

Anglican/Methodist Relations in England During the Period 1950-1982:

A Personal Reflection.

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The first part of this paper is concerned with a factual account of the relations between the Church of England and the Methodist Church in the period 1950-1982, the second is a personal reflection on how I understand both the strengths and weaknesses of Methodism.

A. Anglican/Methodist Relations 1950-1982.

1. Background to the setting up of the 1955 Anglican-Methodist talks.

The discussions on church unity which marked the early part of the twentieth century received added direction in the Cambridge sermon of Archbishop Fisher in November 1946. In his sermon the Archbishop pointed to the problem of "constitutional" schemes of union which he regarded as the most difficult of all ways to re-union in England. Rather, what was needed was "that while the folds remain distinct, there should be a movement towards a free and unfettered exchange of life in worship and sacrament" In order for this to happen the Archbishop proposed that the Free Churches should receive episcopacy into their system, and so enter into full communion with the Church of England without the complexities and upheavals of a constitutional union. In underlining this he was picking up the fourth tenet of the Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1920 in which the Anglican Bishops set out what they regarded as the minimal elements necessary for the visible unity of the church, namely, the Holy Scriptures as the ultimate standard of faith, the Nicene Creed, the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion and a ministry acknowledged by every part of the Church, the episcopate being the one means of providing such a ministry. Conversations between Anglicans and Free Church members sparked off by the Cambridge Sermon led in 1950 to the report "Church Relations in England" and this set the scene for subsequent discussion.

Throughout the period, in the 1920 Lambeth Conference, the sermon of Archbishop Fisher and the 1950 Report was central to the discussions. For Anglicans what was meant by "the taking of episcopacy into their systems" by the Free Churches was not just a form of government by persons called bishops, but rather episcopacy in the historic succession. It was also recognised that even if ways were found of coming into full communion, the continued existence of parallel churches in some areas, "ought not to be regarded as being more than a temporary stage on the road to full unity".

It was the response of the Methodist Church through its Faith and Order Committee to the challenge of the 1950 Report that led directly to the setting up in 1955 of the Anglican/Methodist conversations.

2. Anglican/Methodist Conversations 1955-1967.

(a) The Interim Report

Much of the substance of the first two years of discussion appears in the Interim Statement published in 1958. Among its chapters is an important statement of the common ground on which the two churches stand, a description of a large area of liturgical usage in common, the case for episcopacy and the distinctive aspects of Methodism. However, the particular reason for the publication of the Interim Statement was to reject any process of uniting which would lead to

the setting up of a church in which some ministers were episcopally ordained while others were not. This would have been the case if Methodist bishops were consecrated first and if all subsequent ordinations were episcopal without the full recognition and reconciliation of all ministries from the outset. The Statement emphatically looked to the unification of the two ministries from the beginning and put far greater emphasis on organic union as the goal than the "folds in the garment" of Archbishop Fisher's sermon. (1)

In responding to the Interim Statement the Lambeth Conference had this to say:

"The Conference encourages continuance of the conversations with a view to the making of concrete proposals, as offering a possible first step on the way to re-union in the particular historic situations in which the Churches concerned are placed; but, on the understanding that organic union is definitely accepted as the final goal and that any plans for the interim stage of intercommunion are definitely linked with provisions for the steady growing together of the Churches concerned."

It was then with the aim of working out a scheme of full communion, as a stage, but only a stage on the road to organic union that the conversations were resumed.

(b) The Final Report

In 1963 the Final Report was published, containing a fresh examination of important theological issues: Scripture and Tradition, Church Order with special attention to Priesthood, Episcopacy and the Sacraments. One of the results of this was to see more clearly that theological differences often cut across, rather than follow denominational boundaries. There seemed enough doctrinal grounds to encourage the coming together of the two Churches and the Report consequently outlined a procedure for this to take place by stages. The first stage was to be inaugurated by a service in which ministers and members would be reconciled and full communion be entered into. All new Methodist ministers would be ordained by a bishop in the historic succession and certain Methodist ministers would be consecrated as Bishops. Stage I was to be a time of sharing together as fully as possible while remaining two distinct churches. During this period a number of difficult, yet important, issues would have to be faced:

(1) "In the course of our discussions, we have been led with impressive unanimity to the conviction that nothing short of organic unity, whatever form it may take, should be our final goal"

"Without surrendering our declared immediate quest of intercommunion associated with a unification of ministries, we have come to see that this objective marks a stage, but no more than a stage in the process of growing together towards that fuller unity which we believe to be God's will for his Church."

