

## **A - A Model Declaration of Intent for single congregation partnership**

### **(Specify locality) LOCAL ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIP**

Through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the world has been reconciled to God, and in Jesus Christ unity has been offered to all people. Through him we are called into a new relationship with God and one another as the children of God. It is a relationship inaugurated by God in Christ through the Holy Spirit, appropriated by faith and baptism, nurtured and deepened through the ministry of word and sacrament, and expressed in a confession of one faith and a common life of loving service.

“We understand the mission of the Church to be (i) to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom; (ii) to teach, baptise and nurture new believers; (iii) to respond to human need by loving service; (iv) to seek to transform unjust structures of society; (v) to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.” (Lambeth Conference 1988, Anglican Consultative Council 1990 and CTE Forum 1997).

“We, therefore, now declare together our readiness to commit ourselves to each other under God. Our earnest desire is to become more fully, in God’s own time, the one church of Christ, united in faith, communion, pastoral care and mission. Such unity is the gift of God.” (Swanwick Declaration 1987).

“With gratitude we have truly experience this gift growing amongst us (in these past months/years). We affirm our openness to this growing unity in obedience to the Word of God, so that we may fully share, hold in common and offer to the community around us those gifts which we have received and still hold in separation. In the unity we seek we recognise that there will not be uniformity but legitimate diversity.” (Swanwick Declaration 1987).

In response to God’s call, and accepting the challenge to be pilgrims together, committed to God and to each other, we, the (named) churches, hereby publish our intent to constitute a Local Ecumenical Partnership, as understood by our denominations and interpreted in our Constitution.

We commit ourselves to sharing together in the ministry of Christ to the world, and within this context to explore together the meaning and possibilities of unity for worship, evangelism, mission and service.

We commit ourselves to assessing the resources of church and community in terms of people, money and buildings, and to deploying them in the best way in relation to the aspirations and needs of local people.

*NOTE a): "Because the essence of covenanting lies in the act itself – the act which brings about a new relationship – covenanting makes co-operation between Christians both visible and permanent. This is the heart of the matter. The fact that covenanting is performed with the approval of those in authority and is concerned with definite activities shows the inter-relationship of church leaders and congregations.*

*Without the leaders a covenant would have no authority; without the congregations' activities it would have no substance" – Local Church in Covenant, a paper approved by the Roman Catholic Bishops of England and Wales.*

*The United Reformed Church understands the role of its Synod Moderators as representative of the councils of the church. They give leadership but are not understood as "leaders": thus the process of covenanting envisaged involves both the local congregation and the wider councils of the church.*

We commit ourselves to maintaining and developing relationships with our parent bodies and with the (named County Sponsoring Body)...

We pledge ourselves to this agreement for an initial period of seven years from the date of designation.

(Signed and dated by local ministers, church representatives, and endorsed by the signatures of the regional Church representatives and leaders, e.g. Chair, Moderator and Secretary of the Sponsoring Body).

*Note (b): The Declaration of Intent and the Constitution should be signed in the context of worship with representatives from the wider Church present. It is recommended that an opportunity be given for all church members who so wish to add their signatures to the Declaration.*

**ALTERNATIVE BRIEF DECLARATION OF INTENT**  
**particularly appropriate where there is no inheritance of two distinct congregations in the locality.**

The Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church, believing in one holy catholic and apostolic Church and seeking the visible unity of the Church in worship and mission, have covenanted to work, worship and witness as one congregation under the name of..... (Methodist/United Reformed).

**B – Guidelines for a constitution for a single congregation partnership**

**Methodist/United Reformed joint church**

*Note: This is a model not a straightjacket! It outlines the main issues and areas to be considered in drafting a constitution for a new Local Ecumenical Partnership or for revising an existing one.*

*As recommended in Baptism & Church Membership, CTE 1997, agreements should be reached on how issues of “re-baptism”, extended membership and admission of children to communion will be handled in the Partnership. These agreements should then be written into the appropriate sections of the Constitution, viz 4 BAPTISM & MEMBERSHIP and 5 WORSHIP & THE EUCHARIST.*

*Choices of terminology will have to be made locally with the help of the Sponsoring Body and denominational ecumenical officers.*

*The constitutional systems of the two denominations are not compatible, the United Reformed Church giving priority to the Church Meeting and the Methodist Church to the Church Council. Compromises have to be agreed in each situation to achieve an appropriate balance. The relative size of Methodist and United Reformed memberships should not necessarily determine the decisions on an appropriate form of church government.*

### **1. Name**

The Local Ecumenical Partnership shall be known as (specify)

*1a) Note: It is not normally appropriate to use the term “United Church” or even “Ecumenical Church”. It may be termed the X Methodist/United Reformed Joint Church or X Church (Methodist/United Reformed). A saint’s name or a name clearly indicating the church’s location is usually appropriate.*

The Partnership is a Methodist Church within the (specify) Circuit and (specify) District and a United Reformed Church within the (specify) Synod.

