

Constitution of The Ecumenical Partnership of Christ the Cornerstone, Milton Keynes. *As approved and adopted 16 December 2007*

Part A Agreements

1 Participating Denominations

Five denominations have covenanted together in order to establish a local ecumenical partnership to be known as 'The Ecumenical Partnership of Christ the Cornerstone, Milton Keynes'. The five participating denominations are:

- The Baptist Union of Great Britain;
- The Church of England;
- The Methodist Church;
- The Roman Catholic Church; and
- The United Reformed Church.

The Ecumenical Partnership of Christ the Cornerstone is:

- a Baptist Church within the North Bucks Forum of the Central Area in membership of the Baptist Union of Great Britain;
- the parish centre of worship in the Church of England Parish of Christ the Cornerstone, Milton Keynes in the Milton Keynes Deanery, Archdeaconry of Buckingham and Oxford Diocese;
- a Methodist Church within the Milton Keynes Circuit and Northampton District;
- part of the Parish of Our Lady of Lourdes, Milton Keynes, in the Northampton Roman Catholic Diocese; and,
- a United Reformed Church in the Milton Keynes District of the East Midlands Synod.

The above descriptions shall be updated as directed by the denominations. Changes shall not be deemed to be amendments to the Constitution (see clause 17).

The five denominations have stated that it is open to other denominations to participate at a later date by agreement with the Sponsoring Body (see clause 3).

2.0 Boundaries, Worship and Membership

2.1 The participating denominations have agreed to parallel statements on boundaries, worship and membership applying for the first part to the Baptist Union, Church of England, Methodist Church and United Reformed Church (described below as the Four Denominations) and as to the second part to the Roman Catholic congregation.

2.2 Boundaries.

2.2(i) For the Four Denominations the boundaries of the ecumenical parish are: the A5, Portway, Overgate and Child's Way.

2.2(ii) For the Roman Catholic Congregation the administrative entity is Our Lady of Lourdes Parish of which Christ the Cornerstone is a part.

2.3 Worship

2.3(i) For the Four Denominations there shall be a programme of united worship, which will include preaching of the Word and celebration of the Sacraments. New forms of worship for regular use are subject to the approval of the Sponsoring Body. Participation by the Four Denominations' congregation in Roman Catholic services, as far as current conditions allow, is to be encouraged.

2.3(ii) The sacraments, and especially the Eucharist, are at the heart of Roman Catholic life and worship. Roman Catholics are expected to take part in the celebration of Mass on Sundays and Holy days. Roman Catholics may be encouraged to take part in other ecumenical services as long as the disciplines of their own denomination are observed.

2.4 Membership of the Ecumenical Partnership

2.4(i) For the Four Denominations, Membership of the Ecumenical Partnership shall be open to all Christians of good standing with their own denomination. Initiation will normally be according to ecumenical rites approved by the denominations. The baptism of believers would not normally be offered in the case of a candidate who has been baptised as an infant but the policy agreed by the Sponsoring Body for Milton Keynes and approved by the Baptist Union would apply. The currently

applicable policy shall be annexed to this Constitution. When Members leave the area they are to be commended to the denomination of their choice.

2.4(ii) Membership shall be open to Roman Catholics who are members of Our Lady of Lourdes parish together with those members of other parishes who use Christ the Cornerstone as their local church.

3.0 Sponsoring Body

3.1 The participating denominations have constituted the Presidency of the Mission Partnership of the Milton Keynes Churches Council, or any successor to the Council, as the Sponsoring Body for the Ecumenical Partnership of Christ the Cornerstone. The Sponsoring Body has responsibility for the oversight of the Ecumenical Partnership and for co-ordinating relations between, the Ecumenical Partnership and the five participating denominations. The Sponsoring Body may exercise its functions directly or act by delegation.

3.2 The Sponsoring Body, acting on behalf of the participating denominations, and acting in consultation with the Ecumenical Council and the Ministerial Team (see clauses 12 and 13), is responsible for determining the size and composition of the Ministerial Team in the Ecumenical Partnership; the participating denominations for their part have expressed the expectation that persons will be selected who will continue the ecumenical character of the Ministerial Team and that the Team will include appropriate forms of lay as well as ordained ministers.

3.3 The Sponsoring Body has determined that every seven years or sooner there should be a review of the Ecumenical Partnership with reference to its Object.

