

Facing the challenge of a diverse ministry within the CPCE. Whether and how the model of Unity in Reconciled Diversity should be developed further¹

Dear participants in this consultation,

The title of my presentation was suggested to me by the organisers of this consultation. It sets out an ambitious agenda, which I will endeavour to fulfil as follows:

Firstly, I will outline three examples of a diversified ministry, using concrete examples to help us think this through. *Secondly*, I will explain some fundamentals of the Leuenberg Agreement and the official text *Ministry, Ordination, Episkopé*² (hereafter referred to as MOE). *Thirdly*, I will examine the three examples in light of the MOE. *Fourthly*, I will ask whether and to what extent a diversified ministry calls into question the unity of the church fellowship. And in a final *fifth* step, I will suggest three ideas that could help the CPCE develop its understanding of ministry further.

1. The challenge of a diversified ministry: three examples

I come from Switzerland. The Protestant Church in Switzerland (PCS) is one of the churches that originally signed the Leuenberg Agreement, which was concluded in Leuenberg, Switzerland. The PCS consists of 24 Reformed cantonal churches and the Evangelical Methodist Church. Although these member churches are very small in comparison to other European churches, they serve as a good reflection of the CPCE. Not in terms of their denominational diversity – with the exception of one church, all are Reformed – but in terms of the diversity of their understandings of ministry. Their understandings of ministry diverge to a great extent – because they are anchored in deeply rooted local and regional ministerial cultures and customs. I have selected three particularly critical examples from the Swiss context. These will serve as a kind of litmus test for MOE later in my presentation.

1. In the Eglise évangélique réformée du canton de Vaud, deacons are ordained. Some of them are also authorised to administer the word and the sacraments by virtue of a special pastoral delegation. This has repeatedly raised the question of whether this amounts to the establishment of a *clerus minor*.

2. In the Reformed Churches of Bern-Jura-Solothurn catechists are commissioned to a special ‘teaching ministry’. This ministry primarily involves providing religious instruction. As some confirmands are not baptised and baptism is a prerequisite for confirmation, some are baptised during the confirmation service itself – in some cases by the catechists who lead the service. Although this scenario is not explicitly provided for in the law, the parish council is authorised to delegate this task to catechists, and in practice it is quite common.

¹ This keynote was delivered at the CPCE consultation on the topic “*Rethinking Ministry in the CPCE: Responding to Diversification through Ministry, Ordination and Episkopé*”, Oslo, 23–25 April 2026. The following transcript of the presentation incorporates some points from the subsequent discussion.

² Mario Fischer/Martin Friedrich (Hg.), Amt, Ordination, Episkopé und theologische Ausbildung (Leuenberger Texte 13), Leipzig ²2020 (2013), 23-103.

3. The third example does not concern the present, but the near future: the Concordat, an association of German-speaking member churches of the PCS, has drawn up an emergency Plan P. This Plan P provides that, in the likely event of a shortage of pastors, suitable individuals aged 55 and over may be appointed as “vicar-pastors” (Pfarrvikare). They would then serve for a limited period of 10 years. The retirement age in Switzerland is 65. The proposed vicars will act as deputy pastors. They will undergo an assessment, must study 60 credit points of theology at a university and receive a brief induction into the role. They will not be ordained, but will nevertheless be responsible for the administration of word and sacraments. This is a temporary solution to the problem of the shortage of pastors. The implementation of Plan P has only just begun. It will take some time.

