informal meeting to meet other people and to visit the church and manse. They may then invite the candidate to conduct Sunday services which may be regarded as “preaching with a view”, or they may invite him or her on a second occasion for this purpose. The church membership would be informed of the date and encouraged to attend. There may also be an informal week day gathering to meet the minister and spouse. The deacons decide if a church meeting shall be convened to vote on a definite invitation, a substantial majority being required.

2. Church of England. Within a month of a resignation being announced, the Parochial Church Council must make representation to the patron (who may be the diocesan bishop, the Crown, a college, an individual etc.) about the kind of incumbent required and the needs of the parish if they wish to invoke the Measure which makes consultation with the churchwardens obligatory. The patron invites a priest of his choice to meet the churchwardens; both parties can say yes or no. When the churchwardens and the patrons and the bishop agree, the bishop arranges for the institution and induction. In the case of team vicars, special procedures apply involving consultation and assistant staff are licensed by the bishop on the nomination of the incumbent.

3. Methodist Church. All appointments are made annually

by the Methodist Conference in June/July and take effect from the 1st September next. This usually confirms arrangements already made up to fifteen months previously by circuits but Conference is the supreme authority. Appointment is to a circuit, not to a church. District Chairmen circulate to each other information about vacancies and ministers available. A chairman suggests suitable ministers to circuit stewards or they may make a private approach to a minister. They select and invite a first choice to informal consultation followed by a visit to the church(es) and manse and meeting local church leaders. If all parties are still agreeable, the circuit stewards then recommend the name to the Circuit Invitation Committee which may issue an invitation initially for five years (with possible later extensions of up to eight and eleven years). Where there is an LEP, Standing Orders require consultation with the ecumenical partners.

4. Roman Catholic Church. Priests and deacons are incardinated into a diocese and belong to its Presbyterium. This means that priests normally belong to a diocese for life. The bishop is responsible for all appointments in the diocese and must approve the appointment of his clergy to posts outside the diocese, e.g. chaplaincies, seminaries, etc.

The bishop will discuss a vacancy with assistant bishops and deans. A priest may refuse the offer of a parish. Assistant priests/curates may discuss difficulties they foresee in an appointment, but the bishop has the final say. Priests who belong to religious orders and serve as parish priests/curates are selected by the superiors of their orders but appointed by the bishop. Deacons are appointed by the bishop to serve in a deanery under the pastoral direction of the dean. Laity may make representations to the bishop and they are listened to but the decision rests with the bishop.

5. United Reformed Church. An impending vacancy is notified to the District Council, which has responsibility in consultation with the Provincial Moderator and the church(es) in question of deciding on "the scope of the pastorate" (full or part-time). The District Council also appoints an interim moderator to give oversight until a settlement is made. The Provincial Moderator then visits to discuss with the elders the style of ministry needed and shares this with the other

Provincial Moderators. From this consultation, the name of a minister for consideration is suggested. The church(es) are free to consider other names after checking with the Provincial Moderator. The church invites a minister to talk with the elders about the possibility of his/her becoming the minister. If wishing to proceed further, he/she is invited to conduct worship. Thereafter, if there is a substantial majority in favour, the church meeting issues a call, which the minister may accept or decline. The invitation has to receive the concurrence of the district council and of the district council where the minister is currently serving.

LOCAL ECUMENICAL PROJECTS.

LEPs have to work within the denominational appointment systems already described. In consultation with the sponsoring body and/or the local support or advisory group and the appointing authorities, they should establish a "staffing consultative group" and determine procedures to be followed in a vacancy. This group should include local lay and ministerial representatives of all denominations concerned and representatives of the sponsoring body. It may be most helpful if it is chaired by a sponsoring body officer.

As soon as it is known that a minister is leaving, he or she or the officer deemed appropriate by the denomination responsible for the appointment (e.g. churchwarden, circuit steward) should inform the staffing consultative group which should meet to draw up or update the job description if necessary and this should then be sent to the appointing denominational authority, the sponsoring body and the other denominations involved in the project. The procedure may then follow that which is appropriate to the denomination concerned as outlined above with the addition that the candidate who is approached should meet the staffing consultative group at the earliest possible opportunity. This may or may not happen at the initial visit but neither should it be the last step in the process by which time it would be difficult for the staffing consultative group to make a negative response. The group secretary or the appropriate church officer may liaise with the candidate about the interview, which should be as informal as possible. One of them should also make it possible for the candidate to withdraw while the staffing consultative group considers the

matter further, and should ensure that the appointing authority is informed immediately of the opinion reached.

It is essential that a candidate should meet existing team members, all of whom may not be on the staffing consultative group before this stage and it is desirable that those appointed should attend an introductory course such as that arranged by the Bristol Regional Sponsoring Body.

Denominational timetables for appointments vary, with the Methodists beginning 15 months ahead and some other denominations doing nothing until the present minister vacates the post. In LEPs it is desirable that staff changes should be planned as far ahead as it is possible and this may require of team members the discipline to accept the planning of their departure at an earlier stage than is usual in many denominations.

Due to circumstances beyond the control of an LEP, it occasionally happens that a staff member is removed by his or her denomination at short notice. Sometimes a denomination may wish to permanently withdraw its staff representative in an LEP. It is hoped that such measures will take place only in the most exceptional circumstances because of the importance of sustaining a well co-ordinated team, and because of the need, already expressed, for full consultation on appointments.

Methodist Standing Orders include a direction that there must be consultation with the sponsoring body concerning appointments involving an LEP and concerning the curtailment, extension or expiration of an appointment (SO 540 and 546). The Bishops' Code of Practice states that "....The Bishop shall consult with the appropriate authorities of the other Churches involved, through a sponsoring body where one exists" about appointments in LEPs and where withdrawal of staff is contemplated.

There are some LEPs, particularly one-minister LEPs, in which ministerial staff represent more than one denomination and may be regarded as ecumenical appointments for which no one denomination holds sole responsibility. The advertising of vacancies may be used in such situations, although this method of seeking new staff is also sometimes employed in more conventional circumstances.

Ivan Selman

CHAPTER 3

INDUCTION

The word 'Induction' is here used to embrace all the terms – institution, induction, commissioning, welcome, etc. – which the different denominations use at specially arranged services for newly-appointed ministers.

1. Who should lead such services?

a) the presiding minister is the normal denominational president, i.e. Anglican Bishop, Baptist Area Superintendent, Methodist Circuit Superintendent, Roman Catholic Bishop, URC Moderator, and

b) the other participating denominations are represented at a level of church life outside the immediate local community.

In LEPs, it is important that all traditions are visibly recognised and involved.

Therefore, in the case of *Anglican/Methodist* projects, it will normally be necessary for the Bishop to preside when the incumbent is inducted so that the Declaration of Assent and the Oaths, etc. are legally made but it is desirable that the Methodist Superintendent should take a clear role in the service.

When a Methodist minister is appointed to an *Anglican/Methodist* LEP, the Superintendent should preside (or if the new minister is also the Superintendent, the Chairman of the District), and an Anglican clergyman representing the deanery or diocese should similarly take a clear role.

In the case of *Methodist/URC* projects, the same principle applies, i.e. the URC Moderator presides and the Methodist Superintendent is involved for an inducted URC minister, and the Methodist Superintendent (or District Chairman) presides and a URC District or Provincial representative is involved for a newly-appointed Methodist minister.

In all variations, this general principle of mutual involvement is strongly advised.

Experience shows that members of LEPs value the occasion of an Induction Service as a strong reminder of their full and natural place in the life of the whole Church. In view of this, there is some argument for the presence of a minister at the level of Bishop/Chairman/Moderator/General Superintendent in supporting roles for **all** inductions. This point, however, must be worked out fully by the LEPs themselves, and a combination of theological integrity and personal sensitivity is a great asset. Having said this, it needs to be underlined for *Methodists* that circuit involvement in all LEPs is an important fact of life, and the Circuit Superintendent should be given due recognition at induction services.

Variations:

There are occasions when newly-appointed clergy or ministers may be welcomed or inducted in a church building outside the LEP. It is strongly urged that the other denomination/s of the LEP concerned should be clearly visible and fully involved. This could also include the welcome of a minister of another denomination who is “recognised and regarded” by the Methodist Church.

2. Material for Induction Services.

There are three possibilities for this, depending upon circumstances:

a) When a new Anglican incumbent is appointed to an LEP or ecumenical team, the statutory legal requirements must be fulfilled and a diocesan order of worship for this purpose should be observed.

b) At induction services for ministers other than Anglican incumbents, it is common practice to make use of a regular denominational order of worship, and to inject appropriate words of commitment from members of the LEP, and make provision for realistic ecumenical participation (in the prayers, readings, preaching, etc.) as in a) above.

However, it is normal for members of the ecumenical team to participate at various points in the service, e.g. in ‘The Promises of Priest and People’, (readings, prayers etc.) and to make a clear statement of commitment such as the following at an appropriate point in the liturgy:

“We bind ourselves to God and one another in the mission

of Christ in this place and throughout the world. We commit ourselves and in His and your names" (Induction at Walderslade, Chatham, 1984)

c) The third possibility, which also applies to ministers other than Anglican incumbents, is the use of a specially prepared order of service for use within the individual LEP. This, of course, has attraction in that there is freedom and responsibility given to the LEP for the composition of the liturgy, but it runs the risk of not having a clearly recognisable denominational form. It is desirable that the sponsoring body is consulted at a very early stage.

Examples of induction services may be obtained from the Ecumenical Officer for England at the British Council of Churches and it is strongly recommended that this course be followed.

3. Ordination and Induction.

In some instances – in URC and Baptist churches – ordination may precede induction in the same service. It is important that the ordination itself is not confused or merged with the induction service – it must be clear who is ordaining whom! In some situations, there may be the temptation to contemplate ‘joint ordination’ of a minister into more than one denomination, but it must be recognised that this is not yet a realistic possibility.

Harvey Richardson

CHAPTER 4

WHAT IS DIFFERENT ABOUT LEP MINISTRY?

Ministry in LEPs is in many ways the same as in any parish or congregation. It is also different in different kinds of LEP; a minister who works well in one situation is not automatically fitted for all other LEPs, and it is important that this is recognised.

There are, though, some qualities which will be valuable in most LEPs. Ministry requires people who will be flexible, ready to listen and genuinely to look for fresh insights. Church members and ministers alike need to be aware that they make assumptions based on denominational background and though they may continue to make them, to understand that others will see things from a different viewpoint.

When a person is the only ordained minister in an LEP there are particular stresses, including the tedious one of attending, e.g. Methodist/Anglican/U.R.C. meetings at “the next level up”. There is also the question of how one person can represent two or more traditions at once. For example, one such minister wears different robes for different services, in order clearly to be seen as both a Methodist and an Anglican. Others feel they could not do this. Partly this needs understanding and experience e.g. to have and to convey the feeling of a formal and ‘beautifully done’ Sung Eucharist, and that of Wesley’s hymns sung fortissimo amid brown varnished pews. Partly it needs simple practice e.g. doing a straight ASB Evensong and a very free evening service ‘without the book’.

But partly it involves a minister coming to terms not only with how to ‘do things properly’ but also with his or her own feelings and integrity. This is especially sharp if, for example, a Baptist is expected to practise (and to prepare parents for) infant baptism, but it is not confined to the extreme case. It isn’t easy to be true to oneself and see three points of view at once. Theology of priesthood and ministry also comes in here. It helps if links with, and occasional ministry from, the other denominations involved are strong, though it takes time and energy to maintain them.

A team ministry means that this tension is not so great but can present other problems.

THEOLOGY OF THE CHURCH INFLUENCES PRACTICE.

a. 'Gathered congregation' or 'parish'.

Understanding and experience of the church lies behind an understanding of ministry. A free church minister will usually have worked with the concept of a 'gathered church', made up of members whose membership is expressed in the local church and formally transferred to another when they move. Traditionally, people who live near the church but do not attend are not so much to be given pastoral care as to be presented with the challenge of the Christian faith.

An Anglican upbringing and training will have given a different understanding. Baptism and confirmation are into the universal church. A parish priest still technically has responsibility for the parish, however impossible this is practically. Pastoral care, rather than evangelism, is the traditional background for a parish ministry.

The Roman Catholics come into both understandings – more emphasis on the universal church, and a priest working in a parish system, but with the emphasis only on Roman Catholics living there. A parish mission will be mainly for the lapsed, not the pagan.

