

A Shared Mission for Justice: Catholics and Methodists working Together in Social Action

A report of research in the UK, 2019-2022

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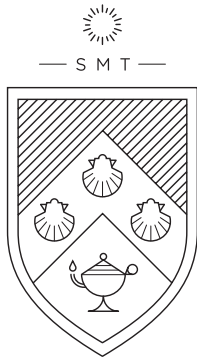
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Contents

1. Background	1
1.1 Context of the research and research questions	1
1.2 Summary of the research project	2
1.2.1 Research sites	2
1.2.2 Research process	2
1.3 Research journey and method	2
1.3.1 The theological action research sites	3
1.3.2 The friendship interviews	3
2. Exploration of themes	4
2.1 Theme 1: the role of normative voices	4
2.1.1 The problem of normativity	4
2.1.2 Personal identity	5
2.1.3 Theology in practice	5
2.1.4 A complex relationship with normativity	6
2.1.5 Expanding the fragments	6
2.2 Theme 2: mediation and receptivity of practice	7
2.2.1 Reception of practice	7
2.2.2 Mediating difference	7
2.3 Theme 3: friendship and relationship	8
2.3.1 Relational foundation of ecumenism	9
2.3.2 High levels of trust	9
2.4 Theme 4: marginality	10
2.4.1 'Not being Anglican'	10
2.4.2 Those at the margins of the church	11
2.4.3 Social action	11
2.5 Theme 5: lay agency	12
3. Gifts of everyday ecumenism	15
3.1 Practice as a mediator of tradition	15
3.2 The importance of friendship and relationship	15
3.3 The contribution of lay people	15
3.4 Receptive Ecumenism	15
4. Questions for discussion	16
Endnotes	17
Appendix	18

1. Background

1.1 Context of the research and research questions

At the heart of this project is a question of the place of friendship and practice within ecumenical work between Methodists and Catholics, particularly the kind of work that takes place in extra-ecclesial settings, such as social action. The starting point was experience of this kind of ecumenical work, which led to a particular observation of the two instigators of the research: Christopher Stephens, from the Southlands Methodist Trust (who funded the project) and who is the current Head of Southlands College, University of Roehampton; and Clare Watkins, the principal investigator on the project, Reader in Ecclesiology and Practical Theology at the University of Roehampton, and a Catholic member of the International Catholic-Methodist Dialogue Commission.

Christopher had noticed that friendships between Methodist and Catholics had been central to the move of Southlands College (Methodist), on to Digby Stuart College's (Catholic) land as part of the formation of the University of Roehampton in the 1990s. (This process began in the 1970s with four teacher training colleges seeking to work more closely together, and eventually moving to a central site and forming the University of Roehampton in 2003.)¹ He wondered whether friendship played a significant role in other similar activities. At the same time, Clare had been working with the Catholic-Methodist International Bilateral Dialogue on the report *The Call to Holiness: From Glory to Glory*.²

What had been particularly interesting to her was the way stories of holy and faithful people from both ecclesial traditions had been a significant source to exploring the theme of holiness in this bilateral conversation. It so captured the group that it was the first bilateral dialogue report to include these types of stories alongside the more typical doctrinal reflections.

Christopher and Clare's reflections on the place of practice, relationships and friendship in Methodist and Catholic ecumenical work sparked a conversation, which resulted in this research project. The project set out to ask whether there was something particular about the way Methodists and Catholics work together in social action; what operant and espoused theologies of ecumenism were present in the lived practice of working together; and whether these working relationships had something to offer the wider ecumenical conversations.

Dr Helen Cameron, Research Fellow, Regents Park College, Oxford

The Revd Dr Jonathan Dean, Methodist Church Connexional Team

Dr Andrew Orton, University of Durham

Dr Catherine Sexton, University of Durham

Dr Christopher Stephens, Southlands College, University of Roehampton

1.2 Summary of the research project

The project was funded by the Southlands Methodist Trust and took place between November 2018 and August 2021.³

1.2.1 Research sites

Two theological action research sites were used, one focused on reconciliation and the other a charity working with the homeless.

Twelve joint interviews took place, carried out with a Methodist and a Catholic who were friends and working together in some form of social action or extra-ecclesial work.

1.2.2 Research process

Following the characteristics and commitments of theological action research we take a collaborative and participatory approach to research. 'The following terms are used in the report.

1.2.2.1 Project team

The project team lead on the project as a whole and are responsible for setting up sites, coordinating data collection, organising data reflection and overseeing dissemination.

Dr Clare Watkins, Principal Investigator

Dr James Butler, Postdoctoral Researcher

1.2.2.2 Reflector team

The reflector team's main role is to reflect on the data from across the project with the project team. This reflection takes place in *reflector meetings* where the team gather together to reflect together, to have a conversation about the data and to identify their learning. They also advise the project team and are involved in dissemination.

1.2.2.3 Local team

Each theological action research site has a local team who work with the project team to design and carry out the research and to reflect on the data collected. The local team run their own reflector meeting, and have in a second reflector meeting with the project team.

1.2.2.4 Participants

Participants refers to those who were interviewed or part of a focus group in the theological action research sites, and to those who were interviewed in the Methodist-Catholic friendship interviews.

1.2.2.5 Feedback meeting

The feedback meeting refers to the meeting where participants were invited to join together to reflect on the themes from the project and an early version of this project report.

1.3 Research journey and method

The project was initially conceived as a theological action research project based around four sites where Catholics and Methodists were engaging in social action together. However, even in the scoping stage of the project it was becoming clear that the realities of ecumenical social action were not so clear cut. While projects might have begun as a partnership between a Methodist church and Catholic church, the majority seemed quickly to become more broadly ecumenical. We turned to look for projects and organisations with significant, rather than exclusive, Methodist and Catholic involvement. While this yielded a good number of potential projects, the focus of our research on Methodists and Catholics did not resonate with many of the groups and it was difficult to find sites that were willing to engage with us in the research. This is reflected on in more detail later in this report.

In the end, we worked with only two theological action research sites. However, somewhat unexpectedly we

found ourselves connecting with Catholic and Methodist friends who worked in partnership in social action. This led us to develop an additional strand to the project that paid careful attention to their practice and experience, and made a rich contribution to the research. The two strands to the project are described in more detail below.

1.3.1 The theological action research sites

Theological action research is a participatory and collaborative method of practical theological qualitative research. Each site is treated as its own project and a team from the site work with the university team as co-researchers.

The first site was in Northern Ireland and based on semi-formalised working together of Catholic and Methodist communities in reconciliation work. The local team was made up of three Methodist Ministers, a priest, and two Catholic lay workers. The data from the site came principally from interviews with leaders, and from focus groups with Methodist and Catholics who were involved in reconciliation work.

