

MOVING TOGETHER



A REVIEW OF THE ECUMENICAL JOURNEY IN ENGLAND

SUMMARY of the full report

1997-2007

for Churches Together in England

August 2007

A personal perspective by

David Spriggs

MOVING TOGETHER

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACEA	African and Caribbean Evangelical Alliance
BUGB	Baptist Union of Great Britain
CEA	Christian Enquiry Agency
CEO	County Ecumenical Officer (or Chief Executive Officer!)
CTBI	Churches Together in Britain and Ireland
CTBO	Called To Be One (CTE 1996; republished / reformatted 2002)
CTE	Churches Together in England
EA	Evangelical Alliance
FCG	Free Churches Group
LEP	Local Ecumenical Partnership
NEO	National Ecumenical Officer
URC	United Reformed Church

“MOVING TOGETHER” -

‘Moving’ Together seems an appropriate title for a ‘Re-view’ of the ecumenical journey, while Moving ‘Together’ links to Churches Together – although the Review is intentionally broader than Churches Together, it mean it connects to its source in the Enabling Group of Churches Together in England.

There is also an appropriate ambivalence; are we ‘moving towards each other’ or are we ‘moving in some common direction, so we are journeying together’? We need to consider both dimensions.

Moving Together also leaves open the issue of whether we are moving forward, backward or round in circles. And it suggests that we consider context.

An army on parade ‘moving together’ is very obvious, as it is if even one soldier is out of step. But an army on parade has a very different feel and a very different purpose to an army on surveillance patrol in enemy territory. This too, however, needs to ‘move together’ if it is to be effective. Now to the observer the movement of the soldiers will be apparently uncoordinated and without synchronisation. In reality, it will be co-ordinated, mutually responsive and even intuitive. If the patrol acted like the parade it would fail in its task and soon be taken out.

David Spriggs
August 2007

The ‘Re-view’ – a fresh look at the past decade – was commissioned by the Enabling Group of Churches Together in England. It was not intended to be a review or audit of Churches Together in England, nor even of everything which took place with some overt connectivity to it. It was meant to be much wider, reflecting the deep and broad realities of the way in which Christians of different denominations, nations, ethnicities, histories and social contexts are part of the overall ecumenical journey whether they are aware of it or not.

It is a personal perspective written by David Spriggs aided by a reference group. The method for producing it was meant to permit and encourage personal perspective and provocation (or prophetic comment), and to point to the future.

The Re-view, of which this booklet is a summary, is offered for discussion to the Enabling Group and more widely. The reflections and recommendations it contains are those of the author: they are a stimulus and invitation to further reflection, discussion and appropriate action.

CHAPTER 1 - THE CONTEXT FOR THE JOURNEY ¹

The incarnation took place at a particular time and a particular place. Features of the particular context of the English ecumenical journey are:

Globally

- The consequences of the break-up of the old Soviet Union
- The continuing growth, confidence and influence of China
- The focus on the Arab nations
- Poverty and the Aids crisis as a major concern of politicians.

In Europe

- The increased membership of the European Community
- Attempts to reform the EEC to cope with enlargement
- Immigration
- Our ambivalence towards USA

The United Kingdom

- Political focus on education, health care and social cohesion
- The democratic processes and devolution
- Efforts to bring reconciliation in Northern Ireland
- Mistrust of politicians and all in authority
- Growing emphasis on efficiency and a target driven culture
- Increased affluence and greater disparity between rich and poor
- Increased anxiety about law and order issues
- Stress on equal rights
- Church attendance has continued to decline (perhaps less slowly)
- Sharper debate between the secularists and faith communities
- Courting of 'faith communities' by Government
- Changed sexual mores and reduction in marriage
- Increasingly post-modern, consumerist and individualist
- Major pre-occupation with leisure
- A 'search for spirituality'
- The cult of the celebrity

The Churches

- The Decade of Evangelism
- Church Planting initiatives and now Fresh Expressions
- A "post Christian", "post denominational", or a "post Christendom" society
- A growing confidence that the Christian faith and world views have a new significance in the face of 'global warming', disillusionment with materialism and science as a philosophy, and in the face of social disintegration.

¹ References here and subsequently refer to the full text of *Moving Together* available on the website www.churches-together.org.uk or from Churches Together in England. Full Report p 9.

CHAPTER 2 - CELEBRATIONS FROM THE JOURNEY ²

Reasons to celebrate:

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

- Willingness to re-adjust to fit better with the four national instruments

Within Churches Together in England

- Free Churches Group in collaborative partnership with CTE

Recommendation 2.1

The effectiveness of the CTE-FCG relationship depends on having staff in both with the right positive, helpful and secure attitudes.

I recommend that this is written into current job profiles.

Intermediate (County) Level

- County Ecumenical Officers serve ecumenism from local to regional level
- Many Single Congregation LEPs continue, new ones are formatted
- Many 'Fresh Expressions' type congregation, often inter-denominational
- Local Churches Together groups – sometimes becoming Covenant LEPs
- County Level Leaders' relationships and collaboration

Called To Be One 1997 – responses to its list of next steps include:

- Publications including *Such a Feast* and *Enriching Communion*
- The Millennium project – Resolution, Candles, the Dome, Pentecost 2000
- The Jubilee 2000 Drop the Debt campaign

Churches Together in England Groups

- Collaboration among denominational specialists and para-churches
- The Group for Evangelisation
- Youth Work Matters Network

Recommendation 2.2

To engage younger people in positive ecumenical experiences and recognising the significant increase in church-related youth workers, I recommend raising awareness of the ecumenical journey among youth leaders and networks perhaps using *More Than Gold* as a fulcrum.

- Bodies in Association, stimulating the churches in their mission.
- *set all free*
- New Communities –New Housing Areas
- The Olympics – *More Than Gold*

² Full Report p 12.

Ecclesial Conversations

- The level of patience, integrity and commitment is noteworthy.
- Anglican-Methodist Covenant

Beyond Churches Together in England

- The Evangelical Alliance, the African and Caribbean Evangelical Alliance
- Alpha
- Bible Society
- Hope 2008
- Christian Festivals

Recommendation 2.3

I recommend that CTE explore with some of the major festivals how connections between what goes on at the festival and the wider ecumenical journey could be made clear.

Prayer

- '24:7' prayer
- The Global Day of Prayer
- Global Prayer Centre

Agencies, Christian charities and businesses

- Christian music or books
- Social concerns
- Support groups and campaigns

The ecumenical scene then is certainly no desert; it is rather a highly complex landscape. At any one time people are travelling on a multiplicity of 'ecumenical journeys' which intersect and support each other. There is much to celebrate as we realise the distance we have travelled over the last ten years, whether in formal dialogues, national co-operation, intermediate support or local mission, and so much more. Although many people and agencies contribute to this complex scene, the role of CTE in much of it has been significant. Even where CTE is not directly involved, its influences are manifest.