We do have to take into account the different traditional views of ministry and our almost unconscious assumptions, for in an LEP there are practical consequences. Anglicans have many more funerals and weddings. When free church ministers are in LEPs and share this workload, they will probably not be so used to dealing with so many apparently non-Christian funerals. They are also unlikely to have met head-on the numbers and the demand for infant baptism, which many Anglicans are now finding difficult anyway. (Though they may have the spin-off: "We've come to your church because the vicar won't do it"). Many of them will, however, be more accustomed to responding to requests for remarriage for divorced people. This, in its turn, can bring problems for the Anglican, especially in a one-minister LEP. It is also a tricky subject in LEPs which include such ministers alongside Roman Catholic priests. Honesty and sensitivity are important in all of these.

Other practical issues emerge out of the understanding of the church. The 'gathered'/'parish' views lie behind the allocation of full-time paid ministry, which is usually calculated on membership or communicant figures (R.C.s and free churches) or on population figures (Church of England). This is why an LEP may have, for instance a full-time Anglican and a part-time Methodist minister who is also responsible for other churches in the circuit. The one is seen as giving pastoral care and being the focal figure to the people of one parish, and the other as enabling the gathered church in each place in its worship, fellowship and witness. Special allowances are often made by the free churches for ministry in LEPs, but it remains a tension which stems from theology as well as finance.

b. Authority

There are also different basic assumptions about authority and Church government which have consequences for the structures of LEPs. Ministers need to understand the different functions of a P.C.C., and church council, a church meeting, as well as the different offices of deacon, elder, churchwarden, steward (as well as coping with new LEP Christians who feel none of this matters!) It is important here not to think of all the free churches together as their structures differ.

Traditional congregations may see the minister's role in different ways, and both minister and congregation need to see what is going on when they come together as an LEP. For example, Anglicans usually expect the incumbent to take the lead and assume that he may make decisions affecting the congregation – however much criticism there may be afterwards! But Baptists expect bright ideas to be discussed with the deacons, and any change to go through the church meeting. The importance of the church meeting as the instrument of authority and the decision-making body, "under the guidance of the Holy Spirit", is not easy to grasp for people without that background, and it needs to be chaired carefully with this in mind. The Baptist minister draws authority from the local church; the incumbent from the bishop.

c. Worship

There is also the Reformation divide in emphasis on Word or Sacrament. The two traditions meeting can mean better

appreciation and balance of both. It can also mean practical problems in organising services for different needs and the recognition that people are not necessarily being awkward but wanting to continue their own tradition. Some are horrified if there is not a weekly Eucharist; some (especially ex-Presbyterians) feel that this is much too frequent (though no less important). Some feel that a sermon of less than fifteen minutes is not taking the Word seriously. All kinds of imaginative arrangements have been worked out to meet different needs, and it is important to respond to the particular needs of each LEP. Choices need making, too, about whether to have one form of service for a joint congregation (perhaps an LEP's own liturgy, approved by the sponsoring body), or whether to use different denominational services, e.g. on set Sundays of the month. It may be that an LEP will change from one pattern to another as seems right at different stages of growth. It may also be that the sponsoring body will only allow the second approach. If there are separate services, joint coffee between them is a great help!

d. "Cultic Habits".

There are many other tricky situations which come partly from theology, partly from habit or culture. The latter includes the church/chapel division, still around in the country, which has to do with social status too. Establishment subtly continues this, and the fact that many more Anglicans than free church ministers have a public school/Oxbridge background.

Apparently trivial things can spark off high emotions, e.g. which hymnbook is used; individual Communion cups or a chalice; flowers in Lent; whether to stand for the Gospel (and whether only an ordained person should read it); alcohol (at Communion or on social occasions); the selling of raffle tickets especially on a Sunday. Heat engendered over small issues can be a bit startling, but they become symbols which stand for a lot more.

There are other 'practical' things which are more obviously tricky and represent different traditions – e.g. The Rosary may be seen as vain repetition or free prayer as embarrassingly subjective.

People will generally expect the minister(s) to understand all

points of view and hopefully suggest a solution. As was said earlier, we need to be concerned that in doing this we do not produce a race of chameleons. Keeping integrity will not be easy in any ministry, and in an LEP these things pose special problems. Only when denominations see the LEP as the 'normal' rather than as a token venture, will the insights gained from grappling with these issues be found really valuable in the total life of the church.

Ruth Matthews

CHAPTER 5

A NOTE ON WOMEN AND MINISTRY

It seems necessary to provide this while the thought and practice of the different churches as regards the role of women are so different.

Women are appointed to LEPs both as ministers and deaconesses and many feel that their ministry is for the most part no different from that of men. For example, Elizabeth Mayes comments: "Someone said recently and I quote ... 'In any team ministry, and in particular in ministry in an LEP, it is not the gender but the person that decides whether it works. From my experience during the past seven years as a Methodist minister working ecumenically, I feel convinced that men and women in ministry bring their own particular gifts which are not necessarily related to maleness and femaleness'". This is endorsed by Sheila Finn, an Anglican deaconess who has worked both on the staff of what was then an "Area of Ecumenical Experiment", and since then as deaconess in charge of an Anglican/URC LEP on a new housing estate.

We are, however, made male and female in the image of God and it is helpful if the partnership of women and men in ministry is among the ways in which we attempt to communicate with God. LEPs, where other divisions are overcome, are logical places in which to overcome the male/female divide as well and give a wholeness to ministry. They are often pioneering churches and are thus able to use the resources of partnership more easily than traditional situations. The two quoted above comment, too, that in new towns or estates, where LEPs are often to be found, people who have never experienced women's ministry accept it as they accept other new factors in their lives.

Anglican deaconesses in LEPs generally only minister alongside an Anglican priest as well as ministers of other denominations. It can be helpful if a deaconess is *the* Anglican minister within the LEP, and thus a more equal partner, even though she is unable to celebrate the Eucharist. If there are no

full time women ministers appointed, it might be helpful to make efforts to co-opt a woman non-stipendiary minister (NSM).

The fact of not being able to celebrate, when free church ministers can, will be hard if the woman concerned feels that she wants to and should be able to. If there is an Anglican woman deaconess or N.S.M. who feels like this in an LEP, then free church denominations should be very sensitive about the possible appointment of an ordained woman there. This could cause almost intolerable stress all round.

In the Roman Catholic context, we should perhaps pay attention not only to the involvement of religious in the partnership but also to lay offices which are becoming more important and may be held by women, e.g. catechist, lay minister of Holy Communion, and chairperson of the parish council.

Ruth Matthews

CHAPTER 6

WORKING TOGETHER

When ordained ministers and lay people co-operate in the ministry of the whole church; when individual ministers recognise the need for support from others engaged in ministry, and become aware that congregations need resources other than those an individual minister can give, then collaborative ministries can come into being and enrich the life of the whole church where they serve.

Working together or collaboration rightly implies that boundaries are being crossed, denominational boundaries, ordained and lay ministry boundaries, old style authoritarian boundaries (as in vicar/curate relationships), discipline boundaries (as in work with social agencies) and, of course, hierarchical boundaries as church leaders work together in a similar way. No sphere of christian work can claim to be outside the application of these principles of shared experience, skills and commitment.

So wherever christians consult together or come together, for worship, prayer, study, fellowship, mission or administrative purposes, collaboration is a possibility. Where practised it will enable all concerned to experience a deeper reality in being the church. The following headings will help spell out the implications of working together; training for ministry in LEPs; the style of such ministry; the implications for church leaders; life in LEPs and the local worshipping community.

STYLE

Changes in personnel can put great pressure on teams of people working together, but there are some basic elements in the life-style of collaborative ministries which help overcome that pressure and enable work together to continue. Candidates in training should be made aware of these as ways of helping them to make the necessary adjustments from ministry in isolation to ministry in co-operation. Age doesn't necessarily indicate maturity. Anyone conversant with youth work knows

that rapport can be established when youngsters know that they are being treated as adult, mature and capable of behaving responsibly. They rise to the occasion and demonstrate that maturity which warrants the trust given.

Mature relationships give scope for 'speaking the truth in love' because the sincerity will be evident and the recipient grateful for any demonstration of wider concern than personal vanity would allow. So no-one who is mature worries over-much about who chairs a meeting so long as things are conducted in a sincere and fitting manner to the matters in hand.

The mutual trust that helps us to mature individually is further strengthened by our availability to one another in all areas of our shared responsibility. A sure sign of commitment is the priority we give to time with others, listening to them and their opinions and readily sharing our own.

Attitudes borne of denominational backgrounds need to be taken account of if new relationships are to be established. Any Anglican from the mould where vicar/curate relationships were clearly understood over a number of years, or any superintendent minister and custodian of Methodist Constitutional Practice and Discipline (CPD), might discover a collaborative style of ministry extremely difficult. It should not prove impossible if others involved have attained that christian maturity which rejoices in the free play of ideas and opinions and welcomes newcomers (both clerical and lay) into a fellowship of ministry which calls upon each member's gifts and abilities.

LEPs

Where the proper spade work of learning about each other, prayer and worshipping together over years rather than months has been experienced before congregations attempt to spell out the special relationship they want to enter into, almost certainly new ministerial understandings and co-operation will have been established. Although large ordained ministerial teams can be a threat to effective lay involvement in overall ministry there is no reason why that should happen if clergy and laity are aware of the danger. Many LEPs have evolved with no over-dependence upon the ordained ministry in their team, but a deep awareness of the truths and riches at many levels of christian life and commitment.

When such teams set about their own life together one of their first problems is who should take the chair. Should it be the superintendent minister who is in the project, or the local team rector or should some other minister or lay member take the chair? The possibilities are only limited by the size of the team. Why not let the alphabet decide the order and let each in turn chair meetings for a period of six months. All will grow by experience, none will be down-graded, others will learn much by containing their frustration!

LEPs have experienced great trauma when ordained ministerial changes take place. A firm lay base in a collaborative ministry helps people absorb such changes and even reductions in ministerial teams when they take place. Reductions seem almost certain once LEPs are well established, and are perhaps desirable as they help the LEP demonstrate the quality of its unity and the calibre of its members' faith.

LEADERS

Anything said about ministry in LEPs has implications for the leaders of our denominations. If experiences of sharing at the LEP level have about them a more recognisable New Testament pattern of ministry with the christian community, then any reflection of that experience in the life style of our church leaders would be both supportive for all in LEPs and help on a broader basis to demonstrate each denomination's commitment.

Some church leaders already stand out as examples to us all by their attitudes, remarkable availability to one another and genuine maturity in their words both of encouragement and constructive criticism. The positive help to LEPs given by such leadership is immensely important both now and for the future of our working together. The differences of geographical area of concern need to be remembered so that we don't build up impossible expectations. However, at other levels within each denomination it is perhaps not too much to hope that those who serve as the inner council for their church leader, should be able to exercise their role in the freedom which collaboration makes possible. Church leaders might well find the customary loneliness of their position less irksome to themselves and less awesome to others with such a background of counsel.

TRAINING

Some training for ministry already takes place in an inter-denominational setting and to that extent helps to prepare the candidates for closer working relationships with those who serve in the ordained ministry of other churches. But this still only applies to a minority. For the majority of candidates the blinkers shutting out inter-church awareness are still in place for most of their training, with the result that at ordination they set off on a course of ministry to one denomination which they will serve in varying degrees of isolation, still regarding themselves, if not regarded by those they serve, as being omni-competent individuals who can minister to all people in any situation of life, as well as getting the church boiler to work. Training must increasingly reflect in all its disciplines the true nature of the church in the world and more particularly in the realm of pastoral studies seek every opportunity to heighten candidates' awareness of other churches. To begin life in the ordained ministry unaware of the opportunities for closer co-operation with ministers of other denominations is like trying to row a boat with one arm tied behind your back. The same criticism could be made in relation to any failure on the part of the ordained ministry to co-operate fully with laity in the use of their evident gifts in the service of our Lord.

LOCAL WORSHIPPING COMMUNITY

Working together in co-operative ministerial/lay teams is not, of course, limited to LEPs nor in fact do all LEPs have such a style of ministry, but where it is at work it demonstrates an exciting understanding of a broader base for ministry in the life of the church.

'Perhaps the most important sharing is between ministers and lay people. Together they make up the people of God in a place.' CCLEPE Broadsheet *"What is Collaborative Ministry?"* – see Bibliography.

Experiences in this field have taught many that church growth is by no means only about numbers, but a growth in fellowship, a maturing of relationships that have been static for years, a release of potential not dreamed of before and a deepening of spirituality that holds hope for the future.