The second site was in England. It was a town-wide project with a focus on homelessness, providing support from emergency shelter through to help with finding employment and skill training. The local team was made up of staff and trustees from the organisation and the data came from focus groups and interviews with people involved in the project; volunteers, staff, trustees, church leaders and local council representatives.

It is helpful to give a brief account of theological action research and highlight some of the terminology that appears in the report.⁵ Committed to collaboration and participation, the two reflector teams work together to agree a research question and research plan. The local team works with the university team throughout the whole process, from the planning stage all the way through to discerning the data and identifying learning. One of the key characteristics of theological action research is that it is 'theological the whole way through'. This means that at every step of the way, theology is at the heart of the conversation. This theology is recognised as having a series of loci: the ones we would more readily identify are the formal theology of the academy and the normative theology of the tradition; it also recognises the theology of how people express their faith, the espoused; and the theology embedded in how faith is lived in practice, the operant. The conviction of theological action research is that these voices – the formal, normative, espoused and operant – are present together in all places where faith is lived out; and that through engaging in actual conversations,

It became clear that the key way in which these ecumenical themes were navigated was through friendship.

where these voices are present through the people in the room and the data collected during the research, there is the possibility of moments of 'theological disclosure'. These are the moments of new learning, new connections, fresh insights and revelations that come in the midst of conversation, opening up new possibilities. These disclosures may be towards the renewal of practice, helping practitioners to reflect on their practice and to articulate the theologies that shape what they're doing; and they may be about developing new insights in formal and normative theologies, or both. Both teams are encouraged to identify their learning through the project and this is what is captured in this report.

1.3.2 The friendship interviews

The friendship interviews covered a variety of contexts. Some involved clergy, but many of our respondents were lay. Contexts included community chaplaincy, a justice and peace group, a community centre, a drop in and support centre for asylum seekers and refugees, a Christian book shop, ecumenical partnerships, and community organising. Some of those interviewed had been friends for a long time and volunteered together in various projects and activities, while others knew each other because of being involved in a particular project or activity together (see appendix). By interviewing pairs of such friends, Catholic and Methodist, we were able to explore with them the dynamics of the relationship, and to gain further insights into the way in which these relationships were significant to ecumenical social engagement. The interviews were carried out in two tranches of six interviews, the first set carried out in the spring of 2019 and the second set in the winter of 2019-2020.

The joint interviews with Catholic-Methodist friends was a separate strand to the research and operated in a different way from the theological action research sites. In particular, here there were no local teams helping to define the research question and research plan, nor reflecting on the data with us. This has meant adapting our theological action research methodology. We continued to reflect as the university team on the data we were collecting, and we invited all participants to read a draft of this report and reflect on it with us in an online feedback meeting. Nine participants attended and their reflections have helped shape the final version of the report.

2. Exploration of themes

While there was a wealth of themes and insights that developed over the project, this report focuses on the five we identified as the most significant for the question around the place of Methodist-Catholic relationships and practice in ecumenical social action.

The first theme is the place of the normative tradition. The normative was a theme we came back to again and again. It is given a significant amount of space in the report because it became a key locus to our research conversation. Despite an insistence from participants and teams that 'denomination doesn't matter' and 'we are all Christians', the engagement in mutual practice and the complex engagement with normativity by participants suggested that ecclesial tradition and theology were a significant part of ecumenical social engagement even where they were not placed front and centre. In fact, the receptivity of practice and the way participants appreciated and learnt from each other in practice became a significant theme in its own right. It is explored in the section on the mediation and receptivity of practice. It became clear that the key way in which these ecumenical themes were navigated was through friendship.

Given the focus and process of the research, it was no surprise that friendship emerged as a theme, and the significant place of friendship at the bedrock of ecumenical engagement is explored as the third theme. The question at the heart of this research was about the particularity of Methodist and Catholic joint work. The fourth theme specifically focuses on the way in which Methodist and Catholic work in these contexts seemed to form around different identities of marginalisation. The final theme, in many ways a consequent of this marginal identity, is how these extra-ecclesial sites are significant places of lay agency. This was not a theme that came across significantly in any of the individual sites, but as we drew the reflections together it was a clear thread that ran through the two theological action research sites and the friendship interviews.

2.1 Theme 1: the role of normative voices

The question of normativity had a significant place in the reflections on the data. This section traces this conversation, beginning with identifying how theology and ecclesial tradition was often seen as the problem within ecumenical work and something to be avoided. It shows how personal identity appears to be less about ecclesial tradition and more about an ecumenical identity, before demonstrating how much of the theo-

logical engagement really comes through the operant theological voice – that is, the theology embedded in practice – and the conversations that the extra-ecclesial practices encourage. Finally, the section identifies how many of the participants have complex ways of navigating normativity in the midst of practice. This leads us to conclude that this is far from a space that has rejected theological engagement with ecclesial doctrine and traditions and it is actually a rich site for theological reflection.

2.1.1 The problem of normativity

In both sites and in many of the friendship interviews ecclesial and normative traditions was seen as an irrelevance or even a hinderance to good ecumenical engagement. In fact, a number of potential sites did not participate because of our particular focus on Methodists and Catholics saying that ecclesial traditions were not important to them. Charlie,⁶ a Catholic involved in visiting Protestant churches in Northern Ireland, stated,

I don't have any agenda and I don't think anybody else does, just to share, be with our friends and neighbours and worship with them.

Elizabeth clarified,

we don't go with an agenda of bringing together. Well, I suppose we do, in a sense of friendship, but it doesn't go to the theological aspect of things, in my experience.

Theology as identified with ecclesial traditions was seen as problematic because it drew attention to difference, as Carrie stated: "We don't talk Catholic or Methodist, we talk Christian." Something similar was seen in the homeless charity. As Nicky explained, "Denomination thing doesn't feel like it's been a thing. I think we've just cared about [the town]." They turned to a language of Christian 'values' and 'ethos'. 'Christian values' become, as Amanda and Sarah, two members of staff, identified, 'a moral compass'. The motive is about creating an inclusive space, which keeps a Christian ethos, but does not require people to be Catholic, Methodist or even Christian. There was even a nervousness about being seen to be 'pushing God'. Rita, a volunteer, distinguished between "religion pushed down people's throats" and "the actual acts". For many, articulation of Christianity is identified as being judgemental and divisive.

While the ecumenical space seemed to be shaped around avoiding talking about difference, it was clear that these things were encountered nevertheless. One Methodist talked about having much in common with Catholics but that there still was "the wee difference of the idols," referring to the statues in the Catholic churches. Similarly, the difficulties of the separate table

at communion was regularly raised in the interviews and focus groups. One group who explored being part of the research but later decided against it told us they did not have problems with differences of ecclesial traditions, and a few minutes later were telling us how difficult and complicated it was to plan an ecumenical worship service because of the different expectations of those different traditions. As we discussed our interest in exploring the particular nature of Methodist and Catholic working in ecumenical social engagement, many of those we met with were keen to stress that denomination did not matter to them, but it was clear that they were still having to navigate these differences in their work. It was striking that in nearly all the discussion, ecclesial tradition and 'theology', as understood by the participants, were identified as a problem; there was little discussion about whether the different traditions might have something positive to offer.

