

Why bother with voting? An ordained diaconate is a done deal.

In August 2016 the ELCA will adopt the **order of deacon** as required to **achieve full communion** with the Episcopal Church.¹ The fix is in. The fix has been in for a long time.

In 1997 the **Concordat of Agreement** was narrowly defeated because of widespread opposition to the imposition on the ELCA of the historic episcopate and its **threefold “Holy Orders.”** Episcopalians **require** this structure because they regard it as a **sacramental conduit of grace** for valid sacraments.

After the Concordat’s defeat in 1997, Presiding Bishop H. George Anderson pledged to bring it back to the 1999 Churchwide Assembly with **“the present outcomes” intact.** (See H. George Anderson below.)

Get it? No real change. Words shuffled. The fix was in. The outcome was as rigged as big-time wrestling. Why bother voting?

And that’s what happened. The Concordat was given a new title, **Called to Common Mission (CCM)** and its long term consequences were disguised in lingo unfamiliar to Lutherans and in an extended timeline.

For years ELCA leaders have **promoted a false narrative** about CCM, knowing that once the agreement was adopted, the ELCA would be **locked** into taking on the **threefold order of ministry at some future time.**

That future is 2016. As the ELCA prepares to adopt the **order of deacons** at its August 2016 Churchwide Assembly, recall how ELCA leaders have misled people about CCM. Note how frequently they voice contempt for dissenters. To be sure, some leaders below were naïve. Most were not.

After all, look also at [what Episcopal leaders openly said](#) about CCM and the ELCA. Note also that **none** of these or similar quotes by Episcopal leaders appeared in *The Lutheran*.

* * * * *

Almen, Lowell (Secretary of the ELCA 1988-2007; still in 2016 a member of the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee and co-chair of the Lutheran/Catholic dialogue)

- **“The Churchwide Assembly did not adopt the Tucson Resolution itself.”** He claimed that the Assembly had merely adopted the sentence added to CCM ¶3 that CCM had been “correctly interpreted” by the Tucson Resolution. (**Almen** to ELCA Church Council, November 2000) (See **Sandstrom, Dale** and see [The Tucson Resolution](#)).
- “The Tucson Resolution was **not voted on by the Churchwide Assembly** and thus the national secretary [**Lowell Almen**] has clarified that it is **not part of the amendment** to paragraph 3 of CCM and that the **Episcopal Church is not being asked to vote on it.**” (From “CCM Questions Answered” by The Episcopal Church, December 1999)

¹ See constitutional change ¶7.54.01. Deacons will be “consecrated,” a synonym for “ordained.” In 2019 the ELCA will vote on the “entrance rite” for deacons. Whichever term (“consecrated” or “ordained”), is chosen, the elements of the rite will conform to Episcopal requirements for an ordained diaconate.

Almquist, Roy (Bishop, SE Penn)

- He said that those who oppose the 1997 ecumenical proposals are like “some congregations who simply do not want to change. They are comfortable with who they are and **do not really care about the church of the future.**” (ELCA News Release 3/20/97).
- “Bishop Roy Almquist, Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, said churches in his area are suffering tremendously because of the *Concordat’s* defeat.” (*The Lutheran*, 6/98, p. 44).

Anderson, H. George (ELCA Presiding Bishop 1995-2001)

- “We need to interpret to ourselves and our constituents that **the gift of the historic episcopate is not some additional requirement.**” (ELCA News Release 10/9/96)
- After the joint meeting of Lutheran and Episcopal bishops in the Poconos Mountains in October 1996: “[The ELCA bishops] are in large measure committed to moving forward and see themselves as interpreters and advocates, **working for the approval of the Concordat.**”
- “I do not understand the paragraph you cite [*Concordat* ¶13] as committing the ELCA to adopting the historical [sic] episcopate. We will certainly recognize its validity for our fellow believers in The Episcopal Church.... **The paragraph recognizes that the ‘three-fold pattern’ will be there in the shared ministry that will evolve, but Lutherans are not required to fill out the pattern.**” (Letter to concerned ELCA pastor, 1/2/1997)
- “We must know what the documents say and assume that they mean what they say.” (ELCA News Release, 3/19/97).
- “There is nothing automatic or inevitable about the link between episcopacy and hierarchy.” (Public letter, 7/29/97)
- “If the goal is full communion, then it must include the historic episcopate.” (ELCA News 11/24/97).
- At their October 1997 meeting the ELCA bishops endorsed Presiding Bishop Anderson’s recommendation that a **revised Concordat should include the “present outcomes of the Concordat.”** (*The Lutheran*, 11/97, p. 49).
- “If we take the long view ... we can count on the healing and cleansing effects of time.... Like most ecumenical projects if it is beneficial it will prosper; if it is more bother than it’s worth, it will wither and fade.” (Referring to CCM in his speech at the 250th Anniversary of Muhlenburg College in August 1998.)
- “I am baffled by the debate over Article 7 of the *Augsburg Confession* because in all doctrinal agreements since 1821, once fundamental doctrinal agreement was reached, structure has always been changed.” (*The Lutheran*, 4/99, p.44)
- **“The Lutheran Reformation was about gospel, not structure.”** (*The Lutheran* 5/99, p.53)
- “If moving into full communion with the Episcopal Church means **a new way of installing** our bishops...” (*The Lutheran*, 5/99, p.53)
- “The agreement will not go into effect unless The Episcopal Church approves it at its convention next summer, so we have nearly **a year to talk it over.**” (Dial Bishop Anderson, 9/1/99)
- “There’s no rule that requires ‘anyone to accept the historic episcopate.’” HGA said this in a forum for Lutherans in the Twin Cities after the 1999 Churchwide Assembly which adopted CCM. (ENS 9/30/99)