Recommendation 2.4

I recommend that the Enabling Group consider ways in which the Churches and agencies across the land could be stimulated to celebrate all that God has been doing among us. It is appropriate that we honour him for calling us to be and to work more closely together by pausing to celebrate. Could Pentecost 2008 be used as a focus for this celebration? Or might it be possible to re-vitalise the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2009?

CHAPTER 3 - PATHWAYS

Each of the nine topics is structured as 'From...to...' This is deliberate in order to reflect the 'ecumenical journey'. It will become obvious that, unlike a physical journey, in traversing these topics we are not necessarily leaving anything behind.

PATHWAYS SECTION 1 - 'From co-operation to commitment'³

'From co-operation to commitment' was an important slogan generated at the four-nations Swanwick Conference in 1987. It still proves to be a serious challenge for the ecumenical journey today. The phrase was first used by Cardinal Hume referring to what should or could happen locally.⁴

The commitment required, in the words of the Swanwick Declaration, 'a shift in the thinking, feeling and action of our Churches, from ecumenism as an extra which absorbs energy, to ecumenism as a dimension of all that we do, which releases energy through the sharing of resources'.

- Commitments of Christians to each other lead to relationships which lead to new developments.
- How well do the commitments, let alone their effectiveness, survive change in personnel?
- What is the 'cost' of commitment? Are churches willing to pay it?
- Commitment is 'for the long haul' and implies a refusal to withdraw when things get tough.
- How realistic and effective are the 'commitments' among church leaders?

A resulting cultural shift in the move from cooperation to commitment

- A sense that whenever there is anything ecumenical going on 'we ought to be there'.
- A sense of being more at home with each other, of not needing to be defensive. Our concern, at denominational level, to involve other Churches in significant decisions.
- Is the commitment 'collaborating' in projects, building relationships or journeying together until visible unity is achieved?

Recommendation 3.1

I would recommend therefore that, certainly at intermediate level, an audit of progress (and lack of it) on this journey towards 'commitment' is carried out.

³ Full Report p 25.

⁴ What 'locally' means here is itself a complex issue - see CTBO pp. 24-28.

PATHWAYS SECTION 2 - From Ecclesial to Ecumenical ⁵

'Ecumenical' – *oikumene* – properly understood refers not to church matters but to the whole inhabited world. In the English context, the growth of Black Majority Churches and other ethnic ones is now being augmented by further variety in ethnic Churches, within the evangelical fold and beyond, and most recently new immigration from the Eastern European accession countries.

The overall situation of immigration both within the wider society and its impact on our Churches needs much more systematic, sustained and informed reflection.

Consider two possible scenarios.

1) The continuing immigration means that over the next ten years the range of immigrant Churches will extend both in ethnicity and numerically. Traditional denominations will need to divert scarce resources (human and financial) away from CTE to cope with the pastoral opportunities and requirements of immigrant Christians. A weakened CTE will be called upon to service and manage a far more complex church landscape.

2) The energy and missionary zeal of the immigrant communities proves to be refreshing to the traditional Churches. In turn, they provide significant and authentic hospitality to other immigrant Christians. This energises the traditional Churches; government finds it hard to dismiss and marginalise the Churches. There is a new confidence for the Christian community. CTE is recognised to have had a key role in ensuring that real Christian welcome is extended to the whole range of immigrants and therefore of developing the impact of the Christian faith on public life.

Which of these two scenarios proves to be nearer the truth, only time will tell – but all Christians involved and all Churches/denominations involved can make a difference one way or the other.

Recommendation 3.2

I recommend that a working party is set up under CTE, or on behalf of CTE, with representatives from the traditional denominations and the newer ones, plus some appropriate agencies, to shape research, practices and policies which will foster good practice and stimulate the maximum benefits for us all of the increasingly diverse nature of the English population in general and of the Churches in particular.

⁵ Full Report p 30.

PATHWAYS SECTION 3 - From Churches Together to Christians Together⁶

The whole ecumenical journey over the last 100 years has been essentially concerned with bringing Churches together. Why not make it a matter of individual Christians coming together?

Part of the answer may be that individuals do not constitute Church. With the Archbishop of Canterbury being on record as saying 'Church is what happens when people who love Jesus gather together' it can be maintained that if two or three Christians meet together they constitute a kind of church unity (compare also Matthew 18.18-20). We may need to recognise that this aspect of the 'ecumenical journey' should not be ruled out.

John 17.20-21, 'I pray that they may all be one, Father' – Jesus is praying for the individual disciples to be one and not about ecclesial communions. Ephesians 4.3-6, 'Do your best to preserve the unity which the Spirit gives' follows immediately from 'Show your love by being tolerant with one another.' Here the 'one another' refers to individual Christians.

Is an ecumenical journey which is about individual Christians uniting (rather than Churches) reductionist or reflecting the over individualism of a consumerist, post-modern culture.

Over the last decade

- acceptance into membership of one denomination people from another,
 - belonging to institutions has lost most of its appeal,
 - people worship in a particular church with scant regard to its ecclesial tradition,
 - a 'consumerist approach' – is the ethos of the worship attractive to us?
 - can they cater well for the needs of our family?
 - is the church made up of people like us with whom we feel comfortable?
 - for many people, certainly in Protestant Churches, the concept of 'belonging to the Church' means little more than 'joining with the people who happen to meet at the church building I go to'.
 - the very passionate concerns of ecumenists are like a foreign language.
- These features become even more prominent in 'Fresh Expressions' Churches

Recommendation 3.3

I recommend that we do some hard thinking about these issues including:

- 1) Evaluating how much of a phenomenon it is.

⁶ Full Report p 34.

- How extensive is it?
 - Is the phenomenon the same across all denominations and parts of the country?
 - What factors or pressures have brought it about?
 - What are the implications for the ecumenical journey and the Churches?
- 2) Considering how this phenomenon is fostering, hindering or confusing the ecumenical journey
 - 3) Discerning what we can learn from the ways the issues are being handled in denominationally-specific local churches, to transfer to LEP contexts and vice-versa?

Web Church

The growth of Christian community through the Internet will take us to another level. Here people are supremely individuals and can be (perhaps would be encouraged to be) another persona. Can a 'virtual church' be real church?

Recommendation 3.4

I recommend that

- 1) CTE networks those involved in net-church, and generates reflection and good practice.
- 2) CTE (together with EA) monitors the development of web-churches.

The Four Presidents

Among the shifts over the last ten years has been the growing profile of the role of the Presidents of CTE, which seems to be beneficial for the persons involved and for the well-being of ecumenism. While they are individuals, they are also fulfilling a symbolic and strategic role. So it is personal rather than individualistic. Nevertheless, the same could be said about many liaisons, arrangements and functions which might be labelled 'Christians Together' rather than 'Churches Together'. The value of this high level 'Presidential' arrangement reminds us of the value of this dimension of the ecumenical journey at all levels.