2.1.2 Personal identity

While being Christian was often emphasised over being Methodist or Catholic in these ecumenical social engagement contexts, it was clear that the way people understood their identity was complex. Nick discussed his identity in the interview.

Well I would call myself a Catholic Christian. I would put the Catholic first. I've been told off for doing that by somebody who said, you're not a Catholic Christian, you're a Catholic. I disagreed with her. [*Later in the conversation...*] I think disunity is a countersign to anyone looking in. So it shows that, despite the labels, the values are the same, the beliefs are pretty much the same, the core beliefs... I have to become a Christian Catholic rather than a Catholic Christian.

Prioritising the ecclesial tradition over the shared identity of Christian is seen as highlighting disunity. This means that for Nick the emphasis on Christian promotes unity, against the ecclesial traditions, which emphasise disunity. In the friendship interviews, there were a number of occasions where it was apparent that the Catholic participants had thought more about their Catholic identity than the Methodist participants had about their Methodist identity, and there were more examples of the Catholic participants being critical of their church tradition than Methodists.

Many of the participants had an ecumenical dimension to their identity, which had been shaped by many years of ecumenical engagement in multiple settings. Some came from a particular church or town that had a strong commitment to ecumenism; some came from families where the parents were from different ecclesial traditions; others simply had a history of being involved in multiple ecumenical projects and felt more comfortable in those ecumenical spaces. Harry, who was a Catholic

married to a Methodist, was an example of someone who was increasingly drawn into those ecumenical spaces, both in the local Churches Together and in national organisations. For many, this ecumenical identity was more important than their ecclesial tradition, with some expressing that they felt much more comfortable in ecumenical spaces than in their own churches.

2.1.3 Theology in practice

While there was an open resistance to talking about theology and naming ecclesial traditions, it still has a significant place in the different activities and groups. In Northern Ireland, they talked about having a unity of purpose rather than a unity of belief. Structural unity was not really on the agenda for any of the participants here, but it became clear that the label of 'just being Christian' did not really account for what was going on. As social action work was established and friendships developed, there became a deep appreciation of each other's faith. Significantly, this was embodied in practice and came from discussions in the midst of practice rather than from engaging in direct conversation about difference.

Examples were given where the primary focus was on difference and learning about each other's tradition. This might be two theologians or members of the clergy from different traditions having an open discussion. While this seemed to carry some value, what energised the groups was where they engaged in practices together. The primary way in which practices were shared here was through the particular social activities that they were focused on. While focused on serving refugees, running a bookshop or engaging in community chaplaincy, there are opportunities to see, experience and engage with how others approach the different joys and challenges, and how they practice their faith. These practices provided the context of their engagement, but it was also interesting to note the way in which other Christian practices were referred to. Examples of this were Lent Bible study groups, ecumenical prayer groups and justice and peace groups. It was here that they encountered their differences and learnt from each other.

While it might on the surface appear that theology and ecclesial tradition is not open for discussion, in practice there is a rich, but complex, exchange of theology through lived practice. In many cases, this led to people encountering and appreciating each other's practices and traditions, learning from them and being enriched by them and, as a result, developing a deeper appreciation for their own tradition. (This is explored in more detail in the next section on the mediation and reception of practice.) As the relationships grow and develop, this seems to become easier to name and talk about. This is discussed in the third section about relationship and friendship.

It is not really surprising that the resistance to talking about theology and naming ecclesial traditions does not play out in practice; after all, the thing that has brought the groups together is theological - being Christian. What is significant for ecumenists, especially those committed to 'dialogue' and more directly theological endeavours, is the witness that it is the sharing of practice and the resulting engagement with difference through practice, along with the friendships that form, that seem to provide a foundation and space for some of these conversations to occur naturally.

2.1.4 A complex relationship with normativity

The opening up of theological difference through practice does not mean that it is easy to navigate. Again, this demonstrates that ecclesial traditions remain important to participants. Many participants had developed quite complex ways of engaging with their own ecclesial tradition in the midst of their ecumenical practice. One example is Anne in Northern Ireland.

And I am a very committed Catholic, but I have a lot of criticism of my church, which I think is healthy. I don't think we should accept everything that's just thrown at us. And our church teaches us that inside everybody is a little voice, which is the voice of conscience, and it should be paramount. And Thomas Aquinas said that if your conscience tells you something, you should do it, even if it means excommunication, which to us is extreme.

Anne sees tradition as something important but also something that can be engaged with critically. She makes sense of her practice by drawing on the Catholic tradition of conscience. For Catholics, the role of (well-formed) conscience as the personal authority in a human being before God is a consistent part of the Catholic normative tradition.⁷ Here we see Anne drawing on this tradition precisely so as to give foundation for a critical or questioning response to normativity within her own church.

A similarly complex engagement with ecclesial traditions, this time through practice, was recounted by Emma, a Methodist chaplain, and Joan, a Catholic sister. They both arrived at a bay on a hospital ward together when distributing communion on a Sunday morning. Rather than distributing the sacraments separately to each person on their list, with the patients' agreement, they improvised a short communal service, even naturally drawing in the person who wasn't down on their lists. In both

these cases, the tradition is not seen as the rules and regulations, but the thing that you lean against, respond to, and use as a guide to navigate the new situation. It is the point the conversation starts from, rather than competing accounts, which can't be reconciled.

There were examples of people turning to more formal sources, particularly Catholic Social Teaching, but also significant was the way people turned to individuals who inspired their practice. Fr. Gerry Reynolds in Northern Ireland was an important figure for many, and some of his writings and prayers had gained a kind of normative status within the conversations. Oscar Romero was another figure who was named a number of times in different places. John Wesley was also named a number of times. These holy people seem to give a deep point of connection in a way that more seemingly abstract theological discussion does not. This finding connected with the observations from the Methodist-Catholic bilateral dialogue document, which, in exploring holiness, included vignettes about holy people from both of the traditions.⁸ Thus, the normativity of personal embodiment suggests itself as a fruitful theme for further reflection.

It is the sharing of practice and the resulting engagement with difference... along with the friendships that form, that seem to provide a foundation and space for some of these conversations to occur naturally.

A further complexity was introduced by our feedback discussions. There was still a sense of the ecclesial traditions as problematic, which in one instance was described as the "obstacle of denomination". Some, however, were reading this through a clerical-lay lens, of how these ecclesial traditions were a step away from the more formal structures and provided space to break with conventions and try new things. In this sense, prioritising Christian identity over ecclesial identity could be read as moving away from ecumenism starting from the questions of doctrine and church order, and beginning with a focus on the need or task before them. The importance of lay agency is picked up later in the report.