- (i) The doctrinal basis which should be adopted by the united Church.
- (ii) The re-organisation of the diocesan system.
- (iii) The place of the diaconate.
- (iv) The relation of church and state.
- (v) The relation of the united Church to other churches.
- (vi) The preservation of the distinctive and valuable features of Methodism in a united Church.
- (vii) The reconciliation of different sacramental practices.
- (viii) The different attitudes to social problems.
- (ix) The bringing together of patronage and stationing.
- (x) The place of confirmation in a united Church.

Complex as such issues were recognised to be, nonetheless they were not regarded as obstacles to entering into stage I.

Integral to the scheme was the form of the Service of Reconciliation in which members of each Church and ministers of each Church, were to be accepted by each other by the reciprocal laying on of hands.

All the Anglicans signed the Report but four Methodists dissented publicly claiming that the Report placed too much emphasis upon Tradition and too little on Scripture; that historic episcopacy was unacceptable and that the Methodist doctrine of the Priesthood of all Believers was not safeguarded. How far the discussion of the Report reached the grass roots is difficult to assess but in 1965 the Convocation of the Church of England and the Methodist Conference decided by large majorities that the scheme offered the right way forward and another group was appointed to deal with certain objections and compose an Ordinal for Stage I.

The new Ordinal received universal acclaim, and the refined Service of Reconciliation made quite clear that in the laying on of hands on each minister of both Churches in turn, the Holy Spirit was being asked to grant to each minister that which he needed for the fulfilment of the larger ministry that was now to be his. In this it was open to anyone who so wished to regard the laying on of hands as an act of ordination. It was on this point of indisputable ambiguity that a leading Evangelical Anglican was unable to sign the Report.

In the discussion which followed disquiet amongst Anglicans came from two sources. Some Anglo-Catholics maintained that all Methodist ministers must be episcopally ordained before their orders could be recognised and that the Service of Reconciliation did not bring this about. On the other hand many Evangelicals objected to the Service on exactly the opposite grounds, namely that all that was needed was simple recognition of Methodist ministers and anything that might be interpreted as re-ordination, such as the laying on of hands, must be rejected. It was also argued forcibly by many Anglo-Catholics at the same time that a union with the Methodist Church would make union with

the Roman Catholic Church much more remote. Moreover, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York with the majority of other bishops were in favour and the referendum of beneficed clergy was also in favour, though not conclusively so, and the majority of dioceses voted for the scheme.

The vote was taken in July 1969. The Methodists reached well above the required 75% while the Anglican vote fell below 70%. Three years later the supporters of the scheme made one more effort after it had been publicly acknowledged that the Service of Reconciliation could be understood as 'conditional ordination'. It failed again.

(More than ten years later it is perhaps easier to evaluate the scheme and to get the voices into perspective. Undoubtedly the talks at national level and as they were carried on locally, by separate groups and shared groups, led to a much greater knowledge of one another's theological positions, church government and spirituality. This, in spite of official rejection of the scheme, prepared the ground for future dialogues and provided a seed bed for the growth of local ecumenical projects. Important work had been done on the theological statements made in the Interim and the Final Reports and the Ordinal. Moreover, an important vision had been seen, that union of churches is not something which can happen at a single moment of transformation but is, as the two stages implied, a process, a growth into new life. Furthermore, it had been recognised that not all problems need be settled at the outset but can only be rightly grouped within the context of closer sharing. The greatest weakness was undoubtedly the ambiguity felt by many to exist in the Service of Reconciliation. And perhaps there is some measure of truth in a comment heard often ten years later that the leadership was too far ahead in understanding and experience of one another than the grass roots. There were too many parishes that had no experience of that fellowship with the other Church which forms the womb in which such a scheme can be accepted and nourished.)