*1b) Note: It will help to indicate of which Methodist circuit and of which United Reformed Synod it forms a part.*

### **2. Area**

The Ecumenical Partnership primarily serves the community/neighbourhood of (specify) and those who associate with it and benefit from its ministry.

### **3. Sponsoring Body**

The Partnership looks for support and oversight to (designate name of the County or equivalent) as its Sponsoring Body and will be accountable to the partner Churches through the Sponsoring Body.

The Sponsoring Body shall indicate the membership and terms of reference of a local advisory group/support group through whom regular two-way contact shall be maintained. Oversight will therefore be experience as both communal and personal.

The Partnership shall make a written Annual Report to the Sponsoring Body.

#### **4. Baptism and Membership**

*4a) Note: It is advisable to study Baptism and Church Membership with particular reference to Local Ecumenical Partnerships, CTE 1997, as issues of baptism, confirmation and membership are complex and the constitution needs to be as clear as possible.*

Baptism shall be administered according to the rite and/or practice of either of the constituent denominations, or according to a rite approved by the participating denominations through the Sponsoring Body, and shall be set, in normal circumstances within an act of congregational worship.

*4b) Note: For Methodists see also Deed of Union 6,8 (c) and 9 and Methodist Worship Book, page 60 ff. For the United Reformed Church, see also the Basis of Union section at paragraph 14, pp A2 and A3 of the Manual.*

The legal requirement to keep a register of baptism shall be met.

*4c) Note: Both Churches recognise each other's baptism and advocate the use of a common baptism certificate. With the agreement of the partner Churches, therefore, a joint baptism register may be kept.*

Since baptism, whether believers or infants, is such an important step, any persons involved (candidates or parents of infants) should proceed with the full knowledge of the options that are available to them. Infant Dedication and Thanksgiving for the Birth of a Child shall be among such options as shall be a service for the Re-Affirmation of Baptismal Faith.

Preparation for believer's baptism or for confirmation and admission to the full responsibilities and privileges of membership shall be undertaken jointly and shall include specific denominational teaching and instruction.

Membership implies certain responsibilities and duties: regular attendance at worship, including Holy Communion, active sharing in the life of the church including attendance at meetings of the church and congregation, regular sacrificial giving, witness to God's love in the world and by word and deed.

A service of Confirmation and Reception into Church Membership shall normally be administered at a joint act of worship according to a rite authorised by the Sponsoring Body.

Those received into membership through such an act of confirmation at a joint service are thereby members of both the participating denominations as well as joint members of the Partnership.

*4d) Note: It is important that the appropriate representatives of each of the partner denominations are together involved in joint confirmation. The offering of the right hand of fellowship in welcoming the newly confirmed persons into the membership of the Partnership can appropriately be done by the members of the Elders' Meeting/Church Council.*

There shall be a Common Roll, including those on denominational rolls and joint members by virtue of joint confirmation, and a separate list of members shall also be kept for each denomination, joint members being included on each list.

*4e) Note: Members of the United Reformed Church may seek Extended Membership of the Methodist Church (see guidance section 13 of CPD 2005). The United Reformed Church may likewise offer membership to all Methodist members of the partnership ( see General Assembly Reports 2001 p53 paragraph 6.1.*

For the purposes of financial denominational assessment, the membership may be divided into its constituent denominational parts, or in the following agreed proportion: - Methodist Church (specify) %: United Reformed Church (specify) %.

In the case of those with joint membership a formula should be agreed by the denominations concerned through the Sponsoring Body. In the absence of such a formula, joint members shall be apportioned equally for the purpose of financial assessment.

Membership discipline shall continue to be a matter for each denomination following its own procedures. In any particular case, joint members shall be subject to either denomination's discipline as agreed by the Sponsoring Body and the appropriate denominational authorities on the proposal of the Church Council. The standing of any joint member with each denomination shall be reviewed in the light of the outcome of any disciplinary process initiated under this clause.