Recommendation 3.5

I recommend that serious consideration is given to extending this Presidency from four to five people – and that the fifth be the Director of the Evangelical Alliance. Enshrining the good relationship between the two present leaders would be opportune and could further the participation of EA-related churches at local level.

PATHWAYS SECTION 4 - From 'doing ecumenical things' to 'doing things ecumenically'⁷

This slogan *From 'doing ecumenical things' to 'doing things ecumenically'* has encapsulated a shift in emphasis which has in many ways been energising and liberating for Christian unity over the last ten years.

- it has focused on doing things together primarily within the Five Marks of Mission
- it has moved the centre of gravity from inside the Church to outside,
- it has given motivation and appeared to provide significant pay-offs in terms of the extent of the reach of the Churches (working further, broader and deeper together than alone).

The freedoms to work together like this depend, for some of the Churches, on the hard work of previous Faith and Order type negotiations and indeed the powerful permission that the Roman Catholic 'commitment' at Swanwick signalled.

Eventually effective mission operations will push us into issues of identity, common ministry, authority and Christian initiation. What happens then?

If permanent arrangements emerge (e.g. running a joint youth activity, employing staff and receiving denominational funding) we run into at least some of the bureaucratic problems that challenge Single Congregation LEPs – though maybe it will be governmental rather than ecclesial.

More generally project-based action and mission can lead to a 'performance related' evaluation mentality. For ecumenism the slogan generates a more profound issue – can the necessary giving to foundational ecumenism (including national, intermediate and local staff time) be justified on this criteria – don't we need to recognise again the 'ecumenical imperative' even to justify the finance.

So, I suggest that a more rounded way of understanding this is that mission (whether evangelisation or social action or care for creation) or prayer are themselves ecumenical things – they belong to the whole Church. In doing them together we are doing ecumenical things.

Recommendation 3.6

I recommend that CTE reflects on the issues raised in reviewing those things we are learning to 'do ecumenically' as themselves 'ecumenical things'.

⁷ Full Report p 39.

PATHWAYS SECTION 5 - From multilateral to bilateral conversations ⁸

CTBO represented a serious attempt to conduct a multi-lateral conversation between a wide range of Churches. During the last decade, many detailed conversations and especially dialogues have been carried out. These normally take place at a trans-national level rather than at English or British and Irish level.

One practical way forward is for dialogues between two (and sometimes more) Churches to take place with the view to exploring detailed issues of theology, ecclesiology and eventually practical issues:

Advantages

- Ensuring those in any particular set of conversations are looking for a similar 'unity' outcome.
- Focusing on those issues pertinent to the dialogue partners.
- Concentrating on the specifics between the two partners.
- Promising speedier and more practical progress.
- Coping with the reality that different denominations/Churches are situated differently in terms of their national bases.
- Being a bridge for other partners beyond the conversations themselves.

Disadvantages

- The sense of exclusion by those not included in the conversations.
- Progress between any two may be detrimental to the whole unity process.

Covenanting Churches

Currently there are two covenant processes: Anglican-Methodist and Baptist Union-Independent Methodist Churches. There are different set of questions around 'what really makes this work for us?' To what extent were the challenges predicted and recognised and to what extent were they surprising? All of these, and many more could be helpful for others who wish to participate in this aspect of the ecumenical journey.

Recommendation 3.7

I therefore recommend that our training colleges and other appropriate university departments are made aware of this research need.

A role for Churches Together in England?

What was CTE's role in these and all the other bilateral dialogues, both formal and informal? What should/could have been its role? What do these dialogues do to CTE's reputation and does it matter anyway? How is CTE's role in such

⁸ Full Report p 42

dialogues perceived by its members? Among the roles CTE could fulfil the following might be considered:

- Should CTE conduct an audit of its member Churches/denominations to assess their attitudes towards bilateral type conversations?
- Should CTE seek deliberately to involve personnel from those denominations and Churches which are not usually involved in bilateral conversations?
- Should CTE seek, through multilateral conversations with its partners, to draw up a guide to best practice for bilateral and multilateral conversations?

Recommendation 3.8

I recommend that the issue of the role of CTE in the context of dialogues be considered.

MOVING TOGETHER

A REVIEW OF THE ECUMENICAL JOURNEY IN ENGLAND

A personal perspective by David Spriggs

SUGGESTIONS FOR USE

MOVING TOGETHER – A Re-view of the Ecumenical Journey in England 1997-2007 is a personal perspective by David Spriggs, commissioned by Churches Together in England (CTE).

The CTE Directors commend it for study and discussion. It is a stimulus to various groupings within the life of the Churches in England today, a basis for further conversation and reflection, and an aid to taking a fresh look – a *Re-view* – of our life together. Not everyone will agree with everything in the Re-view, but it was not meant to be a document of ecumenical convergence. Not everyone will feel that everything has been said that should have been said, but that is the constraint of a document like this.

Groups and churches are asked:

- ✚ To what extent does the Review describe where we are today?
- ✚ What are our priorities for where we go next?
- ✚ If we are 'Moving Together', where do we want to move to?

Though particular groups will want to look at particular aspects of the Review, it is hoped that each element in church life will be able to hear others. For that reason, those who engage with the Review are asked to send their comments (albeit initial comment in some instances) to the CTE General Secretary by 1st February 2008. Comments will be considered by the CTE Directors, and then in March by the CTE Enabling Group, and will be shared more widely.

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In both the Full Report document and in the Summary of it, the questions raised and the recommendations made were kept within the body of the text from which they arose. Here the questions and recommendations are gathered together according to which grouping might most appropriately address them. What is offered here is a set of *Suggestions for Use*.

The questions and recommendations need to be read in the context of the whole Report, alongside the material in the Full Report and the Summary, to which references are provided. The recommendations are not themselves the basis for engaging with the Report; they may help to sharpen and focus discussion, but they should not limit it.

It is envisaged that the Review will be helpful and thought-provoking for CTE's Member Churches, Co-ordinating Groups and Bodies-in-Association, to County Ecumenical Officers and County/Intermediate Bodies, as well as to other interested groups and individuals. All are invited to make comments.

Whilst particular groups may find they focus on specific recommendations, it is very much hoped that attention will be paid to the QUESTIONS FOR ALL and the RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALL.

