

ONE CHURCH, ONE FAITH, ONE LORD? **A dramatic presentation**

Organ music.

A spotlight falls on an altar centre stage. In front of the altar, there are 4 pulpits, 2 on the right side of the stage, 2 on the left. 6 people walk up to the altar and stand, 3 each side. They sing together (Hymn-tune: Thornbury):

Thy hand, O God, has guided
thy flock from age to age;
the wondrous tale is written,
full clear, on every page;
our fathers owned thy goodness,
and we their deeds record;
and both of this bear witness:
one Church, one faith, one Lord.

Voice 1: For over a thousand years since the time of Jesus, there was one Church ...

Voice 2: That disagreed ...

Voice 1: There had been some disagreements since New Testament times, but it was still one Church.

All: We all believe in One ..., Holy ..., Catholic ... and Apostolic Church.

Voice 1: And then ...

Voice 2: In the eleventh century, it split.

Voice 3: East and West disagreed.

Voice 4: The East taught that the Holy Spirit came from the Father.

Voice 5: The West taught that the Holy Spirit came from the Father and the Son.

Voice 6: So, from now on there were two churches ...

Voice 1: The Orthodox in the East ...

Voice 2: And the Roman Catholic in the West.

Voice 1: But they both believed in the One God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Voice 6: And so it remained for another five hundred years.

Voice 5: Everybody in the West belonged to the Roman Catholic Church.

Voice 4: And then ...

Voice 2: The Roman Catholic Church split.

Voice 1: Some reformers, led by Martin Luther in Germany, thought that the Roman Catholic Church was wrong ...

Voice 3: On the eucharist.

Voice 4: We reformers don't think that the bread and wine literally turn into the body and blood of Christ.

Voice 3: And on ministry.

Voice 5: We reformers don't think that priests have any special powers. We think that every believer is a priest.

Voice 6: And on church authority.

Voice 2: We reformers don't think that the Pope should have any authority. The only authority for the Church is the Bible.

Voice 3: And so, in the sixteenth century, the Roman Catholic Church was split into Catholics and reformers.

Voice 1: But they both believed in the One God – Creator, Saviour and Sustainer.

Voice 4: England was still Roman Catholic ...

Voice 2: Until Henry VIII decided to side with the Reformation ...

Voice 3: And we all know why ...

Voice 1: But we won't go into that now.

Voice 2: Let's say only that the Church of England broke away from the Roman Catholic Church.

Voice 3: And it's 39 Articles of belief embraced the reformers' ideas.

Voice 4: So that in England from now on there were two churches – the Roman Catholic Church ...

Voice 5: Persecuted for centuries ...

Voice 6: And the Church of England.

Voice 1: But they both believed in the One God ...

Voice 2: The Church of England? Why are you going on about England? This is Wales.

Voice 3: But Henry VIII had made Wales part of England.

All : Boo!

Voice 2: In time, the Church of England became the church that almost all the people of Wales belonged to.

Voice 1: And it did a lot for Wales.

Voice 4: It was one of our bishops that translated the Bible into Welsh.

Voice 5: One of our archdeacons provided metrical psalms in the Welsh language that are still sung today.

Voice 6: Our Book of Common Prayer was made available in Welsh almost from the start.

Voice 2: But very soon, guess what?

Voice 3: Yes, it split!

Voice 1: Some people thought that it didn't go far enough.

Voice 2: There were the Baptists ...

One person now moves forward, enters the furthest pulpit stage left and says:

Baptist: If the only authority for the Church is the Bible, why does the Church baptize infants? The Bible says nothing about baptizing infants. Jesus himself was baptized when he was thirty years old. Baptizing infants can't be right. We Baptists will only baptize adult believers.

Voice 3: And the Presbyterians.

One person now moves forward, enters the nearest pulpit stage left and says:

Presbyterian: If the only authority for the Church is the Bible, why does the Church have a separate order of bishops? The Bible says nothing about a separate order of bishops. In New Testament times there was no difference between a bishop and a priest (a presbyter). We Presbyterians are led by presbyters. We won't have bishops.

Voice 4: And the Congregationalists ...

One person now moves forward, centers the nearest pulpit stage right and says:

Congregationalist: If the only authority for the Church is the Bible, why do we have Church structures at all? Jesus spoke out against systemized religion. He gave a collection of ordinary people the task of proclaiming God's kingdom. We Congregationalists won't have priests or an elaborate church structure. We can simply come to God through Christ.