Leslie Green

CHAPTER 7

OVERSIGHT

“No church can live without the exercise of some kind of episcopate. The churches deeply differ in their understanding of episcopate and their ways of carrying it out in the life of the community. Some regard it as a personal, others as a collegial responsibility. The ecumenical task ... requires an effort to discover in which ways de facto episcopate is being exercised in each church and what legitimate concerns they represent of the faithful and effective exercise of episcopate”. *Episcopate and Episcopate in Ecumenical Perspective*, W.C.C. Faith & Order Paper 102 1980 p2.

“.... Exactly how separate nationally organised denominations come to terms with united local churches which wish to affirm both their allegiance to the local reality of union and to their own denominations is the burning issue”. *A Pattern for Local Ecumenism*, 1984 para. 14.

Because of the diversities referred to above it is impossible to write anything coherent about episcopate as it is being experienced at the moment, which applies to more than one situation. Each LEP is caught in its own cats-cradle of oversight, shared and denominational; so all that can be offered here are a number of observations and guidelines based on seven years' experience in this particular tangle.

The ministry of oversight is that part of the ministry of the whole people of God entrusted to certain councils and individuals and, as such, is as much part of our ministry as it is theirs. One of the least attractive characteristics of some of us who are totally committed to 'One Church Renewed for Mission' is a disregard of those who spend themselves in administration and management; a disregard that ignores the injunction of 1 Thessalonians 5.12 and 13: "We beg you, brothers, to acknowledge those who are working so hard among you, and in the Lord's fellowship are your leaders and counsellors. Hold them in the highest possible esteem and affection for the work they do".

Because our attitude to those with responsibilities of oversight is so important, it is part of our task to work hard at our relationship with them. Oversight has to be received as well as given and that means taking the trouble to find out who is offering what, and on whose behalf. Understanding the systems of decision-making which influence our project unlocks all sorts of doors.

In this effort 'To discover in which ways de facto episcopate is being exercised in each church' we have the help of important allies. The most obvious is, of course, the **Sponsoring Body**. Here we have a body specifically charged with responsibilities of oversight for our project, made up of representatives of the partner churches and making decisions together. We shall have many occasions to thank God for the support, encouragement and resources provided by the sponsoring body ... but ... sponsoring bodies come, like LEPs, in various shapes and sizes, and with varying remits and authorities. So you do well to cast a critical as well as a loving eye over yours. You need to know everything there is to know about it, as soon as possible. Find out what responsibilities have been given to your sponsoring body in its Terms of Reference, how it does its work, and who is on it. The inability of the Churches in England to effect joint decision-making at national and regional level, and the experience of LEPs over the last fifteen years or so, show that sponsoring bodies, if they are to provide the oversight that LEPs deserve and need, should have amongst their members those officers like Archdeacons, and Chairmen or Secretaries who work with denominational committees which continue to make important decisions about manpower and money. If the sponsoring body is to be both 'a buffer and a bridge', it is not enough to rely on the ecumenically sympathetic, though they, too, are of the greatest importance. In the end, LEPs will only remain in contact with the baggage-trains, albeit we hope out in front, if denominational decision-makers and managers participate in the shared oversight vested in the sponsoring body.

Most sponsoring bodies now operate at county level and oversee a number of LEPs, and this has certain implications:

a) It is more likely to have in its membership the important official element referred to above.

b) Because of this, and because of the number of LEPs for which it is responsible, your particular item needs to have been worked on to the point of being presented as a well researched request or application, with arguments for and against stated, or as a number of options by the time it reaches the sponsoring body agenda.

c) If one does not exist already, ask the sponsoring body for a Local Advisory Group made up of resourceful men and women, denominational link-persons closer to your project like circuit stewards and rural deans, and one or two members of the sponsoring body itself, to work with you on the spot dealing with nuts and bolts items and with the thinking and talking through of matters that need to go to the sponsoring body. More often than not, when the work has been done carefully at this more local level, the initial response by the sponsoring body and, where necessary, the denominational authorities, will be positive.

Church leaders matter. They are charged with responsibility for providing you with personal pastoral and inspirational support; they are likely to be influential members of the sponsoring body, but above all they can be your spokesmen in the 'de facto episcopate' of the churches they lead. Few Church leaders today either can, or want to, make decisions personally – except on personal, pastoral matters – they work in close consultation with boards and committees and, in them, the major contribution they have it in their power to make to your LEP, is in the realms of advocacy. They are better placed than anyone else to explain and commend what you are doing and needing to the officers and committees that make decisions affecting your project. So give a high priority to keeping your Church leaders informed and up to date.

If you have an Ecumenical Officer, use him or her and work them hard, doing most of the things suggested in this paper for you. That is what they are for, and working them hard in this area will not only help you to receive all the episcopate on offer, but will also help the ecumenical officer to establish himself or herself as the chief animator of the whole process of giving and receiving ecumenical episcopate. This is especially the case if your ecumenical officer is shared by all churches; but there is no reason why the ecumenical officer or ecumenical secretary of a single denomination should not be able to help you in this vital area.

The important part played by Church leaders meeting together and the work of ecumenical officers in the oversight of LEPs, has led to various attempts in recent years to create a designated ecumenical leader in various parts of the country. The Swindon proposals for an Ecumenical Bishop, the style of leadership practised by Church leaders in Merseyside, and the appointment of a Pastoral President of the Milton Keynes Christian Council are just three examples of a growing awareness that there is a need for a personal, as well as a shared, decision-making oversight of the work being done in LEPs. There is no doubt that we shall see further developments in the future, and you can assist that development by the way you work with your Church leaders and ecumenical officers.

One way or another, with or without help, you are going to need to understand the dynamics, not only of the shared process of oversight centred on your sponsoring body, but also the continuing 'de facto episcopate' of your parent churches. It is resources that they have to give or withhold – not just the resources of ministry and money, but also those of understanding and support when the strong winds blow. Because each Diocese, District, Province, Circuit and County Union or Association has its own chemistry of oversight, it would be misleading to set out here the detail of which officers and what committees are the important ones to relate to. It may seem daunting but much has already been discovered and help is available. Experience shows that it is worth the time and effort needed.

David Pink

CHAPTER 8

THEOLOGY OF MINISTRY IN LEPs

Having read thus far, it is probably the case that the reader is experiencing some degree of conflict, or, if that is too strong a word, tension, between on the one hand renewed wonder that the eternal truth of God is so rich and so big that even the Body of Christ, the church, cannot contain it; and on the other hand despair, or, if that is too strong a word, discouragement, that the Body of Christ, commissioned to make manifest the truth of God incarnate, should need to spend so much energy and effort on matters of ecclesiology.

The challenge contained in such conflict/tension is the touchstone of the value and indeed the validity of LEPs in the story of the church, the Body of Christ. That challenge, to which it is the prerogative of those involved in LEPs to rise, is: Where are we going? What are we for? What is our motivating vision?

Let it be said at this point that it is not the purpose of this chapter to supply answers to these questions, but rather to stimulate you, the readers, to work out answers appropriate to your situation. The following thoughts are offered as indications of theological and christological considerations which should be the basis of all our exploring in the name of Christ.

The coming together of different traditions in LEPs means that the questions posed present themselves by implication to the separate denominations as they are enabled to see themselves as others see them; and to the enlarged LEP Christian fellowship, which discovers that it is just that: a Christian fellowship; a group of disciples in a new situation, dependent on the guiding Spirit of Christ. And this is exactly the position in which the post-resurrection disciples found themselves!

Since this latter is a state of affairs to be identified, as opposed to one artificially created by the naive assumption that the New Testament can provide blueprints for us to adopt, it is possible and indeed essential to look to the New Testament for inspiration and guidance in attempting to respond to the

broad questions indicated, and in asking specifically about ministry in LEPs: What are the key issues? Is there scope for flexibility in dealing with them?

From the preceding chapters of this book, the key issues in ecumenical ministry emerge as:

1. Ordained ministers: the nature and scope of their authority; and their sex!

2. The sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist: the implication of diversity in practice and interpretation;

3. Sensitivity and integrity: how can these be combined?

Before launching into discussion of these matters, it is profitable to apply the same questions to the New Testament itself. What, in this authenticated collection of Christian “scriptures”, are the key issues?

An all-too-simple summary statement must suffice:

In the Gospels and in Revelation, the identity of Jesus, and hence the nature and scope of his authority;

In Acts, the presence and authority of the Risen Lord in and with his disciples, and the means of growth of the body of believers through the witness of the spirit-filled community;

In the Letters, (1) the Gospel itself, experienced by individuals and its effect on their life; (2) Christian living in a non-Christian society.

At once it is obvious that we are on a different wavelength from New Testament writers. Ours are church questions, concerned more with the maintenance – even the existence – of the organisation, rather than with the growth of the body of believers.

Questions of church order and discipline there certainly are, but they are subordinate to these key issues. That should not surprise us if we heed C.K. Barrett: “The fact is that the Church is an eschatological monster, or prodigy, baffling description and definition.”¹ Of course it is, for that church as we experience it is far removed in self-understanding from the first company of followers of the way of Christ: those who

understood themselves to be in a temporary and short-term (probably less, that is, than their life-time) situation. Since his proved to be – historically speaking – a misunderstanding, (and this within the scope of the New Testament time span) “the long-living church needed not so much guarantees of its permanence as reminders of its essential temporariness which it was always ready to forget; for it was – and never can be anything but – a company of pilgrims, on the march between the present age and the age to come. The church had and has an impossible task, for it can affirm itself only at the cost of denying its proper being”²

We turn back then to consideration of the questions indicated and the possibility of flexibility in approaching them. From the New Testament we gather that there is no room for flexibility in the essentials of the Gospel message: of Jesus as Lord, of freedom under God, and of application of the perspective of eternity as the controlling factor in Christian thinking, living and loving. Paul, Peter, John, and the writer of ‘Hebrews’ all exhort faithfulness to the Gospel and warn against red herrings and blind alleys. Where there is room for manoeuvre is in day-to-day living: food and drink, ‘holy days’, fasting, marriage, celibacy, “I do not have a command from the Lord” says Paul about marriage, (1 Cor. 7:25) “but I give my opinion” – and most would feel free to discuss and argue it through.

And what of Jesus himself? Since his use of parables in teaching shows that he expected people to think for themselves and not to look for clear cut patterns of behaviour to which they could give blind obedience or open rebellion, and since he himself challenged the institutional religion of his day, it would seem that the church must be prepared to put itself among the matters of day-to-day living where there is room for manoeuvre. Can this really be so? The church is the Body of Christ, entrusted with the continuing mission of Christ. Nevertheless, as C.K. Barrett points out, “the Church is most central in the purpose of God when it sees itself as merely peripheral”³ Edward Schillebeeckx expresses the same truth: “Tradition is solidified experience which calls for renewed experiences if it is to become a living and attractive challenge and call for others.”⁴

Is the implication then that ordained ministers in all their

degrees of hierarchy, that authority, sacramental understanding, and all that has been fought for (even with shedding of blood) and built up through the centuries should be regarded as peripheral, debatable, even expendable? Schillebeeckx makes an interesting observation: Western churches, he says, are subject to a subtle form of persecution: "Prosperous Western society takes them gently by the arm and at the same time hinders them fatally." Our Western culture, he goes on, "also makes us, religious and ministers stealthily but surely technologists in religious and church affairs."⁵ If those involved in LEPs are not to be such technologists par excellence they must, in the fellowship of shared leadership and within the shared ministry of the whole local company of believers, wrestle with the key issues here highlighted by asking "What is our vision?" Is it to produce a logical structure as a satisfying end product? Or is it to enable the transformation of individual lives, and thus of society, by the powerful and effective proclamation of Jesus Christ?

Margaret Mascall

1. C.K. Barrett: *Church, Ministry, and Sacraments in the New Testament* Paternoster Press 1985 p. 13.
2. C.K. Barrett: op. cit p. 78.
3. C.K. Barrett: op. cit p. 100.
4. Edward Schillebeeckx: *God among us* SCM 1983 ch. 29 p 195.
5. Edward Schillebeeckx: op. cit p. 196.

CHAPTER 9

THESE DENOMINATIONS!

One of the difficulties encountered in ecumenical work is that we do not all have a ready grasp of the ways in which our churches differ in practical matters, quite apart from “deep differences of conscience”! This is felt all the more keenly by the minister or priest suddenly asked to share the life of an LEP and in consequence being required to care for people of another denomination.

So often we use language differently. For example, “offertory” for some is the offering of gifts of money, while for others it has a liturgically specialist meaning associated with the eucharist.

Sometimes we follow our normal practice only to find we have inadvertently given offence to a fellow Christian. For example, what happens to bread and wine not consumed during the communion? Some churches reserve it for giving communion to the sick, others arrange it so that it is consumed at once, others dispose of it differently!