4 Sharing Agreement and Joint Council

There is a Sharing Agreement for the building of the Church of Christ the Cornerstone under the terms of *The Sharing of Church Buildings Act, 1969*. A Sharing Agreement, dated 2nd October 1989, and supplemented by a Supplemental Sharing Agreement dated 6th November 1992, is signed by the following five denominations: The Baptist Union; The Church of England; The Methodist Church; The Roman Catholic Church; and The United Reformed Church. The Sharing Agreement provides for a Joint Council of the Five Churches. The Sharing Agreement having set out the basis for the joint use by the denominations of the church building has facilitated the Ecumenical Partnership of Christ the Cornerstone.

The decisions of the Ecumenical Partnership of Christ the Cornerstone shall give proper regard to the terms of the Sharing Agreement and to the decisions of the Joint Council of the Five Churches taken in furtherance of the terms of the Sharing Agreement.

5 Cornerstone Trust

A Trust Deed dated 29th January 1985 appoints Trustees in whom the building of the Church of Christ the Cornerstone is vested. The Trustees include representatives of each of the participating denominations.

Decisions of the Ecumenical Partnership of Christ the Cornerstone shall give proper regard to the terms of the Trust Deed and to decisions of the Cornerstone Trustees taken in furtherance of the terms of the Trust.

Part B The Ecumenical Partnership of Christ the Cornerstone

6 Name

The name of this local ecumenical partnership is The Ecumenical Partnership of Christ the Cornerstone, Milton Keynes.

7 Object

The Object of the charity shall be to advance the Christian religion for the benefit of the public in accordance with the statement of belief in Annex 1.

8 Sponsoring and Guiding Bodies

The Ecumenical Partnership of Christ the Cornerstone recognises the proper authority of the Presidency of the Mission Partnership of the Milton Keynes Churches Council acting as the Sponsoring Body; the Joint Council established under the Sharing of Church Buildings Act; and the Cornerstone Trust, Milton Keynes, in which the church building is vested. The Ecumenical Partnership shall look to its Sponsoring and Guiding bodies for support and such oversight as the Bodies may

determine. The Ecumenical Partnership is accountable to the partner denominations through the Sponsoring and Guiding Bodies. The Ecumenical Partnership shall make a written annual report, on matters relevant to their spheres of authority, to the Presidency as the Sponsoring Body, to the Joint Council and to the Cornerstone Trust.

9.0 Powers

9.1 In furtherance of the Object, but not otherwise, the Ecumenical Partnership may exercise the following powers provided that in so doing it acts consistently with the terms of this Constitution, including clause 8, and with its status in law including as a charity:

9.1(i) power to raise funds and to invite and receive contributions provided that in raising funds the Ecumenical Partnership shall not undertake any substantial permanent trading activities and shall conform to any relevant requirements of the law;

9.1(ii) power to buy, take on lease or in exchange any property necessary for the achievement of the Object and to maintain and equip it for use;

9.1(iii) power subject to any consents required by law to sell, lease or dispose of all or any part of the property of the Ecumenical Partnership;

9.1(iv) power subject to any consents required by law to borrow money and to charge all or any part of the property of the Ecumenical Partnership with repayment of the money so borrowed;

9.1(v) power to employ such staff (who shall not be members of the Ecumenical Council) as are necessary for the proper pursuit of the Object and to make all reasonable and necessary provision for the payment of pensions and superannuation for staff and their dependants;

9.1(vi) power to co-operate with other charities, voluntary bodies and statutory authorities operating in furtherance of the Object or of similar charitable purposes and to exchange information and advice with them;

9.1(vii) power to establish or support any charitable trusts, associations or institutions formed for all or any of the Object;

9.1(viii) power to appoint and constitute such advisory committees as the Ecumenical Partnership may think fit;

9.1(ix) power to do all such other lawful things as are necessary for the achievement of the Object.

9.2 The Ecumenical Partnership may exercise such powers as may be delegated to it by the Cornerstone Trustees and/or by the Joint Council of the Five Churches in the management, maintenance and improvement of the church and ancillary buildings.

10 Local Decision Making in the Ecumenical Partnership

Decision making for the Ecumenical Partnership shall be by means of a Congregational Meeting and an Ecumenical Council.

