



THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
Council for Christian Unity

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Applying Canon B 43

in the context of the Anglican–Methodist Covenant

Advice for Diocesan Bishops from the Council for Christian Unity April 2004

This advice for Diocesan Bishops is offered by the Local Unity Panel of the Council for Christian Unity, with the approval of the Chairman and General Secretary of the CCU, in the hope that it will prove helpful and ensure a measure of consistency in the way dioceses respond to the opportunities now available in the context of the Anglican/Methodist Covenant.

A: Introduction

The Covenant between the Church of England and the Methodist Church includes these among its six commitments:

3. We commit ourselves to continue to welcome each other's baptised members to participate in the fellowship, worship and mission of our churches.
4. We commit ourselves to encourage forms of eucharistic sharing, including eucharistic hospitality, in accordance with the rules of our respective churches.

This provides a new context within which a diocesan bishop may wish to grant approvals to parishes when they request it as part of Canon B 43. The bishop may also wish to encourage such requests as part of an overall diocesan response to the Covenant.

B: General Considerations

1. Requests from parishes should come from both the incumbent and the PCC as a result of ongoing consultation between the parish (or grouping of neighbouring parishes) and the related churches in the local Methodist circuit. This will include exploring wider possibilities for shared ministry and mission.
2. The arrangements detailed below will normally relate to Methodist presbyters, deacons and Local Preachers of the Circuit within which the parish is situated.

3. National representatives of the Methodist Church have indicated that, as part of the discipline of the Methodist Church under Standing Order 733(7), it would be appropriate for the Circuit to ask the Methodist Conference via the District to grant 'Authorised to Minister' status to ordained members of the Church of England participating in these arrangements.

4. It is appropriate for the diocesan bishop to keep a record of the names and addresses of all Methodists leading worship regularly or presiding at Methodist services of Holy Communion under these arrangements. The bishop may also wish to specify a set period for these arrangements with renewal subject to review.

5. Services of ordination and confirmation are not included in these arrangements – and the law of the land prevents a Methodist minister conducting the Solemnisation of Matrimony in accordance with Church of England regulations.

C: Invitations to take part in Church of England worship:

- 1 The diocesan bishop may decide in the context of the Anglican/Methodist Covenant that he will normally grant approval when incumbents (with PCC approval where necessary) wish to invite Methodist ministers and suitably authorised lay people to lead or take part in Church of England services *on a regular basis* including

- a) Assisting in the distribution of the holy sacrament – B43 clause 1 (f)
- b) Leading Morning or Evening Prayer or the Litany – clause 1 (a)
- c) Preaching – clause 1 (c)
- d) Assisting at a Baptism or a Wedding – or conducting a funeral service – clause 1 (e) (NB: only at the request of the participating families)

- 2 For invitations to lead services of Holy Communion or conduct Holy Baptism see below:

D: Invitations to share in joint worship or to use a Church of England church for services in the Methodist tradition – including Holy Communion and Holy Baptism

1. The diocesan bishop may decide in the context of the Anglican/Methodist Covenant that he will normally grant approval to allow joint worship or to enable Methodist services to take place in specific Church of England churches when requested by the incumbent(s) (subject to PCC approval) “on such occasions as may be specified in the approval given by the bishop” – B43 clause 9.
2. However a service of Holy Communion presided over by a Methodist minister is understood by the Church of England to be a ‘Methodist’ service and should be advertised and announced as such.
3. Similarly a service of Holy Baptism conducted by a Methodist minister will also be a ‘Methodist’ service. The record of such baptisms will therefore be made in the appropriate Methodist Baptism Register rather than in the Register of the Church of England church where the service has taken place.
4. Further opportunities for shared sacramental ministry are available through Canon B44 in the context of a Local Ecumenical Partnership.

Note:

The declared understanding of the Church of England is that the denomination of the presbyter presiding at a service of Holy Communion or conducting Holy Baptism defines the denominational identity of the service.

A Church of England communion service - in other words ‘a service according to the use of the Church of England’ – takes place when the person presiding uses a rite which is authorised or allowed by canon and when that person is an episcopally-ordained priest of

- a) *the Church of England,*
- b) *a Church in communion with the Church of England or*
- c) *a church with whom we are not in communion but whose orders are recognised by the Church of England (and who in the case of b) and c) has received permission to officiate under the Overseas and Other Clergy Measure 1967.*

E: Invitations to Church of England priests, deacons, deaconesses, readers and lay workers to lead or take part in services in Methodist churches

1. The diocesan bishop may decide in the context of the Anglican/Methodist Covenant that he will normally grant approval for a priest of the Church of England to preside at Holy Communion in a Methodist church or to take part in services on a regular basis (clause 3) – and similarly for deaconesses, readers and lay workers to fulfil their normal roles on a regular basis (clause 6). These arrangements also need the prior approval of the PCC.
2. The basis on which the bishop may wish to grant approval for a priest to preside at Holy Communion in a Methodist Church – as required by B43 clause 4 – could be:
 - a) that the Covenant commitments provide the “special circumstances which justify acceptance of the invitation”
 - b) that “the rites and elements to be used are not contrary to, nor indicative of any departure from, the doctrine of the Church of England in any essential matter”.
3. The services for which this provision is made will be those taking place in Methodist churches either
 - a) within the parish(es) to which those invited are licensed, or
 - b) where the incumbent of the relevant parish has given approval – B43 clause 3 (b)(i).