In order to help people to find their way through the maze (or the minefield!) we now provide some guidelines to the ethos and practice of the five churches most involved in LEPs. These are necessarily short, and will not provide too much detail, so we wish to emphasise that if one is unsure in any matter it is wise to seek advice.

In particular, in liturgical practice it is a good idea to seek help from a minister or priest of the other denomination. Do not be afraid of asking a member of the sponsoring body for this kind of help. It alerts them to a need they may not have realised required to be met.

Advice may also be sought from the Ecumenical Officer for England at the BCC if you do not have an ecumenical officer locally.

The sections which follow have been put together in the same order, to make reference easier; i.e. decision making, ministry, worship, initiation, eucharist, and sensitivities.

SECTION 1: THE BAPTIST UNION

1. Decision Making

With its doctrine of the gathered community, the ultimate authority for a Baptist Church, which is regulated by its Trust Deed and Rules, is the local Church Meeting. There has, therefore, to be reference back to the Church Meeting for all major decisions. This may take place monthly and all those on the Membership Roll are eligible to attend. It also appoints men and, in most cases, women to serve for a specific term as deacons, who with the minister form a partnership to ensure the good ordering and care of the fellowship.

Though autonomous, Baptist Churches normally associate together in larger units, of which the Association (which is the oldest) is usually county size, and the Union national. Associations are grouped together in larger administrative Areas, of which there are twelve. Each Area has a General Superintendent who represents the Union and is available to offer advice and guidance. The Baptist Union meets as an Assembly once a year, to which each member Church may send its Minister and other representatives. The life of the denomination in between times is regulated by the Baptist Union Council. The role of the General Secretary has greater importance than that of the annually elected President.

Churches choose to belong to the Association and to the Union, and some can be in one and not the other, though they usually join both. Neither the Association nor the Union has authority over the local Church, but joining implies acceptance of responsibility to share in mutual fellowship, support and encouragement.

2. Ministry

It is the Church Meeting that calls a man or woman to be its minister, normally without time limit. It may also terminate a call! Unless it is Home Mission Fund aided, a Baptist Church has to meet the full costs of its minister's salary, housing and working expenses. (Churches subscribe to the Home Mission Fund as they are able and inclined, but a per capita figure is recommended annually.)

Most Baptist ministers do not adopt a distinctive style of dress, though some wear a gown, Geneva or academic (with or

without hood), to conduct worship. A very few will don a cassock to take services. Some ministers also wear a clerical collar for everyday use.

3. Worship

Two Sunday services are normal, one in the morning geared to families, with most churches providing a Sunday School concurrently, and one in the evening often angled towards youth. Services consist of prayers, hymns, scripture readings and a sermon, by which great store is set, its anticipation and analysis entered into with relish! Where a church has a minister, he or she will usually conduct the worship at least three out of every four Sundays a month. Other churches rely on lay preachers. The degree to which a Church has been affected by liturgical renewal will depend on its minister's interests.

4. Baptism and Church Membership

There is no particular age when a candidate is expected to be ready for Believers' Baptism, though most would probably be in their mid-teens. The criterion is an ability to make a declaration of a personal faith in, and commitment to, Jesus Christ. Baptismal services occur as the need arises after suitable preparation by the minister, or by other members appointed by the deacons.

They usually take place in a baptistry in the Church, though swimming pools, rivers and the sea have sometimes been used! In a Church baptistry, the water is normally warmed by portable immersion heaters to take off the chill! Prior to the baptism, the minister publicly questions each candidate: 'Do you acknowledge Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord?' *I do.* 'Do you promise with the help of the Holy Spirit to serve him in the church and in the world unto your life's end?' *I do.*

The minister then descends into the water and the candidates, now bare footed follow, one at a time. The women are dressed in simple baptismal gowns, with weighted hems and the men in white shirts and trousers. The Minister may be dressed as the candidates are, or with waders under a preaching gown.

In the water, the minister will say to each candidate: '*Christian Name*', upon a profession of your faith and at your own request I baptise you in the name of the Father, the Son

and the Holy Spirit.' The candidate is then immersed, either from standing up or kneeling, until the water momentarily covers the head.

As each candidate is baptised, it is customary for the congregation to sing two lines of an appropriate hymn, e.g. 'True-hearted, whole-hearted.' The post-baptismal hymn is often 'O Jesus, I have promised.'

The new Christians are received into membership with the Right Hand of Fellowship or by the Laying on of Hands at Communion, which either follows baptism or on a succeeding Sunday.

Many Churches also allow membership on the basis of a public declaration without Baptism, i.e. on 'Profession of Faith'. Every application for membership must be approved by the Church Meeting.

5. Communion

Baptist Churches usually celebrate Communion (sometimes referred to as The Lord's Supper) twice a month during or after a morning and evening service. The Deacons take it in turn to prepare the table with cubes of bread or a common loaf on patens, a symbolic chalice and individual cups filled with non-alcoholic wine in trays on a white cloth.

Communion is normally conducted by the minister, though a senior deacon or visiting preacher, lay or ordained, may preside in his or her absence. At the Communion table the deacons are seated on either side of the minister and assist in the administration, taking the elements to the people in their places. These are received and consumed in silence, or to the accompaniment of a suitable voluntary. Usually the bread is eaten as it is received and the cup retained so that all may drink it together. In common with other Free Church people, Baptists may well find it difficult to go forward to take Communion and to receive from a Common Cup.

There is no set form of liturgy, but the pattern and wording of I Corinthians 11 is normally adhered to with the Prayer or Prayers of Thanksgiving usually offered by one of the deacons.

It is usual in all but closed membership churches (i.e. open only to those baptised as believers) for an invitation to be given at the beginning of the service that 'our Table is open to

all who love the Lord'. Such an invitation extends to all, whether or not any public profession of faith leading to membership (of any tradition) has been made.

After the service the unconsumed bread may be consigned to the open air, the remaining wine returned to the bottle and the vessels washed.

6. Sensitivities

Baptists place great emphasis on freedom of conscience. This can create difficulties for other denominations when those baptised in infancy request Believers' Baptism! Baptists by and large, though, do not accept that the baptism of infants is a variant of the baptism of believers.

Many Baptist Churches also accept as members those dedicated as infants who later make a 'Profession of Faith' and who have, therefore, missed out on any experience of baptism.

They regard evangelism as normative, encouraging and developing all forms of youth and missionary work.

Gethin Abraham-Williams

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SECTION 2: THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

1. Decision Making

The range of thought and practice in the Church of England is so considerable as to make this an almost impossible contribution and it must be therefore one man's view! Each of the forty-three dioceses in the Church of England has its own ethos, and the stamp of the Diocesan Bishop still may be fairly considerable. Episcopal and synodical patterns of authority are combining, but at different speeds and in a subtle variety of ways. The elected Diocesan Synod is the main decision making body, both for local matters and for those referred from the General Synod. The Diocesan Synod is elected by the Deanery Synod members and not by the parishes themselves.

Over recent years the Deanery (which averages between fifteen to twenty parishes) has been growing in importance. In some places a great deal depends on a parish priest's relationship with the Rural Dean, who in many cases can exercise considerable leadership. He is now generally chosen by his fellow clergy, and more and more pastoral and administrative work is conducted through the Rural Dean and the Deanery and its Synod. Members of Deanery Synod are elected by the Parish Annual Church Meeting as is the Parochial Church Council which is the decision making body in every parish. Anyone over 16 who wishes to be a parish elector can be on the Parish Electoral Roll.

2. Ministry

Within their parish most parsons relate well to the many lay people with whom they share their ministry; the days of the autocrat are numbered! The Parochial Church Council, the churchwardens, the readers, and other church officers all play a vital part within the parish, and few clergy would make important decisions without consulting them. The number of assistant clergy has fallen in many areas, although the number of women in ministry is now rising. There is some confusion over lay ministries (deacons male and female, readers, sometimes elders, pastoral assistants, parish stewards). These developments are attempts to find ways of sharing ministry, but as yet no one pattern has emerged. In the main lay ministers function only with the agreement of the Vicar/Rector under his direction.

In many areas now there are team ministries established under the Pastoral Measure. Most are teams of ordained clergy with a rector as leader in team with team vicars. Some include lay ministers (see above).

In a large parish (the average parish is 7,000 inhabitants and an electoral roll of about 130) the parson will spend a lot of his time in "sacramental evangelism" following up baptisms, weddings and funerals. In many town parishes the average month may well bring nine or ten baptisms, six weddings and a dozen funerals, most of these now taken by him at the crematorium. Some see this as the staple diet of parochial work, but a few feel that it diverts them from more useful activity.

If the Vicar/Rector has a "parochial approach" he will usually welcome these contacts, even though sometimes they are pretty tenuous and seem on the surface to produce very little. It is expected that in future about half of parish clergy will probably feel able to remarry at least some divorced people, and this will increase still further the burden of marriage preparation. This type of pastoral work will take up a considerable portion of any Anglican parson's time, as will sick visiting in hospital and home. Depending on the size of the parish he will try to follow up information about illness and also visit some of the newcomers. Lay visiting schemes certainly exist, but still tend to be affected by the "Vicar hasn't been" syndrome. It has to be said that both individuals and some corporate bodies (City Councils, School Governors etc.) have still "community expectations" about the Vicar and his role.

3. Worship

Many (but not all) clergy still base their spiritual pattern on the daily offices (morning and evening prayer) although not always now in the church itself. A few will have a daily Eucharist, and most at least one midweek service of Communion, sometimes for special groups like shoppers or the elderly. In addition a parson may have up to a dozen monthly house Communion for individuals or small groups.

Sunday services fall into three main groups. 1) Communion (often an 8 o'clock said service and a 10 o'clock sung one). 2) Matins (now comparatively rare) and Evensong (still fairly

common) and 3) family and parade worship. In most cases baptisms are integrated into one of these. At a guess 85% of Anglicans worship before Sunday lunch and 15% afterwards! Children's work varies considerably, but there is a growing move towards family worship and away from separate Sunday Schools. Where buildings can be adapted fairly easily, children's worship and instruction often go on alongside adult worship on a Sunday morning.

Clergy dress in church does not now raise the temperature as much as it used to! Cassock and surplice (or the increasingly popular cassock alb) is the norm, with stoles for Communion, and hood and scarf for Matins and Evensong. Perhaps one-tenth of Anglican clergy (mainly Evangelicals) will not wear stoles. About a quarter would normally use vestments (i.e. chasuble, alb and stole) for the Eucharist. This is partly a mark of churchmanship but also one very much of local tradition. In these churches Reservation of the Sacrament and Penance will probably be observed.

4. Baptism and Confirmation

The Church of England still baptises a large number of the nation's babies but in many cases there is careful preparation and follow up. There are some rigorists who will only baptise church-going parents' children.

Confirmation is the norm for admission to the Holy Communion but in some places children are admitted (on a trial basis) to Communion while still in training. Sometimes 10 year olds are confirmed but the more normal age is 13–14. Confirmations are usually an annual event but are not always held in every church.

5. Holy Communion

Although only an ordained priest may offer the prayer of consecration in most parishes the administration of Communion involves licensed lay people as well as the clergy. On Sunday bread is quite often used instead of wafers. In a majority of churches the chalice is offered to people either to take or to tip, and again in most cases the person administering the chalice turns and wipes it regularly. Care is almost always taken to see that any of the elements not consumed are either 'reserved' or eaten within the Church immediately after

Communion. Fruit of the grape is used and this is normally alcoholic. The service is always taken from either the Book of Common Prayer or the Alternative Service Book.

6. Sensitivities

The majority of Anglican clergy have a strong personal loyalty to their Bishop, and much prefer personal to committee direction. Clergy also have a strong feeling of parish, even though in cities parish boundaries are hard to find and in rural areas a single incumbent may look after as many as ten small parishes. A strong community responsibility alongside the ecclesiastical one is the hallmark of many Anglican clergy: the concept of the 'parson in his place' is fairly strong even though nowadays he may be prepared to share this responsibility with Roman Catholic and Free Church colleagues.

If an Anglican clergyman is 'a party man' (i.e. Anglo-Catholic or Evangelical) he will have a network of the like-minded and this may be backed up by belonging to a national church organisation. But well over half (and perhaps two-thirds) of the clergy do not align themselves with any party within the Church. The Deanery Chapter (the local clergy meeting) is very important as the one place where a clergyman relates to other clergy of all backgrounds.