2.1.5 Expanding the fragments

One of the ways we were helped in making sense of these kinds of engagement with the normative was through the work of the practical theologian, Pete Ward. Ward identifies how theological themes and biblical narratives are present in fragmentary ways in Christian practice. The job of practical theology and theological education for Ward is to "expand the fragments". He suggests that the

point of departure and creative development for theological education should be the various ways

that biblical and theological themes are already at large in the ongoing discourse of the Church.⁹

This careful attention to the themes seen in the phrases, quotes, and ways of talking about practice has a deep theological basis, but often that theological basis, and the connections between those themes, has become lost. Rather than thinking the job of the theologian is to bring the theology back into the situation from outside, there is a need to focus on the fragments that are already present and see how they can be expanded and connected. In this view, the ways in which participants have drawn on the normative and navigated the normative within their ecumenical work become the basis for developing a lived theology of ecumenism. They are 'fragments' that can be expanded and, in doing so, remain connected to the lived practice, while drawing out and connecting up these larger theological themes. There is a potential problem with Ward's articulation of expanding the fragments; he does not identify who is doing the expanding, which risks the theologian simply reading their own agenda onto the data. The participative and collaborative nature of theological action research should mitigate some of this problem, seeing it as a work of all involved. The language of fragments is perhaps also problematic, suggesting that the theology present in the everyday life and practices of Christians and churches is insignificant or lost. In contrast, the reflections on the normative from the sites and interviews actually reveal that there is significant theological content to their talk and practice, and some complex engagement with it by the participants. Ecumenism would benefit from drawing on these theological insights from practice rather than taking at face value the opening statements that dismiss theology and tradition as unhelpful.

2.2 Theme 2: mediation and receptivity of practice

As already identified above, it was the participation and practice that formed a basis for ecumenism and was able to bring about the engagement with difference that was seemingly being resisted. This section explores that receptivity and mediation a little further.

2.2.1 Reception of practice

Practices such as prayer, scripture, Eucharist/Holy Communion, singing, drinking tea, prayer walking, running social action projects, and working in chaplaincy teams all displayed rich moments of what might be considered 'receptive ecumenism'¹⁰ where differences in practice were identified and explored resulting in a greater appreciation of the other's faith, but perhaps more significantly, a greater appreciation of their own ecclesial tradition.

Here we would mention as examples Gareth, a Catholic, who through working in a Methodist community project and experiencing their 'quiet time', became more drawn into the contemplative tradition within Catholicism; and William, a Methodist, who through his friendship with Nick, a Catholic, grew to appreciate and value Nick's passion for Oscar Romero, Catholic Social Teaching and Liberation Theology, and as a result found his own commitment to social issues within Methodism deepened.

Prayer is a particularly interesting example. On one level, it is something that all ecclesial traditions have in common and is easy to do together; it is an acceptable ecumenical practice. Groups appeared to be happy to pray together in meetings and while engaging in social action. This might be seen negatively as boiling prayer down to the lowest common denominator where what is done is acceptable to all, but it was clear that many of the groups, as these practices developed, found ways to shape the space to be ecumenical and open, as well as allowing different people to bring their different practices. Diana and Beryl from the Justice and Peace group talked about how the prayer was led by different people and they were able to experience different approaches and practices. Beryl, the Methodist, comments particularly on the use of candles.

In our church, we don't light candles for people, and I like the way we do that in our prayer group. I think that's come from the Catholic Church. We light a candle for someone and focusing on the flame, I've found to be... It's helped with what we're focusing on thinking about. That's been a bit special and I have appreciated that.

Interestingly, Diana comments immediately afterwards that she did not realise that Beryl had a different understanding of candles and had not previously used them as a way to prayer. Similarly, Wendy, a Catholic, and Belinda, a Methodist, in the Christian bookshop, saw prayer as an important part of what they did, particularly having the opportunity to pray for others. For both of them, they had felt encouraged by the other and had grown in confidence engaging together in prayer. Wendy explained how she had received the "great gift of extemporary prayer" and described how Belinda had been a model for her in learning how to pray that way.

2.2.2 Mediating difference

It was one thing for this receptive ecumenism to take place in shared practice but it was also evident in the places where shared practice was more challenging. The most obvious example of this was Eucharist/Holy Communion.¹¹ It has already been discussed above how people are able to navigate these complexities in relation to their own tradition; but we also saw ways in which the kind of receptivity described above was

visible in the discussions around Eucharist/Holy Communion. Gary, a Catholic lay worker in Northern Ireland, described how his understanding of Eucharist/Holy Communion had been strongly influenced by Methodist understanding, particularly

that communion provides an opportunity to be kind of transformed or that it's not that you have to do something first in order to receive Eucharist/Holy Communion, but that Eucharist/Holy Communion is in and of itself an almost conversion by going.

Differences of belief and practice around Eucharist/Holy Communion are widely recognised as impediments to unity between Catholics and Methodists.¹² However, even in these differences of Eucharist/Holy Communion, which appear irreconcilable, people were able to discuss and reflect on these issues in relation to their own ecclesial tradition, and had learnt to appreciate things from other ecclesial traditions.

In our feedback meeting, a number of the participants identified how the long history and experience of day-by-day ecumenical practice was important. Those who were living these ecumenical relationships day in and day out, whether this was in relationships in social action, in friendship, or more intensively in marriages between people from different ecclesial traditions and their families, recognised that they had developed a familiarity and comfort with dealing with difference and celebrating each other's differences as part of life. These happened outside of the ecclesial space, in the domestic and everyday, and meant that not only were people practised in negotiating these differences but also that their ecumenism began from a very different place. There is an 'anticipatory obedience', as in marriage, where people commit to working through differences together.

In ecumenism, there has long been a division between Faith and Order on one hand and Life and Work on the other, a separation that was built into the World Council of Churches (WCC) in its origins because of the groups that it brought together in its formation.¹³ In fact, the themes of first World Conference on Life and Work in 1925, before the formation of the WCC, were summed up by the slogan "Doctrine divides, but service unites."¹⁴ Faith and Order, and Life and Works, became different strands of ecumenical engagement within the WCC, which resulted in these being treated differently and elements of ecumenism being categorised as one or the other.

Many of the groups, as these practices developed, found ways to shape the space to be ecumenical and open, as well as allowing different people to bring their different practices.

In the accounts of social action from the participants in the research, which might typically be categorised as Life and Work, what is observed is the ways these practices have actually enabled the kind of ecumenical engagement that would typically be associated with Faith and Order. This leads us to question whether this division has actually kept things apart that might be mutually enriching to each other if they were engaged with as a single whole.

