

Episcopal Church in the USA Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

QUESTIONS ADDRESSED ON Called to Common Mission: A Lutheran Proposal for a Revision of the *Concordat of Agreement*

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Introduction

The nine papers presented here represent insights of Episcopal Church advisory participants on the drafting team of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America responsible for preparing "Called to Common Mission: A Lutheran Proposal for Revision of the *Concordat of Agreement*" (CCM). Additional consultants graciously contributed their insights. Some of these questions (2, 3, 6, 7, 8) incorporate material taken from *Concordat: Concerns Addressed*, published in 1997 on behalf of the (then) Lutheran-Episcopal Joint Coordinating Committee.

These papers are presented with the hope that they will help to clarify questions concerning the text and thereby assist in the reception process.

1. Full Communion

What is meant by full communion? How does it differ from governmental union?

"Full communion" is the term that each of our churches officially uses to describe its goal for ecumenical relations with other churches. In paragraph 1 of CCM both churches endorse in principle the definition of full communion agreed by the international Anglican-Lutheran Joint Working Group at Cold Ash, Berkshire, England, in 1983, which they deem to be in full accord with their own definitions given in the "Declaration on Unity" endorsed by the General Convention of the EC (1979) and the ELCA's policy statement "Ecumenism: The Vision of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America" (1991). The relevant portion of the Cold Ash Report is as follows:

By full communion we here understand a relationship between two distinct churches or communions. Each maintains its own autonomy and recognizes the catholicity and apostolicity of the other, and each believes the other to hold the essentials of the Christian faith:

- a) subject to such safeguards as ecclesial discipline may properly require, members of one body may receive the sacraments of the other;
- b) subject to local invitation, bishops of one church may take part in the consecration of the bishops of the other, thus acknowledging the duty of mutual care and concern;
- c) subject to church regulation, a bishop, pastor/priest or deacon of one ecclesial body may exercise liturgical functions in a congregation of the other body if invited to do so and also, when requested, pastoral care of the other's members;
- d) it is also a necessary addition and complement that there should be recognized organs of regular consultation and communication, including episcopal collegiality, to express and strengthen the fellowship and enable common witness, life and service.

To be in full communion means that churches become interdependent while remaining autonomous. One is not elevated to be the judge of the other nor can it remain insensitive to the other; neither is each body committed to every secondary feature of the tradition of the other. Thus the corporate strength of the churches is enhanced in love, and an isolated independence is restrained. Full communion should not imply the suppressing of ethnic, cultural or ecclesial characteristics of traditions which may in fact be maintained and developed by diverse institutions within one communion.

Basic differences between full communion and governmental union are outlined in paragraph 2 of CCM. Full communion is a relationship between two distinct churches in which each recognizes the other as a catholic and apostolic church holding the essentials of the Christian faith. At the same time, each church maintains and develops its distinct confessional and doctrinal formulations and its distinct organization. Within the

relationship of full communion the churches "become interdependent while remaining autonomous" (self-governing). The vehicle for their interdependence is the interaction of their parallel local and national leadership persons and bodies as they become "recognized organs of regular consultation and communication, including episcopal collegiality, to express and strengthen the fellowship and enable common witness, life, and service." (par. 2)

In governmental union, by contrast, distinct churches become a single church having one churchwide governing body, congregations in each place grouped in a single diocese or synod, with merged boards and agencies. Such a portraiture of full visible unity would be, in effect, a merger, and that is not what CCM proposes.

Full communion and governmental union are different paths that separated churches may choose to take for the sake of visible unity in the church's mission. In considering the essentials necessary for full communion, the EC regards as a basis or starting point the stipulations of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral (BCP 876-877).

The General Convention has previously declared the EC to be in full communion with the Old Catholic Churches of Europe, the united churches of the Indian subcontinent, the Mar Thoma Church, and the Philippine Independent Church. Members and clergy of these churches who come to the United States may participate fully in the life of the Episcopal Church. Increased immigration has led to the formation of congregations of the Mar Thoma and Philippine Independent churches in the U.S.A. As a result, partnership agreements with them have been approved by the EC House of Bishops.

2. The Diaconate and the Threefold Ministerial Office

What questions and concerns have been raised in the EC and ELCA about the Diaconate and the Threefold Ministerial Office? What responses can be made to them?

From the Lutheran side, there has been a concern that CCM not be read as implying a commitment by the ELCA to ordain deacons in the future, and from the Episcopal side a concern has been expressed that full communion should not be agreed with any church that does not accept, at least in principle, the threefold ministry including the diaconate.

To address these concerns, it may be observed that CCM near the beginning of paragraph 8 does establish that the one ordained ministry will be shared between the two churches in a common pattern for the sake of common mission, although it specifically does not require the ELCA to ordain its diaconal ministers and deaconesses. It does commit the ELCA to recognize the full authenticity of the bishops, priests, and deacons ordained in the EC as fully authentic ministers in their respective orders within the EC (par. 21) and to permit their interchangeability within the ELCA, respecting always the internal discipline of each church. (par.22)

CCM does acknowledge, however, that the threefold ministerial office exists, and it commits both churches to continuing exploration, renewal, and reform of the diaconate, including its place within the threefold ministerial office and its relationship with all other ministries. (par. 9) It also leaves the ELCA (and the EC) free as to how they will be

faithful to these pledges and in this sense does not commit the ELCA to ordain deacons at some specific time in the future. By paragraph 9, however, the ordained diaconate will exist, in principle, within the one ordained ministry shared between the two churches as they live in full communion, even if such an ordained ministry is not activated within the ELCA. CCM neither requires nor forbids to either church the so-called "permanent and non-transitional diaconate", nor does it require or forbid the principle of "sequential ordination" (to the diaconate before the presbyterate / pastorate). Any bishops and presbyters of the EC approved for occasional or extended ministry within the ELCA, however, would continue to exist in the order of deacons, because the principle of sequential orders is required by the EC.

CCM has an important new provision which was not found in the 1997 Concordat. Some functions of ordained deacons in the EC and consecrated diaconal ministers and deaconesses in the ELCA can be shared insofar as they are called to be agents of the church in meeting the needs, hopes, and concerns within church and society. (par 8) The new provision recognizes the potential for expansion of the diaconal mission of the two churches through sharing the work of existing diaconates. The point is underlined by the previously mentioned need that the diaconate be the subject of continued exploration, renewal and reform by each church in consultation with the other. The principle here is that in full communion each church is open to the gifts of the other as it seeks to be faithful to Christ and his mission. (par. 2) By sharing tasks and experience over time, much will be clarified in both churches about the place of the diaconate in the threefold ministerial office and in relation to all other ministries.