3. Progress between failure and the next round of official talks

Failure of the scheme inevitably left a feeling of despondancy amongst advocates in both Churches and an uneasiness about entering too swiftly into more discussions which might lead to a similarly abortive conclusion. There followed a time for both Churches to turn their attention to putting their separate houses in order though a Joint Liaison Commission was set up to maintain official contact between the two Churches. By far the most significant development was in the growing number of local ecumenical projects, as a result of the 1964 Nottingham Conference and the subsequent setting up of the Consultative Council for Local Ecumenical Projects in England (CCLEPE). It is unfortunate for subsequent developments that these experiments spread unevenly over the country and while some dioceses, like Bristol and Birmingham encouraged them, in others they are still little known. Many of these areas involve only Anglicans and Methodists, while others include wider groupings and in some areas the Roman Catholic Church is a partial participant. In spite of the failure of the scheme and largely due to the developments in LEP's official steps enabling the churches to move more closely together were taken. In 1972 the General Synod of the Church of England passed Canon B 15A admitting to Holy Communion all members of mainstream churches in "good standing", though requiring an incumbent to consider whether a person should be episcopally confirmed if they habitually receive communion in an Anglican Church. Although this meant that Free Church people might attend freely Anglican Eucharists it quite clearly did not intend and still does not signify full intercommunion. In 1976 the House of Bishops agreed the use of the Joint Confirmation Service where the diocesan bishop agreed it.

4. Beginning again 1973-1982

(i) The Ten Propositions

As a result of an informal Conference of Church leaders in 1973 and at the invitation of the recently formed United Reformed Church, came "Talks about Talks" and the setting up of the Churches' Unity Commission. The two former partners in dialogue were joined now in conversation with the Baptist Union, the Churches of Christ, the Congregational Federation, the Moravian Church, the Roman Catholics and the United Reformed Church. Three years later in January 1976 came the issuing of the Ten Propositions which were to form a basis for the churches to covenant together to promote visible unity. Such a covenant was to entail recognising each other's members as "true members of the Body of Christ" and to welcome them to Holy Communion without conditions, recognising each others' ministries as "true ministries of word and sacraments in the Holy Catholic Church", the agreement on rites of initiation, the taking of the historic episcopacy into the non-episcopal churches and the continuing exploration of visible unity.

(ii) Reaction to the Ten Propositions

It was at this time with the failure of the earlier scheme in mind due to the ambiguity of the Service of Reconciliation that Archbishop Coggan convened a meeting of Church of England theologians representing a broad spectrum of opinion to consider whether there was a way in which the ministries of the Church of England and the Free Churches could be reconciled which would win the assent of most Anglicans. The decisions of High Leigh have been for Anglicans central in all that followed. The conference concluded that each Church would "recognise" the other covenanting Churches as they now are but this recognition would be seen in the light of what all the Churches would become. All would be episcopally ordered. Bishops would be consecrated and the different existing presbyteral ministries would be "recognised". The future depended on the recognition of ministers with their bishops. In the outline service suggested by High Leigh there was to be no laying on of hands that might be interpreted by anyone as re-ordination. Anomaly might be tolerated but not ambiguity. The order of events in the Service would be the reciprocal recognition of the Churches as they now are, the consecration of bishops and action by the new bishops by prayer to the Holy Spirit for the presbyterates of the Churches, the effect of which would be to incorporate all presbyters into an episcopal structure. All this would be followed by the concelebration of Holy Communion. Much hope was placed by many ecumenically minded members of the Church of England in the High Leigh Conference. It was believed that a breakthrough had been made and a way secured to avoid past failure.

The response of the Roman Catholic Church to the Ten Propositions was predictable. As part of a world-wide Church it was unable to go ahead unilaterally but agreed to remain as an observer to the continuing discussion. The Congregational Federation rejected the propositions out of hand, the Baptist Union reluctantly agreed not to recommend them to its constituents but also to remain an observer. The rest agreed to continue with the direction set by the propositions, the Methodists agreeing to enter the Covenant as soon as the Church of

England was willing to do so, explaining that if it turned out right for the Free Churches to unite without the Church of England, a covenant as such would not be needed since they already recognised each other's ministries and members.

In 1978 the General Synod of the Church of England affirmed by a majority of approximately 80% three resolutions: firstly, that it was ready to proceed with the discussion towards covenanting on the basis of the Ten Propositions; secondly, that such discussions in no way prejudged the question of the ordination of women in the Church of England (this was a new factor in the debate and had not been a part of the earlier Anglican-Methodist debate), and thirdly that a covenant should be drafted within two years. It is important in the light of subsequent events to note that an additional resolution passed by the same majority laid down that the covenant should include "incorporating the existing ministries into the historic threefold ministry by invocation of the Spirit in a prayer which makes clear that such incorporation is intended and conveyed, by a distinctive sign for the conferring of a gift of the Spirit, and by concelebration of Holy Communion". Such a resolution appeared to be consonant with the conclusions of the High Leigh Conference. It has been this additional Resolution of the York Synod that has played such a major part in subsequent events.