Each of the specific cases mentioned concern a different ministry: the diaconal, catechetical and pastoral ministry. As we shall see, none of these cases fits entirely within the line of argument envisaged by MOE. I am sure you could cite similar or *additional* examples from your own churches. Without having examined this in detail, I assume that the diversity of ministries is greater today than it was when MOE was drafted. And I expect that this diversity will tend to increase. For: in most CPCE churches, we have for some time been observing a significant decline in church membership and, accordingly, in the financial resources of the churches, as well as an ideological and religious pluralisation. This development runs parallel to a decline in the number of students studying Protestant theology. (Although we still have a surprisingly high and stable number of students in Zurich, in the long term this too is likely to decline). Combined with the impending wave of pastors retirements, all churches within the CPCE will face an acute shortage of pastors in the coming years. This will inevitably mean that we must make our ministries and their tasks more flexible and increase the involvement of the “laity”. You may now think that my analysis is somewhat undifferentiated and does not apply equally to all churches. That is true. Nevertheless, the megatrend seems evident to me: there will be diversification – and the crucial question will be: can we shape it – and in what way should this be done?

First, however, I would like to explain a few fundamental decisions of the CPCE regarding ministry and church unity.

2. Key statements in the Leuenberg Agreement and in “MOE”

You are all familiar with Article 2 of the Leuenberg Agreement:

“The Church is founded on Jesus Christ alone. Through the gift of his salvation in preaching and the sacraments, he gathers the Church and sends it out. This is why, according to the understanding of the Reformers, the necessary and sufficient prerequisite for the true unity of the Church is agreement in the right teaching of the Gospel and the right administration of the sacraments. It is from these Reformation criteria that the participating churches derive their understanding of church fellowship” (LA, Art. 2)

This understanding of unity, modelled on the *Confessio Augustana*, Art. VII, is based solely on agreement regarding teaching in accordance with the Gospel and the administration of word and sacraments – not on a specific ministry. In this respect, the CPCE clearly differs from the Roman Catholic understanding of unity. According to the Leuenberg Agreement, Jesus Christ is the foundation of their unity and makes himself present through word and sacraments. Thus, agreement on the right, Christ-centred teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments unifies the churches. Unity is not founded on the ministry, nor is the ministry necessary for it. Nevertheless, the Leuenberg Agreement *de facto* presupposes a specific ministry. In practice, achieving this unity without the ministry of the word and the sacraments is hardly possible. While the Leuenberg Agreement does not explicitly state this, it seems to imply it.³ This focus on the ministry of word and sacraments is also presupposed in Article 33(c), where, with regard to the member churches, it states: “*that they accord each other table and pulpit fellowship; this includes the mutual recognition of ordination and the freedom to provide for intercelebration.*” (LA, Art. 33)

At least MOE confirms this interpretation. For it emphasises the “significance” (Art. 41) and “particularity” (Art. 42) of the ministry of word and sacraments and justifies this with the special function of word and sacraments in the constitution of the church as *creatura verbi*. It belongs “to the being of the church” (Art. 41). And as regards the aforementioned mutual recognition of ordination under Art. 33c, MOE clearly attributes this to the ordination to the ministry of word and sacraments: “*This means that mutual recognition of ordinations according to LA 33 refers only to that ministry which is conferred by ordination in all churches of the CPCE, which is the ministry of word and sacraments.*” (MOE Art. 57)

I interpret this to mean that *table and pulpit fellowship*, as well as *intercelebration*, are ultimately tied to the ordained ministry of word and sacraments. In a certain tension with this, Article 13 of the Leuenberg Agreement states that Christ “*employs various forms of ministry and service, as well as the witness of all those belonging to his people*” (LA, Art. 13). How do these “various forms of ministry and service” relate to the one ministry of word and sacraments? This is not stated anywhere. We are still grappling with this tension to this day...Nevertheless, I venture to make a somewhat pointed assertion: Church fellowship according to the CPCE’s model of unity is, in a derived, mediated sense, ‘indispensable’ (cf. MOE Art. 41), and this means it is *essentially* linked to the ordained ministry of word and sacraments.