ANALYSIS FOR ALL: THE CONTEXT *(Full report p 9-11, Summary p 3)*

- Global
- In Europe
- The United Kingdom
- The Churches

QUESTIONS FOR ALL *(Full report p 70-71, Summary p 22)*

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALL

RECOMMENDATIONS TO SPECIFIC GROUPS:

- Recommendations directed to Member Churches & NEOs
- Recommendations directed to Youth Coordinating Group
- Recommendation to the Churches Group for Evangelisation
- Recommendations directed to the Churches Group for Local Unity,
- Recommendations directed to the Churches Theology and Unity Group
- Recommendations directed to Intermediate / County Bodies
- Recommendations directed to Bodies in Association
- Recommendations directed to CTE's Directors and Enabling Group

QUESTIONS FOR ALL *(Full report p 70-71, Summary p 22)*

? **Is the lack of union/ visible unity/ *koinonia* damaging the effectiveness of the Churches' mission?**

- when the variety of churches confuses people;
- where there is real or perceived conflict within the Churches,
- where lack of common decision-making or trust means we don't act together.

? **Is the lack of union/ visible unity/ *koinonia* hindering the Churches' pastoral ministry?**

LEPs, especially the Single Congregation LEPs, make us aware of challenges which are detrimental, but also how we can minister together.

- Often intra-congregational attitudes and ministerial ineptitude cause people to leave the Churches rather than inter Church issues.
- Inter-church families need particular pastoral care.

? **Is our lack of union/ visible unity/ *koinonia* an insult to God?**

We need to identify our sinfulness and strive, through repentance, obedience, hard and clear thinking and love to remove the causes of offence.

? **Where is the divine mandate for union/ visible unity/ *koinonia*?**

Ultimately the reason we are involved *(Full report p 65, Summary p 19)* in the ecumenical journey, is not because it delivers economies (shared buildings, ministers or efficiency, though it may) but because there is a divine mandate.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALL

Recommendation 2.4 *(Full report p 24, Summary p 5)*

I recommend that ... the Churches and agencies across the land could be stimulated to celebrate all that God has been doing among us. It is appropriate that we honour him for calling us to be and to work more closely together by pausing to celebrate.

Recommendation 3.6 *(Full report p 42, Summary p 10)*

Mission (whether evangelisation or social action or care for creation) or prayer are themselves ecumenical things – they belong to the whole Church. I recommend that CTE reflects on the issues raised in reviewing those things we are learning to 'do ecumenically' as themselves 'ecumenical things'.

Recommendation 3.15 *(Full report p 61, Summary p 17)*

I recommend that a group explores the understandings of internal/ external unity in each tradition.

Recommendation 3.16 *(Full report p 64, Summary p 18)*

I recommend that careful consideration is given at all levels of Churches Together as to where trust is operating, where an increase of trust might overcome barriers and ways in which trust can be intentionally built and protected.

Recommendations directed to Member Churches and National Ecumenical Officers

Recommendation 3.3 (Full report p 37, Summary p 8)

I recommend that we do some hard thinking about these issues [the decrease in denominational identity] including:

- 1) Evaluating how much of a phenomenon it is.
 - How extensive is it?
 - Is the phenomenon the same across all denominations and parts of the country?
 - What factors or pressures have brought it about?
 - What are the implications for the ecumenical journey and the Churches?
- 2) Considering how this phenomenon is fostering, hindering or confusing the ecumenical journey
- 3) Discerning what we can learn from the ways the issues are being handled in denominationally-specific local churches, to transfer to LEP contexts and vice-versa?

Recommendation 3.18 (Full report p 67, Summary p 18)

I recommend that serious consideration is given to an appropriate Public Relations strategy.

Recommendation 3.20 (Full report p 68, Summary p 18)

I recommend that the CTE Trustees undertake a process to establish the likely financial position in ten years' time.

Recommendations 4.1 (Full report p 71, Summary p 23)

CTE seeks to co-ordinate the Churches' total ecumenical resources rather more than at present, e.g. by setting up an 'ecumenical bureau' (moving towards an 'ecumenical directorate') whereby the national Churches' resources for ecumenism as well as their designated 'ecumenical' instrument funding are shared and co-ordinated more. What I have in mind is that at a national level the NEOs and the CTE staff work in a more co-ordinated way and at county level the County Ecumenical Officers are co-ordinated with the Denominational Ecumenical Officers and probable people involved in mission and social responsibility etc. ...

Recommendations directed to Youth Coordinating Group

Recommendation 2.2 (Full report p 19, Summary p 4)

To engage younger people in positive ecumenical experiences and, recognising the significant increase in church-related youth workers, I recommend raising awareness of the ecumenical journey among youth leaders and networks, perhaps using *More Than Gold* as a fulcrum.

Recommendation to the Churches Group for Evangelisation

Recommendation 3.4 *(Full report p 38, Summary p 9)*

I recommend that

- 1) CTE networks those involved in net-church and generates reflection and good practice.
- 2) CTE (together with EA) monitors the development of web-churches.

Recommendations directed to the Churches Group for Local Unity, maybe in an ad hoc group augmented by other CEOs.

Recommendation 3.9 *(Full report p 51, Summary p 13)*

I recommend that Single Congregation LEPs are reviewed in the light of current perceptions and suggestions and the context of changing expectations for ecumenism, other LEPs, current practice, and the alternatives of Fresh Expressions and New Housing Areas.

Recommendation 3.10 *(Full report p 52, Summary p 14)*

I recommend that work be done towards an appropriate resource which examines the issues and generates theological reflection and provides guidelines for the ecumenical component of the different types of chaplaincy.

Recommendation 3.11 *(Full report p 53, Summary p 14)*

I recommend that research be done on the facets and extent of the interactivity between County Ecumenical Officers (CEOs) and CTE.

Recommendation 3.12 *(Full report p 54, Summary p 14)*

For better understanding and working relationships I recommend that 'core role portfolios' for all CEOs and all denominational, national and county level ecumenical officers are drawn up.

Recommendation 3.13 *(Full report p 54, Summary p 14)*

I recommend that CEOs concerns about their conditions of service, remuneration, work load and hours paid and so forth be considered.

Recommendation 3.19 *(Full report p 68, Summary p 18)*

I recommend that an assessment of the 3-5 year expectation for funding CEOs be carried out to inform the planning of the Enabling Group for this vital level of work.

Recommendations 4.2 *Full report p 72, Summary p 23)*

CTE promotes more effective co-ordination of local ecumenism with the national scene, by strengthening the value of the CEOs.

Recommendations directed to the Churches Theology and Unity Group

Recommendations 4.3 *(Full report p 72, Summary p 23)*

CTE finds new ways to look at the fundamental Faith and Order issues at the local, county and national levels on a more comprehensive basis.

Recommendations 4.4 *(Full report p 72, Summary p 23)*

CTE should refocus on the spiritual dimension of ecumenism and promote a new level of Scriptural engagement.

Recommendations directed to Intermediate / County Bodies

Recommendation 3.1 *(Full report p 29, Summary p 6)*

I would recommend therefore that, certainly at intermediate level, an audit of progress (and lack of it) on this journey towards 'commitment' is carried out.

