

**GENERAL SYNOD**  
**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE**  
**Ecumenical Relations Measure**  
**Comments and explanations**

The Ecumenical Relations Measure amends the statutory provisions that enable the Church of England to participate in ecumenical activity with other Christian churches. It extends the General Synod's existing powers to make provision by Canon for the participation of members of other churches in Church of England services and updates provisions that enable the Church of England to participate in ecumenical schemes. It enables the bishop temporarily to designate churches that have not been designated at the national level as ecumenical partners of the Church of England within a diocese. It also requires the House of Bishops to issue a code of practice on co-operation by the Church of England with other churches.

## **Introduction**

1. The Legislative Committee of the General Synod, to which the Measure entitled Ecumenical Relations Measure ('the Measure') has been referred, has the honour to submit the Measure to the Ecclesiastical Committee with these Comments and Explanations.

## *Summary of the Measure*

2. The Measure makes a number of amendments to the Church of England (Ecumenical Relations) Measure 1988 ('the 1988 Measure'). These include amendments that extend the General Synod's existing powers to make provision by Canon for the participation of members of other churches in the services of the Church of England and update existing provision for the participation of the Church of England in ecumenical schemes.
3. The Measure empowers the bishop of a diocese to designate a church as one to which the 1988 Measure applies. That church is then treated as an ecumenical partner of the Church of England in the diocese even though it has not been so designated by the archbishops for the Church of England as a whole.
4. The Measure also requires the House of Bishops to issue a code of practice on co-operation by the Church of England with other churches.

## **The provisions of the Measure**

### *Section 1 Extension of power to make provision by Canon*

5. Section 1 of the Measure makes various amendments to the 1988 Measure to extend the scope of ecumenical provision which may be made by Canon.
6. Section 1 of the 1988 Measure empowered the General Synod to make provision by Canon enabling a member of a church to which that Measure applies to take part in public worship in accordance with the forms of service and practice of the Church of England.

7. The 1988 Measure applies to any church which is designated by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York as a church to which that Measure applies. To be eligible for designation by the Archbishops, a church must be one that subscribes to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and administers the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion. It must also be a member of one of the national ecumenical bodies listed in the 1988 Measure or, in the case of a church outside the United Kingdom, be nominated by resolution of the General Synod. (See section 5 of the 1988 Measure.)
8. Section 1(1) of the Measure amends section 1 of the 1988 Measure so that provision made by Canon may allow a member of any church which subscribes to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity but which has not been designated under the 1988 Measure to read a lesson or lead prayers at Church of England services, or to lead intercessions at Holy Communion. There are Trinitarian churches that are not eligible to be designated under the 1988 Measure because they do not administer baptism or Holy Communion; or have not been designated by the Archbishops because they do not have the sort of structure that enables them to be designated at the national level. The amendments made by section 1(1) will enable provision to be made by Canon so that members of such churches may take part in Church of England services in the ways mentioned above.
9. Section 1(1) additionally amends the 1988 Measure so that provision may be made by Canon for members of the Salvation Army to preach at Church of England services. The Salvation Army is not eligible for designation under the Measure because, although it is strongly Trinitarian in doctrine and has a ministry of preaching, it does not administer the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion. However its reasons for this are nuanced and not as a result of rejection of the sacraments, and the Salvation Army permits its members who wish to do so to seek baptism, and to receive Holy Communion, in other churches. It is accordingly considered appropriate for the 1988 Measure to be amended so that provision can be made by Canon enabling members of the Salvation Army to preach at Church of England services.
10. Section 1(2) and (4) replace the term “local ecumenical project” in the 1988 Measure with the term “local ecumenical co-operative scheme” (a wider term that has been agreed following discussion with ecumenical partners). The new term is defined so that co-operation extends to matters affecting mission and worship, and not only ministry, congregational life and buildings (as at present).
11. Section 1(3) amends section 4 of the 1988 Measure. That section currently makes provision in relation to certain churches in South Asia that are in communion with the Church of England. It permits clergy of those churches who temporarily become clergy of the Church of England under the Overseas and Other Clergy (Ministry and Ordination) Measure 1967 to continue to exercise ministry in a church which is an ecumenical partner of their ‘home’ church even though that partner church is not an ecumenical partner of the Church of England, or has a more limited partnership with the Church of England than it has with their home church. That provision is amended so that it covers clergy from all churches that are in communion with the Church of England, not just those in South Asia.
12. Section 1(5) to (8) make consequential amendments.