(iii) The Covenant Service

Responding to the very tight and perhaps unrealistic schedule imposed by the General Synod, the Churches' Council for Covenanting published in 1980 "Towards Visible Unity: Proposals for a Covenant". The Covenant Service is clearly based upon the reconciliation of Churches and the recognition of ministries is not seen as separate from the reconciliation of Churches. The Service includes the following parts:

- (a) Statement of intent.
- (b) The Ministry of the Word.
- (c) The confession of sins of division.
- (d) Promises:
 - (i) To acknowledge one another and to seek to grow together.
 - (ii) To be committed to unity.
 - (iii) To welcome each other to Holy Communion.
 - (iv) To accept each other's ministries, to share a Common Ordinal and a threefold ministry.
 - (v) To develop common decision making.
 - (vi) To respect conscience.
- (e) Act of reconciliation.
- (f) The consecration of bishops and blessing of all bishops.

- (g) The ordination of new presbyters and the blessing of presbyteral ministries. (The accompanying sign was the outstretched hand and not the laying on of hands thus ambiguity was avoided.)
- (h) The blessing of diaconal ministries.
- (i) The reaffirmation by all of baptismal vows.
- (j) The celebration of Holy Communion.

The Service implies that we have all, in our various ways, tried to remain faithful to the Apostolic Tradition; that the Holy Spirit has been effective in the corporate life of all the covenanting churches and in their ministries of word and sacrament; that there exists sufficient agreement between us to grow more closely together in the covenanting process, and that from the time of the Service there is sufficient agreement on the ordering of ministry in the Churches to go forward.

Sadly, there came with the publication of the Service a dissentient report signed by four of the Anglican delegation. They put forward five main objections: firstly that the proposals did not compel all the existing URC Moderators to be consecrated bishop although they would act in collegiality with other bishops until the end of their seven year term of office; secondly that the reconciliation of ministries was inadequate in particular the prayer for the blessing of the presbyterate which does not refer to incorporation and so was felt to be unfaithful to the motion of the York Synod and to the High Leigh Conference; thirdly, and perhaps the most powerful of all the objections was that the Covenant compelled the Church of England to recognise and accept the ministries of Free Church women ministers; fourthly, the scheme involved excessive time to be spent in additional committees and lastly there seemed no guarantee that the proposals would lead to common decision making.

(iv) Response to the Proposals for a Covenant

There followed a two year period of discussion at local level with voting in deanery and diocesan synods before the voting at national level. By a very small number the proposals were passed by the United Reformed Church, by a considerable majority in the Methodist Church while the vote has yet to be taken by the Moravians. Once again the scheme failed in the voting of the General Synod. A two thirds majority was needed in each of the three Houses. This it gained overwhelmingly in the House of Bishops, less conclusively in the House of Laity but failed to do so in the House of Clergy. It needs to be pointed out that even if the vote had not been taken by Houses, the motion would still have been lost overall, though by less than 1%.

This was intended to be a factual account of the relations between the Anglican and Methodist Churches in the last thirty years. This is not the place to assess the action of the Church of England and the debate of General Synod, nor to suggest ways for the future. Nevertheless it is a sad ending to the story of official relations between our Churches since 1955. It needs to be balanced by the much more hopeful and positive signs of what is happening at the local level. There are now over 400 local ecumenical projects

though admittedly, still spread unevenly over the country. In many of them Anglicans and Methodists work closely together, sometimes sharing buildings and even building new ones together - as well as this there is close sharing in theological education. Through the British Council of Churches and observers on each other's national committees, Anglicans and Methodists are working together. It is clear that the problem of the next years will be to strengthen and encourage this in spite of the abysmal failure of what should have been an enabling Covenant.

B. A Personal Reflection on the Methodist Church

It is only fair to begin such a reflection by describing my contacts with the Methodist Church which form the basis for my comments. Although I was brought up firmly within the Church of England, I remember at an early age attending a Methodist Sunday School and even at that time being impressed by the warmth of fellowship and the liveliness of activities involving whole families in contrast to the local parish church. As a theological student I attended lectures at Handsworth College in Birmingham and shared tutorials for three years with men training for the Methodist ministry. Again the openness and the hospitality of that College contrasted with the apparent inwardness and monastic feel of the local Anglican College. Contacts continued through membership of a Sponsoring Body of a LEP, through working parties of the BCC and the Churches' Unity Group and through the forging of close friendships with Methodists through the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches. There I discovered how different the divisions that belong to our home country look when viewed together from another continent. More recently as a member of the Cambridge Federation of Theological Colleges I have worked and worshipped with staff and students at Wesley House.