Recommendation 3.3 *(Full report p 37, Summary p 8)*

I recommend that we do some hard thinking about these issues [the decrease in denominational identity] including:

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 - How extensive is it?
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Celebration

Recommendation 2.4 *(Full report p 24, Summary p 4)*

I recommend that the Enabling Group consider ways in which the Churches and agencies across the land could be stimulated to celebrate all that God has been doing among us. It is appropriate that we honour him for calling us to be and to work more closely together by pausing to celebrate. Might it be possible to re-vitalise the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2009?

The changing context

Recommendation 3.3 *(Full report p 37, Summary p 8)*

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 - Is the phenomenon the same across all denominations and parts of the country?
 - What factors or pressures have brought it about?
 - What are the implications for the ecumenical journey and the Churches?
- 2) Considering how it is fostering, hindering or confusing the ecumenical journey.
- 3) Discerning what we can learn from the ways the issues are handled in denominational local churches, to transfer to LEP contexts and vice-versa?

Recommendation 3.14 *(Full report p 57, Summary p 15)*

I recommend that the contribution of CTE to the whole Church's inter-faith dialogue is maximised, with effective working relationships, communications and support flow between CTE's Inter-faith Officer and the CEOs.

Enlarging the fellowship

Recommendations 4.8 *(Full report p 73, Summary p 23)*

I recommend CTE addresses the extent and diversity of ethnic changes in the country and on the Churches and takes intentional steps to build further bridges to other independent groups, notably EA and ACEA.

Recommendation 2.3 *(Full report p 23, Summary p 5)*

I recommend that CTE explore with some of the major festivals how connections between what goes on at the festival and the wider ecumenical journey could be made clear.

Recommendation 3.2 *(Full report p 34, Summary p 7)*

I recommend that a working party is set up under CTE, or on behalf of CTE, with representatives from the traditional denominations and the newer ones, plus some appropriate agencies, to shape research, practices and policies which will foster good practice and stimulate the maximum benefits for us all of the increasingly diverse nature of the English population in general and of the Churches in particular.

The role, functioning and profile of CTE

Recommendations 4.1 *(Full report p 71, Summary p 23)*

I recommend CTE seeks to co-ordinate the Churches' total ecumenical resources rather more than at present, e.g. by setting up an 'ecumenical bureau' (moving towards an 'ecumenical directorate') whereby the national Churches' resources for ecumenism as well as their designated 'ecumenical' instrument funding are shared and co-ordinated more.

Recommendation 3.18 *(Full report p 67, Summary p 18)*

I recommend that serious consideration is given to an appropriate Public Relations strategy.

Recommendation 3.17 *(Full report p 67, Summary p 18)*

I recommend that the issue of fund-raising for CTE be considered and, in particular, that early on there be a legacies appeal. CTE might also wish to consider the issue of 'personal members' and the possibility of a fund-raising and development post.

Recommendation 3.20 *(Full report p 68, Summary p 18)*

I recommend that the CTE Trustees undertake a process to establish the likely financial position in ten years' time.

Recommendations 4.5 *(Full report p 72, Summary p 23)*

I recommend CTE addresses urgently the issue of the age profile of people engaging with the ecumenical journey.

Recommendations 4.6 *(Full report p 72, Summary p 23)*

I recommend CTE communicates the benefits of the ecumenical journey more widely and improves its profile.

Recommendations 4.7 *(Full report p 72, Summary p 23)*

I recommend the issue of common formation for a shared future needs to be explored through 'ordination' training... training of National, County and Denominational Ecumenical Officers... lay training... a web-based stories.

Noted

Recommendation 2.1 *(Full report p 13, Summary p 4)*

The effectiveness of the CTE-FCG relationship depends on having staff in both with the right positive, helpful and secure attitudes.

Recommendation 3. 5 *(Full report p 39, Summary p 9)*

I recommend that serious consideration is given to extending this Presidency from four to five— and that the fifth be the Director of the Evangelical Alliance.

Recommendation 3.7 *(Full report p 45, Summary p 11)*

I recommend that our training colleges and other appropriate university departments are made aware of this research need.

Recommendation 3.8 *(Full report p 46, Summary p 12)*

I recommend that the issue of the role of CTE in the context of dialogues be considered.

Comments on the analysis and main questions in the Re-view are welcome, especially by 1st February 2008, and should be sent to gensec@cte.org.uk for collation and consideration by the CTE Directors and Enabling Group, and shared more widely.

PATHWAYS SECTION 6 - From National to Local (and back)⁹

Originally many people saw Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs) as signs, foretastes and instruments of the future of the Church. Among the issues pertinent to Single Congregation LEPs recognised today are:

- Relationship to parent denominations/Churches.
- The time and effort involved compared with the benefits.
- Issues of discipline – to whom does the church look to help sort out problems?
- Whose members are we anyway?
- The varied impacts of the 'post-modern' condition on attitudes and behaviours.
- The review process - time and effort involved.
- A sense of distance from CTE as well as national denominations.

Should we consider running Single Congregation LEPs as single denomination congregations while ensuring there is the proper respect for the various components within them and a very generous 'ecumenical welcome' strategy adhered to?

Should we consider a Trust Body for such LEPs?

Could those appointed to such LEPs have to have an ecumenical qualification?

Recommendation 3.9

I recommend that Single Congregation LEPs are reviewed in the light of current perceptions and suggestions and the context of changing expectations for ecumenism, other LEPs, current practice, and the alternatives of Fresh Expressions and New Housing Areas.

Chaplaincy

Chaplaincy represents one of the growing fronts of co-operation if not always commitment.

Chaplaincies fall into three general categories:

- those resourced and managed by state or similar bodies;
- those financially supported by business and similar;
- those resourced by the Churches either through funding or volunteers.

The diverse situations give not only the chaplains and those who may support them, but also the intended beneficiaries of their work, the opportunity to experience something of the breadth of Christian community and witness – they thus contribute to the pool of ecumenical experience.

⁹ Full Report p 46.

There is a question for the ecumenical journey about how the contexts and the funders may encourage and even pressurise the way the chaplains function so as to compromise what may be perceived as the pure and proper 'ecumenical protocols'. Often in these larger contexts denominational differences seem to matter less than meeting the big needs of the individuals or the organisations.

Recommendation 3.10

I recommend that work be done towards an appropriate resource which examines the issues and generates theological reflection and provides guidelines for the ecumenical component of the different types of chaplaincy.

Local and National

A wide reaching concern is the felt detachment of the local from the national. How are we learning at the national level from the local experience? The CEOs have together an extensive picture of the reality on the ground. Finding ways to garner their knowledge and insights and making this available nationally would be a valuable type of co-ordination.

Recommendation 3.11

I recommend that research be done on the facets and extent of the interactivity between County Ecumenical Officers (CEOs) and CTE.