Derek Palmer

Information: Your own diocesan office or Board for Mission and Unity, Church House, Dean's Yard, London SW1P 3NZ. Telephone: 01-222 9011 – Canon Derek Palmer

SECTION 3: THE METHODIST CHURCH

1. Decision Making

The annual Conference meeting for ten days in June/July is the supreme authority. It consists of equal numbers of ministers and lay people, most of them elected by the District Synods. All ministers are ordained at services associated with the Conference and by its authority. The work of the church is serviced by seven Divisions responsible to the Conference. Methodists use the term "the Connexion" to refer to the Methodist Church in general and its national network.

The church in Great Britain is divided into 32 Districts each with a Chairman and each holding a twice-yearly Synod. They are a link between the Conference and the Circuits. Every church is part of a Circuit under the care of a Superintendent minister. The Superintendent is endowed with considerable authority, more than the District Chairman. He or she could be said to be the episcopal figure, and can do much to promote or to thwart the progress of an LEP. The Circuit Meeting elects representatives to the District Synod, invites ministers, and co-ordinates the work of local churches, each of which is represented on it.

The life of the local church including the management of property is ordered by a Church Council. Larger churches also have Committees responsible to the Council. The financial year ends on August 31st.

2. Ministry

All ministers are in the last resort under the direction of the Stationing Committee, which presents its recommendations for the 'stations' for the year beginning in September for approval by the Conference. Since all ministers move at that time there are no inter regna in the circuits except in cases of emergency. A minister is appointed to the Circuit and not to an individual church, and he or she can be redeployed within the circuit under the direction of the Superintendent and after consultation. It also means that a minister is expected to preach occasionally in other churches in the circuit besides his or her own.

A minister frequently has pastoral charge of a number of churches. The conduct of worship is therefore considerably dependent on 14,000 trained and accredited Local Preachers, and the Circuit Plan is an indispensable feature of Methodist life. It indicates who is planned to take Sunday services in each church, as well as providing a circuit directory and being a vehicle for other information.

A probationer minister (i.e. an ordinand) does not celebrate Holy Communion except by special permission in places where there would otherwise be inadequate provision, usually in rural areas. In such circumstances lay persons may also be authorized to celebrate. Except for such cases of pastoral necessity the celebration of Holy Communion is reserved for the ordained ministry.

The Methodist Church was the first to make constitutional provision for ministers of other denominations whose ministries are recognized to serve as Methodist ministers. The Conference by a standing vote each year accords them Recognized and Regarded status, which gives them the privileges and responsibilities of ministry and places them under Methodist discipline.

3. Worship

The 'hymn sandwich' remains normative, i.e. a service without resort to a printed liturgy. The minister or local preacher has considerable freedom in devising its shape and content, although there are often local conventions to be followed, for example the place of children in the service, and the involvement of members of the congregation in the reading of lessons. The sermon is still given priority. Many churches and preachers now observe the Lectionary to be found in the Methodist Service Book. "Methodism was born in song" and hymnody continues to be a vital element in worship and to be a foremost means by which Methodists express their faith and experience.

There are no regulations regarding the dress of ministers or local preachers. A majority of ministers probably wear cassock and gown, some with hood or scarf, but a preaching gown or a plain suit are still common.

4. Baptism and Confirmation

Christian parents are regarded as being under solemn obligation to present their children for baptism, which is regarded as an unrepeatable act. Baptism is normally administered in the context of public worship, following the rite in the Methodist Service Book. In infant baptism much weight is given to the promises made by the congregation and the parents; godparents (called sponsors) are not essential, but when present are asked to promise to "support these parents in the christian upbringing of this child". A candle is often presented after a baptism.

Confirmation or Reception into full membership follows, usually for those of mature age, and may include one or both of two symbolic acts derived from the New Testament – the laying on of hands and the right hand of fellowship. The local minister usually presides and confirms. The names of those

confirmed are placed on the church membership roll and are transferred to another church on removal to another area. An annual ticket of membership is provided.

The annual Covenant Service is a prized treasure initiated by John Wesley, providing a means for rededication and renewal of membership pledges.

5. Eucharist

In urban churches Holy Communion may be celebrated on one Sunday morning and one Sunday evening each month, but less often in rural areas. There has been a noticeable revival of eucharistic worship in recent years, and it is now no longer added to the "main" service. The tradition of the "open table" is still valued. The rite in the Methodist Service Book which contains those services authorized by the Conference, is usually used, but some churches prefer a non-liturgical service on occasions. The minister may decide how the service is to be conducted, position at the Communion table, etc., but he or she will be sensitive to local traditions. It is usual for a whole row or "table" of communicants to wait and to be dismissed together before returning to their seats. Bread and unfermented wine are used, and individual glasses are still the general rule. Any remaining elements are "disposed of reverently".

6. Sensitivities

There is still some suspicion of hierarchical forms of leadership in some quarters in Methodism. 'Bishop', 'priest' and 'altar' continue to be terms that are held in suspicion by some. 'Minister' is preferred to 'clergyman'.

Methodists remain proud of their own form of democratic process and their Connexional system, enabling the strong to help the weak.

The social conscience characteristic of earlier Methodism continues to be reflected in the prohibition of alcohol and gambling on Methodist premises, and an active concern about a wide range of social and political issues. Methodists do not always take kindly to being described as a gathered church; something of the spirit of Wesley who said 'The World is my parish' continues to be expressed in an active concern for the whole community in which each church is called to be a missionary presence.

Where Methodists are in minority partnerships with Anglicans the latter need to be aware of the fear of absorption which is often present, as Methodists may need to be in the case of URC or Baptist partners.

Bibliography and Information

Guidelines for LEPs: Methodist Procedures 25p inc. postage

Standing Orders are found in:

The Constitutional Discipline and Practice of the Methodist Church.

Information: Committee of Local Ecumenical Development (Convenor) Rev. Ivan J. Selman 1 Central Buildings, Westminster, London SW1H 9NH Telephone 01-222 8010

SECTION 4: THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Foreword: Two things ought to be said by way of preface to what follows: first that there are, within the Roman Catholic Church in England, local variations in practice and in the interpretation of laws; second that as the ecumenical movement develops the Roman Catholic Church, like other churches, is by no means static.

1. Decision Making

In many ways, Roman Catholic structures are not unlike those of the Church of England in their general shape, though there are notable differences in the way that some structures are used. Both churches have dioceses, deaneries and parishes, though there is no RC equivalent to the Anglican archdeaconry. Some RC parishes are very large, and in rural areas one such parish may include well over thirty Anglican parishes within its boundaries.

The effects of this on ecumenical co-operation have to be borne in mind. The same consideration applies, of course, to many Free Church congregations which have to relate to large numbers of Anglican ones. But Free Church disciplines allow a greater degree of sharing in ministry, both among themselves and with Anglicans, than is presently possible for Roman Catholics.

Nowadays most Roman Catholics are accustomed to the presence of pastoral councils of clergy and laity in their

dioceses, deaneries and parishes. This is important, for example when there is a question of getting support for a local covenant. But unlike, say, Anglican parochial church councils these Roman Catholic structures are not decision-making bodies. They are advisory to the parish priest or diocesan bishop concerned, with whom the power to make decisions lies.

2. Ministry

The coming of the permanent deacon in the last two decades has gradually made the Roman Catholic community used to an ordained minister who is not celibate. At the same time, Catholics have got accustomed to lay people, men and women alike, who are not in holy orders but who have been commissioned by the diocesan bishop as ministers to assist in the administration of holy communion. One way and another, the Roman Catholic understanding of ministry is no longer confined to that of a male, celibate priest.

3. Worship

That the celebration of Mass, the Eucharist, is central to Roman Catholic worship is well known. One (unintended) result of this is that other Christians sometimes complain that RCs are not interested in other services. Latter-day papal teaching on frequent communion, and more recently the introduction of evening Masses, combined with a falling-off in some of the traditional evening devotions has all meant that many Roman Catholics are not used to non-eucharistic worship, whether their own or other people's.

But the great sensitivity connected with the Eucharist is this: Roman Catholic teaching strongly emphasises the connection between Eucharist and church. So Roman Catholics are not allowed to receive at the altars of their fellow-Christians nor, as a general rule, to invite others to share their own Eucharist. (Where exceptions are made these are on an individual basis and do not affect local ecumenical situations). It must be added that there are now many Roman Catholics actively working for more liberal laws and for the more generous interpretation of the existing ones.

4. Baptism and Confirmation

The Roman Catholic Church regards Baptism, Confirmation

and Holy Eucharist as the sacraments of initiation; if a person not previously baptised is received into the church he or she receives them in that order. But in ordinary practice, most Roman Catholic children, after being baptised as infants, make their First Holy Communion at the age of seven and are not confirmed until much later; customs differ, but often nowadays Confirmation is not received until people are well into the teens.

5. Communion

See under 3 “Worship”

6. Sensitivities

In the same way that it was said of the Mass in 3 above that many Roman Catholics are actively working for more liberal laws and for the more generous interpretation of the existing ones, so it may be said of another serious matter which causes hurt and bad feeling: the Roman Catholic treatment of ‘mixed marriages’ – the very term is an unhappy one. What was said in a general way in the Foreword needs to be reiterated here: there are many variations in the way that laws are interpreted. Basically, the Roman Catholic Church is trying to remind its members of their Christian and Catholic heritage as something to be treasured; it is ‘for’ the Church’s faith rather than ‘against’ other Christians. But there is no area which needs a more delicate pastoral touch – from ministers and people on both sides. And Roman Catholics sometimes wish that some of their fellow Christians might be more positive in stressing the importance of their own Christian heritage.

Another, very different, Roman Catholic practice is that of sacramental confession. In common with all Christians, they believe that it is God who forgives sin, and that he forgives all those who turn to him. Nonetheless, the RC Church attaches importance to what is now called the Sacrament of Reconciliation, in which a person makes his or her confession to a priest and receives sacramental absolution.

Turning to some more general matters of worship, we may note that the official worship of the Church is based on the liturgical year, starting on the First Sunday of Advent with preparations for the coming of Christ, continuing with the main events of his life, death and resurrection and the sending of the Holy Spirit. Into this framework are built many other

feasts, notably those expressing the Church's sense of the communion of saints and the special place in it of Mary the Mother of the Lord. The Stations of the Cross, statues and candles – the latter in less profusion than once upon a time – are features of Roman Catholic churches.

In shared buildings, difficulties can be felt by the presence or absence of some of these things. But a little imagination and ingenuity can work wonders. There is one successful shared church where the cross behind the altar is a plain one, rather than a crucifix, to meet the wishes of many of the congregation. When the Roman Catholics celebrate Mass, a server brings the crucifix in procession and rests it on a stand near the altar throughout the celebration; everyone is satisfied!

Dennis Corbishley

Information

Your diocesan bishop or Ecumenical Committee, 38 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1PD. Telephone 01-804 5612.

SECTION 5: THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

1. Decision Making

The United Reformed Church is a recent union of three churches with distinct patterns of structure and practice – the Congregational Church and Presbyterian Church of England in 1972, and the Churches of Christ in 1981. Local congregations frequently share some of the experience of LEPs in that individual members will have grown up with an unequal mix of the traditions and sensibilities of the three churches. Thus the variety of expectation and approach may well be greater than in most other churches.

Authority and care are exercised by the General Assembly (national), Provincial Synods and District Councils. The District Council has the responsibility to enquire pastorally into the situation of each local church under its oversight at least every five years – the Quinquennial visitation. In the case of some LEPs Council will delegate this to a Sponsoring Body.

In each local church elders share responsibility with the minister for regular pastoral care of the membership and, in

conjunction with the church meeting, lead and direct the life of the congregation. Elders are lay people, elected by the church meeting and ordained for life by the local minister to specific pastoral and managerial responsibilities in the local congregation and in the councils of the church. Among all URC members there is a strong expectation of lay involvement in decision making at all levels.

2. Ministry

The URC ordains both men and women to the ministry of Word and Sacraments. Most ministers are full-time stipendiary ministers but an increasing number of non-stipendiary Auxiliary Ministers are now serving in local churches, chaplaincies and a variety of less formally structured pastoral settings.

3. Worship

Worship in the URC represents the same anomaly as in other Free Churches – a proud insistence on freedom from the restrictions of a set order, printed and prescribed, alongside a fairly restricted expectation of the structure and content of the normal service. This normal service is basically the read and preached word set in the context of hymns and prayers with great emphasis laid on biblical proclamation. The response of the people is usually expressed through the hymns. There is a strong tradition of metrical psalms especially in the former Presbyterian strand of the church, but little of sung psalms or canticles. Many members of most congregations will be happy with a service entirely conducted by the minister, but there is an increasing acceptance and expectation of opportunity for congregational participation and response that is more than token or ritual. Ministerial dress may vary from lounge suit and tie to cassock, bands, hood, gown and even occasionally coloured stole. Generally it involves clerical collar and gown with either suit or cassock. Some ministers may wear an alb for Holy Communion, but this is rare.