## *Section 2 Power of bishop to give temporary designation*

13. Section 2 inserts a new section 5A in the 1988 Measure. The new section 5A will enable the bishop of a diocese to designate a church as a church to which the 1988 Measure applies, with the result that the church’s members can be invited to participate in Church of England services in various ways, Church of England clergy can accept invitations to participate in

the services of that church, and the Church of England can enter into local ecumenical co-operative schemes with that church.

14. As mentioned above, there are Trinitarian churches that administer baptism and Holy Communion but have not been designated by the Archbishops because they do not have a national structure or governing body that enables them to be designated by the Archbishops at the national level. This is true in many cases of the large and growing number of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, including many black-led and black-majority churches. The power of designation conferred on the bishop by new section 5A will allow formal ecumenical relationships to be established between the Church of England and churches of this description.
15. A designation by the bishop of a church under section 5A will have effect only in the diocese of the bishop who gave the designation. The designation continues for the length of time specified by the bishop, the maximum being seven years.
16. A designation can be renewed by the bishop, on each occasion for not more than seven years. A designation can be revoked by the bishop.
17. For a church to be eligible for designation (or renewal of a designation) under section 5A it must be a church which subscribes to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and administers the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion. Additionally, the bishop must be satisfied that it does not promote any doctrine which is contrary to the doctrine of the Church of England in any essential matter and that it meets conditions relating to the ordering of its life and its ecumenical relations that are contained in a code of practice issued by the House of Bishops. (See further below as to the code of practice.)

### *Section 3 Code of Practice*

18. Section 3 inserts a new section 5B in the 1988 Measure. The new section 5B will require the House of Bishops to issue a code of practice on co-operation by the Church of England with other churches.
19. Clergy, deaconesses, lay workers and readers will be required to have regard to the code of practice when exercising any functions under the 1988 Measure or under any Canon made in reliance on that Measure.
20. The code of practice (and any revision or replacement of it) will have to be laid before the General Synod for approval.

### *Section 4 Short title, commencement and extent*

21. Section 4 provides for the citation of the Measure, for its coming into force and for the making of transitional, transitory and saving provision in connection with its commencement. It also provides for its extent, including by making provision for its extension to the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man in accordance with the provisions of the relevant local legislative procedures.

## **Proceedings in the General Synod**

### *First Consideration*

22. The Measure originally formed part of a much larger draft Church Representation, Ecumenical Relations and Ministers Measure. That Measure was introduced into the Synod for First Consideration in February 2017. A number of points about particular aspects of

that Measure were raised but it was generally favourably received and was committed to a Revision Committee.