In this connection it is important to recall that the proposed relationship of full communion between the two churches is not a merger. EC and ELCA will become interdependent but will remain autonomous (self-governing). Diversity of diaconal ministries is not a difference that breaks or blocks communion. The possibility of such diversity in the diaconate has been affirmed in Anglican-Lutheran dialogues since their beginnings in 1909 (Anglican Communion-Church of Sweden). Recently such diversity was allowed by the Church of England in "The Porvoo Common Statement" of the British and Irish Anglican churches and the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran churches. Several of these Lutheran churches lack an ordained diaconate, but the churches signing Porvoo do agree to work toward a common understanding of diaconal ministry. In America, it is enough that ELCA recognize the threefold ministerial office in the EC. (par 9)

Further reading: *Diaconate as Ecumenical Opportunity: The Hanover Report of the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission*. 1995. 30 pp. Church House Publishing.

The Porvoo Common Statement: Conversations between the British and Irish Anglican Churches and the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran Churches. The Council for Christian Unity of the General Synod of the Church of England. 1993. Church House Publishing.

"The Concordat and the Northern European Porvoo Common Statement: Different Paths to the Same Goal," James E. Griffiss and Daniel F. Martensen, eds., A Commentary on "*Concordat of Agreement*". Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, and Cincinnati: Forward Movement Publications. 1994. p.143 ff.

3. Suspension of the Restriction in the Preface to the Ordination Rites

To enable recognition of the full authenticity of the ordained ministries presently existing within the ELCA, the EC will temporarily suspend the seventeenth-century restriction in the Preface to the Ordination Rites in order to permit pastors ordained in the ELCA or its predecessor bodies to preside at the Eucharist in the EC when canonically invited to do so. The question arises whether in taking this unprecedented step the EC will be giving up its position on the importance of the historic catholic episcopate.

In its unanimous evaluation of the 1997 *Concordat of Agreement*, the Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations of the Episcopal Church stated:

On account of the fundamental agreement on faith and order between our two churches which we find in the proposed Concordat, we are convinced that the Episcopal Church can and should take such a bold step, but we acknowledge that some Episcopalians will have grave theological difficulties with this course of action, since this would seem to them to be a retreat from a cherished Anglican principle. We nevertheless urge the church to suspend this portion of the Preface to the Ordination Rites (and supporting Constitution and Canons) in this case. In large part we are moved by our understanding of the historical function of the Preface to the Ordination Rites, which was not originally intended to render judgment on the ministries of continental Protestant churches.¹ We see this action as a temporary step whose aim is the achievement of full communion with the ELCA and the sharing of the historic episcopate. We also note that this interchangeability will be an action in principle of The Episcopal Church as a whole, and it would be "subject always to canonically or constitutionally approved invitation" (Minutes of the SCER, Delray Beach, Florida, January 1995).

¹ On this question see: John Spurr, *The Restoration of the Church of England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991); Paul F. Bradshaw, *The Anglican Ordinal* (London: SPCK, 1971); Richard A. Norris, "Episcopacy," in Stephen Sykes and John Booty, eds. *The Study of Anglicanism* (London and Philadelphia: SPCK/Fortress, 1988); *Lutheran Episcopal Dialogue: Report and Recommendations* (Cincinnati: Forward Movement, 1981), p. 42. All of these scholars note that the Preface to the Ordinal was directed against seventeenth-century British non-conformists, and did not address the "churchly" nature of the continental Protestantism.

The understanding in both the Concordat and CCM is that under the Gospel the church is apostolic in that it continues in the succession of the mission given by Christ to the apostles and through them to the church. It is thus the church as a whole that is apostolic as it continues in this mission. The Spirit works through instruments that are both means and signs of apostolic continuity: the canon of scripture and the creeds, sacraments and the ordained ministry, all elements that the EC has emphasized in the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1886-1888. Succession in the episcopal office is the visible and personal way of focusing and signifying the apostolicity of the whole church, which also includes its scriptures, creeds and sacraments. In this connection, it is important to recognize that the apostolic succession in the episcopal office does not consist primarily in an unbroken

chain of those ordaining to those ordained, but in a succession in the presiding ministry of a church which stands in the apostolic faith pointing backwards in continuity and forwards in mission (par. 12), and which is overseen by the bishop in order to link it in the communion of the catholic and apostolic church.

Bearing these understandings in mind, briefly what is the theological rationale for the temporary suspension?

1. The suspension is based fundamentally on the orthodoxy of faith and order found and discerned in the ELCA and in its Augsburg Confession. The commonly held and solemnly vowed statement of faith (par. 4) unites the future of both churches. This orthodoxy has been established and proven to the EC through years of patient and extensive dialogue.
2. The agreement in the doctrine of the faith (pars. 4, 5) moves the churches to the liturgical action of including regularly one or more bishops of the other church to participate in the laying-on-of-hands at the ordinations/installations of their own bishops. This action is a repeated sign and testimony that each local church recognizes the catholicity and apostolicity of the other, enhancing the future mission and ministry of the churches.
3. Mutual recognition of sacraments and ministries is in the Concordat and CCM related to the shared use of the sign of the laying-on-of-hands. (par. 10) When the two churches officially recognize each other in this way in full communion, there is a recognition of each other's sacraments as true grace-bearing sacraments and of each other's ordained ministries as true ministers of those sacraments. In considering the Concordat as revised by the ELCA and now proposed to the EC, the EC must understand that this recognition is implied in an affirmative vote by the EC.
4. The Preface to the Ordination Rites in the Book of Common Prayer states the normative character of ordination in the historic episcopal succession. The principle there contained must be related to the particular situation addressed in the Concordat and CCM and the language of suspension is understood (and so worded) to imply the continued acceptance of this norm by The Episcopal Church. With these understandings, the temporary suspension of the restriction for the sake of full communion and unity in apostolic mission is consonant with Anglican ecclesiology and ecumenical intentions.² Although the minority within the ELCA opposed this provision as adding a "condition" to the "true unity" of the church, this condition is precisely what the CCM stipulates and what every church in the historic episcopal succession would expect for the sake of full communion. An action of this sort is known in the Orthodox tradition as an act of oikonomia or "economy" and within the Roman tradition as *ecclesia supplet*.

² Cf. "Report of the Consultation on the Ecclesiological Implications of the *Concordat of Agreement*, Delray Beach, Florida, January 1996" in *Ecumenical Trends* Vol. 25, No. 5, May, 1996, p. 6.

5. Dispensation from strict conformity to a canonical norm is within the authority

of the general synod of a church that considers itself within the catholic tradition, such as the EC and as is now implied by the affirmative vote of the ELCA for the CCM. Thus it can be voted by a synod such as the General Convention or the Churchwide Assembly when it has a positive effect on the common good of the church.³ The purpose of this suspension in the case of the EC by whatever technical name it may become known is for the sake of the ultimate maintenance of that very same norm within the shared ministries.⁴ It should be noted that succession has to do not only with the past (bishops succeed their predecessors) but also with the future (bishops are responsible for the successive generations of bishops, presbyters and deacons to follow). The ELCA, as it moves within the catholic tradition of the historic episcopate, will no doubt develop its own evangelical way of doing this and describing it.