2.3 Theme 3: friendship and relationship

It was clear early on that friendship was key to the ecumenical social action we were exploring, and for this reason we specifically interviewed friends together who were Methodist and Catholic. These friendships formed in a variety of ways. Some of the friendships were over common issues, such as Nick's and William's passion for social justice issues, which then initiated ecumenical work. Others were friendships that formed in the midst of ecumenical work, such as Wendy and Belinda working together in a Christian bookshop. For most of the friendships, what was important was action and participation. Christine and Susan talked about how they came "together with a shared focus and a shared purpose to engage in a piece of work" but how they also seemed to be on the "same wavelength" as they came together.

While these friendships began through action and participation, there were clear signs of deep care and affection. Beryl and Diana were able to joke and tease each other. Many felt at ease to interrupt each other in the interviews. Emma, a Methodist Chaplain, notes how her colleague Joan, a Catholic Sister, took great interest in her family and was someone she was really able to discuss the ups and downs of family life with. For Christine, these friendships are a "God-given gift".

I always find this incredibly moving, in many different settings, just the way that God nudges ordinary people. We're all from different backgrounds and upbringings and life experiences, and yet we have this unique bond between us, which is our shared faith in the God of Jesus Christ, which somehow is more fundamental. Friendship is one level, but there's a deeper connection, I think. We're all just ordinary people. We're nothing special. We are special to God, but each of us is special to God.

A particular normative source referenced by Methodists was John Wesley's focus on friendship. One participant, Sally, noted, "I'm taken back to the words of John Wesley. He often said, Methodists are friends of all and enemies of none."

2.3.1 Relational foundation of ecumenism

The friendships between Methodists and Catholics, and indeed more broadly across ecumenical relations, were vital to both holding together and enabling this ecumenical work. Fr. Stephen in Northern Ireland named this underpinning explicitly in his reconciliation work.

I'm going to keep coming back to relationships because for me so much is about the building of friendships and relationships.

William described how what is happening in the ecclesial structures provides the 'mood music' for ecumenism. The likes of Pope John XXIII and Pope Francis set the environment in a way that encouraged these kinds of relationships to form and grow. He noted that the mood music can change but the local relationships remain.

I think the great thing is that relationships at a personal level have built up and have been strengthened to such an extent that, even if that should occur, I don't think it would impact on this, on our personal relationships.

The ecclesial structures have a role to play but the key thing is the local relationships. Roger and Heather in their context noted how important the relationships between the different clergy and lay workers are for their strong ecumenical work. Roger worries that, "a new person will completely change things" but thus far they had managed to continue to build those strong ecumenical relationships even through these transitions. It was also noted on as we reflected on the data from Northern Ireland, where strong relationships between clergy and lay leaders enable the space for ecumenical participation. Key figures in reconciliation were able to build these webs of relationships, which provided the bases for the ecumenical work. While these relational networks give a strong basis to the ecumenical work, it also means that there is a level of fragility because losing a key person can destabilise the web of relationships. However, attempts to make these ecumenical partnerships less fragile through more formal arrangements do not always work. Susan expresses this well:

We can just work alongside each other and learn to love one another and concentrate on those things that unite, I know that sounds terribly cheesy and soundbite-y, but it can work in reality, and for me, that's the most important part of ecumenical rela-

tions. I'm coming to the thing now where even local ecumenical partnerships, single congregation ecumenical partnerships, that the structures of the Church cause so many problems for those to operate missionally that I'm not even convinced that they're a good idea anymore.

What becomes clear is that these kinds of ecumenical works stand and fall on the relationships that are formed. These are not easy, and they can mean that these ecumenical partnerships can feel fragile, but trying to shore up this work through structures does not necessarily help; in fact, for Susan it seems to get in the way. There is no shortcut to ecumenism away from the actual ecumenical relationships between people and groups, and any attempt to organise and formalise those relationships needs to place the kinds of friendships discussed above at their heart.

2.3.2 High levels of trust

These friendships do not happen overnight, and they take time, patience, and energy. Shared experience was named as a key element to this. In their discussion, Roger and Heather note how there were a number of activities they could identify that enabled this trust to be built. Heather recounted,

a Lenten Course together, sometimes an Advent Course together, and perhaps most bonding, pilgrimages together as groups of churches.

They described the pilgrimages as particularly "bonding exercises". They had a particularly difficult experience on one pilgrimage.

We had a rather unfortunate Roman Catholic experience there but it drew us together rather than broke us. The Roman Catholic sanctuary that we visited could not tolerate women priests or ministers and they were extremely offensive.

This negative experience was one that actually brought them together in their local ecumenical work. Others also pointed to these kinds of incidents. Christine described it as "connecting over our discomfort" when she (a Methodist) went to a Patronal Mass with her Catholic friend. They both felt a sense of embarrassment when in the liturgy they prayed for the 'separated brethren', but together they were able to move to finding it amusing and actually a point of connection rather than a division. They were able to hold the tension within their friendship. In another interview, Penny, a Methodist working in a Catholic school, recounted an incident from one particular Good Friday service.

There is a long liturgy in which you pray for heretics. As the priest passed me they were just uttering this

particular prayer at which point he winked at me. I thought, okay!

starting point in practice, and also a different emphasis.

There is a formal liturgical language that talks about heretics, but the priest's wink made a connection that Penny interpreted as humour and inclusion, despite the liturgical language suggesting otherwise. Humour is then one way that these awkward situations and difficulties from the past are able to be navigated. On hearing the story, Clive, her Catholic friend being interviewed, comments, "good for him," also recognising the importance of this informal communication. Another example was the frank discussion between Diana and Beryl where Diana told Beryl,

These kinds of ecumenical works stand and fall on the relationships that are formed...they take time, patience and energy.

We've had this conversation, and I mean you've said some absolutely terrible things, Beryl. And I'm only... I'm joking. BUT... I mean there are lots of people, well, you couldn't say it in front of, and they wouldn't laugh, would they?

They have developed this depth and strength of friendship, which can enable these difficult conversations. Having built close relationships, some of the difficult things can be navigated with humour. However, some things cannot be navigated this way. There was no instance in the data of people making light of the difference over the Eucharist, and especially the pain of being unable to share the Eucharist as Catholics and Methodists together. Some things are too current and present to be made light of.

A more sombre example of connecting over difference was also recounted by Roger and Heather. This was sharing in the commemoration of local Catholic martyrs, which they have managed to develop into an ecumenical celebration where they also remember Protestant martyrs. Historically, the commemoration had been very divisive locally. However, they had begun to find ways in which it was actually an opportunity to connect over discomfort. It became clear that these careful friendships that formed over action and participation were ways that difference and discomfort could be held.