### *Revision*

23. 15 members of the General Synod submitted proposals for amendment of the draft Church Representation, Ecumenical Relations and Ministers Measure within the time allowed by the Standing Orders but of those, only three proposals for amendment were directed to the provisions of the Measure concerned with ecumenical relations.
24. Having considered proposals from members of the General Synod that it should do so, the Revision Committee decided to divide the draft Church Representation, Ecumenical Relations and Ministers Measure so that the provisions concerned with ecumenical relations became a separate Measure (i.e. the Measure now presented to the Ecclesiastical Committee). The Revision Committee made a number of amendments to those provisions.
25. The other provisions which originally formed part of the draft Church Representation, Ecumenical Relations and Ministers Measure – mainly concerned with replacing the Church Representation Rules with new rules – are proceeding separately in the Synod and are expected to be considered for final approval by the Synod in February 2019.
26. The Revision Committee made only one amendment to the Measure. The amendment was to insert what is now subsection (5)(d) of the new section 5B inserted by section 3 of the Measure. The inserted paragraph will mean that the code of practice issued by the House of Bishops under the new section 5B will, if desired, be able to incorporate by reference relevant guidance that is set out elsewhere. The code will therefore not need to duplicate other relevant guidance (for example, guidance on financial matters or safeguarding).
27. The Revision Committee rejected an amendment which would have restricted the provision relating to members of the Salvation Army preaching at Church of England services (see section 1(3)) so as to exclude services of Holy Communion, confirmation and ordination. The amendment was proposed on the basis that as the Salvation Army did not itself celebrate those particular services, it would not be right to allow a member of that church to preach at such a service in the Church of England. However the Revision Committee noted that existing provision in the 1988 Measure already provided for members of other churches which did not administer confirmation or ordination (e.g. the Baptist Church) to preach at those services in the Church of England. The Revision Committee therefore considered that it was right to make provision enabling members of the Salvation Army to do so.
28. The Revision Committee rejected an amendment to substitute the term “local ecumenical partnership” for “local ecumenical co-operative scheme” (see section 1(2) and (4)). The Committee noted that the expression “local ecumenical co-operative schemes” had been adopted at the request of the Council for Christian Unity, following discussion with other churches. The intention was that the expression used in the legislation should merely be descriptive; not that it should specify a formal name for ecumenical initiatives which were, quite reasonably, known by different names in different places. While ‘local ecumenical co-operative scheme’ would be the generic statutory term for such an arrangement in the Church of England’s legislation, it was not expected that they would be described as such ‘on the ground’. In any event, it was not for the Church of England to prescribe for other Churches what ecumenical initiatives should be called. Diocesan ecumenical officers would, in consultation with their colleagues in other Churches, be able to advise how such arrangements be described.
29. The Revision Committee reported the Measure to the Synod in February 2018 and it was then considered on the Revision Stage in full Synod. One amendment to the Measure was made at the Revision Stage so that the Measure did not automatically extend to the Isle of

Man but would only do so if an Act of Tynwald or an instrument made under an Act of Tynwald so provided, and subject to such exceptions, adaptations or modifications as specified in the Act or instrument (see section 4(8)).

### *Final drafting*

30. Two drafting amendments were made to the Measure at the Final Drafting stage which was taken at the July 2018 group of sessions of the Synod as follows.
31. An amendment was made to section 2 to insert a consequential amendment to section 6 of the Church of England (Ecumenical Relations) Measure 1988. That amendment provides that where a diocesan bishop makes a temporary designation of a church under the new section 5A, the bishop also has the function of designating the “appropriate authority”, in relation to that church, for the purposes of section 2 of that Measure.
32. An amendment was made to section 3 to give express power for Canons made under the 1988 Measure to make provision by reference the code of practice. See new section 5B(4) inserted in the 1988 Measure by section 3 of the Measure.

### *Final approval*

33. Because the Measure makes provision “touching ... the services and ceremonies of the Church of England or the administration of the Sacraments or sacred rites thereof” it was referred to the House of Bishops under article 7 of the Constitution of the General Synod. The House of Bishops resolved to return the Measure for final approval without making any further amendments to it. Neither of the Convocations nor the House of Laity required a reference under article 7 of the Synod’s Constitution.
34. The Final Approval Stage took place at the July 2018 group of sessions of the Synod. The Measure received the approval of all three Houses.
35. The voting on the motion for the final approval of the Measure was as follows—

	In favour	Against
Bishops	22	0
Clergy	84	2
Laity	95	0

### *Conclusion*

36. The Legislative Committee invites the Ecclesiastical Committee to issue a favourable report on the Measure. Should the Ecclesiastical Committee require any further information or explanation, the Legislative Committee stands ready to provide it.

On behalf of the Legislative Committee

*Geoffrey Tattersall*

Deputy Chair

September 2018