³ For the EC, this principle is recognized for example in Title III, Canon 19 (a). Cf. Orthodox and Roman Catholic contributions to the Delray Beach consultation and Peter L'Hullier, "Economy (OIKONOMIA)" in Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement (Geneva: WCC Publications, and Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991).

⁴ Such a promise for the future (par. 8) was described in the original wording of the Concordat as a "mutual pledge to a future already anticipated in Christ and the Church of the early centuries" (par. 16) and is described in CCM as "to secure the future implementation of the ordinals' same principle in the sharing of ordained ministries." (par. 16) This eschatological understanding of the historic episcopate can best be understood in terms of the following paraphrase published in The Anglican (July 1996), from the Orthodox theologian John D. Zizioulas, Being as Communion (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), chapter 5: "On the question of episcopal succession (not doctrinal succession), within the biblical and early patristic sources that survive we can distinguish two basic approaches to the notion of the church's continuity with the apostles. On the one hand, the apostles are conceived as persons entrusted with a mission to fulfill. They are sent in a process of linear movement, from God to Christ to the apostles and their successors. We may call this approach "historical." But on the other hand, the apostles are also conceived as persons with an eschatological function, not so much as those who follow Christ but as those who surround him at the end of time. This is an image that confronts history already now with a presence and vision from beyond history, a proleptic approach that presupposes the end that was really there from the beginning and is realized already now in the celebration of the Eucharist and the proclamation of the Gospel. The former approach, the historical one, is most clearly expressed in patristic writing in the First Epistle of Clement (God sends Christ, Christ sends the Apostles), whereas the latter approach, the eschatological one, is found primarily in another source of this same early period, the letters of St. Ignatius of Antioch, especially those to the Magnesians and Trallians. In these letters of Ignatius, we find the apostles united as a college and surrounding Christ in his kingdom, in a continuity expressed finally not by linear succession but by the church's vision of the kingdom at the end of time as it gathers to partake of the eternal life of God offered to the world at the eucharistic banquet-table. And whereas the former approach (the historical) implies only a continuity of survival in linear time (i.e., a transmission of authority from past to present that creates a retrospective linear continuity but not as eschatological one), the latter

approach (the eschatological) implies a vision of the future, an anticipation of the end that is already being realized in the here and now, a continuity that transforms the present into the future that is already seen and pledged even now. Thus we may say that the Holy Spirit, in this latter approach, is active in transforming a linear historicity into an eschatological presence, as it were, a living memory of the future that is based more upon promise than upon pedigree."

6. To the degree to which our churches and their ministries have been separated, each of our churches has lacked something of that fullness that God desires for God's people (Eph. 1:23, 3:17-19). By moving together in full communion and being served by a reconciled episcopal ministry, our churches will both be more faithful to their calling and also more conscious of their need for renewal. By the sharing of our life and ministries in closer visible unity, we shall be strengthened for the continuation and extension of Christ's mission in the world.

The suspension as proposed is consistent with Anglican formularies and does not diminish the importance of the historic episcopate even as it is minimally described therein. (BCP p. 510) All Provinces of the Communion make the preservation of the episcopal succession a matter of scrupulous discipline, yet Anglican tradition (unlike that of the Roman Catholic Church) pronounces no judgments on other successions. Such pronouncements are sometimes heard, but they are not accurate. No such Anglican pronouncement, for example, against Lutheran ordinations has ever been made as, for example, the Roman Catholic Church has pronounced against Anglicans in its bull *Apostolicae Curae* (1896). The Lambeth appeal of 1920, which accords fully with the Preface to the Ordination Rites, recognized "the spiritual reality of the ministries of those Communion which do not possess the Episcopate"⁵ and acknowledged that "these ministries have been manifestly blessed and owned by the Holy Spirit as effective means of grace." At the same time, Anglicans are convinced that the Anglican Communion has been right to regard the historic episcopate as in a special sense the organ of unity and continuity and universality in the church and thus to retain it as the fourth point of the Quadrilateral.

⁵The 1982 General Convention recognized this with similar words in adopting "Principles of Unity."

4. Interpretation of the Historic Episcopate in the Episcopal Church

What interpretations of the historic episcopate are found among Episcopalians? What is the official position? There are some Episcopalians who think it necessary for a church to be already in the historic episcopate in order to be truly a church but this has never been the official position of the EC or the Anglican Communion. The position of the EC is found in the Book of Common Prayer: "Holy Baptism is full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ's Body the Church. The bond which God establishes in Baptism is indissoluble." (p. 298) The historic episcopate is not necessary for recognition of another church as a church. (par. 13) It is, however, the position of the EC, found in the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, that the historic episcopate is necessary when Anglicans enter the relationship of full communion in order to link the local churches for

mutual responsibility in the communion of the larger church. (par. 13)

As has been pointed out above in question 3, the Anglican Communion and the EC have hesitated to make official judgements about the ordained ministries of churches without the historic episcopate. As long ago as 1920, however, the Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops did acknowledge "the spiritual reality of the ministers of those Communion which do not possess the Episcopate", stating that "these ministries have been manifestly blessed and owned by the Holy Spirit as effective means of grace." Many Anglicans would also think that to the degree to which the churches and their ministries have been separated, all churches lack something of the fullness that God desires for God's people.

Some Episcopalians maintain that churches with the historic episcopate are more fully "church" than those without it. Others think that the historic episcopate is necessary for the church's mission and the future coming great church. Both of these positions are compatible with the CCM text, although neither is required by it. Very few Episcopalians regard the historic episcopate as representing an unbroken tactile succession in linear descent from Christ and the apostles, and the view is not endorsed by CCM.

Already in the 19th century, Anglicans began to see the historic episcopate as one of the church's signs of a spiritual and universal society surpassing boundaries of particular peoples and nations. This modern growth and affirmation of the historic episcopate was a product of the ecumenical movement of the 19th and 20th centuries. The term "historic episcopate" was popularized by William Reed Huntington in his famous Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1886-1888.⁶ Present-day developments in the world, sometimes described as "globalization," suggest this insight was prophetic, and that the connectedness of bishops in all places and all ages is a powerful contemporary witness that the church proclaims the Gospel to all people to the end of time.

⁶See J. Robert Wright, *Quadrilateral at One Hundred*. Cincinnati: Forward Movement Publications, and London: Mowbray, 1988.

Today the ecumenical movement has inspired many Episcopalians to think that the historic episcopate is our church's most unique contribution to the fullness of the coming great church, of which the Anglican Communion is at present one small and imperfect part.