The theme of strong relationship was one that resonated with the feedback group too and they further drew our attention to the extra-ecclesial starting point of these ecumenical relationships, which is often a common action or a common response to a need or issue. It is easy to assume, when talking about ecumenism, that the most pressing issue is doctrinal difference, but in these extra-ecclesial settings, what brings the participants together and is the focus of their work has a different

2.4 Theme 4: marginality

The margins as a place of ecumenical connection was a recurring theme throughout the project. The significance for this project was in the ways in which marginality was particularly connected to Methodist and Catholic ecclesial traditions by the participants. We identified three different types of marginality arising in the conversations. The first was in the identity of not being the Church of England and therefore marginalised in terms of not being the established church. The second was the ways in which those involved in these

ecumenical practices often felt at the margins of their churches. And thirdly, the common sense of connection to those on the margins of society and engaging together in social action.

2.4.1 'Not being Anglican'

Many said that as Methodists and Catholics they found a common identity in not being Anglican.¹⁵ Because they were not part of the established church, there was a sense of marginalisation, which came in in aspects of the ecumenical works, particularly in more formal chaplaincy, and in more formal ecumenical partnerships. The Methodist and Catholic participants identified a common history of being non-conformist and dissenter, and a current experience of being marginalised – albeit unintentionally – by Anglicans. As Roger mentioned,

I think one thing was the sense that we as Roman Catholics and Methodists were brought together because we weren't Anglicans! We weren't part of the established Church and this locality, of course, has a rich tradition of dissent.

Wendy made a similar comment, "We are all of us not Anglicans. We are not members of the established church, so we have that in common." For Joan this was not just something about identity but also about their approach to theology and belief.

What struck me was the Anglicans, they didn't really talk about theology and beliefs, whereas Emma and I seemed to be able to dovetail in at that level and possibly some worldwide views of things.

It was also noted by some that there is quite a big difference in practice and theology between Methodism and Catholicism. There might be a desire to blur the boundaries between Methodism and Anglicanism,

and similarly between Catholicism and Anglicanism, minimising the differences and therefore leading to tensions, whereas Methodism and Catholicism are much further apart, so people are not under false pretences concerning significant differences. It was speculated that it was easier to acknowledge these differences, which enables Methodists and Catholics to work together more easily. They are also further apart historically. The development of Methodism out of the Church of England means that Methodism and Catholicism did not directly split from each other historically, whereas the Church of England directly split from the Catholic Church and from Methodism. The absence of a direct split in their history seems also to make friendship between the traditions easier.

2.4.2 Those at the margins of the church

While marginality in not being Anglican was one element, many of the participants in the research also felt that they were at the margins of their own ecclesial traditions. Much of their social action and ecumenical practice was outside of the clerical system and away from the central practices. Some felt they were viewed a bit suspiciously by their own church for engaging with ecumenism. Others felt more drawn to the social action and ecumenical spaces than their own traditions. In Northern Ireland, Fred, a Catholic in the focus group, noted that

there's no great enthusiasm among Catholics for our ecumenical, for the broad ecumenical, I mean, breaking down the divisions.

Fr. Stephen, who spends a lot of his time engaging in ecumenical work, commented,

Some of [the congregation] will be very committed to it, some of them as I say just, well, let him get on with it, some of them will say maybe he spends too much time there and he needs to spend more time with us.

Similarly, Timothy, a Methodist minister in Northern Ireland, noted,

I would also be conscious there would be some, from Christian groups, who probably would avoid working with me because they know that I'm ecumenically minded and would work with the Catholics.

While these are both from the Northern Ireland context, which has an additional layer of complexity because of the political connotations of denominational identity, a similar sense of marginalisation was seen in other contexts.

Susan, a Catholic who was involved in a wealth of ecumenical activity, noted in discussion with her friend

Susan the ways in which she had a different perspective from many within her own Catholic tradition.

I am in another group with Catholic women, and I'm way out on a limb, compared to... They're all about statues and praying, and particularly to Our Lady, and I've got nothing against that at all, and it's powerful, but they don't seem to make the connections to the Church outside, if you like, the Church that we're in now in this new reality. It's the Church without walls. It's the Church where people, as you say, Christine, it's pastoral need. That's where the Church is. It's the people.

Diana tells a story of going with a group of Catholics to the Easter vigil at a local Anglican Church, but most had decided to leave before the Eucharist. Diana had felt uncomfortable about this but had followed them out. She recounts:

I said, I feel I should have stayed, it was wrong to come away. He said, if you'd done that, you'd have been giving scandal. I said, what? He said you would have been giving scandal. I said, I don't think so. I was quite cross about it. That made me even more determined then. Because I thought, I will always, always do it, and probably now I'm going to be condemned.

These 'scandalous' ecumenical relations put people on the boundaries of their own churches. These scandals of interaction were recounted by others in attending Pride marches, travelling with Muslims to the stop the war march, and supporting the university production of *The Vagina Monologues*. Many of the Catholics held a critical view of their own church and had a complex way of engaging with the normative tradition as discussed above.

2.4.3 Social action

This marginal identity named above led some to identify the ways in which they are then also drawn to those at the margins. Refugee work, work with the poor, a common interest in social justice, and collaborative work for change such as community organising were all common interests that drew participants together. Discussing her friendship with Emma, Joan said, "I think we both have a feeling for people on the margins." Harry, a Catholic, is another example of someone who identified a common commitment to social justice within Methodism and Catholicism. The focus on social justice and social action were regularly cited by participants as being a point of connection between them. Nick and William traced their friendship to a meeting for Church Action on Poverty and realising they had a common interest. Wendy, a Catholic, reflected,

And we've been born out of, and I think especially in this country, because of with Catholics, all of that, the Irish poor. That culture is still imbedded within Catholicism here and those fundamentalisms [sic] of Methodism working with those who were most disadvantaged, that's definitely something, isn't it?

Connections were made between the work of Wesley and of Catholic religious orders with their shared focus on the marginalised. Many throughout the research identified this common commitment to social issues from Methodists and Catholics, and a number of people identified the Methodist and Catholic churches locally as being most identified with social concern.

The naming of these different marginalities within ecumenical social action and the connections made by participants between these marginalities became a significant theme through the project. Marginality became a point of connection for Methodist and Catholic, both in the ways in which their ecclesial traditions were marginal in relation to Anglicanism, and in the ways they sensed themselves as marginal in relation to their own traditions. These marginal identities in turn seemed to draw them towards others who experienced marginality and to be an important motivator for their engagement in the wider practices of social action. Given that much of ecumenical dialogue has been carried out from the centre of ecclesial structures, the identification of marginality here suggests that these places of marginality might be rich sources of insight around ecumenical practice and thought.

This turn to the margins identified in other places, and in particular the theme of 'mission from the margins', was a key theme in the World Commission on Mission and Evangelism's affirmation, *Together Towards Life*.¹⁶ It provocatively states;

People on the margins have agency, and can often see what, from the centre, is out of view. People on the margins, living in vulnerable positions, often know what exclusionary forces are threatening their survival and can best discern the urgency of their struggles; people in positions of privilege have much to learn from the daily struggles of people living in marginal conditions.¹⁷

Perhaps these insights here can extend this challenge, not just to see how those marginalised have wisdom, insight and agency in mission, but also for ecumenism. The lived practice of those who are

often marginalised within their ecumenical work can offer fresh perspectives to the theology and practice of ecumenism.

