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# TOGETHER FOR MINISTRY

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**Final Report and Actions  
on the Study of Ministry  
1988-1993**

**Incorporating the Task Force Final Report and  
Actions of the Board of the Division for Ministry  
and the 1993 Churchwide Assembly of the  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

## Action of the 1993 Churchwide Assembly

The Third Biennial Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on August 30, 1993, adopted the following:

VOTED:

*Yes-831; No-14; Abstain-18*

CA93.06.17 WHEREAS, the report of the Task Force on Ministry has promoted vigorous conversation throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America about the mission of the Christian Church; and

WHEREAS, that conversation has served to strengthen our vision for the ministry of the priesthood of all believers; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we thank all the members and support persons who worked, dreamed, hoped, studied, prayed, and served this church and the cause of the Gospel of Christ well; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we receive the adopted work as encouragement to continue the conversation, dream the dream, and bear the creative and redeeming Word to all the world in whatever ways the Spirit leads.

NOTE: The various actions of the 1993 Churchwide Assembly in approving and adopting the recommendations related to the Study of Ministry during the course of the assembly are reported within the structure of the final report of the Task Force on the Study of Ministry, "Together for Ministry." Amendments to the final report, both by the board of the Division for Ministry and the Churchwide Assembly, are noted within the endnotes. The implementing action of the Churchwide Assembly follows:

### Report of the Task Force on the Study of Ministry

To receive as information "Together for Ministry," as amended by the board of the Division for Ministry, which:

- a. received the text and recommendations of "Together for Ministry" as the final report of the Task Force on the Study of Ministry, and transmitted them through the Church Council to the 1993 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for discussion and decision;
- b. approved the recommendations of the Task Force on the Study of Ministry, as amended, regarding the ministry of the baptized, call and ordination, the ministry of pastors and bishops, officially recognized lay ministries, and flexibility for mission;
- c. affirmed the proposal of the Task Force on the Study of Ministry to establish a diaconal ministry as part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's officially recognized ministries;
- d. dissented from the proposal of the Task Force on the Study of Ministry that diaconal ministers be ordained; and
- e. urged further study by the Division for Ministry of the relationship between associates in ministry and diaconal ministers with the results and any recommendation from such a study to be considered at the 1995 Churchwide Assembly.<sup>1</sup>

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# EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

8765 West Higgins Road • Chicago, Illinois 60631-4195 • 312-380-2870

Division for  
Ministry

March 1, 1993<sup>2</sup>

Dear Reader:

"Together for Ministry" is the final report and recommendations of the Task Force on the Study of Ministry 1988-1993. This text was approved by the task force on February 22, 1993, by a vote of 15 to 2. This report represents the completed work of the task force. It is being shared with you on that basis.

This report and its recommendations are now subject to action by the board of the Division for Ministry (March 1993). The board may alter the text and recommendations as it sees fit. The text finally recommended to the voting members of the 1993 Churchwide Assembly will reflect actions taken by the board, and so may differ from the text printed here. The Church Council of the ELCA will review the text as it comes from the March board meeting. Final action on the report and recommendations is reserved to the 1993 Churchwide Assembly. The Assembly will act on the text as printed in "Reports and Records of the 1993 Churchwide Assembly."

As with all of the task force's work, every effort is being made to share information as quickly as possible with as many people as possible. Copies of this printed report are being mailed to all rostered persons in the ELCA. Copies are also being distributed to all voting members of synodical assemblies for discussion. While this will result in some duplication of distribution it is the most expeditious way to share the report. Rostered persons who receive a second copy are urged to share that extra copy with laity.

The work of the task force has embraced a wide range of mission and ministry concerns. Many of these issues are reflected in the report and recommendations. No single recommendation should be allowed to eclipse the importance of the other parts of the report. The future role of associates in ministry in this church is of critical importance in what the task force has done. So too is the emphasis on the ministry of all the people of God.

Comments on this text will be accepted by my office for the record of the task force's work until the opening day of the Churchwide Assembly. Comments to those who will make decisions on the report and recommendations should be directed to the Board of the Division for Ministry, the Church Council, and the voting members of the 1993 Churchwide Assembly.

Sincerely,

Dr. Paul R. Nelson  
Director of the Study of Ministry

# Together for Ministry

The Christian Church  
born in the Word of God  
by the powerful breath of the Holy Spirit  
in the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ  
in Pentecost preaching and Baptism  
born to minister. Born to serve.  
God gives mission with gift.  
Go preach visit clothe give water teach feed  
baptize serve love worship  
and and and . . . .  
Gathered people move in time and space  
in timeless worship ancient new Word  
and in the glorious disarray of everyday.  
This church holds fast the creeds  
and lives in scriptures and the confessions.  
Lives to do what God commands  
under God's promise  
I am with you always.  
Ministry changes expands includes re-orders  
defines lists and enlists  
but always holds forth  
the Word the water the bread  
the wine the healing helping nurturing hand.  
We are baptized believers  
formed in the firth breath of the Holy Spirit.  
We are the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.  
We are together for ministry.

*Marj Leegard*  
*Task Force Member*



# PREFACE

What is the nature of Christian ministry? What forms of ministry will best serve the mission of the Church in the world today? How can this Church in all its expressions work together for ministry? These are the questions before the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America today. They arise out of three contexts: the formation of this church in 1988, the changing world in which the Church serves, and the ecumenical relationships this church has with other churches.

The first context is the uniting of three closely related but not identical Lutheran church bodies—The American Lutheran Church (ALC), the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC), and the Lutheran Church in America (LCA). All three had identical patterns for ministry by ordained pastors. The other forms of ministry were not identical in the past—ALC commissioned church staff, AELC deaconesses and deacons, ALC and LCA deaconesses, AELC commissioned teachers, and LCA lay professional leaders, together with interim ELCA associates in ministry. Should these be retained, combined, or replaced?