11.0 Congregational Meeting

11.1 All those on the current Membership Roll of the Ecumenical Partnership are eligible to attend, contribute to and vote at the Congregational Meeting; other interested persons may attend and speak at Meetings but not vote.

11.2(i) The Chair of the Ecumenical Council and the Leader of the Ministerial Team shall be jointly responsible for the chairing of the Congregational Meeting.

11.2(ii) There shall be a Clerk to the Partnership.

11.2(iii) There shall be a Treasurer for the Ecumenical Partnership.

11.3 There shall be procedural rules governing the summoning and proceedings of the Congregational Meeting including of Special Congregational Meetings which shall be proposed by the Ecumenical Council for the consideration and approval of the Congregational Meeting.

11.4 Congregational Meetings shall be held not less than four times each year, one such meeting being the Annual Congregational Meeting.

11.5 The functions of the Congregational Meeting are to:

11.5(i) review the life and witness of the Ecumenical Partnership of Christ the Cornerstone and seek the will of Christ as Head of the Church;

11.5(ii) consider topics relevant to the local and wider witness of the Ecumenical Partnership in furtherance of the Object of the Partnership;

11.5(iii) receive reports covering all aspects of the life of the Ecumenical Partnership;

11.5(iv) consider recommendations brought to it by the Ecumenical Council and take decisions on them, in so doing acting consistently with this Constitution and with the Object;

11.5(v) consider, and where appropriate, approve nominations from the Ecumenical Council for the offices of Chair of the Ecumenical Council, Clerk to the Partnership, Treasurer and as Auxiliary Members of the Ministerial Team.

11.5(vi) in accordance with the procedural rules appoint the Elected Members of the Ecumenical Council from among persons on the Membership Roll. In making its appointments the Congregational Meeting shall act consistently with the aim, first, that the Ecumenical Council will forward the Object of the Ecumenical Partnership, and, second, that where possible the membership of the Ecumenical Council should be representative of the participating denominations.

11.5(vii) on the recommendation of the Ecumenical Council consider, and where appropriate approve, rules of the Ecumenical Partnership;

11.5(viii) on the recommendation of the Ecumenical Council consider and approve estimates of projected income and expenditure for the forthcoming year;

11.5(ix) refer matters for the attention of the Ecumenical Council;

11.5(x) at the Annual Congregational Meeting receive, and where appropriate adopt, the independently examined or audited statements of account of the Partnership for the previous financial year and appoint independent examiners or auditors, as appropriate, for the current year;

12.0 Ecumenical Council

12.1 The Ecumenical Council shall comprise:

12.1(i) twelve Elected Members appointed to it by the Congregational Meeting for a single term of three years except that an elected member who is appointed Chair of the Ecumenical Council is eligible for re-election for the period or periods of the appointment;

12.1(ii) members ex officio namely:

the Designated Members of the Ministerial Team,
the Clerk to the Partnership,
the Treasurer;

12.1(iii) up to two members co-opted in accordance with the procedural rules for the Ecumenical Council;

provided that in the membership of the Ecumenical Council the Elected Members shall constitute the majority.

12.2 The Chair of the Ecumenical Council shall be nominated by the Council from its current Elected Membership for approval by the Congregational Meeting for a two year term of appointment renewable by the Congregational Meeting on the proposal of the Ecumenical Council for one further two year term. The member appointed as Chair shall hold office from the conclusion of the next ensuing Congregational Meeting after which the appointment is approved, except that in exceptional circumstances the appointment shall take effect from the conclusion of the Congregational Meeting at which the appointment is approved.

12.3 The Ecumenical Council shall nominate persons who are Members to the offices of Clerk to the Partnership and Treasurer for approval by the Congregational Meeting. The Clerk and the Treasurer are eligible for appointment for three year terms extendable for up to, but not more than, three further years by the Congregational Meeting on the proposal of the Ecumenical Council. The Member appointed as Clerk to the Partnership or as Treasurer shall hold office from the conclusion of the Congregational Meeting at which the appointment is approved.

12.4 Procedural rules to govern the proceedings of the Ecumenical Council and associated operations shall be proposed by the Ecumenical Council for approval by the Congregational Meeting.

12.5 The procedural rules shall include provisions governing the eligibility of persons to serve on the Ecumenical Council; persons becoming members of the Council whether ex officio or by election or co-option shall confirm their eligibility as provided under the rules.