## **5. Worship and Holy Communion**

The partnership shall respect the faith and practice of its member denominations.

Worship shall safeguard and present the doctrines, practices, traditions and developing traditions of each participating denomination and be conducted in

accordance with denominational practices and/or using rites agreed by the Sponsoring Body.

A balanced and varied pattern of worship shall be aimed for in order to maximise the riches of each tradition and to enable the congregation to explore and express its ecumenical life and aspiration, while at the same time ensuring that worship is accessible and sustaining for all its members.

Ordained ministers or other duly authorised persons shall preside at the Eucharist as permitted by denominational legislation or by dispensation therefrom.

The authorisations of each denomination apply to that denomination's services. Good and sensitive practice shall be to advertise services, particularly eucharistic services, as "according to ...x... tradition".

*5a) Note: For Methodists, see Methodist Worship Book, introduction to Orders of Service for Holy Communion, and Standing Order 011 (on lay authorisation). For the United Reformed Church, see the Basis of Union para. 24 on presidency of the sacraments.*

All those recognised as communicants by the participating Churches/denominations may receive the sacrament.

*5b) Note: Reference may be made at this point in the constitution to the agreed policy on children and communion.*

In arranging services encouragement shall be given to the participation of Lay/Local Preachers and others authorised as leader of worship.

## **6. (either) Ecumenical Ministry Team (or) Ministry**

**Either:** The Ecumenical Ministry Team shall consist of the local ministers (enumerate by office) and of any other people duly appointed by the participating denominations, after reference to the Sponsoring Body.

**Or:** The Minister of the Partnership shall be duly invited/appointed in accordance with the practice of the appointing denominations after reference to the Sponsoring Body.

The Ecumenical Ministry Team/the Minister(s) shall normally share leadership and pastoral care with the Elders' Meeting/Church Council. Members of the Elders' Meeting/ Church Council shall be set apart for office by prayer in the context of worship.

*6a) Note: It is the United Reformed Church Practice for the minister/ministry team to share leadership and pastoral care with the Elders' Meeting. Members of the Reformed United Church including joint members who are appointed as Elders (or an equivalent leadership role) should be set apart by prayer in the context of worship. This constitutes ordination as Elders. Members of the Methodist Church who are appointed as Elders (or an equivalent leadership role) should be set apart for office by prayer in the context of worship also.*

(If applicable the following clause should be inserted - )

There shall normally be a practice of alternating ministry between the Methodist and United Reformed Churches.

*6b) Note: For Methodists, see Standing Orders 543 to 547.*

*6c) Note: The practice of alternating ministry is becoming harder to sustain.*

Denominational procedures shall be followed in the appointment/call of ministers. Recognising, however, the importance of continuity, the partnership expects that those responsible for the appointment/call of ministers shall select persons who shall develop the Partnership ecumenically. To this end, the Ecumenical Church Council shall appoint (specify number of) members to a Staffing Consultative Group, which shall follow the procedures for these groups, as laid down by the Sponsoring Body in each and every case.

When it is anticipated that a minister or member of the Ecumenical Ministry Team serving the Partnership may leave, or before any major changes in the responsibility of the minister presently in post are considered, or if additions to the Ecumenical Ministry Team are being contemplated, there shall be a meeting of the Staffing Consultative Group appointed by the Sponsoring Body.

*6d) Note: Changes should not be made in the size and scope of a minister's responsibility without full consultation with the Methodist Circuit and the United Reformed Church Synod as well as with the Partnership.*

The Staffing Consultative Group shall comprise representatives of the Partnership, the parent bodies and two representatives of the Sponsoring Body, one of whom shall chair the group.

The Staffing Consultative Group shall be responsible for amending an existing job description or drawing up a new one and submitting it to the appointing authority. The procedure to be followed in the appointing or re-appointing of a minister shall be agreed and shall conform to the requirements of the participating denominations. The Staffing Consultative Group shall advise as to

the appropriate level of ministry and the denomination of the new minister to be sought.

The minister(s) shall be subject to the normal discipline of the Church/denomination to which each belongs.

A United Reformed Church minister serving the Partnership shall be expected to seek Authorised Status on the Methodist Conference.

*6e) Note: For Authorised Status see Standing Order 733 to 734.*

A Methodist Minister serving the joint church shall agree to abide by United Reformed Church doctrine and practice and shall give an undertaking to seek to foster good relationships with both parent denominations.

Methodist ministers appointed to or called by the Partnership are, by virtue of that appointment or call, members of the ... Synod.