4. Baptism and Confirmation

Baptism in the URC was originally infant baptism, frequently observing the Reformed tradition of baptising only the children of church members. Since 1981 and the union with the Churches of Christ, both adult and infant baptism have

been practised – along with the undertaking that the circumstances of infant baptism should not be such as to minimise the significance of the rite. All traditions in the URC regard baptism as an unrepeatable act but special provisions are contained in the Scheme of Union for pastoral reconciliation in the event where ‘differences of conviction within the one Church result in personal conflict of conscience’. No-one is required to administer nor submit to a form of baptism to which he/she has a conscientious objection.

Church membership/confirmation usually involves people of mature age – rarely under about 16. Reception is usually by a local minister or a senior elder in the church. The emphasis is on profession and commitment recognised and celebrated in a local relationship.

5. Communion

Holy Communion is central to the life of the church – but this is expressed in different ways. The Presbyterian tradition is of quarterly communion, the Churches of Christ of weekly and the Congregationalists somewhere in between. Presidency is normally by an ordained minister or an elder authorised to officiate in case of pastoral necessity. Communion is in both kinds, using leavened bread and (usually) unfermented wine of various sorts. The elements are taken to the seated members by the elders. Generally wine is served in small glasses – but LEPs may find use of both glasses and chalice or chalice alone. There is a traditional invitation to ‘all who love and acknowledge the lordship of Christ’. In practice this generally means people of mature age and often only church members participate; there is, however, a growing and animated discussion in the URC about the place of children at communion. The bread and wine may be consumed by each person as and when it is distributed or by all together when the whole company has been served; local patterns vary. There is very little concept of consecration of the elements, and what there is is functional. Thus left-over bread may be fed to the birds and wine poured back into the bottle for further use. One “takes communion” rather than “communicates”; the rite is referred to as Holy Communion and, occasionally, The Lord’s Supper – “Eucharist” and “Celebration” are terms used only by very liturgical or ecumenical URCs.

Peter Poulter

Information

In the event of uncertainty or dispute concerning URC understandings or practice, reference should be made to the District Secretary or Provincial Moderator. The committee responsible for ecumenical affairs is the World Church and Mission Committee serviced from Church House, 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT. Telephone 01-837 7661.

APPENDIX A

AN ECUMENICAL CURRICULUM: THE HISTORY AND THEOLOGY OF THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

*Report on a seminar held at Ripon College, Cuddesdon
January – March 1984*

*Martin Conway
April 1984*

The Invitation

In the hope of finding ways by which ordinands could be more adequately prepared for future service in Local Ecumenical Projects (LEPs), the Consultative Committee for such projects in England (CCLEPE) approached some months ago the Association for Centres of Adult Theological Education (ACATE). Out of the resulting conversation one suggestion was that a pilot effort at an element in the curriculum of a theological college, covering the central questions of the modern ecumenical movement, should be attempted.

An outline was drawn up, on the basis of comments from several people, by John Matthews (Appendix 1) – for a 10 week course in ecumenics. I was then asked if I could find a way of running this at Ripon College, Cuddesdon. A possible slot in the college's offerings was in fact available for the next term. I therefore drew up (Appendix II) a more detailed Provisional Agenda and Booklist. There was not to be time for the case studies and placements that John Matthews had suggested. As well as a more felicitous title, I was aiming at a rather more manageable agenda, and at a booklist that could draw on my own library. (The college library turned out to possess the books listed at the end, but only a few of those given for the individual sessions. The planning needed to have been done a few weeks earlier in order for the library to buy in the more essential texts).

The Experience

1. The group sharing in the seminar consisted of seven recent graduates in theology and three older people training for ordination after ten years or more in a lay career. No-one had

had major, specific experience of inter-church partnership; the three older ones had all in various ways had dealings with people in different churches and with local councils of churches; among the younger, two had had valuable experience of a local meeting-point. Any generalisation will be rough, since each person is unique, but it rather quickly became clear that where the older ones approached the ecumenical movement with expectations of something pretty positive and worth encouraging, the younger were more likely to be questioning, not to say sceptical.

2. The time allotted was the first hour of a Tuesday morning, 9 – 10, with at least two or three having to leave for another class promptly at 10. On virtually every occasion this was too short to allow for discussion to go at all adequately into the questions thrown up.

3. The outline agenda quickly proved too heavy. Several people were adamant that they couldn't possibly do as much reading as it appeared to require, even if the books could be shared out. Nor was there willingness to undertake three distinct introductions each time – on the one occasion when they happened as foreseen, the time for discussion was near nil. So we settled for a single introduction to the main question listed. All members bar one took a turn at giving the introduction, on the basis of the text suggested, but little wider reading was done.

The agenda also proved too far-flung. Perhaps because it was only in the fourth session that we came to anything directly within the experience of the group, there grew up a sense that we were talking about large-scale and far-away things that seemed irrelevant.

4. The seminar also undoubtedly took on a particular colouring from my share, as both an expert (who alone knew what the initials and jargon really meant, let alone about those far-off conferences and bureaucracies), and an enthusiast who is committed to the theology and the positions they enshrine. I'm hardly the best person to know just what this meant to the others, but I became aware that I was anything but the 'objective' teacher of factual material. For all of us, our various commitments were brought into the discussions, if sometimes more clearly and usefully, sometimes less so! In particular, one member twice came out with strongly negative

judgements on material he had been reading, judgements that to me were in no way merited, but which he had clearly been thinking about with considerable intensity. When pressed, this difference in approach could be in part traced back to the fact that several members know themselves to be standing in the 'catholic wing' of the Church of England – another member pointed out that this would inevitably make them look quizzically at a body with such a Protestant basis and tradition as the WCC, let alone one which cannot but constitute a rival focus of universality to the Pope. Time never stretched for anything like adequate discussion of all this, but at least it indicates that any future such course would do well to allow for careful and open facing of these sorts of tensions.

5. The most constant areas of question that came up, time after time, and which, while we went into them as far as we could, inevitably remain less than fully clarified, are those that circle round:

- a) diversity/pluralism/freedom and the fear of any imposed organisational unity that could only be a limiting uniformity/control;
- b) integrity of belief/freedom of religion and the problems of any evangelism that seems not to take the other person's belief as genuine;
- c) 'modern thought' and the necessity of subjecting any biblical tradition and any apparent dogma to rigorous, critical testing.

I list them like that, in that each of these regularly slid into one or more of the others. It was clearly not the case that previous theological studies, or the rest of Ripon College's curriculum (though the 7 theology graduates are in their first year at Ripon) had provided much if anything by way of agreed base for these discussions. In particular one member commented that the deliberately rapid and wide-ranging survey of biblical passages concerned with unity that I had given in the first session (from Adam to the city with 12 gates), seemed so uncritical as not to respect the group's earlier training in the critical method.

6. The glaring lack was of persons of other churches or other backgrounds; it would have been a much more real and significant experience to have pursued the actual ecumenical movement among us. To talk about the movement, in a circle

of people all in the same church, however varied in personal outlook, is not at all the same thing. Next best would have been one or more visits that we could have paid together, to a different church, to an LEP, to the place of worship of another faith, etc., though any one such might have restricted our discussions more than appropriate to a deliberately wide-ranging course.

APPENDIX A(i)

SUGGESTED 10 WEEK COURSE IN ECUMENICS

This outline can be either a course of lectures or a sustained project with presentations by course members. It could, of course, be supplemented by the study of documents and written work. Because several colleges now encourage it I have included possible placements which could alternatively be case studies without an actual visit. The course has two introductory sessions covering theology and history, six more thematic sessions, and two sessions which try to draw the course together.

1. The Pressure of our Common Calling

To take this phrase of Visser 't Hooft's to give a theological backcloth covering:

- biblical material and the period of the Church Councils
- post-reformation theories of where unity lies and how it is to be maintained

2. A Moment in History : Edinburgh 1910

- the streams that led to it
- the streams that flowed from it – Life & Work, Faith & Order, International Missionary Council, etc.
- the pioneer figures who followed it through

3. From Prophets to Churches

- to chart the shift in the development of the World Council of Churches
 - to note the Catholic pioneers and the importance of Vatican II
- Possible case study: A biographical study of Visser 't Hooft or Congar

Possible placement: Attendance at the Ecumenical Commission/BCC etc.

4. The International Pressure

- from mission field to partnership
- the story of aid, from relief through development to political action
- the agenda that resulted from the churches of the South; race, violence, etc.

Possible case study: The Special Fund of the Programme to Combat Racism

Possible placement: With a development agency

5. The Debate about Evangelism

- from the IMC through the Division of World Mission and Evangelism, Mexico-Bangkok-Melbourne
- from the evangelical societies, Berlin-Lausanne-Pattaya
- from Vatican II through the 1974 Synod and on to the present papacy

Possible case study: The story of the NIE

Possible placement: An inner city parish or church

6. From Council to Neighbourhood

- the institutions: Free Church Federal Council, British Council of Churches, CCLEPE, etc.
- the process: from New Delhi via Nottingham to LEPs and shared buildings
from Vatican II via the Liverpool Congress, prayer, study, local action, local covenants, missions etc.

Possible case study: an LEP or sponsoring body

Possible placement: in a shared building

7. Parallel Developments

- world confessional bodies and bi-lateral conversations
- the charismatic movement and alternative ecumenism

Possible case study: The ARCIC conversations and final report

Possible placement: In an ashram or community house

8. Schemes of Union

- to trace some international developments from the Church of South India onwards.
- to look at successes and failures and where the blocks are
- to look at covenanting in the British Isles as a whole

Possible case study: The New Zealand scheme

Possible placement: With one of those following up faith and order issues or with an ecumenical officer

9. Is there an Ecumenical Theology?

- the changing perspective of faith and order questions from 1927 to 1983 (including Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry)
- the significance of Catholic and Orthodox contributions
- the increasing significance of theology in the Third World

10. What is the Ecumenical Movement Today?

(I am indebted to a paper of Martin Conway's for this division)

- classical ecumenism working away at the things that divide
- secular ecumenism finding unity in action for the poor
- cultural ecumenism which tries to break through all the limitations of people's 'local' influence and give it a catholic and universal setting.

John Matthews

November 1 1983

APPENDIX A (ii)

Ripon College, Cuddesdon
January – March 1984 Tuesdays, 9.00 – 10.00
**THE HISTORY AND THEOLOGY OF THE
ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT**

Martin Conway

1. (Jan. 17) **Introduction and Planning**
The Pressure of our Common Calling
Evidence on the vocation to unity in OT, NT, early councils
For all: *The Pressure of our Common Calling*, by W.A. Visser 't Hooft, SCM Press 1959.
2. (Jan. 24) **Prophets – Movements – Organisations**
The various beginnings of the ecumenical movement
Introductions on John Mott, Wm Paton, Paul Couturier
For all: *Men of Unity* by S. Neill. SCM Press, 1960.
For introducers: biographies of Mott by Matthews and Hopkins, of Paton by Sinclair and Jackson, of Couturier by Villain and Curtis
3. (Jan. 31) **The World Council of Churches as Pioneer and Model**
Introductions on the 'classical', 'secular' and 'cultural' strands in the Council's work
For all: the four Letters in *And Yet It Moves* by Ernst Lange (Christian Journals, Belfast, 1979)
For introducers: classical – the Lima Text on *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* WCC, 1982
secular – *Towards a Church of the Poor* ed. J. de Santa Ana WCC, 1979
cultural – *Can Churches be Compared*, by S. Mackie WCC, 1970 or *A Voice for Women* by S. Herzel WCC, 1981
4. (Feb. 7) **Successes and Failures on the British Scene**
Introductions on the evidence from councils of churches, from church union negotiations and from the Roman Catholic church
For all: *Unity – Why Not Yet?* ed. M. Conway BCC, 1980 especially part 1

For introducers: *Local Councils of Churches Today* BCC, 1971

A New Hope for Christian Unity by J. Huxtable Collins, Fount, 1977

National Pastoral Congress Report Catholic Truth Society, 1980 and *The Easter People* St. Paul Pubs, 1980

5. (Feb. 14) **The Horizons of Mission**

How has the ecumenical movement widened and deepened the central theology of mission?