Whatever the interpretations of their members, the EC and the Anglican Communion agree in their unflinching insistence on the historic episcopate. A classic Anglican statement is found in the report of the Lambeth Conference of 1930: "When, therefore, we say that we must insist on the Historic Episcopate but not upon any theory or interpretation of it, we are not to be understood as insisting on the office apart from the functions. What we uphold is the Episcopate, maintained in successive generations by continuity of succession and consecration, as it has been throughout the history of the Church from the earliest times, and discharging those functions which from earliest times it has discharged." The reference is to "the Episcopate as it emerged in the clear light of history from the time when definite evidence begins to be available." According to this, the episcopate receives definition as an historic fact and clarification from a description of its functions. For Anglicans, as for Episcopalians, the historic episcopate receives its

particular definition from the Ordinal and Catechism within the Book of Common Prayer.

In CCM, Episcopalians and Lutherans can find such a definition and clarification of episcopal succession that is both evangelical and historic. (par. 12) To couple the word "evangelical" to the episcopate in this way is new for Episcopalians, but they can hardly deny that it is appropriate. As CCM indicates, the ordination or installation of a bishop is a sign, though not a guarantee, of the unity and apostolic continuity of the whole church. The two churches will value and maintain this ministry of oversight (episkope) as one of the ways the apostolic succession of the church is visibly expressed and personally symbolized in fidelity to the gospel through the ages. This expression is also linked, obviously, with the other orders of ordained ministry and with the whole people of God. The bishop serves the diocese or synod through ties of collegiality and consultation that strengthen its links with the universal church. Participation in each other's ordinations / installations of bishops is an expression of full communion calling for planning and common mission in each place. When persons are called, elected and ordained/installed in this way, they are understood to join bishops already in this succession and thus to enter the historic episcopate.

Lutherans have already voted in the CCM their church's intention to enter into what is generally known as the historic episcopate (par. 18), although CCM offers them the freedom to develop it in their own evangelical ways. (par. 13)

5. Lay Ministries in the Two Churches

CCM reconciles differences over ordained ministries between the two churches, but isn't the church primarily the ministry of the baptized?

Baptism is the foundation of ministry. Baptism is full initiation into the body of Christ, the church, wherein the people of God promise to serve God faithfully. All are called. The two churches fully recognize this principle. There is no difference between them. CCM does not, therefore, need to resolve differences on this point.

Ministry in Daily Life

The baptized are called to stand alongside other men and women in the world, and as individual members of the church they are to work out their Christian discipleship in their lives. Daily life is the medium through which Christians seek to become true disciples of Jesus Christ and to respond faithfully to their unique calling by God. Such involvement in the life of the world is the form of discipleship to which God calls most members of the community: "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). In baptism all members of the Christian community become members of the body of Christ, to participate in the common vocation of the Christian community, and to be a sign to the world of the reign of God by living their lives for the good of all. Ministry in daily life is the fundamental vocation of the laity.

While there is little disagreement about this concept, there is a great deal of difficulty actualizing the concept within the mainstream of both churches. It will take a change of

attitude and a new commitment to the understanding of the royal priesthood of the people of God to advance this concept as a new way of "being church", a way that will enrich the role of individuals and their participation in the life of congregations. CCM stands as a challenge to this end.

The concern here is on future vision. We pose and attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between members of the ELCA and EC at the grass-roots level?

Baptized members of both churches already live and minister in the world with one another and with other Christians daily.

The shared commonalties of daily life emphasize, not church structure but ways to be faithful people in the world. Christians work and play in the world, day after day, understanding themselves as spiritual. They commit time to prayer, believe in God, and in the pursuit of that belief uphold morality and seek to behave morally. Much of the excitement in their lives comes from the realization of how their faith connects with their daily living as the Gospel is realized in what they say and do.

They desire that their churches offer support for their spiritual development and discernment of their vocations.

2. How can the structures of the two churches together create a new vision of such support of ministries of the laity in the world?

Both ELCA and EC have for decades pursued various ways to do this. Because few languages or ecclesiastical barriers hinder the people of God from doing their work in the world, full cooperation between the two churches will continue to enhance lay efforts.

At present, both churches are members of an international ecumenical Coalition for Ministry in Daily Life. They have communicated regularly over the years to share and produce resources appropriate for congregations of both churches, including the EC's publication in collaboration with the ELCA and the Coalition for Ministry in Daily Life, of *Ministry in Daily Life: A Guide to Living the Baptismal Covenant*.

More effort needs to be made to realize the ministry of all God's people in the world as full and equal partners in God's mission. A new vision could increase lay participation in the life of both churches. (par. 6)

Ministry in the Churches

Some members of the churches are called to accept appointments for specific roles within their church. The ministry of leadership reflects the calling of the whole people of God. All the baptized have a responsibility of shared leadership within the community and a call to the fullness of Christian discipleship. God calls individuals to undertake specific tasks for the sake of God's people. Some of these roles are filled by members of the laity as volunteers. Others are filled by members of the laity who are paid professionals.

Lay Professionals in the EC

The National Network of Lay Professionals in the EC exists to provide a support system for lay people employed in the ministry of the church. The network includes musicians, directors of Christian education, parish administrators, diocesan and national staff officers, secretaries, teachers, communicators, ecumenical workers and seminary professors. The primary responsibility for guidance and support of lay professionals lies within dioceses. Canon III.2.2 requires a Commission on Ministry in a diocese to assist the bishop "in providing for the guidance and pastoral care of Clergy and Lay Persons who are in stipendiary and non-stipendiary positions accountable to the Bishop" and "in promoting the continuing education of Clergy and Lay Professionals employed by the Church."

Because of the variety of lay professionals serving the church, a uniform national certification is considered neither possible nor desirable. The certification and accountability of lay professionals is done by the dioceses or by professional associations. For example, some lay professionals receive their credentials from associations such as the American Guild of Organists, universities or seminaries.

Lay professionals are listed in the national Church Development Office database and use this service to search for new positions. In order to register with this office as a lay professional, certification is required from the bishop of the diocese where the person is canonically resident.

Lay Professionals in the ELCA

Each form of nationally rostered lay ministry carries distinctive characteristics and functions, yet the forms are dynamic and complementary, and tasks are shared among them. Each has a unique history. To meet the many needs of the contemporary church, each requires a particular program of education and training.

Associates in Ministry include church staff workers, lay professionals and day school teachers. They have four primary areas of service: 1) education, 2) music and the arts, 3) administration and 4) service and general ministry. They are "called and commissioned" for service. Their theological studies include Bible, church history, Lutheran theology and confessions. They serve congregations, agencies, schools and institutions of the ELCA.

Deaconesses serve in social ministry institutions and in hospitals as nurses. They are a community of women for spiritual, personal and professional growth and support. They are "called and consecrated" for service. Preparation is a seminary degree for most, an approved program of theological study for others. They serve in congregations, agencies and institutions of the ELCA.