County Ecumenical Officers

CEOs (but also county level denominational ecumenical officers) are likely to play a significant role in fostering the interaction of local and national. CEOs could be encouraged to work on identifying their concerns and generating creative and imaginative solutions to alter the ethos of distance between the local and national. Possible ideas could be that:

- Every CEO is invited to participate on a national CTE group.
- Every county body invites someone from the national level to contribute.
- Every national group plans to visit or sets up county level events.
- Every participating church (local congregation etc) receives attractive visual information about someone or some group working nationally.
- The use of the CTE website be developed.
- Each Single Congregation LEP could be linked with others.

Recommendation 3.12

For better understanding and working relationships I recommend that 'core role portfolios' for all CEOs and all denominational, national and county level ecumenical officers are drawn up.

Recommendation 3.13

I recommend that CEOs concerns about their conditions of service, remuneration, work load and hours paid and so forth be considered.

PATHWAYS SECTION 7 - From Inter-Church to Inter-faith? ¹⁰

Some may see inter-faith dialogue as the next step for ecumenism, indeed as the logical or inevitable next step. Some may even question whether in years to come the one will be distinguishable from the other.

Most Churches wish to differentiate all forms of Christian faith from other faiths and religions on the basis of the place and significance of Jesus Christ within each faith. 'From inter-church to inter-faith' is meant to indicate that the ecumenical journey has prepared us for ministry and mission within the inter-faith context. Ecumenism is not being replaced by inter-faith; but the ecumenical experience is equipping us for inter-faith engagement.

- They take time and loving attention to the other.
- They require patience and imagination, humility and confidence.
- They require the ability to discern the significance of behaviours, rituals, and festivals.

Valid ecumenical participation has led to a growing conviction that it is worthwhile seeking to risk the difficult challenge of articulating our faith and its expressions to others for whom this is 'other'. Through sharing in ecumenical encounters, whether of worship, dialogue or service, most of us discover that God may surprise us by being present beyond the boundaries we had drawn. The presence of God we would affirm is throughout his creation, but discovering he is there to greet us is a powerful experience.

In the next decade it is likely that the inter-faith interface will become increasingly important for Christians. To maximise our contribution we should:

- Build relations with the denominational people responsible for inter-faith work and co-ordinate their effort and outcomes.
- Help Christians understand the difference between ecumenism and inter-faith so that the fear of syncretism does not restrict, hinder or confuse.
- Tell stories of the Christian contribution to inter-faith.
- Resource Christians to participate confidently.
- Provide leadership (including 'by example').
- Monitor the contribution that Christian ecumenism makes to inter-faith relationships and relating to Government.

Recommendation 3.14

I recommend that the contribution of CTE to the whole Church's inter-faith dialogue is maximised. Considerations should include how to ensure effective working relationships, communications and support flow between CTE's Inter-faith Officer and the CEOs.

¹⁰ Full Report p 54.

PATHWAYS SECTION 8 - From Unity to *koinonia* ¹¹

In the recent period the preferred language is *koinonia* –variously translated as communion or community. On the way to *koinonia* we note the following steps:

Organic unity

'Organic unity' was a term used to contrast with any sense that unity equalled uniformity. In addition to its link to the 'body language' of Paul, it implied 'perfectly natural and good'.

Visible and invisible unity

Language about 'visible unity' taps into two fundamental reservoirs of thought. The first is the Chicago Quadrilateral with its marks of Anglicanism, and this has led on to a tacit agreement that the issues relating to 'visible unity' are at least those of episcopate, scripture and the creeds, sacraments and interchangeability of ministries. The other reservoir relates to centuries of conversation about the nature of the Church as both visible and invisible.

This latter source raises a rather different set of issues to the former. Among them is one which seems to have received little attention but which could have implications for the former. Is there a point (or several points) where making visible the unity of the Church is a kind of idolatry? If we seek to make visible, and so available for examination, negotiation and even manipulation, aspects of the Church and its unity which within the divine dispensation are essentially 'invisible', may we not stray into idolatry?

We can also explore the complexity of language about 'visible unity' in relationship to John 17. Two aspects are highlighted from this: 1) the unity of Christians is grounded in the unity of the Father and the Son; 2) and is directed to mission – 'so that the world may believe'. Often ecumenical discussions around John 17 interpret it from the perspective of the Churches, that is to say what indicates that this 'unity' is tangible and real to the Churches. However, in the light of the mission focus of John 17, it makes sense to consider this from beyond the Churches, who are intended to be the beneficiaries of God's mission. What would be the marks of visible unity for 'not yet believers' as they look towards the Churches?

From Division to Difference and Diversity

Because it was seeking to quieten the concern that unity=uniformity, the language of diversity, in distinction to division of course, has become significant. So the search to explore the role and limits of diversity within unity became a primary focus.

¹¹ Full Report p 58.

Already by 1997 it was clear that the quest for unity did not entail the dissolution of difference. This was encapsulated first in the phrase 'legitimate diversity' and then later 'reconciled diversity'. Both of these raise important challenges. A further positive presentation of diversity is in terms of 'gifts'.

Gifts

CTBO emphasises that the appreciation of 'gifts' requires intentionality and hard work both in offering (there are also risks involved here) and in receiving. There are also challenges which can be noted. CTBO states, 'Not everything will be attractive to everyone and there may be things that are unacceptable to some... Who decides whether something is a gift or an imposition; what happens if I lose sight of the gift I have or may not the gift be lost if neither of us appreciates it, and so forth.'

Recommendation 3.15

I recommend that a group explores the understandings of internal/external unity in each tradition.

koinonia – communion, community

The word '*koinonia*' focuses primarily on the gift of participation in the life of the Trinity...and only derivatively on the relationship between Christians in the Church, says CTBO. This quotation is itself ambivalent. The phrase 'gift of participation in the life of the Trinity' is capable of at least two understandings. The first is that the Trinity (*perichoresis*) provides the primary model of *koinonia* so that every human expression of it (such as that between Christians or Churches) is derivative. The second is that it is our (human beings') relationships with the triune God which is the primary model – which can again mean that our human inter-relationships are derivative, even those between Churches.

We can say that the Trinity provides us with a dynamic model for understanding unity: this may be a better base than '*koinonia*' language. 'Communion' language, while it helps to form a bridge between unity and eucharist in a more flexible and positive way than has often been the case, can end up confusing and conflating, because it can become unclear whether the word 'communion' refers to the experience of communion between people, between people and God, something to do specifically with the Eucharist, or the links between these.

Communion language has another positive value, in that it is also used to describe the type of unity which some Churches claim to have. This occurs in the phrase 'the Anglican Communion' and so it is indicative of a model of 'unity' which allows for flexibility and diversity and yet can also be said to exist and be manifest rather than be invisible or eschatological.

Trust

I commend the consideration of the language of trust. During recent years the significance of trust has received considerable attention in commerce and business. This has led to the realisation that trust is a fundamental component of good and effective working processes.

One of the remarkable things which has happened over the last ten years is the growth of trust between Christians of all denominations and Churches and even at the institutional levels as well, although neither this understanding of the shift, nor its importance, seems to me to be adequately noted.