Introductions on the experience of the ecumenical movement in respect of racism, of dialogue with other faiths, with the question of world development

For all: *The Other Side of 1984* by Lesslie Newbigin BCC, 1983 and WCC, 1983

For introducers: *A Small Beginning* by E. Adler WCC 1974, *Racism in Theology, Theology against Racism* WCC, 1975 and *The New Black Presence in Britain* BCC, 1976

Guidelines for Dialogue in Britain BCC, 1983/2 *Poor Yet Making Many Rich* by R. Dickinson WCC, 1982

6. (Feb. 21) **The Debate About Evangelism**

Has the ecumenical movement succeeded in forging a common understanding?

Introductions on the contributions by the WCC, by the conservative evangelicals and by the Roman Catholic Church

For all: *Mission and Evangelism – an ecumenical affirmation* (BCC for WCC, 1983)

For introducers: *Confessing Christ Today*, report of Section I at WCC Nairobi Assembly in *Breaking Barriers*, ed. D. Paton SPCK 1976.

The Lausanne Covenant Evangelical Alliance, 1974; also *Christian Mission in the Modern World* by John Stott, Falcon, 1975 and *Evangelism Today* by W. Hollenweger Christian Journals, 1976

Evangelii Nuntiandi by Pope Paul VI Catholic Truth Society 1976

Evangelism – Convergence and Divergence Nationwide Initiative in Evangelism, 1980

7. (Feb. 28) **Hopes and Goals at the Top Level**

Where is the debate about the proper nature and form of Christ's Church universal?

Introductions on the view of the Christian World Communions in their bi-lateral conversations, on the reaffirmation of the Papacy, and on the search for conciliarity

For all: pp. 329–359 of *Conflict over the Ecumenical Movement* by Ulrich Duchrow WCC, 1981

For introducers: Forum on Bilateral Conversations WCC, 1981

The Bishop of Rome by Jean Tillard SPCK, 1983 and *A Pope for All Christians?* ed. P. McCord SPCK, 1977
Councils, Conciliarity and a Genuinely Ecumenical Council in *Study Encounter* 1974 no. 2

8. (March 6) **Hopes and Goals at the Bottom Level**

Where is the debate about the proper nature and form of the local church?

Introductions on the evidence from the 'preferential option for the poor', from the charismatic movement, and from British local ecumenical projects.

For all: *What is 'a local church truly united'?* by Lesslie Newbigin (Christians Together no. 1)

For introducers: *Starting All Over Again* by J. Vincent WCC, 1981 and *Into the City* by J. Vincent Epworth, 1982 – also de Santa Ana, above 3, *Locusts and Wild Honey* by Rex Davis WCC, 1978 TAP Roots BCC leaflets, nos. 1–19

9. (March 13) **'Ecumenical Commitment: criterion of the authenticity of the Church's life today'**

(Lange)

Where have we reached through this course – and for the rest of our training?

* * *

Aim of the course: to test out Ernst Lange's claim (p. 147/8 of *And Yet It Moves*, see above 3)

"Ecumenism can no longer be toyed with as a mere possibility. It has become the test case of faith. Today there is only one way of putting the four credal marks of the Church into practice, only one way for the Church to be one, holy catholic and apostolic, and that is the ecumenical way."

A secondary aim: to test out for the British Council of Churches and the Association of Centres of Adult Theological Education a possible model course to be recommended to all theological colleges.

Method: seminar, with each session after the first starting from 3 concise context-setting and question-raising contributions.

The books and articles mentioned under 'For all' in each session are the basic reading list. Fuller historical surveys and bibliographies will be found in

A History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517-1948 ed. Ruth Rouse and Stephen Neill, SPCK 1954/67

The Ecumenical Advance - A History of the Ecumenical Movement Vol II ed. Harold Fey, SPCK 1970

The Churches Search for Unity by Barry Till, Penguin/Pelican 1972

For theological synthesis of the ecumenical movement as a whole, in addition to the books mentioned above by Lange and Duchrow, I would especially recommend two by Lesslie Newbigin:

The Reunion of the Church - a defence of the South India Scheme SCM Press, 1948 and (revised, with a new Introduction) '60

The Open Secret - Sketches for a Missionary Theology SPCK, 1978

APPENDIX B

BRISTOL REGIONAL SPONSORING BODY

INDUCTION COURSE 1984

Wednesday 28th November

- 9.00 a.m. Arrive at Almondsbury Conference Centre
- 9.15 a.m. Welcome and Introductions
- 9.30 a.m. Prayers
- 9.45 a.m. The Theology of LEPs
- 11.00 a.m. Coffee
- 11.30 a.m. Unity and Mission
- 1.00 p.m. Lunch
- Free time
- 3.00 p.m. Regional and Local Sponsoring Bodies
- 4.30 p.m. Tea
- 5.00 p.m. Collaborative Ministry
- 6.15 p.m. Worship
- 7.00 p.m. Dinner
- 8.00 p.m. Any Questions

Thursday 29th November

- 8.00 a.m. Breakfast
- 9.00 a.m. Holy Communion
- 9.45 a.m. Different Churches' Understanding of the Church
- 11.00 a.m. Coffee
- 11.20 a.m. Different Churches' Understanding of the Church
– Discussion
- 12.00 noon Membership
- 12.45 p.m. Lunch
- Free time
- 2.30 p.m. Uniting Traditions of Worship
- 4.00 p.m. Tea
- 4.30 p.m. Uniting Traditions of Worship – Discussion
- 5.15 p.m. Open Forum
- 6.00 p.m. Disperse

APPENDIX C

REPORT OF A CONSULTATION ON FINANCE IN LEPs HELD ON 15 MARCH 1984 AT 2 EATON GATE, LONDON SW1

1. The Chairman of CCLEPE, the Revd. Peter Chesney was in the Chair, and CCLEPE's Secretary acted as Secretary to the Consultation.

2. PARTICIPANTS

Baptist Union: Revd. Keith Jones, Mr. David Lovegrove, Revd. David Rowlands.

Church of England: Mr. D.J. Day, Mr. James Brook Turner, Mr. Ronald Last, Mr. David H. Orman, Canon Derek Palmer, Canon Martin Reardon, Revd. Robert Reiss.

Methodist Church: Dr. John E. Pater, Revd. Ivan Selman, Revd. Gordon Simmons.

Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales: Canon Dennis Corbishley, Revd. Vincent Nichols.

United Reformed Church: Mr Michael Currass, Mr. Clem Frank, Revd. John Slow.

3. METHOD OF PROCEDURE

After initial introductions it was agreed that the nine matters enumerated in the paper 'The Financing of LEPs' (CCLEPE/76/15) should form the agenda of the Consultation. In addition to that paper there had been circulated 'An Introduction' by the Secretary, and 'Support of Ministry in Joint Churches' by the Revd. Bernard Thorogood (URC).

Additional papers tabled at the meeting by the Church of England were, 'Finance in LEPs: Anglican Response to Point 2.2', 'Support of Ministry' and 'The Parochial Expenses of the Clergy'.

Two areas were of particular importance, namely, assessing ecumenical congregations for denominational

quotas, and difficulties connected with stipends and clergy expenses. Appendices I and II show how the Churches deal with these matters in terms of their own denominational structures. The Consultation tried to find some advice for those who have to deal with these issues in LEPs.

Another major matter was that of the Ecumenical Development Fund proposed in the 1976 paper 'The Financing of LEPs'.

The other topics were considered, and some were covered under other headings.

This Report will follow the nine topics.

4.1 RELEASING DENOMINATIONAL FUNDS ACROSS DENOMINATIONAL BOUNDARIES

The consensus was that this did not now present so many difficulties as there had been in the past, although there were still isolated cases where difficulty was encountered. The main areas where this is encountered are in the payment of clergy and ministers and in shared buildings. It is now possible to find ways of sharing resources in both areas.

In this connection, the Conference noted that, for legal reasons, it was doubtful whether it was permissible for a minister other than a Church of England clergyman declared by the Bishop to be engaged in the 'cure of souls' (a phrase with a technical meaning) to be paid from the Diocesan Stipends Funds held by the Church Commissioners. This should not in practice, however, give rise to any difficulty, since in all dioceses a substantial proportion of monies for the payment of the clergy was now raised from parishes via the quota; and there was, *prima facie*, no reason why contributions from this local diocesan money should not be paid to Free Church ministers via their usual 'employing' body.

4.2 ASSESSING ECUMENICAL CONGREGATIONS FOR DENOMINATIONAL QUOTAS

Appendix I itemises the way each denomination assesses its own congregations or parishes, and the purposes for which the assessment is made. It will be noticed that

there are variations in respect of the purposes and in the basis on which the assessment is calculated.

It should also be noted that in response to the question "Are there special criteria which are applied to LEPs by your denomination?", the response in each case was "No". Nevertheless, it is also true that they all take the special circumstances of the LEP into consideration.

Concern was felt about duplicate assessments on joint membership rolls. There is a need for a return specifically designed for LEPs which would provide information more accurately for assessments.

A common practice is to assess the LEP on the denominational roll plus a proportion of the 'common membership' roll equal to the ratio of the denominational rolls to each other. For example, in an LEP where the 'A' roll had 120 members on it, the 'B' roll had 60, and the common roll had 45, the quota for 'A' would be on the basis of $120 + 30 = 150$. The 'B' assessment would be $60 + 15 = 75$. Such an equation is satisfactory where the amount asked per member by denominations 'A' and 'B' were identical. Where they are not it might be more equitable to assess the quota on the total membership figure and then to ask for an amount based on the proportion of the denominational figure to the total. So, in the example above denomination 'A' would assess on 225 members but ask only for $\frac{120}{225}$ of the assessment. That would leave the numbers on the common roll unassessed. This could be corrected by asking for an amount based on the proportion of the denomination figure to the total, plus a proportion of the common roll equal to the ratio of that denominational roll to the other(s). So, in our example, denomination 'A' would assess on 225 members and ask for $\frac{120 + 30}{225}$ of the total assessment.

Of course, the calculation becomes more complicated where there are more than two sponsoring denominations, but the principle can still be applied.

4.3 DIFFICULTIES CONNECTED WITH STIPENDS AND CLERGY EXPENSES

4.3.1 Remuneration and expenses

Appendix II shows the variations in remuneration of

clergy and ministers, what expenses are paid and by whom. Housing and expenses of office are commonly a charge on local resources.

The first principle agreed by the members of the Consultation was that the local congregation must be spared fluctuations of financial expectations made by the denominations.

The second principle was that denominations should be willing to allow local solutions to difficulties to be made in this area.

From the information in Appendix II and the foregoing it will be clear that LEPs are faced with many complexities in the matter of remuneration of ministers.

4.3.2 United congregation with more than one minister

What may be said of the united congregation served by two or more ministers of different denominations?

In an Anglican/Free Church congregation it should always be assumed that the Free Church part will represent all the Free Churches since there is mutual recognition of members between the Free Churches. Usually the Free Church denomination will pay the minister according to its own custom. It may, however, be judged right that paying the Free Church minister should be shared by two or more denominations. This might be achieved by the minister's own denomination finding the full stipend, while the other(s) find the expenses. Alternatively, proportions of stipend and expenses could be paid based on numbers of members of each denomination at the start of the project. But in determining how the minister is paid it must be remembered that URC ministers are paid from central funds, while Methodist and Baptist ministers are paid from local funds. Since expenses of office are also a charge on local funds, thought should be given to the ability of the project to be able to meet all these demands, and it may require subsidising from national or other sources.

Similar consideration has to be given where Anglicans share with Free Churches in joint congregations served by two or more ministers. Because Methodists and

Baptists pay their ministers principally from local funds, it may be necessary for an apparently large disproportion to occur between the contribution made by the local congregation to the Free Church minister's stipend and to its diocesan quota. Indeed, it is most likely that there will be a severe limitation on paying a full quota.

4.3.3 Expenses borne locally

Note should be taken of the URC practice of paying the manse lighting and heating costs as part of the stipend, and that this is a charge on the local congregation. So where there is a joint Anglican/URC project, this added large expense borne locally may well affect the ability of the LEP to meet its full diocesan quota and its full contribution to the URC unified appeal.

The pattern of paying expenses of office from local resources is common to all the Churches. Sponsoring Bodies and others having responsibility for oversight of LEPs need to examine closely the ability of the LEP to meet the expenses of more than one minister fully, as well as meeting its other commitments. LEPs may well need grant-aid to meet expenses, or a significant reduction in what is expected of them by way of quota or central denominational requirements.