I cannot go into all the earlier texts of the CPCE that have addressed the ministry here (Neuendettelsau Theses, 1982/86; Tampere Theses, 1986; The Church of Jesus Christ, 1994). Instead, I wish to focus directly on the MOE, where these earlier statements have indeed been revisited and developed further.⁴ MOE distinguishes between three ministries, “*which are indispensable for the life and order of the church*”: the ministry of word and sacraments, the

³ See also: David Plüss, ‘The Ministry as a Leadership Role? Office – Ordination – Episkopé’, in: M.Bünker/B.Jaeger (Hg.), 1973-2013. 40 Jahre Leuenberger Konkordie. Dokumentationsband zum Jubiläumsjahr 2013 der Gemeinschaft Evangelischer Kirchen in Europa, Wien 2014, 256–271, 259.

⁴ See also: Ulrich Körtner: Amt – Ordination – Episkope. Zum Stand der Diskussion in der Gemeinschaft Evangelischer Kirchen in Europa (GEKE). In: Materialdienst des Konfessionskundlichen Instituts 62, 2011, 83–90, 84–87.

ministry of diakonia, and the ministry of episkopé. Alongside these three ministries, there are other *vital* services and ministries, though these are not *indispensable*. (cf. MOE, Art. 40) There is, of course, much to be said about the explanations in MOE. For this presentation, I shall highlight just *one* characteristic point: It follows from the logic of the unity of the Leuenberg Agreement mentioned earlier that MOE, whilst it values other forms of ordination, *de facto* affirms only *one* form of ordination: namely, the ordination to the ministry of word and sacraments (cf. MOE Art. 63; Recommendation 3).

Yet even in this narrowing down to a single ordination, MOE displays remarkable *elasticity*: the ministry of word and sacraments is not, in fact, restricted to the pastoral parish ministry (Art. 44). Not only could specialised pastoral ministries (Spezialpfarrämter), volunteer pastors (ehrenamtliche Pfarrpersonen) but also “lay” preachers (Prädikant:innen) and presbyters therefore be ordained under certain circumstances – provided that this ordination is linked to a functional assignment to the service of public preaching and the administration of the sacraments. It is indeed striking how little MOE speaks of the *pastoral* ministry. For MOE, the focus is not on linking ordination to the specific profession of pastor, but on the functional assignment to word and sacraments.

I would now like to return to the three examples from Switzerland mentioned at the outset. How should they be assessed in the light of the fundamental principles of MOE just explained?

3. Assessment of the three examples of diversified ministry against the background of MOE

As previously mentioned, none of these three examples is entirely in line with the aforementioned basic provisions of MOE. However, let us go through them one by one and examine their compatibility with the requirements of MOE:

1. The first example concerned the ordained deacons from the Church of Vaud, who are permitted to administer the word and the sacraments via *pastorale delegation*. What does MOE say about this? Article 64 contains the following relevant statement: “*In some churches of the CPCE elders and deacons are ordained (even in cases where these ministries do not include the administration of the sacraments). This issue deserves further consideration*” (MOE, Art. 64) And the recommendations state accordingly: “*We recommend further study on the diaconate, given the fact that the diaconal ministry is understood and organised in several different ways within churches of the CPCE. One particular aim should be to clarify its position in relation to ordination.*” (MOE Rec. 5)

The question of the ordination of deacons therefore remains open, as does the question of whether ordination entails a functional connection to word and sacraments.⁵ Does the structure of the diaconate in the Church of Vaud therefore fully align with the MOE?

⁵ As does the question of mutual recognition of ordained and not ordained deacons within CPCE.

When forming an opinion on this matter, it is helpful to draw a distinction. Namely, the distinction between the *prescriptive, affirmed inherent logic of unity* and the *descriptive, valued – or at least tolerated – legitimate variation* in the order of the ministries within the CPCE.

In my view, the diaconate in the Church of Vaud does indeed correspond to the valued, legitimate variation in the order of ministries. However, it does not align with the inherent logic of unity within the CPCE, which affirms only ordination to the ministry of word and sacraments. For the deacons of the Church of Vaud are not ordained to the ministry of word and sacraments. Rather, they are ordained solely for diaconal ministry – they are merely *delegated* by the church to the service of word and sacraments. However, they are delegated only in cases where there is no local pastor.