Diaconal Ministers are to enhance and extend the ministry of witness and service in the world. They are grounded in theological and practical training as a ministry of the Word carried out in service, in congregations, agencies and institutions of the ELCA. A master's level degree is required with a diaconal formation program. They are "called and consecrated" for service.

6. Enhancing the Mission of Christ's Church

If the EC accepts CCM in 2000, the two churches will immediately begin the operational stage. What will full communion mean for the reordering of our life and mission? What are the new forms of being together and the new models of witness together? How will the sharing of our life and ministries in full communion strengthen us for the continuation and extension of Christ's mission in the world?

Every member of the church is an integral part of its witness and its mission, and every member has been given a gift of the Holy Spirit so that the whole may flourish. The purpose of different gifts is "to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ" (Eph. 4:12-13). Mature unity in Christ is something Christians will grow into if each member is "working properly (and) promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love." (Eph. 4:16)

All members of Christ's church are commissioned to participate in God's mission through baptism. (par. 6) Every Christian has a unique place and role in the mission of the church, because every Christian occupies a unique place in the world into which the church is sent. All members are called to discern and develop, with the help of the community, the gifts they have received and to use them for the building up of the church and for the service of the world to which the church is sent.

Within the whole body there are some lay members, bishops, pastors or priests, deacons whose gifts of leadership are recognized. Among these, the ministry of bishops is an aspect of and a service to the apostolic mission of the whole church. Theirs is a generalized ministry of pastoral leadership, coordination and oversight which is part of the church's witness to the Gospel because the mission of the church requires the coherence of its witness in all aspects of its life.

Implementation of CCM will lead for the foreseeable future to ELCA bishops continuing to exercise a ministry of oversight (episkope) within its synods parallel to those of the EC within its dioceses. In such a situation, shared participation in ordinations/installations of bishops will be a liturgical expression of the full communion calling for mutual planning and common mission in each place. (par. 2) Further, the creation of a common episcopal ministry will occur, not alone through a shared ministry of bishops in the historic episcopate, but also through the indispensable context of a common life and mission. (par. 14)

Drawing on the ecclesial model provided by CCM and the polities of the two churches, the overall pattern for planning will be Lutheran-Episcopal *interaction of structures of leadership*, including bishops, deacons, laity, and pastors or priests. Motivating the entire complex of actions will be the biblical teaching about mutual responsibility and interdependence in the body of Christ.

The following forms and models of interacting and witnessing assume the ecclesial model in CCM and the polities of the two churches, and they draw upon the beginnings of common prayer, study, witness, evangelism and joint projects already experienced since

1982 during the stage of "Interim Sharing of the Eucharist", and in some cases already sketched out in *Implications of the Gospel*. This is not to anticipate what all these forms and models may be, but simply to describe possibilities that are obvious from the perspective of today. In time, newer and fuller experiences will lead to forms and models still unimaginable, the fruit of mutual trust and finally a gift of the Spirit.

Shared Leadership

Regular leadership persons and bodies of the two churches, increasingly working in consultation with one another, continue their responsibilities to discern mission needs, take decisions, and assure necessary human and material resources. Shared leadership may include:

1. Regular representation of the other church at each church's diocesan conventions or synodical assemblies.
2. The presence of bishops from time to time at major events in the life of the other church, such as conventions, conferences and ordinations of bishops, and at times their service as assisting bishops of the other church.
3. Appointment of representatives to each other's meetings of diocesan and synodical councils, so that they become familiar with agendas and ways of working and move toward opportunities for coordinated planning, stewardship of resources and programs, and shared staff time for more effective solutions (the churchwide Executive Council and Church Council already have such representatives).
4. Joint staffing of dioceses and synods and of provincial and regional centers, encouraging shared use of resources.
5. Periodic joint meetings of the House of Bishops and the Conference of Bishops for collegial consultation (the first took place in 1996).
6. Periodic meetings of presiding bishops and other churchwide officers.
7. Bishops from the other church regularly invited to sit and speak in national bishops' meetings to learn and to share.
8. Regular consultative meetings of local bishops in the same city or region for discernment, support, and to address issues (already begun in some places).
9. Interaction between organizations of church women, men, youth, students, choirs, funding agencies, racial-ethnic networks, etc.
10. Multiplication of partnerships between national committees and staff to share planning and resources in areas such as evangelism and small churches.
11. Regular gatherings of neighboring Lutheran and Episcopal parish clergy for prayer, study and planning.

12. Pairing of congregations and more agreements between parishes and between dioceses and synods, perhaps including other churches in dialogue.

13. Invitation to ELCA bishops to participate in the Lambeth Conference and EC Bishops to participate in LWF assemblies.

Common Education

The fact that we have much to learn about sharing in mission suggests an educational task. We need to engage in as much common education as we can. Opportunities include:

1. Joint retreats and continuing education for clergy and parish lay leadership.
2. Periodic convocations of Lutheran and Episcopal theologians, church historians, liturgiologists, ethicists, scripture scholars, etc.
3. Conferences of seminary deans and presidents for shared involvement in theological education, including student and faculty exchanges, expanded teaching in each other's seminaries, avoiding duplication of training institutions.
4. Joint cooperative work of seminaries, especially in the area of multi-cultural or multi- ethnic ministries.
5. Jointly sponsored college for new bishops.
6. Parishes or dioceses and synods sharing the ministries of staff persons in such areas as parish education, including catechetical training.

Chaplaincies

Work together to support chaplaincies for expanded ministries in hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, schools, higher education and the military services through:

1. Officers responsible for military chaplaincies pioneering Lutheran-Episcopal chaplaincies.
2. Dioceses and synods with other agencies assessing and extending Lutheran-Episcopal ministries in institutions.

Parish Cooperation

In a time of scarce resources, parishes in particular contexts ask themselves what opportunities full communion offers for mission and ministry. Some possibilities:

1. Cultivate diocesan, synodical and churchwide planning and founding of new parishes.
2. Encourage clustering, shared buildings and joint deployment of clergy, especially

in areas of low or decreasing population.

3. Refer communicants to one another's parishes in situations where only one church has a parish.
4. Together respond and plan for complex urban situations, especially multi-cultural or multi-ethnic ministries and compassionate witness.
5. Develop relationships of support for stronger ministry and service where one church is small and the other large.
6. Offerings of time and money for each other's ministries to increase knowledge and interest, support and interdependence.

Prayer and Worship

We should be engaged in regular and disciplined prayer for and with each other. We have similar liturgies and need to encourage familiarity with each other's rites and music. Ways this may take place are:

1. Full communion includes not only receiving the sacraments in each other's churches, but also celebrations of the Eucharist together on holy days and special occasions by parishes and other expressions of the churches.
2. Congregational prayer by name for each other's bishops, for nearby parishes and clergy, for specific mission communities, schools, etc., and for churches in other nations of each other's communions. Preparation of joint calendar for prayer to this end.
3. Liturgical leadership may be shared at synods and conventions.
4. Granting access of Lutheran bishops to Episcopal cathedrals and churches and Episcopal bishops to Lutheran churches for worship, meetings, etc.
5. Consultations and common work whenever either church contemplates revision of liturgical rites or hymnals.