For Methodist ministers the normal Methodist stationing period and review procedures shall apply, in consultation with the Partnership and the United Reformed Synod ( in an Area of Ecumenical Co-operation/United Area the United Reformed Church Synod delegates this authority to the Area Council ). United Reformed Church ministers shall be appointed for an initial period of ... years with a review in consultation with the Methodist Circuit in the ...th year.

Newly appointed ministers shall be inducted/welcome at a service at which they, other members of the Ecumenical Team, the Partnership congregation and representatives of the Sponsoring Body shall affirm/re-affirm the Declaration of Intent.

*6f) Note: The induction or welcome must meet the legal and liturgical requirements of the appointing authority while taking due account of the ecumenical nature of the ministry to be exercised. See joint service enclosed in this pack.*

## **7. Joint Decision Making**

Joint decision making for the Partnership shall be by means of a Congregational Meeting and an Elders' Meeting/Church Council.

*7a) Note: The balance of roles of a Congregational Meeting and an elected Elders' Meeting or Church Council will need to be thought through carefully. Where the building is vested in the Methodist Church it may be appropriate to call the smaller body the "Church Council"; where it is vested in the United Reformed Church it will be appropriate to call it the "Elders' Meeting". In United Reformed Church practice the*

*(Congregational) Church Meeting is a higher authority than the Elders' Meeting.*

The Partnership shall assemble in Congregational Meeting at least once a quarter. The minister(s) shall normally chair the meeting. All members on its roll shall be eligible to attend, speak and vote; non-members may be invited to attend, may speak, but shall not vote. During a ministerial vacancy when considering an invitation/call the Interim Moderator or the Methodist Superintendent (or their deputies) shall preside, depending on which denomination is seeking a minister.

In Congregational Meeting members have the opportunity through discussion, responsible decision making and care for one another, to strength each other's faith and to foster the life and work and mission of the church.

**Generally the functions of the Congregational Meeting shall be.**

- To further the Church's mission at home and abroad
- To develop local ecumenical relationships
- To consider matters of public concern in relation to the Christian faith
- To bring to the notice of the Elders' Meeting/Church Council and to the wider Councils any matter for their consideration.
- On the advice of the Elders' Meeting/Church Council, to determine the number and the period of service (normally three years) of Elders/Leaders and to elect them.
- To receive the report of the Elders' Meeting/Church Council on all matters pertaining to membership.
- To adopt the annual accounts and receive other financial reports, and to make arrangements for the auditing/checking of accounts.

*7b) Note: Assuming that the financial year followed by the Partnership is January-December, it will be appropriate to hold the Annual General Meeting at which accounts are presented in February or March. If the financial year adopted is September-August, it will be appropriate to hold the Annual General Meeting in October.*

- To receive reports and proposals from the Elders' Meeting/Church Council and from representative bodies of both denominations and to authorise appropriate action.

- To make such appointments to offices within the joint church and to the wider Councils of the churches and to other representative groups as may be deemed appropriate.
- (where a building is vested in the United Reformed Church) to make arrangements for the proper maintenance of the building (under the terms of the Sharing Agreement) **OR** (where the building is vested in the Methodist Church) to receive a property report from the Managing Trustees and to offer such advice as may be appropriate.

*7c) Note: Where the building is vested in the Methodist Church the Elders' Meeting/Church Council, when constituted in accordance with Standing Order 611 may with the agreement of the District Synod be deemed to constitute the Managing Trustees for Methodist Church purposes. In such a case a Circuit Steward shall be a member of the Elders' Meeting/Church Council.*

- To make arrangements for the general oversight of all the financial responsibilities of the joint church on the recommendations of the Elders' Meeting/Church Council.
- To set up such committees as are deemed necessary for the life of the Partnership
- To work as a constituent part of the ... Methodist Circuit and the ... URC Synod ( where there is an Area Council also specify Area Council ).

The Elders' Meeting/Church Council shall meet at least once a quarter. The minister shall normally chair the meeting. Its members shall combine the functions of URC Elders and Methodist Stewards and Councillors. The Elders' Meeting/Church Council shall share with the Minister(s) in the pastoral oversight and leadership of the Partnership.

There shall be at least one member of the Elders' Meeting/Church Council on any committee set up by the Congregational Meeting for the care of property, finance, worship and the sacraments, and such other matters as from time to time are deemed to be necessary. The members shall be elected by the Congregational Meeting and set up by prayer in the context of worship: such setting apart shall be understood by the United Reformed Church as ordination. They shall be inducted to serve for such limited period as the Congregational Meeting shall decide (normally 3 years) and be regarded for United Reformed Church purposes as Elders.