12.6 The procedural rules shall elaborate and further specify a requirement that no member of the Ecumenical Council shall receive any benefit in money or in kind from the charity; nor have a financial interest in the supply of goods or services to the charity; nor acquire nor hold any interest in the property of the charity. The rules shall also specify procedures to apply where there is a potential conflict of interest. This does not prevent the Ecumenical Partnership meeting costs in the maintenance of a ministerial manse consistent with the terms of an agreement with the relevant authorities of a partner denomination by virtue of a trustee member of the ministerial team being in occupation of the said ministerial manse.

12.7 The Ecumenical Council shall convene eight times each year and for any additional and special meetings summoned in accordance with the procedural rules.

12.8 The proceedings of the Ecumenical Council are not invalidated by any vacancy among their number or by any failure to appoint or any defect in the appointment or qualification of a member.

12.9 The Ecumenical Council shall be the executive governing body and the charity trustees of the Ecumenical Partnership of Christ the Cornerstone with general control over the administration of the Partnership and the conduct of its affairs. Subject to this Constitution and consistent with the Object, and recognising the relationship of the Ecumenical Partnership with the partner denominations and the Sponsoring Body, the Ecumenical Council may exercise powers conferred, and shall perform all of the duties imposed, by law and by valid agreements applying to the Ecumenical Partnership.

In conducting the affairs of the Ecumenical Partnership, the Ecumenical Council shall:

12.9(i) maintain general oversight including of the worship, pastoral care, Christian education, outreach, lay leadership and ministry, and finance; make recommendations on appropriate matters to the Congregational Meeting; and consider and respond to matters referred to it by the Congregational Meeting;

12.9(ii) advise the Sponsoring Body on the size and composition of the designated membership of the Ministerial Team, and in so doing encourage enthusiastic commitment to the ecumenical nature of the Ministerial Team;

12.9(iii) maintain a Roll of Members of the Ecumenical Partnership in accordance with this Constitution and with supplementary provisions in the procedural rules of the Ecumenical Council;

12.9(iv) propose procedural rules to govern the summoning and proceedings of the Congregational Meeting, and any amendments to such rules, for the consideration and approval of the Meeting;

12.9(v) make reports annually to the Sponsoring and Guiding Bodies as provided in clause 8; report otherwise to the Bodies as deemed necessary; and make any other reports and returns required in law;

12.9(vi) devise procedures to be included in the procedural rules of the Ecumenical Council for selecting persons to represent the Ecumenical Partnership on bodies of the Mission Partnership of the Milton Keynes Churches Council;

12.9(vii) devise and adopt procedures, where appropriate after taking advice from the relevant denomination, by which the Ecumenical Partnership shall maintain a proper relationship to the appropriate local and regional denominational bodies, so fulfilling requirements of those denominational bodies. The adoption of such procedures shall be reported to the Congregational Meeting. Any procedures adopted shall provide for reports to be made regularly to the Ecumenical Council and Congregational Meeting on relations with local and regional denominational bodies. While these procedures may include provision for denominational councils in the Ecumenical Partnership, any such councils shall meet only to transact business of a strictly denominational nature and shall not form part of the decision making structure or process of the Ecumenical Partnership;

12.9(viii) after taking advice from the Congregational Meeting, the Ecumenical Council shall prepare recommendations on the terms of a Review of the Ecumenical Partnership to be undertaken every seven years or sooner, as described in clause 3.3, and shall submit recommendations from the Review to the Sponsoring Body along with a report of the consideration given to the recommendations in the Ecumenical Council and Congregational Meeting;

12.10 The Ecumenical Council may from time to time appoint standing and *ad hoc* committees for specific purposes. The Council shall clearly define the membership, terms of reference and requirements for reporting to the Council. It shall specify the duration of *ad hoc* committees. The Council shall report the appointment of committees to the Congregational Meeting.

12.11 The Chair of the Ecumenical Council shall work closely with the Leader of the Ministerial Team (see clause 13.5).

13.0 The Ministerial Team and Ministry within the Ecumenical Partnership.

13.1 There shall be a Ministerial Team comprising Designated Members and the Team may additionally include Auxiliary Members as provided in clause 13.4.

13.2 The Sponsoring Body having determined in consultation the size and composition of the designated membership of the Ministerial Team (as provided in clause 3.2), the ministers (ordained and lay) consequentially appointed to the Ecumenical Partnership by the partner denominations shall constitute the Designated Members of the Ministerial Team. The Designated Members of the Ministerial Team shall work together as a Team of equals with commitment both to the ecumenical cause and to working together ecumenically.