Trust is a very relational concept, and so creating contexts where people can learn together, worship together, work together and be together has been important. We are now normally in the position where honest comments can be made without fear that the other will take inappropriate offence and withdraw. Trust is an invaluable commodity for the ecumenical journey. Trust is something we can both give and receive. Learning to live trustfully creates all kinds of new opportunities for shared understanding and work, while leaving space for 'the other' with their distinctives.

Of course, trust is a very sensitive but also a very tough reality. In view of its sensitivity it would be worth developing guidelines for working together trustfully at different levels. In view of its toughness, we could also explore how far affirmations of fundamental trust might take us in making visible to the world the unity we have in Christ as his gift.

One of the aspects of a common life which CTBO highlighted but which seems to me to have received little attention is that of 'shared decision-making' to which we could add from some of the more continental (European) discussions 'a common purse.' I suspect that somewhere in the background to our reluctance to progress these features is a boundary to the trust we either can or choose to give to each other.

This connects to another issue that I am aware of which is not often surfaced, that is the issue of asymmetry. Asymmetry occurs when one party is stronger than another or is likely to gain significantly more advantage than another. When there is trust there will be the presupposition that no one will seek to take advantage over the other.

Recommendation 3.16

I recommend that careful consideration is given at all levels of Churches Together as to where trust is operating, where an increase of trust might overcome barriers and ways in which trust can be intentionally built and protected.

PATHWAYS SECTION 9 - From solvency to fragility ¹²

Funding is becoming a problem in many areas of Christian work in this country as the number attending declines and the age profile indicates that more and more attenders are post-retirement. Clearly too, in the English context, CTE is moving beyond the Churches for some of its funding, particularly for project-based work.

During the last ten years there has been considerable financial pressure on the various Churches/denominations. In this 'cash strapped' environment inevitably ecumenism is being asked to carry its share of the 'cuts'. Though the Churches have in many instances had to reduce central spending, they have largely retained their subscriptions to the ecumenical bodies as a fixed sum, without inflationary increases.

Similar pressures have been experienced by intermediate bodies, and anxiety levels are high among County Ecumenical Officers about the long-term sustainability of their posts, and – by implication – the value placed on their work by their member Churches.

There may also be a temptation to ask ecumenism to carry more than its share for several reasons including

- It can appear from the centre that ecumenism is less pastorally and missionally *essential* and therefore can take the pressure more easily!
- There is more and more pressure to apply 'performance type' appraisal criteria – putting it at its crudest 'what are *we* getting for *our* money?'
- A sense that 'if we can't afford it because we are a special case, the others can carry it and/or we are already doing more than our "fair share" – isn't this what we should expect from our ecumenical partners?'

The more we think of 'not doing ecumenical things but doing things ecumenically' the less felt need there is for the supporting structures and services which CTE supplies. In this context there is a financial but also faith argument for re-focusing us all on the 'ecumenical imperative'. Ultimately the reason we, as Christian Churches and Christians, are involved in the ecumenical journey, is not because it delivers economies (either in shared buildings, ministers or efficiency, although it may) but because there is a divine mandate.

The decline of widespread interest in 'Faith and Order' type concerns in the face of a missional, co-operational programmes and projects approach, means that this sense of obligation to one another and to God to seriously work at and therefore fund the ecumenical journey has declined.

¹² Full Report p 65

So, while CTE as an instrument serving the Churches needs to be economic and effective, it also needs to be prepared to properly promote its achievements and to lobby for proper funding. This process also needs to take place at the regional and more local levels.

Recommendation 3.17

I recommend that the issue of fund-raising for CTE be considered and, in particular, that early on there be a legacies appeal. CTE might also wish to consider the issue of 'personal members' and the possibility of a fund-raising and development post.

Recommendation 3.18

I recommend that serious consideration is given to an appropriate Public Relations strategy.

The Intermediate level

The pressures are also felt at the intermediate and local levels. Although there has been the occasional new post created, there are some CEOs who are feeling the squeeze. One strategy is that the 'Denominational Ecumenical Officers' function both for the denominations and 'Churches Together'. In some contexts the function of CEO is being funded through other sources such as Government Regional Planning Groups.

Recommendation 3.19

I recommend that an assessment of the 3-5 year expectation for funding CEOs be carried out to inform the planning of the Enabling Group for this vital level of work.

If the ongoing assessment is that financially-speaking CTE and Churches Together will move towards breakdown, then a different approach may be called for which makes 'visible' what people are getting and what it costs.

Recommendation 3.20

I recommend that the CTE Trustees undertake a process to establish the likely financial position in ten years' time.

CHAPTER 4 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS ¹³

Theological reflections

I have been aware that some aspects of the theological framework of Christian discourse seem not always to function adequately, at least in any obvious way. The main culprit here is the awareness of the 'fallenness' of creation, including not only humans but also the empirical Church. To a lesser extent the eschatological dimension is minimised also.

Partly because we are thinking of the Church theologically and partly because our disunity is itself a sign of our fallenness, the implications for ecumenism are not always factored in appropriately. For instance, if we are fallen then it is impossible for us to realise the unity of the Church in a way that fully corresponds to the unity of the Trinity.

The New Testament eschatological images indicate both continuity and discontinuity with our present state. So we must strive to maintain the unity which the Spirit gives, but we shall never fully attain it, even with the help of the Trinity, without the ultimate divine intervention.

Is diversity a sign of our fallenness or a reflection of the creativity of God at work in the Church and in the cultures, which the Churches could legitimately reflect?

When we talk about 'reconciled diversity' we need to realise that 'reconciliation' can only ever be partial this side of the eschatological event. At the same time we should affirm that reconciliation provides us with direction, and the love of Christ which leads to reconciliation provides us with motivation.

What kind of reconciliation is appropriate? Is it primarily a theoretical, theological doctrinal reconciliation? Sometimes this is going to be the case – as reasonable people we need to have as clear an understanding of our faith as possible. However, sometimes the appropriate reconciliation is primarily going to be a functional one that enables us to live together as a functioning community of God's people.

The perspective of fallenness should lead us to expect that even our understandings of 'the unity we seek' will be both time-bound and distorted. This should not lead us to despair, but it does require a deep humility.

The 'step approach' is mainly correct, but it should not mislead us to think of steps as part of a linear journey, as though we can say that until we get to x

¹³ Full Report p 69

and y we cannot have z. But if it is multi-directional, then z need not wait for x, let alone y. If we are involved within an eschatological context can we not do without complete coherence from our perspective? Living faithfully without apparent coherence can be the expression of the necessity for trust in God.

'Next steps' - questions to be asked:

1) Is the lack of union/visible unity/*koinonia* damaging the effectiveness of the Churches' mission?

- when the variety of churches confuses people;
- where there is real or perceived conflict within the Churches,
- where lack of common decision-making or trust means we do not act together.