Voice 1: So the Reformation shook things up. There were:

Anglicans: Anglicans.

Baptist: Baptists.

Presbyterian: Presbyterians.

Congregationalist: And Congregationalists.

Voice 2: But we all believed in the One God – Creator, Saviour and Sustainer.

Voice 3: And we all believed that we were being faithful to New Testament teaching of Jesus and the apostles.

Voice 4: And so it remained until around the middle of the eighteenth century. And then ...

Voice 5 (groans): Oh no! Not again!

Voice 6: Yes, folks! That's right! Another split!

Voice 5: Who is it this time?

Voice 1: Step forward, the Methodists.

2 persons now step forward stage right. One of them enters the furthest pulpit and says:

Calvinistic Methodist: We are the Calvinistic Methodists. We were born out of a revival in Wales led by three Anglicans – Howell Harris, Daniel Rowland and William Williams, Pantycelyn. We follow the teachings of the sixteenth century reformer John Calvin, who taught that only those elected by God can be saved. Originally, we were a reforming group within the Anglican Church. But in 1811 we broke away to form our own denomination.

The other enters the next pulpit to the Calvinistic Methodist ' and says:

Methodist: We are the Wesleyan Methodists. We were born out of a revival in England led by the Anglican priest, John Wesley. We follow the sixteenth century reformer Jacob Armin, who taught that all people can be saved. Originally, we too were a reforming group within the Anglican Church. But in 1795 we finally broke away.

Anglican: And so it has remained in Wales to this day.

Presbyterian: A Christian Church that is hopelessly divided.

Baptist: And we have been so unChristian towards one another.

All point at one another and start calling names in a chant.

All (at the Anglican): Old foreigner! Old foreigner!

All (at the Baptist): Heretics! Dippers!

All (at the Presbyterian and Congregationalist): Roundheads! Agitators!

All (at the Calvinistic and Wesleyan Methodists): Methodists are so po-faced;
They go to chapel without grace!

Anglican: In the last century, there was one significant development ...

Calvinistic Methodist: But that was in England ...

Presbyterian: In that in England in 1972 Congregationalists and Presbyterians came together
to form the United Reformed Church.

Congregationalist: And it had an effect in Wales because the Congregationalists that
worshipped in English joined in ...

Prebyterian: And the United Reformed Church has several congregations here in Wales.

Methodist: Yet we've still got ...

Anglican: Anglicans. But since 1920 we are a national Church – the Church in Wales.

Baptist: Baptists.

Methodists: Methodists.

Calvinistic Methodist: Calvinistic Methodists. But we are now known as the Presbyterian
Church of Wales.

URC: United Reformed.

Anglican: And don't forget the Roman Catholics.

Methodist: Or the Orthodox.

All: And we all think that we are the one true Church.

They all sing:

Through many a day of darkness,
through many a scene of strife,
the faithful few fought bravely,
to guard the nation's life.
Their gospel of redemption,
sin pardoned, man restored,
was all in this enfolded:
one Church, one Faith, one Lord.

Anglican: One Lord?

All: Yes, we all believe in the one Lord Jesus Christ.

URC: One faith?

All: Yes, there is salvation only through the Lord Jesus.

Baptist 3: One Church?

Silence.

Anglican: We know that disunity is wrong.

Baptist: We know that we are sinning against Jesus.

Methodist: Because Jesus said on the night before he was crucified ...

Presbyterian: 'I pray that they may all be one'.

URC: And our disunity impairs our mission to the world.

Methodist: But there are so many differences between us.

Baptist: Even our buildings are different.

Anglican: Our focal point is the altar.

All others: Ours is the pulpit.

Anglican: We believe in liturgy.

All others: We have fewer liturgies, or none.

Anglican: We have vestments.

All others: Vestments?

Anglican: And bishops.

All others: Oh, no! No bishops!

Presbyterian: We know we should come together. But it's hopeless!

URC: Christians should never say anything is hopeless.

Baptist: But what can we do?

They sing quietly:

And we, shall we be faithless?
shall hearts fail, hands hang down?
shall we evade the conflict,
and cast away our crown?
Not so: in God's deep counsels
some better thing is stored;
we will maintain, unflinching,
one Church, one Faith, one Lord..