Stephen Bouman (Bishop, Metro New York) “In the ensuing two year [1997-1999] we adopted a much more clear and evangelical agreement.” (*The Lutheran New Yorker*, Fall 1999) (But after CCM was released in April 1998, the ELCA Bishops’ Conference adopted [the Tucson Resolution](#) [March 1999] proposing twenty interpretative points regarding CCM)

Bouman, Walter (Professor, Trinity Seminary and member of the Lutheran/Episcopal dialogue team that adopted the *Concordat* by a vote of 5-3. Upon his retirement from Trinity Seminary he joined the faculty of Episcopal General Theological Seminary in New York).

- Once future generations get used to the churches being interchangeable, they will start questioning why two bishops are needed for the same territory.” (ELCA News 5/96)
- After the defeat of the *Concordat* by the 1997 Churchwide Assembly: Unless people of the Upper Midwest rejoice in perverse anti-institutionalism, I cannot imagine they understood the magnitude of their action.” (*Mpls StarTribune*, 8/23/97, B6)

Braaten, Carl (Professor LSTC, Co-Founder of the Center for Catholic and Evangelical Theology) “If the proposed ELCA/Episcopal *Concordat* fails in 1997, the only sensible choice would be for the ELCA to leave the ecumenical movement.” (*Metro Lutheran*, 12/96, p.12)

Gritsch, Eric (Professor of Church History, Gettysburg Seminary): “Assuming we vote ‘No’ [on the *Concordat*] then we [the ELCA] are and remain not only the sleeping giant, but I think **spiritually and mentally retarded.**” (Speech to Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly, 1996).

Hanson, Mark (Bishop, St. Paul; Presiding Bishop of the ELCA 2001-2013)

- Opposition to the *Concordat* is “a **visceral** response ... coming out of a **piety** that is suspicious of hierarchy.... **Intellectual arguments are not helpful.**” (ELCA News Release, 3/20/97. In a workshop on the *Concordat* organized by Hanson, only proponents of the *Concordat* were invited as presenters.)
- “Please remember that a pastor prays for the gifts of the Holy Spirit and lays hands on the heads of those affirming their baptism in the rite of confirmation.... [CCM doesn’t] imply that this rite [ordaining a bishop into the historic episcopate] has been raised to some kind of sacramental status.” (Letter to concerned Lutheran, 6/19/02)(To the contrary, ordination of a bishop into the Episcopal episcopate is **constitutional requirement** in the ELCA under CCM because it is **sacramental**; it confers the grace necessary to **make Christ present in the Eucharist.**)

Hinlicky, Paul (Theology Professor, Bratislava, Slovakia) “Consolidation of the LWF as church means church on the way to reunion with Rome, as God shows us the way. Such a decision will entail ... the integration of justification by faith with ... the **re-institution of the episcopal office.**” (*Lutheran Forum*, Christmas, 1998, p. 11)

Hultgren, Arland (New Testament Professor, Luther Seminary) Wrote a paper for the ELCA bishops (1997) urging adoption of the *Concordat*.

Jenson, Robert (Professor of systematic theology at Gettysburg Seminary for over twenty years, then recently retired professor at St. Olaf): “Non-episcopal churches comprise a tiny minority of orthodox Christians, and **if the ELCA cannot integrate with established episcopacies, it might as well save money by closing down all ecumenical efforts.**” (*dialog*, Summer 1996, p.222).