Ecumenical Strategy

Continue to develop shared ecumenical strategies through:

1. Appointment of representatives from the other church for each church's local and churchwide ecumenical commissions.
2. Periodic joint meetings of churchwide committees responsible for ecumenical relations, in which we take each other and the CCM into account, perhaps inviting representatives of other churches in dialogue.
3. Engagement in joint dialogues with churches of other traditions whenever

possible.

4. Inviting representatives of the other church to the Churchwide Assembly and General Convention.

Evangelization

The churches' responsibility to give attention to the urgency and quality of their evangelism through word (doctrine, confession, proclamation) and deed (polity, life together) cannot be expressed strongly enough. Areas include:

1. Attention to an understanding of evangelism with its focus in baptism.
2. Renewal of baptismal practice through the catechumenate and sponsorship (joint training of catechetical trainers began in offices concerned with evangelism).
3. Cooperation in global mission aided by the churches' world mission offices.
4. Invitations to travel and work together on evangelism projects.

Ethics and Social Issues

The magnitude and complexity of the Church's attention to issues of peace and war, economic and social justice, compassion and stewardship, and cultures and life require resources for study which may be larger than our individual churches have available. We also need each other's perspectives in such areas as:

1. Diaconal/service ministries in cooperation with the North American Association for the Diaconate, Lutheran Family/Social Services, and Diakonia.
2. The needs of the sick, suffering and dying, and provision of relief and assistance to victims of poverty, deprivation and disaster, all of which invites us to expand compassionate witness, for example in immigrant and migrant ministries.
3. Social justice concerns such as racial, sexual, class and age discrimination and other oppressive manifestations such as violations of human rights, which can be addressed together in parishes, dioceses and synods with churchwide support.
4. Peacemaking in the face of violence in our society and beyond and turning of resources and energies to peaceful purposes through local interaction with support of churchwide offices.
5. Selection of priorities for common enterprises by diocesan, synodical and churchwide officers (AIDS resources have already been jointly prepared)

Joint Commission

The ELCA and the EC will establish a joint commission, fully accountable to the decision-making bodies of the two churches. Among other things, it is to:

... Assist joint planning for mission.

... Facilitate mutual support and advice as well as common decision making in fundamental matters that the churches may face together in the future.

... Work with bodies of the two churches concerning such ecumenical, doctrinal, pastoral, and liturgical matters as may arise.

Each church becomes interdependent while remaining autonomous. (par. 2) The joint commission is a consultative body, not a decision-making body. Responsibility for enhancement of mission remains with the existing leadership structures of the ELCA and the EC. The new reality of unity in full communion is that these structures will be in regular consultation and communication. The joint commission is to assist, facilitate and guide these conciliar relationships, which will be forums for mutual growth and interdependence.

The magnitude and complexity of the mission agenda should not intimidate us. God, who has endowed our churches with many gifts and resources, will not cease to guide us. We can move into the future joyfully, benefiting from each other's gifts.

By moving together, our churches will be more faithful to their calling and more conscious of their need for renewal. By the sharing of life and mission in full communion, we shall be strengthened for the continuation and extension of Christ's mission in the world.

7. Liturgical Similarities and Differences

There are great similarities between liturgies of the EC and the ELCA but there are also differences. Are these differences likely to lead to misunderstanding or tension if CCM is adopted?

Planning a liturgical event for a congregation comprised of worshippers from several local communities is always a delicate task. A regional convention, for example, brings together people, all of whom are committed to their own congregations and denominations. But because congregational worship habits vary from place to place, particular elements of the liturgical design are likely to be more acceptable to some and less to others. For example, some worshippers will regret the presence of incense while others cannot imagine its absence. Differences which are a matter of ethos or custom can be misunderstood as differences of doctrine or teaching.

It is also easy to make assumptions about the ability of people to enter into an unfamiliar situation. Those who are enthusiastic about CCM may unconsciously minimize the hesitations of worshippers attempting to participate in an unfamiliar liturgical experience. Thus, it will be important, as Episcopalians and Lutherans gather in enthusiastic celebration, to recognize that caution in the face of novelty is a normal response.

Lutheran and Anglican liturgical practice is very similar, but there are also differences.

Lutherans are not required to follow a prescribed liturgical text as are Episcopalians. The ELCA does carefully prepare and commend worship resources for congregations. The *Lutheran Book of Worship* and *With One Voice* are examples of this process. Lutherans regard "wine" as the norm, although they are allowed the use of unfermented wine or grape juice as a pastoral alternative alongside fermented wine. Lutherans welcome a wide variety of worship practices and styles, (though the range of *catholic* expression is probably more limited than in the EC.) Lutherans will be especially sensitive to the way in which new bishops are set apart for episcopal leadership in ordinations/installations. Elements of those celebrations that focus on the ministry of bishops in the church and the world will be congenial to members of both churches. Some Lutherans will be uncomfortable with any marks of episcopal ministry that may, however unintentionally, suggest privilege or domination, as are some Episcopalians. The liturgical role of bishops when they are in parishes or congregations will be more familiar to Episcopalians who are accustomed to the bishop as minister of confirmation. Lutherans in the historic episcopate will no doubt explore appropriate ways to bring the liturgical aspects of the ministry of bishops into Lutheran experience.

The Lutheran emphasis on the *use of sacraments*⁷ has led many congregations to pay serious attention to catechesis and careful distribution of Holy Communion but often little attention has been given to the consecrated elements remaining following a celebration of Holy Communion. The ELCA urges "The bread and wine of Communion are handled with care and reverence. Any food that remains is best consumed by the presiding and assisting ministers and by others present following the service." For some Lutherans, the care taken by Episcopalians in the disposition of these elements can be seen as a way to uphold what Lutherans profess as the *real presence of Christ in the sacrament*.

⁷See *The Use of the Means of Grace: A Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament*. 1997.

Likewise, the opinion of many Lutherans that ordained ministry is purely functional and not in any sense ontological often results in the relative lack of sacramentality, of transcendence, in Lutheran worship when it is compared with that in the EC, but there are also EC parishes where this is lacking just as there are ELCA parishes where it is being recovered.

These examples of liturgical behavior are worth noting so that liturgical planners can be aware of possible negative responses in each church. But it may be helpful to note that the variety represented in these examples is not exclusively related to interaction between Episcopalians and Lutherans. Some Episcopal churches depart from the prescribed prayer book text. A few have used grape juice alongside wine in eucharistic celebrations. So, perhaps the issues of liturgical style which are raised by the prospect of full communion should be seen more as issues which should be raised afterward *within* full communion rather than seen as positioning one church against another.