2.5 Theme 5: lay agency

The marginal spaces described above, and the marginal status many of the participants felt in relation to their churches, showed a complex relationship between lay and ordained, and between their work and the structures of the church. While there was quite a bit of discussion from participants about clericalism and the problems of priests and church structures, there was also a recognition of a deeper complexity.

But going back to what we were talking about before we started recording, what you were saying about hierarchy and the control of all that, would that be a factor in relationships not flourishing even more? Another factor is the congregations themselves, who are... Often quite conserva-

tive, we'll say. They want to do so much but they don't want to get into the nitty-gritty. That's how it appears. And what struck me when you were saying that, Beryl, was that we can talk about our hierarchies and all the problems we've got or not got with them. But we can't rule out the fact that the laity is a big part of that and they are reluctant to get over engaged.

Diana saw this as much more than just priests holding on to power, but a whole system that can end up disabling lay involvement. For many of the participants, the ecumenical space gives a place away from these structures of the churches, giving them agency and space to pursue what they are passionate about. They identify these as spaces quite clearly. Nick described this in the ecumenical gatherings they organise focused on particular social issues and how they created a valuable space where they could meet together to have "quality input". Wendy saw the bookshop that she and Belinda ran as providing a more 'normal' space:

We always used to say a shop is a normal place to come. It's not a counselling session. You don't need a referral. You don't need a label. You don't need a booking. You can just come in, sit on the sofa or browse around the shop and there will be an offer or a welcome of somebody to listen, a cup of tea.

These lay ecumenical spaces provide something quite different from the ecclesial spaces often dominated by clergy. The homeless project revealed ways in which projects, as they grow, can both enable and inhibit lay agency. Some staff and volunteers celebrated the ways they had grown and developed; Bryan, Amanda and Susan had all begun as volunteers and found paid roles in the organisation. Others, such as Cynthia and Mark, found it frustrating that they were giving time but then didn't always have things to do.

Gareth and Bradley wanted to resist labelling the community hub they were involved with as church or denomination and turned to the language of the Kingdom of God. As Gareth stated,

None of that needing to be labelled in any sense. Like Bradley says, in the Kingdom of God you don't need to label it quite clearly. That's what the Kingdom of God looks like. When people cooperate and barriers fall down, and people are cared for.

Others, like Jennifer, turned to pneumatological language:

The Spirit is working through us because we're here, the people, we're here to do... by the grace of God, to carry out God's work on Earth and I was saying this to some of our other colleagues in [the work], that is what we're here, that is what we're doing.

While our conversations about each individual site did not draw out the theme of lay agency in any significant way, when reflecting back on all the different sites it was clear that lay agency was a significant theme of the project as a whole. It was not immediately clear whether this was because of it being social action or because of it being ecumenical, but perhaps this is a false distinction to be made; after all, what we discovered was that broad ecumenism was the reality of so much of the social action. Things that began from one or two churches or individuals quickly developed an ecumenical ethos.

Joan and Emma recognised how chaplaincy meant that they weren't so central to the denominational structures and had more freedom.

Joan: And that's what I feel in the chaplaincy. I could recognise Emma as a clerical person within her own church, but a clerical person who was not caught into a system. And yes, so...

Emma: And that's the whole joy of chaplaincy in any context, isn't it? It's that you're semi-detached from whatever church you are in and represent. And I've always said that, yes, I love chaplaincy because you

have real conversations about things that actually matter and you don't get caught up in, exactly how are we doing this communion correctly, or, how many cups do we have, and, who's going to fix the roof? And all sorts of reasons why, for me, chaplaincy is a far better place to be, because you are outside of that clericalism.

The community chaplaincy project was strongly lay-led, the refugee work was almost entirely lay-led, two lay people ran the Christian bookshop, and the homeless charity was almost entirely lay, although it had recently introduced chaplaincy as an important strand to their work. It was interesting that a number of the friendships were between lay Catholics and Methodist ministers, and that there was significant involvement from Catholic women religious.

This all points to a more complex arrangement than simply lay agency. What was clear was that there was huge value in these ecumenical social action projects, groups and ministries that allowed people to engage with more freedom and to take initiative. It is apparent that these ecumenical projects and groups provide spaces where lay people can use their gifts, develop their calling, explore their passions and take pastoral responsibility. Many of the situations being navigated were complex, engaging with a diversity of people, many of whom were vulnerable; it was here that our participants were providing spaces where they could be cared for, loved and supported away from the busyness and sometime cumbersome organisational structures of the ecclesial space.

Given that it was not until the reflections from the different elements of the project were being brought together that the significance of lay agency became apparent, it was somewhat surprising that this seemed to be one of the key topics of discussion in the feedback meeting. People were keen to reflect further on the way the social action and extra-ecclesial spaces enabled lay agency. Contrasts were made between the more formal ecumenical commissions and dialogues that people had experienced with the more lay-dominated spaces of social engagement. They noted how it takes time to get past the hierarchies based on people's roles, particularly clergy-laity distinctions. In social action, this was often much easier because the expertise required in many of these activities was not primarily doctrinal and ecclesial but focused on the action, need and issues being engaged with.

In ecumenical spaces, there is often an expectation that we need 'experts' to help us to navigate, or perhaps even rule on, the doctrinal and ecclesial discussions, which tends to defer to the clergy. What these lay-led and extra-ecclesial spaces provided was something of a liberation from that, allowing other voices to be

heard and relationships to be reshaped. In the feedback meeting, there were a number of clergy present but often they were included in this liberation and lay agency by other participants, perhaps because they were women or were in roles, such as chaplaincy, that were more clearly identified with the extra-ecclesial. This identification of lay agency and the energy generated by the conversation suggests this is a rich topic for further exploration.

3. Gifts of everyday ecumenism

Rather than offer a conclusion or simple summary of the points, here we present four 'gifts' that the 'everyday ecumenism' discussed and reflected on in this project offers to the broader theology and practice of ecumenism. Four key features emerged from this project, gifts of everyday ecumenism:

3.1 The significance of practice as a mediator of tradition

The focus of ecumenism has often been on formal theological dialogue or on service, as typified by the strands of Faith and Order and of Life and Works within the WCC. What this research has shown is that practice can be a rich site of mediation of ecclesial tradition as well as the more commonly recognised site of unity through practice.

3.2 The importance of friendship and relationship at the heart of ecumenical work

The research has shown that friendship and relationship is at the heart of fruitful ecumenical work, and it is these relationships that build trust and allow ecumenical practice to flourish. This suggests more attention needs to be given to those relationships both in research and in practice.