*7d) Note: Due regard should be given to the functions of elders in the local and wider councils of the church as found in The Manual, section 2:2[2].*

*When a Single Church Partnership is in its infancy it may be desirable to require on its decision making body a balance of members of each of the partner churches.*

*This would be in line with the usual terms of the Joint Council under The Sharing of Church Buildings Act (see below). Later on the requirements for such a balanced representation may be perceived as unduly limiting. The constitution should therefore be worded so that either method can be used. The Elders' Meeting Church/Council and Congregational Meeting can draw up rules spelling out the practice to be adopted. These should be appended to the constitution, indicating the date on which the Elders' Meeting/Church Council and Congregational Meeting adopted them. They can be varied by decision of the Elders' Meeting/Church Council and Congregational Meeting without having to alter the constitution itself.*

**Generally the functions of the Elders' Meeting/Church Council shall be:**

- To share with the minister in the pastoral oversight of the Partnership
- To see that arrangements are made so that public worship is regularly offered and the sacraments duly administered
- To be responsible for the institution and oversight of work among children and young people and of all other church organisations
- To foster in the congregation concern for witness and service at home and abroad
- To be responsible for day to day pastoral care, administration and outreach
- To recommend to the Congregational Meeting the number of members of the Elders' Meeting/Church Council that will be required and to make recommendations regarding the length of service (normally three years)
- To oversee all matters concerned with membership, except in cases of discipline (which shall be dealt with according to denominational practice), and report all decisions to the Congregational Meeting
- To recommend to the Congregational Meeting proper arrangements for the general oversight of all financial responsibilities of the Partnership
- (where the buildings are vested in the United Reformed Church) to recommend to the Congregational Meeting proper arrangements for their maintenance under the terms of the Sharing Agreement OR (where buildings are vested in the Methodist Church) to make proper arrangements for their maintenance and, when constituted according to SO 611, to act as Managing Trustees

- To advise the Congregational Meeting on such other committees as will facilitate the proper fulfilment of the church's worship, mission and service to nominate a Church Secretary and Treasurer to be elected by the Congregational Meeting who shall then be members of the Elders' Meeting/Church Council.
- To nominate a Church Secretary and Treasurer to be elected by the Congregational Meeting and who shall then be members of the Elders' Meeting/Church Council
- To act on behalf of the Congregational Meeting and bring concerns of the wider councils of the Methodist and United Reformed Churches to the attention of the Congregational Meeting.
- To bring all major issues to the Congregational Meeting for consideration, decision and support of the church members
- To do such other things as may be necessary in pursuance of its responsibility for the common life of the Partnership.

(Where a Sharing Agreement is entered into:-) Financial and management arrangements shall be as set out in The Sharing Agreement under the Sharing of Church Buildings Act, 1969

*7e) Note: See Under the Same Roof – Revised Guidelines to The Sharing of Church Buildings Act, 1969 (CCBI in association with CTE and CYTUN, 1994). There may be a requirement for a Joint Council distinct from the Elders' Meeting/Church Council and Congregational Meeting. Where the Partnership is using a Methodist building, permission may be sought from the District Synod for the Elders Meeting/ Church Council to act as the Methodist Church Council – see Standing Order 611.*

There shall be a Joint Council (where required under the provisions of the Sharing Agreement). This shall meet when new capital money is to be raised or proposals to buy or sell land or property are being taken. The Joint Council may delegate its day to day management functions to the Elders' Meeting/Church Council, but this should be by a formal decision, not by default.

The Partnership shall maintain a proper relationship to the appropriate local and regional denominational bodies, fulfilling necessary constitutional requirements. These bodies are: the (specify) Circuit of the Methodist Church and the (specify) Synod of the United Reformed Church or, in ( specify ) Area of Ecumenical Co-operation/United Area, the Area Council.

*7f) Note: For Methodists the Superintendent Minister has general responsibility for the Circuit and all its constituent churches (Standing Orders 502,520 and 521). Standing Order 503 also provides for*

*ecumenical representation on the Circuit Meeting and Circuit Committees. Non-United Reformed Church ministers and those regarded for United Reformed Church purposes as elders, may serve as members of the United Reformed Synod and General Assembly.*

Denominational/Church Councils or other committees shall be constituted annually and meet as frequently as required for purposes determined by the respective denomination/church.