Jeske, Richard (Lutheran co-chair of the Lutheran/Episcopal Coordinating Committee)

- “The concern has also been expressed that the actions of the ELCA’s most recent churchwide assemblies obviate a return to the threefold ordering of ministry, especially the diaconate. Can the assembly actions be interpreted to leave room for revisiting this issue, especially in concert

with our ecumenical partners?” (*Concordat: Concerns Addressed*, p. 20 [April 1997] Occasional Paper produced by the Lutheran/Episcopal Joint Coordinating Committee)

- Speaking to the 1997 Episcopal General Convention about his confidence that the ELCA would adopt the *Concordat*: “Our churches have never disagreed on significant matters of theology. The discussion [in the ELCA] has been very open, people’s concerns have been heard and their questions addressed.”

Jessen, Richard (Bishop, Nebraska):

- “Every point of opposition [to the *Concordat*] is based on **misunderstanding**.” (ELCA News Release, 3/20/97)
- “Virtually every point of opposition I have seen is based on **misinformation**. Nebraska is Midwest too. Why is the upper Midwest upset about what is factual? (*The Lutheran*, 4/97, p. 43)

Larson, Duane (Professor of systematic theology at Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg)

- “**Look into the eyes**” of Episcopalians when you decide about the *Concordat*, advised Duane Larson, chair of the ELCA Ecumenical Committee. (Gettysburg Seminary Bulletin Summer 1998, p. 47)
- He accused opponents of the *Concordat* of “**outright distortion, lies, and sleaze**,” but offered no specifics. (*Gettysburg Seminary Bulletin*, Fall 1997, pp. 5-8.) A few months later he accompanied Presiding Bishop Anderson on an ecumenical junket to Canterbury and Rome. In 1999 he was named President of Wartburg Theological Seminary.

Martensen, Daniel (Executive Director of the ELCA Department of Ecumenism after William Rusch): “I was born and raised in Minnesota and I have to say there is a block of Lutherans there that haven’t had any ecumenical elbow-rubbing with others. They have a built-in Lutheran self-understanding, and it’s something of an anti-Catholic feeling. It’s deeply felt and visceral. They are deeply threatened by hierarchy.” (*Mpls. StarTribune*, 8/24/97, B6)

Marty, Martin (Professor of religious history at the University of Chicago Divinity School for 35 years and author of over 50 books. Appointed in 1997 by H. George Anderson to be one of the three Lutheran members (along with Michael Root and Todd Nichol) to revise the *Concordat* for presentation to the 1999 Churchwide Assembly)

- “I have never spent a moment writing a denominational document. You’re not going to find many people who are more bored than I by ecumenical negotiations and official documents.” (*Chicago Tribune*, 1/28/98)
- “This draft [CCM] could not make it more clear that **Episcopalians do not expect Lutherans to be asked to come to believe in this**.” (A public letter titled, *An Essay from The Reverend Dr. Martin E. Marty*, April 8, 1998, p. 3.)
- Marty told the ELCA Church Council at its April 1998 meeting that adopting the Episcopal historic episcopate is not a big deal; the rite only takes “two or three hours.” He told the Council that those who find CCM a faulty proposal “are in effect asking us to end all efforts at ‘agreement’ and to go our separate ways, probably permanently.” He also held out the **false hope** that Episcopalians might be flexible: “It could very well be that in this interaction [between the ELCA and the Episcopal Church] we take a new look at these [1993 ELCA decisions on ministry] and come out at a very different pattern for both [churches].” (*ELCA Church Council Minutes*, p. 60)
- “Where ELCA members do not feel at ease [with adopting the historic episcopate], one could say about it in minimalist terms that **the only difference** they would or need ever see is the

presence of an Episcopal bishops ... at the installation ... of the presiding bishop of the ELCA and synodical bishops in the years ahead.” (Letter to the ELCA Church Council, 4/18/98)

- “Not once in this year of intense work or in our consulting records of antecedent conversations through the years did we find a single Episcopal thinker who envisioned their departing from the Anglican Communion by exchanging ministries apart from the episcopate.” (Letter to Church Council, 11/14/98)
- “We took great pains these months to have the document precisely say that Episcopalians don’t expect Lutherans to start accepting the episcopate as something essential to our understanding of the ministry of word and sacrament.” (*The Lutheran*, 6/98 p. 45)

Mau, Joan Pastor and member of the ELCA ecumenical advisory team: “No one seemed to agree on what the text of the *Concordat* meant.” (ENS, 1/8/98)

McCoid, Donald (Bishop, SW Penn)