2. Let us turn to the second example: the catechetical ministry of the Reformed Church Bern-Jura-Solothurn, which has the power to baptise confirmands by delegation. Unfortunately, the catechetical ministry is barely mentioned in MOE. Only in one place does it state: *“In the churches there are also other services and ministries that are vital to the church’s life. Teaching the faith of the church belongs to several ministries. Many churches have a special teaching ministry, however, which they would consider indispensable.”* (Art. 40) Is the Bernese catechetical ministry legitimised by MOE? I would say that whilst its existence is valued, it is not affirmed. Here too, the following applies: This catechetical ministry does indeed fall within the realm of legitimate variation, but it does not fully align with the inherent logic of unity within the CPCE – certainly not when it administers the sacrament of baptism without ordination.

3. Finally, let us turn to the third example: Plan P, the office of career changers, who, as non-ordained “vicar-pastors”, are permitted to carry out all the duties of a full pastoral ministry independently – including the administration of the sacraments. In this difficult case, I believe the only recourse is to refer to the emergency clause in Art. 45⁶. It states the following:

“Historically, under exceptional circumstances, non-ordained persons have been authorised in their churches to serve as ministers of the word and sacraments without special professional qualifications. (...) Such forms of ‘local ministry’ respond to urgent needs and have become widely recognised.” However, the issue is clearly identified and the following is called for:

“It is important that locally defined ministries are exercised within defined areas of responsibility and with requirements for appropriate training. In addition, their forms of recognition must be theologically and structurally compatible with those of the other ordained ministries in the church. Of particular importance in this regard is the issue of ordination for all ministries of word and sacraments. In this area, there will necessarily be significant variations among the churches, and consultations within the CPCE churches will be helpful.” (MOE, Art. 45)

The case is clear: the ministry of non-ordained “vicar-pastors” lies quite at the edge of the tolerated, legitimate range of variation under MOE. In defence of Plan P, I would like to add: Firstly, in Switzerland *all* vicars may preach and administer the sacraments during their one-

⁶ During the discussion that followed this presentation, the valid point was raised as to whether the example in question could be interpreted as a ‘state of emergency’. However, the text does not provide any precise criteria for determining this.

year vicariate. Secondly: Plan P is indeed a temporary and not a permanent emergency measure. Its actual aim is to preserve the pastoral ministry via vicariates and to ensure precisely that there is no permanent dilution of the pastoral ministry through other services.

Viewed positively, it is therefore a substitute solution in the service of the ordained ministry of word and sacraments. – And at least in this purpose-oriented sense, it corresponds not only to the scope of the tolerated variation, but even to the inherent logic of unity within the CPCE.

Let me briefly look back. MOE advocates a threefold ministry with a characteristic and concise emphasis on the ordained ministry of word and sacraments. This emphasis corresponds to the logic of unity within the church fellowship. Despite this emphasis, however, according to MOE there is a remarkably high degree of *elasticity*⁷ even with regard to differing orders of ministry: this has been demonstrated, for example, in relation to the diaconal, catechetical and the pastoral ministry. The scope of valued tolerance for legitimate deviations is deliberately kept broad.

4. The significance of a diversified ministry for the unity model

It is clear that, given the enormous historical and current diversity, the CPCE needs this elasticities. As far as I can see, the three examples from Switzerland represent only a fraction of the current diversity of orders of ministries within the CPCE. And I assume – as I said – that this diversity will inevitably increase in all member churches due to declining finances, membership and the shortage of pastors. There is a significant risk that, in the face of this crisis, many new local or regional *ad hoc* solutions will emerge. Solutions that are even less compatible with the guidelines of the MOE and its fundamental provision regarding the ordained ministry of word and sacraments. Ad hoc solutions that also render ecumenical dialogue with other churches scarcely credible or even possible. Will it then still be possible to assert: “*they accord each other table and pulpit fellowship; this includes the mutual recognition of ordination and the freedom to provide for intercelebration*”? (LA, Art. 33) And if that were no longer the case: Is the CPCE’s model of unity then actually in danger of being undermined – perhaps not theoretically, but certainly in practice? So that a *new* model of unity is indeed needed, as the subtitle of my presentation suggests?