13.3 While recognising that they are representative of the ministry of Christ in the Church and in the world, Designated Members of the Ministerial Team shall be appointed or called in accordance with the practice of the denomination to which they belong. They shall exercise their ministry within the discipline of their denomination and with respect for the disciplines of the other partner denominations. The Ministers from the Four Denominations shall exercise their ministry consistent with the provision of united worship as prescribed in clause 2.3(i).

13.4 With a view to furthering the work of the Ecumenical Partnership the Ministerial Team may be augmented with Auxiliary Members. The procedural rules of the Ecumenical Council shall state the categories of persons eligible for appointment as Auxiliary Members and the terms of such appointment; and acting consistently with these rules the Ecumenical Council may, having taken advice from the Ministerial Team, nominate a person as an Auxiliary Member of the Ministerial Team for approval by the Congregational Meeting. With reference to clause 12.1(ii), an Auxiliary Member of the Ministerial Team shall not be a member *ex officio* of the Ecumenical Council but such a person shall be eligible for appointment as an Elected Member of the Council in accordance with clause 11.5(vi).

13.5 The Ministerial Team shall choose a Leader of the Ministerial Team to fill the office for a defined period subject to the appointment being ratified by the Ecumenical Council and to confirmation by the Sponsoring Body. In case of disagreement between the Ecumenical Council and the Sponsoring Body, ultimate responsibility shall lie with the Sponsoring Body. The Team Leader shall work closely with the Chair of the Ecumenical Council.

13.6 To govern the operation of the Ministerial Team the Team shall prepare guidelines for endorsement by the Ecumenical Council. At least annually the Ministerial Team shall review the guidelines and, after consulting the Ecumenical Council, where appropriate amend them.

13.7 Members of the Ministerial Team both Designated and Auxiliary shall meet regularly for prayer and reflection upon the life of the Ecumenical Partnership and shall report their deliberations to the Ecumenical Council as appropriate. The Ministerial Team shall develop agreed practice in united worship, in pastoral care and in ecumenical working and in so doing shall co-ordinate appropriate endeavours with the Ecumenical Council. The Team shall review any matters of difficulty in the conduct of united worship, in pastoral care and in ecumenical working and, if it cannot resolve points of difference, the Team shall refer the matters to the Ecumenical Council for further consideration. Where appropriate the Ministerial Team and the Ecumenical Council shall jointly refer a matter for the attention of the Sponsoring Body. The Ministerial Team shall advise the Sponsoring Body on the size and composition of the designated membership of the Ministerial Team (clause 3.2) and shall advise the Ecumenical Council on the development of ordained and recognised ministry within the Ecumenical Partnership (clause 3.2).

13.8 Every member of the Ecumenical Partnership of Christ the Cornerstone (ordained and lay), having a vital role to play in ministry, is expected to co-operate with other Members for the achievement of the common purpose as set out in the Object (clause 7).

14.0 Finance

14.1 The Ecumenical Council shall prepare and agree rules governing the management of the finances and property of the Ecumenical Partnership, consult where appropriate on these, and recommend such rules to the Congregational Meeting for its approval. The management of finances and property shall accord with the approved rules.

14.2 The Ecumenical Council shall prepare annual estimates of projected income and expenditure. It shall recommend the annual estimates of income and expenditure to the Congregational Meeting and shall provide such other estimates as may be specified in valid agreements and law applying to the Ecumenical Partnership.

14.3 The Ecumenical Council shall ensure that the accounts of the Ecumenical Partnership are kept, and are presented to the Annual Congregational Meeting together with an independently examined or audited report on them. The Ecumenical Council shall make the accounts and a report on them available to the Sponsoring Body and such other bodies as required under valid agreements and law applying to the Partnership.

14.4 Out of the combined income of the Ecumenical Partnership there shall be discharged:

14.4(i) operational and administrative costs of the Ecumenical Partnership;

14.4(ii) financial obligations to the central and other funds of the participating denominations, as agreed with the Sponsoring Body;

14.4(iii) gifts, as determined by the Ecumenical Council, to other societies and charities consistent with the Object of the Ecumenical Partnership;

provided that the funds belonging to the Ecumenical Partnership shall be applied only in furtherance of its Object and consistently with the provisions of this Constitution.