The creation of circumstances in which worshippers from different church communities are able to worship together in comfort and confidence is a task we all have. The road ahead for Lutherans and Episcopalians begins with shared belief and will move toward shared practice. The substantial body of shared texts and music in our worship books should not be overshadowed by particular issues of practice. Considering ways to

recommend or at least explain traditional practices to one another without causing them to be stumbling blocks is a constructive challenge for our churches.

At the onset of the third millenium, the church is coming to grips with its ministry in and to the world in truly remarkable ways. Christians are seeking and learning how to establish community across cultural and racial lines. Churches are looking across borders in search of commonalities that bind together all followers of Christ, and even all people. Probably, in the long run, communion between Lutherans and Episcopalians depends more upon attention to a common ministry for the sake of a common mission, all being expressed, celebrated and consecrated in worship, rather than upon analysis and synthesis of the differences which characterize Lutheran and Anglican history.

Further reading: *An Essential Unity: A Contemporary Look at Lutheran and Episcopal Liturgies*, David L. Veal. 1997. Morehouse Publishing. To order, call 800-877-0012.

The Use of the Means of Grace: A Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 1997.

Lutheran Book of Worship, 1978.

With One Voice, Augsburg Fortress, 1995.

8. Resolution of the Conference of Bishops

The Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA added a sentence to amend the text of CCM in paragraph 3: "In adopting this document, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Episcopal Church specifically acknowledge and declare that it has been correctly interpreted by the resolution of the Conference of Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, adopted at Tucson, Arizona, March 8, 1999." **What is the relation of the Tucson resolution to CCM?** The Tucson resolution (copy attached as information) was not voted on by the Churchwide Assembly and thus the national secretary of the ELCA has clarified that it is not part of the amendment to paragraph 3 of CCM and that the EC is not being asked to vote on it. The added sentence quoted above from CCM (par. 3), however, declares that the resolution correctly interprets certain consequences for ELCA of accepting CCM. The twenty points in the resolution address questions raised within the ELCA about implications of CCM for ELCA. The advisory members from the EC who had been on the drafting team were later consulted about the bishops' resolution and found no inconsistency with the text of CCM, although they did not endorse it and did point out that Episcopalians would probably prefer different words to say the same things. The ELCA Conference of Bishops did not refer the Tucson resolution to the drafting team that was chaired by Professor Martin Marty, and thus it did not receive the benefit of such bilateral interchange while it was being formulated.



One of the twenty points of the Tucson resolution says that lay persons in the ELCA may continue to be licensed by the synodical bishop in unusual circumstances to administer the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion as is presently permitted on rare occasions in the ELCA. An official manual of the ELCA, *The Use of the Means of Grace*, clarifies with regard to this practice that "a synodical bishop may authorize a

properly trained lay person to preside for a specified period of time and in a given location only." It is well known that the EC does not accept this practice (EC instead makes other provisions for unusual circumstances.) The practice is not mentioned in CCM.

Another of the twenty points says that the ELCA will continue to receive onto its roster of ordained ministers, without re-ordination, pastors from other traditions, some of whom will not have been ordained by a bishop in the historic episcopate. Episcopalians need to remember that the ELCA is in full communion with all member churches of the Lutheran World Federation as well as with three Reformed churches and the Moravian Church in the United States. According to CCM, pastors ordained in the ELCA or its predecessor bodies will be interchangeable with the EC. (pars. 16, 22) Pastors not ordained by a bishop in historic succession who transfer into the ELCA from other traditions after passage of CCM will have no new status in the EC and will not be regarded by the EC as interchangeable. Rostered ELCA pastors who were not ordained in the ELCA or its predecessor bodies are not interchangeable under the provisions of CCM.

In this connection it is important to remember that CCM is not a merger. While becoming interdependent, EC and ELCA remain autonomous. (par. 2) It is appropriate, after mutual consultation with the EC, for the ELCA Conference of Bishops to interpret implications of CCM for the ELCA, just as it is for the EC to interpret implications of CCM for the EC, after mutual consultation with the ELCA.

Conference of Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Tucson, Arizona, March 8, 1999

RESOLVED, that the Conference of Bishops affirm the following understandings of "Called to Common Mission":

A. The Conference of Bishops understands that "Called to Common Mission" contains:

1. no requirement that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America must eventually adopt the three-fold order of ministry. Rather, "Called to Common Mission" recognizes that the present understanding of one ordained ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, including both pastors and bishops, may continue in effect;
2. no requirement that ELCA bishops be elected to serve as synodical bishops for life. Rather, they will continue to be elected and installed for six-year terms, with eligibility for re-election, subject to term limits, where applicable;
3. no defined role for the presiding bishop or synodical bishops after their tenure in office is completed;
4. no requirement that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America establish the office of deacon, nor that they be ordained;
5. no requirement that priests of The Episcopal Church will serve congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America without the congregation's consent;
6. no requirement that the Ordinal (rules) of The Episcopal Church will apply to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
7. no commitment to additional constitutional amendments or liturgical revisions other than those presented to the 1999 ELCA Churchwide Assembly (ELCA constitutional provisions 8.72.10-16.; 9.21.02.; 9.90.-9.91.02.; 10.31.a.9.; 10.81.01., and parallel provisions in synodical and congregational constitutions); and further

B. The Conference of Bishops has the expectation that:

1. ordinations of pastors will continue to be held at synodical worship services and in congregations, as is the present pattern;
2. the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will continue to receive onto the roster of ordained ministers, without re-ordination, pastors from other traditions, some of whom will not have been ordained by a bishop in the historic episcopate;
3. following the adoption of "Called to Common Mission," if someone who has been received onto the roster of ordained ministers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America who was not ordained into the pastoral office in the historic episcopate is elected bishop and installed, he or she will be understood to be a bishop in the historic episcopate;
4. lay persons may continue to be licensed by the synodical bishop in unusual circumstances to administer the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion as is the present practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
5. "Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline of Ordained Ministers" will apply to priests of The Episcopal Church and ordained ministers of the Reformed churches serving ELCA congregations [under continuing resolution 8.72.E98.b., A...to live in a manner consistent with the ministerial policy of this church."];
6. the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is not in any way changing its confessional stance that, "For the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree concerning the teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments" (Augsburg Confession, Article VII);
7. The Episcopal Church accepts fully, and without reservation, present Lutheran pastors and bishops who are not in the historic episcopal succession;
8. priests of The Episcopal Church and ordained ministers of the Reformed churches will not be asked to subscribe personally to the Confession of Faith of the Lutheran Church as their personal faith. They will be expected to recognize the agreement in faith of the churches and to preach and teach in a manner consistent with the Lutheran Confessions;
9. the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America receives the historic episcopal succession as a sign of and service to the continuity and unity of the Church and in no way as a guarantee of the faithful transmission of the faith;
10. future decisions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on matters of common concern will be made in consultation with churches with whom a relationship of full communion has been declared, but these decisions will not require their concurrence or approval;
11. future Churchwide Assemblies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will be free to make whatever decisions they deem necessary after mutual consultation on matters related to full communion;
12. the joint commission [to which reference is made in "Called to Common Mission"] will have no authority over the appropriate decision-making bodies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or The Episcopal Church; and
13. pastors of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will continue to preside at confirmations.