This calls for a nuanced response:

1. The ecumenical model of unity in reconciled diversity can take various forms. The concrete form of this model in the sense of a primarily European communion of Protestant churches, is just one such form.⁸ For the CPCE’s model of unity, it is particularly important to distinguish

⁷ In addition to the elasticity in the view of the precise definition of the ordained ministry of word and sacraments, there is therefore a further elasticity in the view of the order of ministries.

⁸ See, on the discussion of models of unity: T. Brandner, *Einheit gegeben – verloren – erstrebt. Denkbewegungen von Glauben und Kirchenverfassung* (KiKonf 39), Göttingen 1996, 44-67; U.H.J. Körtner, *Versöhnte Verschiedenheit. Ökumenische Theologie im Zeichen des Kreuzes*, Bielefeld 1996, 68-74; K. Raiser, *Modelle kirchlicher Einheit. Die Debatte der siebziger Jahre und die Folgerungen für heute*, ÖR 36 (1987) 195-216.

between the *foundation* and the *shape* of unity (“Grund und Gestalt”)⁹. The foundation of the unity of the churches is given to them: it is God’s saving action in Jesus Christ. This foundation constitutively unites the churches; but this *unity* does not require ecclesial *uniformity* with regard to the *communio* of the churches amongst themselves (cf. MOE Art. 21). It allows for unity within a reconciled diversity of church shapes.

2. As regards the specific form of unity within the CPCE, I would like to reiterate that, for the unity, it is sufficient to agree on the evangelical practice of the word and the sacraments. The ministry only comes into play in a derivative sense. Furthermore, the unity also depends on witness and service, ecumenical external relations, and other factors.

Conclusion regarding these two points: A diversified ministry does not, *in itself*, yet endanger the unity of the church community! The “*existing differences in the understanding of ministry and in the diverse forms of ministry and service of episcopé ‘do not refer to the foundation but to the shape of the church?’*” (MOE, Art.18). The distinction between foundation and shape thus brings a certain degree of relief in view of the anticipated future process of diversification.

What are we to say to this? Problem solved. Let’s pack up, the consultation is over...

However, in all honesty, shouldn't we agree with Lukas Vischer, the old Reformed ecumenist who criticised the reception of CA VII in this regard early on: “*The churches do not have to change; once they have recognised one another, they can maintain their identity without compromise. But does this attitude not ultimately amount to a refusal of communion?*”¹⁰

Questions of ministry are indeed, as I said, not of constitutive but nevertheless essential importance for the unity and communion of the CPCE. Does acceptance of any and all diversity of ministry not ultimately amount to a quiet swan song for substantial *communio*? This criticism of the CPCE’s model of unity, or rather of the way it gives concrete shape to its church fellowship, is by no means new. In my view, however, this criticism must be refuted. I will raise two objections to it:

1. In MOE, it is at least pointed out at the beginning of the text that there are *limits to diversity* (Art. 18+19). Later on, *criteria* for the understanding of the ministry are listed: namely, the criterion of conformity with Scripture (Art. 25–27) and the criterion of conformity with reality (Art. 28–30). Both criteria are linked in a hermeneutical circle. Admittedly, these two criteria are rather open to interpretation, especially since no direct theology of ministry can be derived from the Bible (MOE Art. 56). But one thing is clear: *plurality* of ministries, yes, but not just any kind of *pluralism*. After all, the MOE explicitly identifies what I consider to be an important example that calls the limits to diversity into question: the refusal to ordain women (Art. 19).