4.4 CONTRIBUTIONS TO DENOMINATIONAL MISSIONARY SOCIETIES AND CHARITIES

The Consultation was firmly of the opinion that 'outside giving' should be based on a proportion of the LEP's income, and that decisions should be taken within the project about what to take on as charitable giving.

Differences exist between the denominations about how giving to mission at home and overseas is handled. The URC unified appeal covers both. The Methodist Church has a number of separate funds to which local congregations are expected to contribute. It is the Baptist practice that a local congregation pays an annual contribution to the college at which its minister was trained. Anglicans are asked to contribute to clergy training through special contributions to the diocese. The Free Churches each have their own agency for

overseas mission, while the Church of England and Roman Catholic Churches have a number of missionary agencies to whom parishes may be asked to contribute. One possible solution to handling the diversity of expectation of giving to overseas mission could be for the LEP to discover an ecumenical project abroad to which it can contribute. However, it should be said that the project at the receiving end should be ecumenical and related, if possible, to denominationally related missionary work.

4.5 FINANCIAL ECUMENICAL SECTOR MINISTRIES

There is likely to be a growth in the number of full-time or nearly full-time ecumenical officers. How they are paid rests with the body appointing them. The person's stipend may be paid from the central funds of the denomination from which the ecumenical officer comes, while housing and other expenses will be shared between the other denominations participating in the appointment. Where housing allowance is paid in lieu of provision of a house, the allowance may be linked to that paid by the British Council of Churches. Differences between the amounts paid by denominations for car mileage may be resolved either by paying at the rate paid by the ecumenical officer's denomination or by paying at the BCC's rate.

Consideration should be given in this area to the fact that often the Church of England can provide an ecumenical officer by appointing a suitable priest to a small parish from which he can operate. In this way a considerable part of the cost of the officer is borne indirectly. The consequence of this is to limit such appointments to Anglicans, and ordained men at that. The Churches need to ask how it might be possible to fund an appointment of a non-Anglican minister, or lay person to an ecumenical post of this kind.

In Merseyside the ecumenical officer is drawn from different churches in turn, ensuring that basic costs are to some extent shared in the long term.

4.6 ENSURING THAT DENOMINATIONAL AUTHORITIES BUDGET AHEAD FOR ECUMENICAL MINISTRY AND MISSION

The Consultation felt that generally the denominations did budget for ecumenical ministry and mission, and that this made the case for central budgetting in order that there might be more equitable use of money in strategic planning for mission ecumenically.

Discussion took place on the concept suggested in the 1976 paper of an 'Ecumenical Development Fund'. Although at first there appeared to be no great enthusiasm for such a fund, further consideration showed that there could be a need for it. The question was asked: "Have the denominations the will to be committed and involved ecumenically in mission?". If they had, it was suggested that the will could be expressed in contributing to an ecumenical development fund. It would be a fund contributed to on a 'knock-for-knock' basis of funding ecumenical appointments. It was felt that a case could be argued for launching such a fund to provide new money for ecumenical projects in inner cities and on new housing estates. The Baptist Union has an understanding that a small percentage of its annual appeal for the Home Mission Fund may be used for ecumenical mission. Might this form a basis for an ecumenical development fund to which the other Churches would contribute proportionately for the purpose outlined in this paper?

4.7 CERTAIN COSTS, e.g. LEGAL FEES FOR SHARING AGREEMENTS, WHICH ARE 'BEYOND NORMAL'

LEPs are, from time to time, faced with large extra costs which are difficult to meet. The 1976 paper pointed to sharing agreements, although these now may cost considerably less than they did. The present Consultation identified the cost of major evaluations carried out at 5 or 7 year intervals as required by sponsoring bodies and recommended by CCLEPE. The costs may amount to several hundreds of pounds and may well inhibit a project from arranging a proper and full evaluation. This could be a charge on an ecumenical development

fund, or could be covered by grant-aid from the denominations in proportion to their involvement in the project.

4.8 ENSURING THAT THE DENOMINATIONAL AUTHORITIES UNDERSTAND THE COMPLEXITIES OF LEPs AND MAKE FINANCIAL ALLOWANCE

The denominations have different expectations of their members in terms of their giving, and this sometimes affects judgements made by denominations about the stewardship exercised in a project. For example, a Baptist Association may well be critical of an LEP in membership with it, which is a Baptist/Anglican project, where the giving per head is below the average within Baptist churches. Such a judgement could affect a recommendation for grant aid for the LEP from the Home Mission Fund. It cannot be too strongly stated that LEPs cannot in every issue be judged by the criteria used by the denominations. Flexibility and understanding are essential elements in this area as elsewhere.

5. STEWARDSHIP

The Consultation felt that LEPs had something to teach the denominations in the matter of stewardship. They are very often a way by which resources of personnel, buildings and money may be shared in such a way as to provide a proper stewardship of limited resources. It was also suggested that they can show the way of stewardship of expenditure as of income.

6. CONCLUSION

This report is presented to the denominations, CCLEPE, Sponsoring Bodies and LEPs in the hope that it will help towards solving many of the problems in the area of finance currently facing LEPs.

June 1984

Hugh Cross
Secretary, CCLEPE

APPENDIX C (i)

ASSESSING CONGREGATIONS FOR

	<i>Baptist</i>	<i>Church of England</i>
1. Does your denomination ask local congregations to pay a 'Quota' to denominational funds, diocesan (or equivalent) funds?	No. More a target-per-capita request	Yes
2. For what purpose is this quota paid?	To help congregations pay minimum stipend, and central and regional administration	Diocesan and General Synod expenses
3. On what is the quota based? Membership, income or need (i.e. denominational or diocesan budgets) or some other formula?	Head count	Variety of factors, e.g. parochial income over 1 or 2 yrs. or potential income or a combination of factors
4. Is any allowance made for local circumstances or is the figure asked for identical in the case of every congregation?	Allowance made	Allowance made
5. If a congregation is unable to meet its quota are there any sanctions applied, or does it qualify for grant aid to assist it?	No <i>(But all said there would eventually</i>	No
6. Are there special criteria which are applied to LEPs by your denomination? If so, what are they?	No	No

DENOMINATIONAL QUOTAS

<i>Methodist</i>	<i>Roman Catholic</i>	<i>United Reformed Church</i>
Yes	Yes	Yes (qualified) – unified appeal
Ministry Circuit, District & Connexional administration	Diocesan administration	Expenses best met centrally
Membership	An annual Sunday Mass attendance count	Varies from Province to Province
Allowance made	Allowance made	Allowance made
No	No	No
<i>be a re-assessment and enquiry.)</i>		
No	No	No

APPENDIX C (ii) STIPENDS AND EXPENSES

	<i>Baptist</i>	<i>Church of England</i>	<i>Methodist</i>
STIPEND	Ministers paid by congregation but supplement available from Home Mission Fund. Minimum 1986 – £6,600. Chaplaincy and all other fees up to £350 may be retained. Approx. 40 member minimum before grant-aid is available.	Clergy receive income from various sources including (a) the Church Commissioners ((i) “former endowments” and (ii) the Diocesan Stipends Fund, which includes both allocations from the Commissioners and monies from the dioceses (parish quota)); (b) local appointment(s) (e.g. chaplaincies); and (c) fees (e.g. for funerals and weddings). Variations between dioceses, but national minimum 1986/7 of £7,400.	Circuit pays minister’s stipend decided annually by Conference. 1986/7 – £6,068 plus service increments.
EXPENSES	Expenses of office paid by local congregation.	Expenses of office paid by parish. Car mileage allowance recommended by diocese on advice of Central Stipends Authority. 1984/85 range from 23p to 32p per mile, depending on engine capacity.	Expenses of office paid by Circuit.
	House provided or housing allowance paid by congregation.	House provided by the diocese. Rates paid by parish or diocese.	House provided by Circuit.

Roman Catholic

Priest dependent on parish.
Many dioceses guarantee a minimum income equivalent to a single person's tax allowance.

United Reformed Church

The Church (URC) pays a basic stipend plus heat and light of manse. Some ministers receive a supplement from the local congregation. Minister keeps all fees. 1986/7 – £5,712

Expenses of office paid by parish.

Expenses of office paid by congregation. Car expenses also and light and heat of manse.

House provided by the parish.

House provided by congregation.

APPENDIX D

CHURCH STATISTICS IN ENGLAND 1982/83

	<i>Anglican</i>	<i>Baptist</i>
Organisation	43 Dioceses	26 Associations
Membership	1,809,000	152,385
	1,648,000 (Easter Communicants)	
Baptisms (Annual)	241,000	5,942
Places of Worship	16,700	1,893
Full time Clergy/Ministers	11,432 (including 312 Deaconesses & 295 lay-workers including Church Army)	1,388 (including 58 women)
Readers/Lay/ Local Preachers	6,978 (including 949 women)	1,700
Member's Weekly Giving	£1.02	?

<i>Methodist</i>	<i>United Reformed</i>	<i>Roman Catholic</i>
26 Districts	11 Provinces	22 Dioceses
454,725	140,065 (Communicants)	1,500,000 (Average Mass attendance)
28,889	—	70,025
7,659	1,943	3,611
2,403 (including 45 Deaconesses & 87 Lay Pastoral Assistants & Supernumeries)	780 (plus 132 part- time)	4,470 (plus 2,160 in Religious Communities)
15,000	1,500	
£1.75	£1.79	?

APPENDIX E

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. Books available from CCLEPE

Local Church Unity:

Guidelines for LEPs and Sponsoring Bodies BCC

The Sharing of Church Buildings Act 1969:

Guidelines prepared by legal representatives of the Churches
(Revised 1983) BCC

Moving into Unity BCC

Local Ecumenical Projects Bristol Regional
The Bristol Handbook Sponsoring Body

Local Ecumenical Projects, *Reports to the Churches* CCLEPE

Broadsheets: CCLEPE

What is a Local Ecumenical Project?

What is a Shared Building?

What is a Sponsoring Body?

What is CCLEPE?

What is a Team?

What is a Council of Churches?

What is Collaborative Ministry?

What is a Local Covenant?

TAP Roots (*a series of case studies in ecumenical and collaborative ministry*) CCLEPE

The Shared Church of All Saints, Stevenage

Thamesmead – an Ecumenical Clergy Team

Sherborne Ecumenical Parish

The Sponsoring Body for Lincolnshire and South Humberside

Schools for Unity. St. Andrew's School, Dronfield, and St.

Bede's School, Redhill

Westminster Bishops' Team Ministry

Congregational/Methodist Union in Trowbridge

Lay Elders

Working in Industrial Mission

Rural Norfolk – Loddon and the Raveningham Group

Indigenous Church in the East End

Chaplaincy in Higher Education
 Dagenham Methodist Team Ministry
 What can an Ecumenical Officer do?
 Anglican-Baptist LEP in Milton Keynes
 Dream and Reality. An Anglican-Roman Catholic Shared Church
 Skelmersdale Evaluation Evaluated
 City Centre Team (Southampton)
 A New Zealand Co-operating Parish
And there are more to come.

Starter Pack on Local Church Unity <i>(contains Broadsheets and selected TAP Roots)</i>	CCLEPE
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Starter Pack on Teams <i>(contains Broadsheets and selected TAP Roots)</i>	CCLEPE
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TAP Bulletin (twice yearly news sheet)	CCLEPE
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TAP Register of LEPs and Teams	CCLEPE
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TAP Handbook for Teams and Projects	BCC
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Evaluation of Local Ecumenical Projects	CCLEPE
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Worship the Lord with Joy! <i>(Sharing in worship in local ecumenical projects)</i>	CCLEPE
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Ministry in Local Ecumenical Projects	CCLEPE
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One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism	BCC
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How we grew a Local Ecumenical Project	Grove Books
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Visiting a Community Church	Lutterworth
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A Primer for Teams	BCC
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All the above are available from
 BCC Publications, 2 Eaton Gate, London SW1W 9BL.

B.Books available from other sources.

Local Churches in Covenant	Catholic Information Services
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Local Ecumenical Development (The Derby Report)	Church Information Office
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C. Books and documents which are now out of print

Sharing of Church Buildings Act, 1969	HMSO
Unity begins at home	SCM press 1964
Areas of Ecumenical Experiment R.M.C. Jeffery	BCC 1968
The Designation of Areas of Ecumenical Experiment	BCC report 1969
Ecumenical Experiments: A Handbook. R.M.C. Jeffery	BCC 1971
Adventures in Unity. David Blatherwick	BCC 1974
Visible Unity: Ten Propositions	Churches Unity Commission 1976
Guidelines for Local Ecumenical Projects Supplement: 1975, 1981	BCC

bcc