- “The Episcopal Church recognizes that ‘shared corporately’ does not require both churches to adopt the threefold office of the ordained ministry, but only that, in the shared ministry ahead, the **threefold office will be present through its continued use by the Episcopalians.**” (Letter to concerned Lutheran, 8/25/2000)
- “There is strong support among the bishops for CCM” (ELCA News 3/22/01)

Meyer, Harding “Whoever justifies his or her rejection of the *Concordat* with the argument that it is in conflict with the Lutheran Confessions is himself or herself in conflict with them.” (*Lutheran Forum*)

Miller, Curtis (Bishop, Western Iowa, author of the Tucson Resolution)

- “There are **no changes** required of congregations because of this agreement: no constitutional changes, no changes in procedures, not changes in policy.” (Christmas letter to synod congregations, 12/2000)
- “*Called to Common Mission* clearly affirms that **the three-fold order of ministry is not essential** to full communion....Second, the Ordinal of 1662 will not have force in the ELCA....The purpose of this [Tucson] Resolution is to both clearly state the understanding of the ELCA and **to put at rest the many wild speculations and misinformation** circulated by some in the church.” (Letter to a concerned Lutheran, April 5, 1999)

Miller, Robert (Bishop, Pacifica) “I know Lutherans have their Confessions and all that, but unity is important.” (Promoting the *Concordat* to the 1996 Pacifica Synod Assembly)

Mocko, George (Bishop, Delaware/Maryland) “Lutherans and Episcopalians really do **agree on everything else of real importance**, this [the historic episcopate] is the issue that requires attention.” (Bishop’s mailing to DE-MD congregations 3/99).

Olson, Stan (Bishop, SW MN, head of the Conference of Bishops’ ecumenism committee) “Our two churches will not have identical structures. Only looking at the two churches together will one see a threefold ministry. **They will have it. We won’t.**” (Letter to concern Lutheran, 10/20/2000)

Riley, E. Roy (Bishop, New Jersey Synod) and 36 fellow bishops wrote a June 29, 1997 letter to voting members of the 1997 Churchwide Assembly that the *Concordat* does not require the ELCA to adopt a particular “form of ministry” and that adoption of the *Concordat* would not require the ELCA to bind itself to the historic episcopate of the Episcopal Church.

- “[W]e are **not bound** to a form of ministry prescribed another (either) church.... We are no more bound to allegiance to an historic episcopate (ECUSA) than we are committed to a congregational polity of church governance (UCC).”

Rogness, Peter (Bishop, St. Paul) “We’ve simply agreed that liturgically we’ll use **forms in ordinations** that will make the **Episcopalians comfortable** in joining with us. The heart of the church’s life isn’t its constitution.” (*Mpls StarTribune* 8/17/02, p. B7)

Root, Michael (Appointed by Presiding Bishop H. George Anderson to serve on the drafting team (along with Martin Marty and Todd Nichol) which revised the *Concordat* into CCM. **Root became Roman Catholicism in 2010.**

- “The recognition of ELCA ordained ministries is made specifically in light of the two churches’ common commitment to **the threefold ministry in succession as the pattern of ministry in both churches.**” (*Ecumenical Trends*, 7/8/94, p. 104).
- If the ELCA does not adopt CCM, this “is something I believe we will have to answer for on the last day....” (Philadelphia Seminary Bulletin, 82:1, p. 1)
- “There’s no hidden stage 2 in CCM.” (January 1999)

Rusch, William (Executive Director for the Office of Ecumenical Affairs.) Announced to the 1997 Episcopal General Convention that the Episcopal bishops’ 1997 vote to approve the *Concordat* was “an ecumenical event without parallel.”

Sandstrom, Dale (ELCA Church Council Member)

- “The bishops’ interpretation [the Tucson Resolution, see page 8 below] then becomes **a binding part of the agreement, not merely an interpretation.** Let’s be clear and state it.” (*The Lutheran*, 5/99, p.43; italics in text.)
- “I am Dale Sandstrom, a member of the Church Council. I made the motion at the Church Council meeting that brought this [[Tucson Resolution](#)] before the Churchwide Assembly. The intention of the action of the Church Council is to make the interpretation of the Conference of Bishops **binding and incorporated by reference and therefore binding by the action of both this church and The Episcopal Church if this language is added as recommended by the Church Council.**” (Audio transcript, 1999 ELCA Churchwide Assembly)

Schneider, Ted (Bishop, Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod) “This will be bigger than the Reformation itself when this is adopted.” (Addressing his synod assembly in 1996)

Spring, Paull (Bishop, Northwestern Penn) He, along with seven other bishops, issued a statement (March 1999) in support of CCM which includes the following: “The bishops said they were “pleased” CCM reflect significant changes over the previous *Concordat*. They said changes include...a recognition that the ELCA accepts the historic episcopate in practice, **but not the threefold order of ministry.**” (ELCA Press Release, 4/1/99)

(The other bishops who signed the March 1999 statement: **Ralph Dunkin** (West Virginia-Western Maryland; **Guy Edmiston**, Lower Susquehanna; **Donald Main**, Upper Susquehanna; **Donald McCoid**, Southwestern Penn; **George Mocko**, Delaware-Maryland; **Gregory Pile**, Allegheny; **Theodore Schneider**, Metropolitan Washington D.C.)

