



THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND Council for Christian Unity

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Yes, you may

(Stage Two)

How the Church of England shares in Local Ecumenical Partnership with other churches

A mini-guide to Canon B44: Of relations with other churches

Six categories of LEP

Since 1994 Churches Together in England has identified six categories of Local Ecumenical Partnership

1. Single congregation partnerships between more than one denomination
2. Local covenant partnerships where several congregations covenant to work together
3. Shared Building agreements
4. Partnerships for chaplaincy work in institutions
5. Partnerships for missionary engagement (e.g Industrial Mission)
6. Partnerships in educational work

Any individual partnership may appear in more than one of these categories. e.g. Many single congregation partnerships will operate in the context of a Shared Building agreement.

The bishop must agree

Canon B44 authorises the bishop of a diocese to make an agreement with other churches designated under the Church of England (Ecumenical Relations Measure) 1989 (*see leaflet A-1*) so that the Church of England may be a partner in a Local Ecumenical Partnership. Partnerships can operate in a variety of contexts.

a) Parishes (or parts of parishes)

Canon B44 (1) sets out how this is possible in relation to a **parish** or part of a parish (and indicates how it can be extended to more than one parish).

In practice, detailed proposals are likely to be worked out between the parish or local

congregation and representatives of its prospective partner churches, in the form of a Declaration of Intent or a Covenant, together with a Constitution for the new Partnership. This is what will be brought to denominational bodies for approval.

In the Church of England, therefore, for a parish, or part of a parish, to become involved in a Local Ecumenical Partnership – whether single congregation (Category 1) or a multi-congregational Covenant (Category 2)

- (i) The incumbent must agree
- (ii) The PCC must agree by at least a 75% majority
- (iii) The parish's annual meeting (or a special meeting) must agree
- (iv) The Deanery Synod and Standing Committee must agree
- (v) The Diocesan Pastoral Committee must agree

To enable Church of England participation, the Constitution will need to include clauses reflecting the provisions of Canon B44 (2) namely:

- (i) The Partnership shall be subject to review and renewal after not more than seven years.
- (ii) Any extension or amendment to the Partnership (e.g. by including additional parishes) must also have the consent of
 - The incumbents concerned
 - The PCCs concerned
 - The Diocesan Pastoral Committee

For a proposed single-congregation Partnership, many other practical matters will have to be resolved including:

- Possible pastoral re-organisation
- Possible Shared Building Agreement
- Financial considerations
- Possible ministry by a minister from another church
- Provision of housing for such a minister

Special guidance leaflets are available from the Council for Christian Unity: *C-1 Authorisation of ministers from another church*, *C-2 Housing of ministers*, *C-3 Finance and LEPs*

See also below on the provisions of Canon B44 (4) and (5) in relation to worship and ministry in a single congregation LEP.

b) Cathedrals

Canon B44 (6) sets out how all this is varied if a **cathedral** is involved.

c) Non-parochial LEPs

Canon B44 (7) sets out how all this is possible **extra-parochially**. This is normally taken to cover Church of England participation in Local Ecumenical Partnerships in Categories 4, 5 and 6.

The clause in the Canon, however, specifically refers to "institutions" (without defining the word) where "a clerk in Holy Orders is licensed under section 2 of the Extra-Parochial Ministry Measure 1967 in respect of that institution."

The arrangements for any partnership in these circumstances simply need the approval of the Diocesan Pastoral Committee

Shared Buildings

A Shared Building Agreement allows two or more congregations to 'time-share.' Where there is no separate written agreement in line with Canon B44 (1) & (2), there is, in terms of the Church of England canons, no Local Ecumenical Partnership. Shared buildings are, however, listed as Category 3 LEPs by Churches Together in England.

Shared Building Agreements can be made under the Sharing of Church Buildings Act 1969 with any of the churches designated under the Act (*see leaflet A-3*).

Churches not designated under the Ecumenical Relations Measure 1989 (*see leaflet A-1*) may hold their own services on the basis of the Sharing Agreement (which relates solely to the building). Shared *worship*, however, will be regulated by Canon B43 and is thus limited to those churches designated under the 1989 measure.

Worship and Ministry in a single-congregation LEP

Clause 4 & 5 of Canon B44 normally only come significantly into play in the case of single-congregation LEPs (Category 1).

They may also sometimes be thought relevant in the case of Category 4 chaplaincies where there is regular provision of public worship. The latter part of Clause 5, however, refers only to *parishes*.

A bishop *may* in these circumstances, by making an **instrument** in writing, make special provision as to worship and ministry in the partnership. This will, among other things, make it possible for a minister of another church to lead worship on a regular basis and be engaged in the cure of souls.

Copies of a **Draft Instrument** reflecting the provisions of Canon B44 (4) and (5) are available from the Council for Christian Unity.

The Instrument will be the means by which, in relation to a Church of England place of worship, the bishop

- exercises his powers of discretion in relation to various canonical obligations to do with the conduct of Church of England services – 4 (1) (b)
- authorises ministers of other participating churches to baptise – 4 (1) (c)
- authorises a Church of England priest to use rites of Holy Communion authorised by a partner church – 4 (1) (d)
- permits joint services with other participating churches, e.g. baptism and confirmation – 4 (1) (e)
- authorises ministers of other participating churches to preside at services of Holy Communion – 4 (1) (f)

For these last three the bishop must be satisfied that rite used is essentially in line with Church of England doctrine – 4 (2)

The Instrument will also draw attention to clause 4 (3) as follows:

- Details shall be published in advance, "so far as practicable," when a minister of another church is to preside at Holy Communion
- It must be understood that, even if that minister uses a Church of England rite (as authorised under Canon B1), it is not a service "according to the use of the Church of England"
- Bread and wine consecrated at these services may not be reserved, and may only be used for sick communion if the communicant expressly wishes it.

A guidance leaflet is available in relation to diocesan authorisation of ministers of other churches (*leaflet C-1*) – including ways of meeting the requirements of Canon B44 (5).

For all other categories of LEP, a bishop's Instrument will not normally be necessary. The provision of non-Anglican worship by non-Anglican ministers (and the participation in non-Anglican worship by Anglican ministers) will be covered by Canon B43.*

The Bishop's signature on the LEP agreement may be regarded as giving permission for whatever is allowable under Canon B43 'on a regular basis' in relation to the partner churches in the LEP.

* *A new paper is being prepared on the use of B44 in the context of churches in covenanted partnership.*

Note: This leaflet is an introduction to the provisions of Canon B44 and is not a comprehensive statement of the law.

The full text of **Canon B44** is available in this series of Resource papers (paper B-2-1). Alternatively it is available by email together with the House of Bishops' Code of Practice (1989) and Supplement (1997) from ccu@c-of-e.org.uk.