

## "MIND OF THE HOUSE RESOLUTION"

House of Bishops Meeting  
Lake Arrowhead, California  
April 3, 2000

Resolved that the House of Bishops of The Episcopal Church specifically acknowledges and declares that the following understandings shall govern our interpretation and acceptance of the document "Called to Common Mission: A Lutheran Proposal for a Revision of the *Concordat of Agreement*" within The Episcopal Church:

1. The Episcopal Church agrees that each of the two churches has the right to interpret the same document according to its own standards, as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has already done for itself and referenced in CCM para. 3, so long as neither church contradicts the text or spirit of the document. In full communion, "churches become interdependent while remaining autonomous" (para. 2).
2. In common with all churches of the Anglican Communion, The Episcopal Church continues to maintain, as the Preface to the Ordination Rites makes clear (Book of Common Prayer, 510), that "three distinct orders of ordained ministers", namely, bishops, priests, and deacons, are "characteristic of Christ's holy catholic church," and that "it has been, and is, the intention and purpose of this Church to maintain and continue these three orders."
3. The Episcopal Church's recognition of the full authenticity of the ministers ordained in the ELCA or its predecessor bodies (CCM para. 15) is made in view of the voted intention of that church to enter the ministry of the historic episcopate (para. 18). According to catholic tradition of which The Episcopal Church is a part, the order of the historic episcopate properly includes within itself all three of these orders.
4. In view of the firmly voted intention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that "a bishop shall regularly preside and participate in the laying-on-of-hands at the ordination of all clergy" (para.20), it is necessary to state that according to the standard of The Episcopal Church and of the Anglican Communion and of catholic Christianity it is the rule (regula) that no exception to episcopal ordination can be allowed. Therefore if any ordination within the ELCA were to be carried out after full communion begins without an ELCA bishop presiding and participating in the laying-on-of-hands, it would not be acceptable for interchangeability and reciprocity in The Episcopal Church under para. 16 of the CCM. In this regard The Episcopal Church welcomes the ELCA's explanation of para. 20 recorded in the minutes of its 1999 Denver Churchwide Assembly that "The use of 'regularly' establishes the ELCA's intent to adhere to the same standard of ordination by a bishop as practiced by The Episcopal Church in the USA" and the word "regularly" does not imply the possibility of planned exceptions."
5. Although the ELCA may continue to receive onto its roster of ordained ministers, without reordination, pastors from other traditions, some of whom will not have been ordained by a bishop in the historic episcopate, only pastors ordained in the ELCA or its predecessor bodies will be considered for interchangeability with The Episcopal Church (para. 16, 22). Pastors not ordained by a bishop in historic succession who transfer into the ELCA from other traditions after passage of CCM will not be regarded as interchangeable. Rostered ELCA pastors who were not ordained in the ELCA or its predecessor bodies will not be interchangeable under the provisions of CCM.
6. Although lay persons in the ELCA may continue to be licensed by its synodical bishops in unusual circumstances on rare occasions to preside at celebrations of the sacrament of Holy Communion for specified periods of time and only in a given location, it is well known that The Episcopal Church follows the consensus of catholic Christianity in not allowing or recognizing this practice, nor is it accepted or even mentioned in the text of the CCM (cf para. 16).