2) Is the lack of union/visible unity/*koinonia* hindering the Churches' pastoral ministry?

LEPs, especially the Single Congregation LEPs, make us aware of challenges which are detrimental, but also how we can minister together.

- Often intra-congregational attitudes and ministerial ineptitude cause people to leave the Churches rather than inter Church issues.
- Inter-church families need particular pastoral care.

In a post-modern culture the variety of the Churches may be a positive value. But some aspects of this may reflect the sinfulness of our world. That it helps some people does not make it right.

3) Is our lack of union/visible unity/ *koinonia* an insult to God?

We need to identify our sinfulness and strive, through repentance, obedience, hard and clear thinking and love to remove the causes of offence.

CTE's role within the ecumenical journey

CTE is properly responsive to those whom it is called to serve. But ultimately, it is called to serve its Lord before its beneficiaries or providers!

Unless CTE takes one or more strategic decisions it is likely that several discernible features of the last ten years will strengthen and become even more dominant. There is the risk of a serious lack of momentum as the lack of progress towards ecclesial unity, the differences in understanding what 'unity' might look like, the decline of resources, the reduction of motivation, all put pressure on substantive developments.

Powerful social currents and 'Christian' trends are carrying the Churches. Among the outcomes from these are mission-based pragmatism, denominational/ national Churches by-passing CTE or the Free Churches

Group, and a growing individualism diluting any energy which is left for any form of ecclesial visible unity. These trends may well lead to further disenchantment within England's Churches for ecumenism at world, European, British and Irish, and possibly national level.

Recommendations 4.1 - 7

In the light of this I recommend that:

- 1) CTE seeks to co-ordinate the Churches' total ecumenical resources rather more than at present, e.g. by setting up an 'ecumenical bureau' (moving towards an 'ecumenical directorate') whereby the national Churches' resources for ecumenism as well as their designated 'ecumenical' instrument funding are shared and co-ordinated more. What I have in mind is that at a national level the NEOs and the CTE staff work in a more co-ordinated way and at county level the County Ecumenical Officers are co-ordinated with the Denominational Ecumenical Officers and probable people involved in mission and social responsibility etc. It would also be proper that those working for a particular Church (such as the Church of England Council for Christian Unity) should work more responsively with this bureau. This bureau would require more common decision-making but might also move us towards the capacity for more strategic planning.
- 2) CTE promotes more effective co-ordination of local ecumenism with the national scene, by strengthening the value of the CEOs.
- 3) CTE finds new ways to look at the fundamental Faith and Order issues at the local, county and national levels on a more comprehensive basis.
- 4) CTE should refocus on the spiritual dimension of ecumenism and promote a new level of Scriptural engagement.
- 5) CTE addresses urgently the issue of the age profile of people engaging with the ecumenical journey.
- 6) CTE communicates the benefits of the ecumenical journey more widely and improves its profile.
- 7) Common formation for a shared future should be explored.
- 8) CTE addresses the extent and diversity of ethnic changes in the country and on the Churches and takes intentional steps to build further bridges to other independent groups, notably EA and ACEA.

Conclusion ¹⁴

This Re-view indicates that there is much to celebrate from the last ten years but also that there are substantial challenges ahead for us on the ecumenical journey. It also substantiates the core role that CTE with its associated endeavours has played and needs to play into the future.

It is vital that we find a new way to express the shared vision that the Member Churches and denominations in England have for Christian unity as well as the necessity, motivations, benefits and constraints that apply to this. If the ecumenical journey is not to stall or degenerate, there is the need for a new and valid trumpet call to be sounded, which is owned and affirmed by the Churches' leaders at every level. While CTE may remain an 'ecumenical instrument' and so have a relatively low profile, the excitement and challenges of God's call 'to be one that the world may believe' must not be hidden but projected.

Appendix 1 – Members of the CTE Reference Group

Peter Whittaker – Convenor Enabling Group, Methodist Chair of District

Tunde Balogun – Redeemed Christian Church of God

Paul Henricks – Auxiliary Bishop, RC Archdiocese of Southwark

Janet Scott – Religious Society of Friends

Corresponding members

Lindsey Sanderson – Action of Churches Together in Scotland

Rose Hudson-Wilkin – Council of Christian Unity, Church of England

Appendix 2 – List of individuals consulted (Full Report p 74)

Appendix 3 – Significant dialogues and publications (Full Report p 75)

Appendix 4 – From Unity to Diversity (Full Report p 76)

This is a summary version of the full Re-view document which is on the website www.churches-together.org.uk under 'Our work'.

Further copies of this summary are available free from Churches Together in England (a contribution to postage would be appreciated).

The full Re-view is available for £12 (incl postage: cheques to CTE) from:

Churches Together in England, 27 Tavistock Square, WC1H 9HH
lorraine.shannon@cte.org.uk -- 020 7 529 8131

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¹⁴ Full Report p 73.

MOVING TOGETHER – A personal perspective

In September 2006 the Enabling Group of Churches Together in England (CTE) responded to informal conversations that had been taking place during the previous few months, and agreed that there would be value in stepping back and taking a look at how Churches in England were engaging with one another in the 'ecumenical journey'. A key moment in the life of CTE had been the 1997 Forum, the culmination of the *Called To Be One* process, which had looked at what was meant by the visible unity of the Church, both in theory and practice. 2007 seemed a good time for some 'stock-taking', ten years on.

The 'Re-view' – a fresh look at the past decade – was not intended to be a review or audit of CTE, nor even of everything connected to it. It was meant to be much wider, reflecting the deep and broad realities of the way in which Christians of different denominations, nations, ethnicities, histories and social contexts are part of the overall ecumenical journey.

It was decided to seek a personal view, rather than one generated by a committee. Revd Dr David Spriggs was invited to be the writer, aided by a reference group. The method for production was meant to permit and encourage personal perspective and provocation (or prophetic comment), and to point to the future.

David Spriggs is a Baptist Minister who has had pastoral ministries in Shepshed, Minehead and Coventry (where he served as Chair of Coventry Council of Churches and was a founder member of the City Centre Covenanting churches). More recently he was Head of the Evangelism and Prayer Departments of the Evangelical Alliance. Since 1997 David has worked at Bible Society; he was Project Director for *The Open Book*, and is now Bible and Church Consultant. David is Moderator of CTE's Group for Evangelisation and represents Bible Society at the meetings of CTE's Bodies in Association.

This booklet is a summary of the fuller Re-view, which is available under 'Our work' on www.churches-together.org.uk. It is offered for discussion to the Enabling Group and more widely. The reflections and recommendations it contains are those of the author: they are a stimulus and invitation to further reflection, discussion and appropriate action. They are in no sense the 'official policy' of CTE: but they are the considered outcomes of a prayerful, careful listening and analysing process over the first six months of 2007.