Strommen, Peter (Bishop, Northeast MN)

- Quoted as saying about the *Concordat* and its official commentary, *Concordat: Concerns Addressed*: It has been “a managed process.” (*The Lutheran* 4/97, p.43)
- “I came to our meeting with the Episcopal bishops last October with an enormous bias against this proposal. But I came to see that the church has a lot at stake in it and **will probably vote for it even though I’m not excited about it**. I just hope we never get into such a managed process again.” (*The Lutheran*, 4/97, p.43)
- “The process we’re discussing won’t be perceived as running over people.” (*The Lutheran*, 11/97, p. 49) (But after CCM was released in April 1998, ELCA bishops issued [the Tucson Resolution](#) proposing twenty (!) clarifications of the agreement.)

Tiede, David (President, Luther Seminary)

- “We commit our leadership to the reception and implementation of that [CCM] decision in our church and seminaries.” (Tiede and two other seminary presidents pledge their support for CCM. *ELCA News* 9/2/99)
- “I believe the possibility of exceptions is really important. Without it we’re conditioning the gospel.” (*MetroLutheran* 11/01, p. 7).
- “Knowing that we don’t have to do it (ordination) your way, we probably will not need to do it our way.” (www.episcopal-ut.org/DialogueMain/DialogueArticle/july2003/nws.htm.)

Trexler, Ed (Editor of *The Lutheran*. Trexler’s coverage of CCM frequently portrayed opponents of CCM as fearful and narrow-minded, and proponents as sensible and broad-minded.)

- Trexler omits a key phrase from Episcopal Ecumenical Officer David Perry’s statement to the ELCA Church Council (November 1997).
Episcopal Press Release: “Bishops function for mission and ministry as servants,” Perry told the ELCA council. “The historic episcopate is not magical, it is **the power of the Holy Spirit**, working in a community for its life and faithfulness to the gospel of Jesus Christ.” (ENS, note 2032)
ELCA Press Release: “David Perry, Episcopal Church ecumenical officer, said, the ‘non-negotiable’ is not pleasant to hear or to say. The historic episcopate isn’t magical. It has to do with community. Our bishops exist for mission and ministry, to participate as servants within our community.” (*The Lutheran*, 1/98, p.48.)
- “It is virtually a denial of the faith not to try to enhance the visible unity of the church.” (*The Lutheran*, 8/98, p. 58.”
- Unattributed claim in *The Lutheran*: “The Episcopal Church” agrees that CCM has been “correctly interpreted” by the ELCA bishops’ resolution. (*The Lutheran* 5/99, p.43)
- “Further, as the ELCA faces future volative questions, we can counsel with our new partners, possibly even moving in tandem.” (*The Lutheran*, 10/99, p.58)
- CCM does “not require the ELCA to adopt a threefold order of ministry.” (*The Lutheran*, 8/2000, p.40)

Wagner, Robert (Executive Director of the Division for Ministry) He informed the ELCA Conference of Bishops at their March 1994 meeting that there ought to be a separate entry rite of “**consecration**” for diaconal ministers because diaconal ministers are “to **fit between** associates in ministry and pastor ordained ministers.”

Wengert, Tim. (Professor of Lutheran Confessions, Philadelphia) “We in the ELCA agree to **respect the ‘historic episcopate’** of the Episcopal Church out of Christian love and for the sake of the unity of these two groups.” (*Lutheran Forum*, Winter 2000, p. 42)

Yeago, David (Professor Southern Seminary)

- Endorsing CCM: “It is also quite thinkable that a relationship with Lutherans could be one factor shaping the action the Episcopal Church seems to be getting closer and closer to taking. We simply do not know – we never do – what difference our actions might make, but if there is any chance that we could help things turn out even a bit less badly, that would seem to add another layer of obligation to our basic obligation to seek the unity of the church.” (*Lutheran Forum*, Easter 1998, p.46)

* * * * *

See also The Tucson Resolution, especially A1 and A4:

- A. 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 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, including both pastors and bishops, may continue in effect;

4. no requirement that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America establish **the office of deacon, nor that they be ordained**;