14.5 None of the income or property of the charity may be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend, bonus, or otherwise by way of profit to any member of the charity. This does not

prevent expenditure on the maintenance of the manse of a minister and payment of council tax on that manse.

15.0 Membership

15.1 There shall be a Membership Roll recording the names of Members of the Ecumenical Partnership. The Membership Roll shall record against names entered the allegiance to partner denominations where appropriate. The Membership Roll shall be reviewed following an annual Dedication Service. The presence of a person's name on the Membership Roll shall be the evidence of Membership of the Ecumenical Partnership.

15.2 Persons shall be eligible to have their names entered on the Membership Roll who are, or have become, Members, as described either in clause 2.4(i) or clause 2.4(ii) above, and who complete an annual declaration of dedication.

15.3 Additionally in a spirit of ecumenism the Ecumenical Partnership has, with the approval of the Sponsoring Body, determined that persons shall be eligible to have their names entered on the Membership Roll who are members in good standing of a member church or association of churches of Churches Together in England or the World Council of Churches and who complete an annual declaration of dedication.

15.4 The procedural rules of the Ecumenical Council shall govern the maintenance of the Membership Roll and associated pastoral care. These rules shall include provisions relating to the absence of rededication, resignation from Membership and the termination of Membership and removal of a name from the Membership Roll.

15.5 The responsibilities of Members are to confess the Christian faith and, in dependence upon God's grace, to be disciplined in worship, prayer and Bible study, to participate in the mission of the Ecumenical Partnership of Christ the Cornerstone, and to be faithful in giving and in service.

15.6 In meeting the responsibilities of Membership, Members shall wherever possible attend the Congregational Meeting and make themselves available to serve on committees appointed to forward the work and witness of the Ecumenical Partnership.

Part C Concluding Provisions

16 Termination of the Ecumenical Partnership

The Ecumenical Partnership may be terminated and the sharing of the church building ended, only with the approval of the Sponsoring Body, the Joint Council established under the Sharing Agreement, the Trustees of the Cornerstone Trust and the appropriate denominational authorities. If the Ecumenical Partnership and sharing of the church building is ended, the distribution of any property or assets shall be in accordance with the Sharing Agreement and the Trust Deed, and the distribution to be effected only by the Joint Council and Trustees. There shall be no distribution among Members of the Ecumenical Partnership.

17.0 Amending the Constitution

17.1 No amendment may be made to this Constitution which would cause the Ecumenical Partnership of Christ the Cornerstone to cease to be a charity in law.

17.2(i) A proposal to amend this Constitution may be brought to sequential meetings of the Ecumenical Council and the Congregational Meeting, after due notice of the proposal has been given in accordance with the rules of the Ecumenical Council and the Congregational Meeting.

17.2(ii) If the proposal is supported by both the Council and the Meeting by simple majorities of those present and voting it shall be submitted to the Sponsoring Body for its assent.

17.2(iii) If the proposal secures the assent of the Sponsoring Body it shall then be brought to further sequential meetings of the Ecumenical Council and Congregational Meeting, along with a report on the decision of the Sponsoring Body on the proposal.

17.2(iv) If the proposal, having the assent of the Sponsoring Body, is approved at the further meetings of the Ecumenical Council and Congregational Meeting by simple majorities of those present and voting, the amendment shall take effect according to its terms, but subject to paragraph 17.3.

17.3 An amendment to any of the following clauses:

Part A clauses 1; 2; 3; 4 and 5

Part B clauses 13.2; 15.2; 15.3; 16; 17

shall take effect but this shall be provisional pending a decision of the relevant authority of each partner denomination. If within twelve months of the submission of the amendment to the denominational authorities any one such authority disapproves the amendment, the amendment shall be suspended and any previous provisions reinstated. In the event of no such decision being communicated to the Ecumenical Partnership to disapprove an amendment within twelve months, the amendment shall be deemed to be confirmed.

18 The law of England and Wales applying

The Ecumenical Partnership of Christ the Cornerstone, Milton Keynes, is governed by the law of England and Wales and this Constitution shall be interpreted in that context.

19 Consent

This Constitution as amended was adopted on 16 December 2007 by the Ecumenical Council and the Congregational Meeting on behalf of the Ecumenical Partnership with the due assent of the Sponsoring Body and the participating denominations.