After making a few general comments I want to try to suggest what seem to me the great strengths and perhaps with affection some of the weaknesses of Methodism.

One of the things to strike me increasingly is the diversity that exists within the Methodist Church, a diversity which differs little from the range of theological opinion and spirituality existing within the Church of England. The differences do seem, as was recognised in the Anglican/Methodist discussion, to cut across and not go along denominational lines. A clear example of this is the attitudes to Scripture revealed in the recent debate on the sexuality report in the Methodist Conference and the earlier debate on the Gloucester Report in the General Synod. Secondly, having for many years conceived of Methodism as a feature of the British scene and of British history, the international character of Methodism came as something of a surprise. Although I understand little of how the Methodist Church coheres as a world family or where if anywhere its centre of authority lies, it does appear that Methodism varies considerably from country to country. I have the feeling that Methodism is less conscious than the Anglican Communion, with the Lambeth Conference and the Anglican Consultative Council, of the universality of the Church which in one sense might be a great strength, making it easier to enter into local schemes of church union and avoiding problems like that of the ordination of women in the Anglican Communion, yet equally might be argued theologically as a weakness.

1. The Strengths of Methodism.

(i) Fellowship

From my earliest experiences in a Methodist Sunday School, I have been impressed by what I can only describe as the fellowship and warmth which characterises the Church. There is much less regard for rank or concern with status and much less of a gulf between ministers and laity. Members appear to care for and be committed to one another and enjoy a warmth of fellowship less often encountered in Anglicanism. Perhaps this is due partly to the effects of being a non-established church and partly to the early growth of Methodism amongst the "working classes". Whatever its cause the effect is an attractive feature of the Church.

(ii) The Place of the Laity

The less marked division between minister and congregation is perhaps the result of much greater encouragement of and responsibility being given to the laity: the taking more seriously of the priesthood of all believers. For example, it seemed natural for Methodist undergraduates, women and men alike, as well as those who played a leading role in Methodism to be enlisted and trained as local preachers something that would never have occurred to their Anglican counterparts, particularly not to the women. The Methodist Church appeared, at least in the sixties to be successful at encouraging the young. Again the "class system" and house groups suggest that much more was expected of and offered to Methodist lay people. In the liturgy too, certainly twenty years ago there appeared to be more involvement of the laity and an encouragement of all ages.

(iii) Commitment to the Ecumenical Movement

The high degree of commitment to the ecumenical movement, particularly since 1950 is a humbling example to many in the Church of England. Particularly impressive has been the commitment of the leadership of the Church. It was the Methodists that took the initiative after the Cambridge Sermon of Archbishop Fisher and who, in spite of what must have been a painful rebuff in 1969, willingly and wholeheartedly contributed to the Covenant Proposals. If the Anglican Church had forfeited its claim to be in any meaningful sense a "bridge church", the Methodist Church in this country surely deserves to inherit the title as a bridge between the Church of England and the other Free Churches. It is to be hoped that the Church and its leaders will find strength and resilience in the face of another Anglican refusal to continue in this way.

The remarkable and important ARCIC statements have recently rightly commanded much attention. Much less has been heard of the impressive international dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Methodist Church. Although the texts are very different in character arising out of a quite different historical situation, nevertheless they deserve much wider publicity and a bringing into the local discussions and studies of the ARCIC statements. It is important for Anglicans to understand that the Roman Catholic Church is also in dialogue with the Methodist Church and to know of the content of those talks.