## **8. Premises**

The Premises comprise (specify), (and where appropriate) and are/shall be subject to a Sharing Agreement under the provisions of The Sharing of Church Buildings Act, 1969.

*8a) Note: See Under the Same Roof – Guidelines to the Sharing of the Church Buildings Act, 1969, CCBI/CTE/CYTUN, 1994. Manses as well as churches may be made subject to a Sharing Agreement. This will be especially appropriate where alternating ministry is envisaged.*

They shall be subject to inspection in accordance with the current Regulations of the (specify) denomination.

*8b) Note: Where a shared building is in the ownership of one particular denomination that Church's Rules on inspection will apply as well as on alterations/extensions.*

*Where a building is in joint ownership it is the responsibility of the Managing Trustees (usually the Joint Council) to negotiate with the Custodian Trustee a system of regular inspection. One of the partner denominations' (or some equally rigorous) system should be followed since capital money from two denominations is at stake. The proportion of capital money contributed in the first place may reasonably influence the decision.*

The terms of the Sharing Agreement shall take precedence if any conflict is perceived with Constitution.

*8c) Note: (See 7 above) A Joint Council is not absolute requirement. It is possible to vary the terms of a Sharing Agreement in the light of its operation but this will require consultation with appropriate denominational authorities and parties and obtaining the necessary legal consents. The Elders' Meeting/Church Council and the Congregational meeting may be appropriate bodies to take decisions concerning the premises in full consultation with the Managing Trustees (if a different body) and a Custodian Trustee.*

## **9. Finance**

*9a) Note: See A Harmony of Church Finance, CTE 2006.*

There shall be a common purse. The Treasurer (see 7 above) shall receive and account for all monies donated to the Partnership through collections, gifts etc. to the Elders' Meeting/Church Council and the Congregational Meeting. Copies of the independent/examined/audited accounts as adopted shall be submitted to the Circuit Treasurer.

Out of the common income there shall be discharged:

- the expenses of ministry and of the administrative costs of the Partnership, as agreed with the Sponsoring Body and with the Methodist Circuit and District and the United Reformed Church Synod.

*9b) Note: It is particularly important that an agreed system for financing ministry is in place before alternating ministry is adopted. Every effort should be made to ensure that financial arrangements are equitable and not subject to drastic variation when the denomination of the minister changes.*

- financial obligations to the central and other funds of the participating Churches/ denominations, as agreed with the Sponsoring Body and with the respective Church/denominational authorities:

*9c) Note: The two denominations differ considerably in the responsibilities discharged from central funds, and this will need to be taken into account when working out financial obligations. In a Partnership some regular contribution should be made to the central and missionary funds of each of the partners.*

- gifts to other societies and charities, as determined by the Council.

## **10. Wider Participation**

Other churches in or near the neighbourhood of the Partnership may negotiate for participation in the Partnership at any time, subject to the agreement of the appropriate denominational authorities and the Sponsoring Body.

## **11. Review**

The Sponsoring Body shall ensure that every seven years, or sooner, the Partnership shall be evaluated with reference to its objectives set out in the Declaration of Intent and the Constitution.

*11a) Note: See Revised Guidelines for the Review of LEPs' CTE, April 2002.. For Methodists, see Standing Order 412(2) and (3).*

*If the property is vested in the Methodist Church, it will be helpful if the quinquennial inspection is held shortly before of at the same time as the review.*

*The review should normally be so arranged as to fulfil also the United Reformed Church's responsibility for visitation. See the Manual Section 2.(3)A(ix) or for Area of Ecumenical Co-operation/United Area 2.(4)A(v)*

*Attention is drawn to the long experience of the United Reformed Church in carrying out such reviews.*

## **12. Termination**

The Partnership shall be terminated only with the approval of the appropriate denominational authorities and of the Sponsoring Body.

## **13. Amendments**

Any amendments to this constitution shall require three months' notice to be given to the Congregational Meeting and the Elders' Meeting/Church Council. No such amendment shall be valid unless it has been approved by not less than three-quarters of those present and voting at a Congregational meeting and by a majority of those present and voting at and Elders' Meeting/Church Council. It must also be approved by the appropriate denominational authorities and the Sponsoring Body.

*13 a) Note: Rules relating to committees or working groups should be appended to the constitution but do not form an intrinsic part of it and may therefore be altered by formal decision of the Elders' Meeting/ Church Council and the Congregational Meeting.*