3.3 The contribution of lay people to ecumenical practice and theology

So much of the ecumenical work focused on in this research is lay-led and an important site of lay agency. This suggests that more attention needs to be given to the lay contribution to ecumenism, particularly given that this research has shown the rich and complex ways that the normative tradition is engaged with and navigated in these predominantly lay, ecumenical spaces.

3.4 Potential contribution to Receptive Ecumenism

The mediation and reception of ecclesial tradition through practice in the midst of social action identifies a potential contribution to Receptive Ecumenism. It suggests a slightly different form of receptivity, one that is primarily lay, informal and extra-ecclesial.

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4. Questions for discussion

It is our hope that the insights and learning from this project are not only informative but can become formative for the churches in renewing their ecumenical vision. In this final section, we offer questions for reflection aimed at helping readers make the research learning their own. We are conscious that readers will approach these questions from different perspective: as practitioners, ecumenical officers, academics, church leaders, and others committed to the living of ecumenism in action. We invite you to engage with the seven questions below in whatever ways seem most pertinent to your perspective in the discussion.

1. Reflecting on your own ecumenical experience, what have you most appreciated in others with whom you have worked? How do the themes and gifts that emerged from this research resonate in your own context and experience?
2. Discussion of 'ecumenism' often privileges the theological, the ecclesiastical, the formal, and doctrinal. What, for you, were key themes from the report which could help to re-configure this common perception of ecumenism? How might these themes help us to notice fruitful and energetic ecumenism at work in our own contexts?
3. One of the significant insights from the research is the way that differences in ecclesial tradition are navigated through sharing in friendship and acting together in social action. How might the way in which difference has been talked about and experienced here re-shape your own understanding of ecumenical work and experience? And what might it mean for the kinds of unity we seek in ecumenical work?
4. One of the things the report draws attention to is the place of marginality within the ecumenical relationships in this research. What is the significance of these marginal identities for more formal practices of ecumenism?
5. The contribution of laity to ecumenism was identified by participants in the research as particularly significant. How might these contributions help to enable lay practices of ecumenism to inform ecumenical engagement?
6. What does the ordinary and everyday nature of much of the ecumenical activity discussed in this research suggest about the kinds of posture and spirituality which enriches ecumenical practice?
7. What might the significance of shared practice and friendship for encouraging ecumenical reception in social action suggest for more formal ecumenical dialogues? How can friendship and shared practice be welcomed as theological sources in those formal ecumenical dialogues?

Endnotes

1. Nigel Watson, *The Story of Roehampton University* (Third Millenium Pub., 2010).
2. 'The Call to Holiness - Report of the Joint International Commission for Dialogue between the World Methodist Council and the Roman Catholic Church 2016' <http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/meth-council-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20171018_report-joint-commission_en.html> [accessed 11 October 2018].
3. southlandsmethodisttrust.org.uk
4. Helen Cameron, Deborah Bhatti, Catherine Duce, James Sweeney and Clare Watkins, *Talking about God in Practice: Theological Action Research and Practical Theology* (London: SCM Press, 2010), pp. 49–60.
5. Cameron, *et al.* (2010); Clare Watkins, *Disclosing Church: Generating Ecclesiology Through Conversations in Practice* (London: Routledge, 2020).
6. All names are pseudonyms. A full table of the pseudonyms of participants is available in the appendix.
7. For example, Vatican II's declaration on religious Liberty, *Dignitatis Humane*, §3.
8. 'The Call to Holiness' (2016).
9. Pete Ward, *Liquid Ecclesiology* (Leiden, Boston: BRILL, 2017), p. 209.
10. In using this term 'receptive ecumenism', we are not equating this directly with the Receptive Ecumenism that Paul Murray has pioneered. *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning: Exploring a Way for Contemporary Ecumenism*, ed. by Paul Murray (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). What is being named here is the informal reception taking place in the midst of practice. However, we highlight this connection with Receptive Ecumenism as a rich site for further exploration and conversation, particularly in the ways that it occurs within practice and the context of mission and the extra-ecclesial. For an example of this see Clare Watkins, 'Living Church. Practical Theology as a Locus for Ecumenical Learning', *Receptive Ecumenism as Transformative Ecclesial Learning: Walking the Way to a Church Re-formed*, ed. by Paul D. Murray, Gregory A. Ryan, and Paul Lakeland (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2022), pp 372-382.
11. As a team we used the language of Eucharist, which would be more common in ecumenical discussion. However, we received some pushback from participants on this term, with Methodists in particular preferring Holy Communion. For this reason, we have used Eucharist/Holy Communion to reflect this preference from some participants.
12. *Encountering Christ the Saviour. Church and Sacraments*. Ninth Report of the International Methodist and Catholic Dialogue Commission, 2011, nn. 73-134.
13. R. David Nelson and Charles Raith, *Ecumenism: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London, New York, NY: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017), p. 39
14. Nelson and Raith (2017), p. 37
15. 'Anglican' was being used to talk about not being the established church and therefore should technically be referring to the Church of England, but we are choosing to retain the language used by the participants.
16. Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes (TTL)* (WCC, 5 September 2012) <<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/mission-and-evangelism/together-towards-life-mission-and-evangelism-in-changing-landscapes>> [accessed 26 April 2019]
17. Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (2012), para. 38

Appendix

This gives details of people named in the text, rather than a comprehensive list of everyone interviewed.

Theological Action Research Site

Northern Ireland:

Charlie	Lay Catholic
Elizabeth	Catholic Religious Sister
Carrie	Lay Methodist
Anne	Lay Catholic
Gary	Catholic lay worker
Fr Stephen	Catholic Priest
Fred	Lay Catholic
Timothy	Methodist Minister

Homeless project:

Amanda	Member of staff, Church of England
Nicky	Ordained, Church of England
Rita	Lay volunteer, Methodist
Cynthia	Lay volunteer, Catholic
Bryan	Member of staff, prefers to think of himself as human
Susan	Member of staff, wouldn't necessarily identify as Christian
Sarah	Member of staff, brought up Catholic
Mark	Volunteer, retired Baptist minister

Methodist-Catholic friendships

Methodist	Catholic	Context
William (Lay)	Nick (Lay)	City-wide, ecumenical, social action network
Beryl (Lay)	Diana (Lay)	Justice and Peace prayer group
Edward (Ordained)	Jennifer (Lay)	Community Organising
Bradley (Ordained)	Gareth (Lay)	Community café and hub
	Harry (Lay)	Catholic widower who was married to a Methodist
Belinda (Lay)	Wendy (Lay)	Christian bookshop
Penny (Lay)	Clive (Lay)	Refugee Drop-in
Heather (Ordained)	Roger (Lay)	Formal, local, ecumenical partnership including community organising
Christine (Lay Pastor)	Susan (Lay)	Know each other through working together locally and involved in a women's group together
Emma (Ordained)	Joan (Nun)	Worked together in hospital chaplaincy



Theology and Action Research Network (TARN)

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