9. Other Questions

a) **The Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA added the word "regularly" to the CCM provision that "a bishop shall regularly preside and participate in the laying-on-of-hands at the ordination of all clergy" in Paragraph 20. What is the**

significance of this action?

The existing ELCA constitution provides that the synodical bishop "exercise solely this church's power to ordain (or provide for the ordination of) approved candidates", thus leaving open the possibility of authorizing a pastor to act on his or her behalf. If and when CCM is accepted by the EC, the ELCA has agreed that the constitutional provision will change to read that the synodical bishop shall "exercise solely this church's power to ordain (or provide for the ordination by another synodical bishop) of approved candidates". This practice will then become the whole ELCA's regular practice something that is already the regular practice in most parts of the ELCA.

The new constitutional provision will need to be interpreted by the language of CCM, including the theological context of CCM as it relates to ordination, and also by the narrative provided by the ELCA Assembly's Committee of Reference and Counsel in recommending the addition of the word "regularly", as recorded in the minutes of the Denver Assembly: "The use of 'regularly' establishes the same standard of ordination by a bishop as practiced by The Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. 'Regularly' does not imply the possibility of planned exceptions but allows for pastoral discretion in emergencies."

Some examples of emergencies have been mentioned, such as flood, blizzard, or death of the bishop in the sacristy. It should be noted that interchangeability of ELCA pastors within the EC is "subject always to canonically or constitutionally approved invitation" (par. 22), so that any ordination after full communion begins without the presence and participation of a bishop would not be acceptable within the EC.

b) If EC approves CCM, EC and the three Reformed churches and the Moravian Church in the U.S.A. will be in communion with the ELCA but not with each other. What does this mean for EC relationships with these churches?

For the sake of clarity in understanding, it is important that we avoid any impression that being in full communion with the ELCA automatically puts other churches into that same relationship *through* the ELCA. Church-to-church relationships are established by each church body according to the church body's internal process of decision-making. They are not "spread" officially through a common partner (like a virus), although such a partner may facilitate contact and conversation which may lead to closer relationships.

A similar situation already exists between the EC and the Church of South India, a governmental union of Anglican dioceses with Christians of other traditions. By action of the General Convention, the EC is in full communion with the Church of South India which is in full communion with churches not in communion with The Episcopal Church, such as certain Reformed churches in the USA. This situation is an anomaly, but as a report of the 1930 Lambeth Conference points out, "we hold that as part of a movement towards general and complete union such a situation may be covered by the principle of 'economy'" (described as a "technical term representing administrative action to meet a temporary situation without prejudice to any principle of ecclesiastical order"). It should be noted that the EC has been in dialogue with two Reformed churches in the Consultation on Church Union; the ELCA has remained an observer in that conversation.

c) Some members of the ELCA opposed CCM because the historic episcopal

succession is included. How might members of the EC respond to them?

It is understandable but regrettable if some members of ELCA think that in accepting CCM with the historic episcopate certain aspects of their own faith have been forgotten or at least not been given sufficient importance. Churches cannot expect every individual member to agree fully with all the decisions they make. Concerning relationships with other churches, the discernment that comes from ecumenical experience does not become apparent to everyone at once. The process of attentive and reflective listening is demanding. Some may experience the prospect of full communion with fear or anxious concern for their identity, and this is a possibility that exists for members of the EC as well.

The diverse peoples in both ELCA and EC have to receive and share this relationship as they grow together over time in full communion. (par. 14) Lutherans and Episcopalians have already learned much from each other. Learning will increase as more and more come to know and trust each other. For example, Episcopalians may learn new understandings of episcopal succession, while Lutherans may learn from experience of the historic episcopate as it is already adapted to democratic America in the EC and as it comes to be adapted in the ELCA. Both churches may learn more of what it means for the historic episcopate to be "evangelical", just as the members of each church may learn more fully what the "Gospel" actually means.

Some Episcopalians may also come to perceive, and this is already becoming the case, that Lutherans who opposed the CCM have important gifts to offer in full communion that are precisely the gifts that Episcopalians need and want, such as the emphases upon the centrality of God's Word in scripture, the doctrine of justification by faith, and the stress upon preaching, church growth, evangelism and lay ministries. Rather than arguing with such Lutherans about doctrines of ministry, ordination, sacraments and ecclesiology, Episcopalians should seek out the positive gifts that these Lutherans do bring.

Episcopalians will naturally seek the advice and help of ELCA leaders to arrange contacts and conversations with opponents. Mutual understanding will increase through open, honest and humble listening and responding. Episcopalians will also have to make it clear that they understand the church to be sent into the world on mission. They too believe that unity and mission are in and of the Gospel. They see bishops in historic succession as leaders in mission whose task is to support the mission of all the baptized, a part of their ministry of oversight in full communion being to connect dioceses and synods.

d) If some in the EC and ELCA are reluctant to invite clergy of the other church to preach or preside at the Eucharist, what should be our response?

Some in both churches may not invite the ordained clergy of the other church to their own pulpit or altar and they should not be forced to do so. CCM provides that the ELCA and EC will permit the interchangeability of pastors and priests, respecting always the internal discipline of each church. (par. 22) This means that churchwide, diocesan and synodical regulations of the ELCA and EC are to be followed. In the EC such an invitation from a parish involves guidelines from the bishop. A similar procedure is followed in the ELCA. We need to be aware that both of our churches already live with internal diversity, and full communion will not mean the elimination of all differences.

The exercise of mutual respect is called for in this time of learning.

e) The EC and ELCA already cooperate in mission with other churches. What difference will full communion make?

It was the ELCA who insisted on renaming the Concordat of Agreement "Called to Common Mission", thus challenging the EC to share in mission. The promise of CCM is that both churches will be energized to strengthen and expand their activities for mission.

It is true that both churches already cooperate with each other and with many other churches in councils and other ways, but such cooperation is limited by differences of faith and order to certain aspects of mission. In full communion, the EC and ELCA will recognize each other's faith, sacraments, and ministries, thus removing the claim that there are any differences of faith and order. All ministries of the baptized and of the ordained in EC and ELCA will be free to share fully in all aspects of mission.

Further reading: "Enhancing the Mission of Christ's Church", Question 6.

Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

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