⁹ Cf. The Church of Jesus Christ. The Contribution of the Reformation towards Ecumenical Dialogue on Church Unity (LT 1), Frankfurt a.M. 32001.

¹⁰ L. Vischer, ...satis est? Gemeinschaft in Christus und Einheit der Kirche, in: K. Herbert (ed.), Christliche Freiheit – im Dienst am Menschen, Frankfurt am Main 1972, 245–254, 253.

2. The second objection is even more significant. As regards the concretisation of the CPCE's model of unity, a key distinction is drawn in the Leuenberg Agreement: the distinction between "*declaration* and *realisation* of Church Fellowship" (LA, part IV). The realisation of church fellowship consists of "witness and service", organisational alliances, ecumenical aspects – and, of course, continuing theological work, including doctrinal dialogues. These dialogues are, after all, about "*overcoming divisive differences, thereby contributing towards greater visibility in church unity*". (MOE Art. 21)

This is significantly more than merely endorsing an already established declaration of church fellowship. In the Leuenberg context, unity in reconciled diversity means: continuing to work towards a realisation of church fellowship that has not yet been achieved. The two fundamental distinctions of the CPCE's unity model just explained do indeed stand in a certain tension with one another, yet they are not mutually exclusive: the difference between foundation and shape does not imply a halt to the dynamic of the more intensive realisation of church fellowship indicated by the distinction between declaration and realisation.¹¹ With regard to the order of ministry, this means: continuous work on overcoming divisive differences towards greater visibility in church unity. But what might this mean in concrete terms: What could we change with regard to the understanding of the ministry in order to realise church fellowship more deeply?

5. Three ideas for developing MOE further

I said: we must overcome divisive differences when it comes to the ministry. We cannot exploit and overstretch the elasticities of MOE any further. To do so would jeopardise the table and pulpit fellowship and it would result in unity becoming nothing more than a theoretical concept; a unity which, in practice, is in fact increasingly breaking apart and losing its ecumenical power. – However, let us be modest and honest. Given the expected diversification of the ministry, I am not so sure that church fellowship can be deepened in *this regard* any longer – even though I'd very much like it to be!

Churches of the CPCE are already struggling to survive, so I'm not sure how open they are to prescriptive recommendations 'from above'. There are no easy solutions here. The only thing the CPCE can and should do is *help* its member churches! It should advise and support them by offering helpful and ecumenically sensitive guidance regarding the forthcoming process of diversification of ministries. I see three areas of guidance that would need to be supplemented and expanded *following MOE*. These are merely ideas – and I am probably not the first to put them forward:

¹¹ One might also ask whether the dynamic required for the realisation of church communion might already be discernible at the more abstract level of the ecumenical *model* of 'unity in reconciled diversity': for diversity between churches, in and of itself, can certainly be ambiguous, indeed tainted by guilt – namely, the guilt of failing to live out communion more fully together. Consequently, the process of reconciliation is still ongoing, and our participation in it also requires a deepening of mutual ecclesial participation. Ulrich Körtner already argued along similar lines several years ago: Ulrich H. J. Körtner, *Wohin steuert die Ökumene? Vom Konsens- zum Differenzmodell*, Vandenhoeck, Göttingen 2005, 41-43.

1. I believe that in the CPCE we will have to give much more thought to *interprofessionality* and *transprofessionality*. By ‘interprofessionality’ I mean – simply put – greater cooperation between the ministries (and also services), and by ‘transprofessionality’ I mean cross-professional cooperation – also with “laypeople”. It is no longer enough to state who is responsible for what and how one is commissioned to do so. We need guidelines and ideas for shaping cooperative church collaboration, particularly at local and regional levels. What demands does a specific context of church work place on us? What human resources and skills are available for which tasks, and how can we best support one another as a team? What resources are available outside the church? Who can relieve whom, and how? For me, inter- and trans-professionality does not mean blurring the boundaries of ministry – but rather better, more flexible cooperation in light of local requirements. There is already a great deal of expertise in this area, particularly in Practical Theology, which I unfortunately do not possess.