(iv) The Place of Women

Although there is still in the Methodist Church much more to be explored to make women feel equal members of the community of women and men in the church in both the training and deployment of women ministers and in the language and symbols of liturgy, nevertheless the decision and the way it was taken to ordain women are important examples to many women in the Church of England. The Methodist Church's refusal to ordain women during the course of Anglican/Methodist talks in the sixties, although it undoubtedly hurt some of the women who felt called to a full ministry of word and sacrament, was sensitive in the face of the position of the Church of England on this divisive issue. However, after the failure of the scheme the decision to proceed without looking over the shoulder to the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church or the Orthodox was surely the right way forward. It is an intolerable position to hold that a course of action is theologically right and yet to refuse to act upon it for expediency's sake. It is important now that the Methodist Church should seek to publish out of their experience of women in ministry the benefits of a more inclusive ministry and to explore openly the problems encountered in the inevitable increase in partnership ministries of husband and wife teams. Imaginative and widely available evidence could help the Church of England develop its mind and support those Anglican women who are actively involved in changing opinion in their own church. It is important also that the Methodist Church encourage women to take positions of leadership in the central organisation of the church and take part in theological training especially in those Colleges which are ecumenically based.

(v) Social Concerns of Methodism

From the very beginnings the Methodist Church has taken an impressive lead in England in social concern, in ethical thinking and in good works. Of all the Churches it seems its leadership is most politically radical. It has, I believe, shown itself often more able to listen to and take seriously the challenges of new scientific and sociological knowledge. Most recently this has been demonstrated in the report on sexuality and can be illustrated by a comparison with similar reports of other Churches.

(vi) Theological Education

Again in the "formation" of its ministry, the Methodist Church has important examples to offer. The period of preparation before residential training and the probationer studies after training might well be adopted more widely as could the links between the student in college and a local congregation.

(vii) Spirituality

As the Interim Report of the Anglican/Methodist scheme illustrated there is much that is common in the liturgical life of our two churches. But there are also elements in Methodist spirituality which would have enriched a united church. Among these are the theology of the hymns, the greater balance in public worship between the structured and the extempore, the challenge of an annual Covenant Service and the encouragement of laity in preaching and teaching.

2. The Weaknesses of Methodism

It is much more difficult to write about the weaknesses of Methodism for what may look like weaknesses from outside the community may be experienced in quite the opposite way from within.

It may appear insensitive to begin at this point in the face of the willingness of the Methodist Church to take episcopacy into their system and the failure of the Church of England to support them in this through the Covenant Proposals. Nevertheless there does seem to be lacking the important personal focus of continuity and unity in the person of the local bishop. The position of the bishop in his diocese, although open to abuse when his authority is exercised in isolation, does prevent the organisational structure from over concentrating power in the central structures. From the outside, the organisation of Methodism appears to concentrate power in the centre in the Heads of Departments so that there could be a built in strength of establishment groups. With the rapid change in chairmen of Conference and members of Conference this may only serve to heighten this.

This is not the place to explore this further but if the Methodist Church in England is committed to episcopacy not merely as an expediency but out of a genuine belief the the rightness of episcopacy properly exercised might the Church not consider the possibility of taking episcopacy to themselves even without the Covenant being ratified? With more time and less pressure new forms of episcopacy might be developed which in their turn might challenge existing patterns in episcopal churches.

Still in the area of ministry perhaps the Methodist Church's decision to phase out the Order of Deaconesses on the ordination of women ministers might be considered to have made ministerial structures more rigid, less flexible and diverse. Are there sufficient opportunities open to both women and men who are not called to a full time ministry of word and sacrament to carry out a variety of recognised and experimental ministries in the church perhaps helping to fill the gaps that are apparent in the caring agencies of the State? Certainly there are some Methodist women who are asking this question now. Experiment in this area could help us all to understand what a renewed diaconate might be in a united church of the future. The ecumenical movement generally seems to be giving more support to a three fold order of ministry, as the Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry texts suggest and yet very little is in practice being contributed to the understanding of this order. Perhaps our partners in the Covenant discussions should have pressed us harder in this area.

In the realms of theology the Methodist Church has in the past produced many notable theologians in the British scene. With the retrenchment of theological faculties and departments in our Universities should not the Church be putting more resources into the training and support of its theologians?

Finally, and this is perhaps the most difficult point to make from outside a community, there seems to be in Methodism less emphasis on what might be called one dimension of spirituality, a dimension which in Anglicanism is perhaps most clearly demonstrated and fostered in the religious communities: the daily offices of the church, the direction in prayer, the tradition of regular retreats and meditation and a spirituality fostered in the keeping of the calendar of the Christian Year with its festivals of saints and martyrs and the recovery of the celebration of Holy Week according to the ancient liturgies.

It is hard to write of such things with the vote of the General Synod so newly taken. And yet perhaps such reflections show that we might each be enriched and strengthened by the riches and ways of one another.