Anglican: The Covenant. Let's not forget that we have made a Covenant ...

Methodist: With each other and under God.

Presbyterian: We made it in 1975, and ...

Baptist: We recognized in one another the same faith in the gospel of Jesus ...

URC: The same awareness of God's calling ...

Baptist: And that we all belong to the one Church of Christ.

Presbyterian: We recognized that the members of all our churches are members of Christ because of their common baptism and common calling ...

Methodist: And that the ordained ministries of all our churches are true ministries of the word and sacraments.

Anglican: We recognized in one another patterns of worship and sacramental life and marks of holiness which are manifestly gifts of Christ ...

Presbyterian: And the same concern for the good government of the Church.

URC: We all signed up to the Covenant.

Baptist: For once, we all agreed.

Each person moves from their pulpit and stand together at the front of the stage.

Anglican: The Church in Wales.

Baptist: Baptists. Or at least some of us.

Methodists: The Methodist Church.

Presbyterian: The Presbyterian Church of Wales.

URC: The United Reformed Church.

Methodist: And we promised ...

Baptist: To act, speak and serve together in obedience to the gospel ...

URC: To work together for justice and peace at home and abroad ...

Presbyterian: To seek an agreed pattern of ordained ministry ...

Anglican: To listen to one another and to study together the witness and practice of our various traditions ...

Baptist: To seek a shared mode of Church government.

URC: And in 2009 we all stated that we wanted to establish a Church of Wales that shares ...

Methodist: One faith, one structure, one ministry and one governance,

Presbyterian: But that honours and celebrates the different theological emphases ...

Anglican: And worship traditions that constitute and enrich the greater whole.

URC: Eh?

Methodist: I missed that too.

Presbyterian: It means that we would like to be one Church, but where we could all feel comfortable and worship as we wish ...

Anglican: With vestments and liturgy ...

Baptist: Or without vestments and liturgy.

Anglican: In a traditional church building ...

Methodist: Or in a chapel building.

URC: In English ...

Baptist: Or in Welsh.

Presbyterian: But that there would be one body making decisions for all of us. One General Assembly ...

Methodist: Or Conference ...

Anglican: Or Governing Body ...

URC: Or Synod. Call it what you wish.

Baptist: And one ministry.

Presbyterian: Including bishops?

Anglican: We're working on that.

Methodist: After all, bishops are pastoral overseers ...

URC: And we all have some kind of pastoral oversight ...

Presbyterian: Except that ours is done by a group, not an individual ...

Methodist: Communally, not personally.

Anglican: So it's simply a matter of seeing what model would be acceptable to us all.

Baptist: So, we would all at last belong to one Church ...

URC: Where we could all enjoy the riches of each other's spiritual heritage.

Anglican: We would remind the Church of the need for freedom and diversity in theology and practice.

Baptist: And we that baptism is the fundamental mark of a believer's identification with Christ.

URC: We would remind the Church of the importance of the local congregation and of the priesthood of all believers.

Methodist: And we that salvation is open to all and that the Gospel must be preached.

Presbyterian: And we would remind the Church of its specific mission to the people of Wales and of its need for fervour in worship.

Anglican: We would bring to this Church the riches of our Book of Common Prayer, the discipline of our liturgical year, the metrical Psalms of Edmwnd Prys .

Baptist: And we the insights of Bunyan and Spurgeon and Lewis Valentine.

URC: We would contribute the insights of Richard Baxter, Jonathan Edwards and William Gurnall.

Methodist: We the hymns of John and Charles Wesley.

Presbyterian: And we the intense Welsh language hymns of Williams Pantycelyn and Ann Griffiths.

Methodist: One Lord ...

URC: One Faith ...

Baptist: And at long last, one Church.

URC: A broad Church ...

Baptist: Where our diversity would be honoured and celebrated.

They all embrace.

Presbyterian: Shall we dare?

Anglican: Shall we venture in faith?

Methodist: For the sake of God's mission to Wales ...

URC: And guided by him.

Presbyterian: So that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow ...

Anglican: And every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord ...

All: To the glory of God the Father.

They sing:

Thy mercy will not fail us,
nor leave thy work undone;
with thy right hand to help us,
thy victory shall be won;
and then, by all creation,
thy name shall be adored,
and this shall be their anthem:
one Church, one Faith, one Lord.