2. Closely linked to the concept of inter- and trans-professionality is another point: we need to give more thought to *institutionally organised delegations*. I have already mentioned the pastoral delegation from Switzerland. Perhaps in future it will no longer be possible for every celebration of the Lord’s Supper or Baptism to be conducted in person by a representative of the ordained ministry of word and sacraments. But it would at least have to be ensured that those ministries and services presiding over such celebrations exercise the word and sacraments in the sense of a delegation. The responsibility for moderating and leading the celebration of word and sacraments would still have to lie solely with the ordained ministry of word and sacraments. However, the actual personnel carrying out the service would do so by delegation. The link back to the ordained ministry must be clear to everyone in the congregation. Visible forms of delegation would need to be developed.

The ordained ministry of the word and sacraments is carried out on behalf of the entire congregation. Therefore, the decision to delegate this ministry's tasks must be carried out by the local or regional leadership (e.g. the parish council¹²), acting as representatives of the entire congregation.

The two points mentioned could lead to a certain shift in emphasis with regard to the ordained ministry of word and sacraments. It will thus likely become more of a ministry that trains, advises and empowers “laypeople” and other ministers, takes responsibility for and moderates pastoral tasks – but no longer carries them all out itself.

Anyone holding a ministry of word and sacrament would certainly need to have completed an academic degree in theology!¹³ This role of team leadership would require the episcopal and the catechetical dimension to be strengthened. Linked to this is a final proposal:

¹² ... of which the ordained ministry of word and sacraments is a part.

¹³ This requirement goes beyond the provisions of Article 67 of MOE, which merely states: “It is important that those who are to serve in ordained ministry should be sufficiently trained. Ordination of persons who do not have the necessary theological training runs the risk of not safeguarding faithfulness to the apostolic tradition, the unity of the church and the interconnectedness of word and sacrament. This does not mean, however, that ordination should be limited only to theologians who have undergone a full course of study. In any case, biblical and theological training and spiritual maturity are important also for limited forms of employment. (...)”. – Compare, however, the arguments in “Training for the Ordained Ministry in the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe”: Mario Fischer/Martin Friedrich (Hg.), *Amt, Ordination, Episkopé und theologische Ausbildung* (Leuenberger Texte 13), Leipzig ²2020 (2013), 231-265.

3. For the future, we need guidelines to set out more precise ideas on how “laypeople”¹⁴ can be integrated into the tasks of other ministries. It is precisely the role of “laypeople” and the catechetical ministry that are still under-emphasised in MOE. The doctrine of charisms mentioned at the beginning of MOE (Art. 38) would offer an important point of reference here! The integration of “laypeople” also requires further consideration of power dynamics and gender sensitivity within the ministry.

My understanding is that the three ideas outlined here all relate to the internal logic of unity of MOE, they would not merely be valued or tolerated variations.

I come to my conclusion: The subtitle assigned to my presentation was: “Whether and how the model of unity in reconciled diversity should be developed further”. I hope this has become clear: I do not believe that the *model* of unity in reconciled diversity needs to be developed further. For it can be understood in both static and dynamic terms and leaves sufficient scope for interpretation in the future. However, I believe that the concretization of the unity model within the CPCE should continue to work towards strengthening the *realization* of church fellowship, rather than merely declaring it. With regard to the future diversification of ministry, this means: it is not enough for us to stretch the elasticities of MOE even further. We need ideas on how we can offer the churches of the CPCE ecumenically sensitive guidance along the lines of the logic of unity of MOE. I outlined three ideas at the end of my presentation. I hope you have further and better ideas and look forward to the discussion!

Thank you for your attention!

¹⁴ The term requires clarification and is problematic in light of the priesthood of all believers.