Vivdy Lattis
Andrew Ollard
~~James~~
Anser Hes
David Swenson
Peter Goodhead
Robin D. R. H.
David W. Pater
J.B. Bailey
Ernesto LOZADA-GEORIGIA

Sam Cross
Moyra Archibald
D. J. ...
Paul Jenkins
H. ...

Annex 1

Statement of belief with reference to the charity Object (clause 7)

Having been established under covenant as a local ecumenical partnership by five Christian denominations, as recorded in the Constitution clause 1, with God's help the charity manifests that unity in Christ in which He has called us, so that we may the more effectively proclaim the Gospel and offer to the community around us that diversity of gifts which our several traditions have received and which we have too often held in separation.

Annex 2

Baptismal Annex: MEMBERSHIP OF THE ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIP

With reference to the Constitution, Clause 2.4(i) the policy as agreed is as follows:

Minutes of the Meeting of the MKCC Presidency, 18 February 1997

Minute 6. Baptismal Policy in LEPs. It was agreed to adopt the Baptist/Methodist Agreement on Baptismal Policy within Local Ecumenical Projects, finalised between the Baptist Union and the Methodist Church, as the policy for all LEPs in Milton Keynes.

BAPTIST/METHODIST AGREEMENT ON BAPTISMAL POLICY WITHIN LOCAL ECUMENICAL PROJECTS.

Finalised after long consultation between the Baptist Union Advisory Committee on Church Relations and the Methodist Church Ecumenical Committee.

A We recognise the necessity of:

- i) Maintaining the integrity of both Methodist and Baptist understandings and practice of baptism;
- ii) Having a flexible and sensitive approach in this very delicate area;
- iii) Maintaining and developing good relationships and unity within the congregations of the sharing churches.

B We note that:

- i) It is the practice of the Methodist Church to baptise infants and to confirm them on confession of faith or, when infant baptism has not occurred, to baptise and confirm believers. In both cases these services make provision for pouring, sprinkling or immersion in water.
- ii) It is the practice in Baptist churches to hold a service for infants and their parents (variously known as "The Dedication Service", "The Service of Infant Presentation and Blessing", "The Blessing of Infants", etc) and to administer believer's baptism on the candidate's personal profession of faith in Christ.
- iii) Standing Order 800 of "The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church" makes clear that "it is contrary to the principles and usage of the Methodist Church to confer what purports to be baptism on any person known to have been already baptised at any time"
- iv) Whilst welcoming "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" (the so-called Lima Document) as a "notable milestone in the search for sufficient theological consensus", the BUGB Council in November 1984 dismissed as wholly unacceptable in its present form the statement that, "Any practice which might be interpreted as 'rebaptism' must be avoided". In this way the Council sought to protect the freedom of an individual's "informed conscience" in matters concerning baptism and to allow for the possibility of a change of conviction here.
- v) Whereas "Recognised and Regarded" (Methodist) ministers are expected to administer infant baptism in appropriate circumstances those with "Authorised" (Methodist) status have greater flexibility here. This latter category may accordingly be more acceptable to (most) Baptist ministers in Local Ecumenical Projects.

C. Procedures:

1. Since baptism, whether of believers or infants, is such an important step, any persons involved (candidates or parents of infants) should proceed with the full knowledge of all the options that are available to them. Candidates for believer's baptism and confirmation shall, wherever possible be trained together and shall thus be made aware of the teaching of both churches.
2. It shall be left to the discretion of the Baptist membership to baptise as believers any who have previously been baptised as infants in other churches. In the interests of the unity of the congregation this should not be applied to Methodist members except as provided under 4 below.
3. Whenever a Methodist member wishes to make a public confession of faith (other than through those opportunities normally provided by the services of the Methodist Church) then the Methodist Church Council shall arrange an appropriate opportunity such as The Service for the Celebration of Christian Renewal.
4. If, despite the above provision, any Methodist maintains a conviction about being baptised as a believer, this shall only be after a full consultation between (1) the candidate AND (2) the Baptist minister and Church Meeting and the Superintendent Minister and Church Council. This consultation will, of course, be pastoral in nature and not in the way of a tribunal. In view of SO 800 such a service should not take place unless the Methodist member is willing to have his/her membership transferred to the Baptist roll.

The Baptist Union of Great Britain

The Methodist Church