The second context is the world in which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is called to serve today and in the coming years. This context is global in scope and is oriented toward the present and the future. What forms of ministry will this church require to serve its mission from God most faithfully and effectively today and in the years to come?

The third context is the need for shared witness among the Christian churches throughout the world. To what extent can officially recognized forms of ministry structured according to churchwide standards contribute to or detract from that common mission? These questions reflect the challenge and opportunity for renewal in ministry before us.

## The Constitutional Mandate

This report and its recommendations are directed at fulfilling the mandate which this church established in 1988. They are not an attempt to answer every important question about ministry which faces the Church. From its beginning, the Study of Ministry has been charged by continuing resolution 10.11.A87. of the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

During the same period of 1988-1994, this church shall engage in an intensive study of the nature of ministry, leading to decisions regarding appropriate forms of ministry that will enable this church to fulfill its mission. During the course of such study, special attention shall be given to: 1) the tradition of the Lutheran Church; 2) the possibility of articulating a Lutheran understanding and adaptation of the threefold ministerial office of bishop, pastor, and deacon and its ecumenical implication; and 3) the appropriate forms of lay ministries to be officially recognized and certified by this church, including criteria for certification, relation to synods, and discipline.<sup>3</sup>

In addition, the proposal developed by the Division for Ministry and approved by the Church Council of the ELCA (July 1988) added specific consideration of the ministry of all the baptized people of God to the scope of the study.

This study has been broadly consultative. Church wide hearings (1989) and forums (1991) were conducted to give concerned members of this church direct access to task force members. Regular reports from the task force to all rostered persons and others interested in the process have been distributed. Consultations with a wide variety of experts and those most directly affected by the study, persons rostered in previous churches, were held. The preliminary report of the task force (1991) was distributed to more than thirty thousand persons. Each person receiving a copy was invited to share his or her response with the task force. Seminary faculties and other teaching theologians have been invited to contribute and respond to task force work. Preliminary recommendations from the task force have been available to the church within weeks of the time they were made by the task force, beginning in January of 1992. Task force members and the director have been available for presentations and consultation with interested groups throughout the process. (A fuller account of the process employed for the study is found in Appendix A.)

Part I of this report is a study of ministry which provides a context and foundation for Part II which sets forth rationale and specific recommendations on ministry within this church.

# PART ONE: THE STUDY OF MINISTRY

## A. The Nature of Ministry

### 1. Ministry

The words “ministry” and “service” are closely related. “The word ‘ministry’ in its broadest sense denotes the service to which the whole people of God is called, whether as individuals, as a local community, or as the universal Church. Ministry or ministries can also denote the particular institutional forms which this service can take.”<sup>4</sup>

For Christians this relationship between service and ministry is clearly seen in the life and teaching of Jesus. “So Jesus called them and said to them, ‘You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many’” (Mark 10:42-45).

Jesus, in giving his life, frees people from bondage and empowers them to serve. Christ’s servant ministry is the model for all Christians. It shapes the relationships between the baptized and the officially recognized ministers of the Church, among those various official ministries and between all Christian ministries and God’s world. Do our ministries reflect Christ, the servant, clearly?

The specific content of ministry is diverse. Lutherans have often identified proclamation, worship, witness, service, and unity as its central concerns and activities.<sup>5</sup>

### 2. Mission

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s mission is to “proclaim God’s saving Gospel of justification,” to “carry out the great commission,” and to “serve in response to God’s love to meet human needs.” It is pledged to worship God, nurture its members in the Word of God, and manifest the unity given to the people of God (ELCA 4.02.).

The vision of the ELCA and its constitution inextricably link the mission of the Church and the world. The Church is a people who are created, empowered, and sent to bear witness to God’s creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world (ELCA 4.01.). The

Church, like its Lord, lives not for itself but for the world God loves.

This imperative to express the Gospel and God’s will for the world in terms which are understandable and applicable to needs in an ever-changing world has been a constant one, from the New Testament, through later times, in Luther’s day, and down to the present day. The world today has a desperate need for the Gospel, for proclamation, worship, witness, service, and, like the Church, for unity. This church needs an expanded awareness that all its people are called to ministry to God’s world. Once this call is recognized the opportunities for mission are enormous and exciting.

American society is changing. Population studies make this clear. The balance among various cultures is changing. The shape of family life is changing. The traditional roles assigned to women and men are changing. Forms of communication are changing. The mission question before the ELCA is how to make its witness to the Gospel in that changing society. How should the ELCA organize itself for partnership and ministry among all ethnic and cultural communities? Partnership among African American, Hispanic, Euro-American, Asian, and Native American cultures is an exciting part of our mission.

How can the ELCA witness to the non-Christian religious communities and others that are increasingly present in American society?<sup>6</sup> How can this church make its witness in a culture with religious roots but secular in its outlook? “Americans revere the Bible—but, by and large they do not read it; they have become a nation of biblical illiterates.”<sup>7</sup> Mission must mean more than providing leaders to care for persons who are already a part of this church. Mission compels Christians to organize themselves and their communities for proclamation, service, and witness in the world as well as proclamation, worship, and unity in the Church.

Attention to existing ministries is also a part of the Church’s mission. Our ministries in rural and urban areas where we already have congregations are also places for mission. Many of these congregations are struggling against mounting pressures and costs to maintain their ministries. Many find it difficult to support traditional patterns of pastoral ministry and congregational life. Yet the ELCA has few officially recognized alternatives to offer.

Our congregations are centers of teaching ministry. Day care, grade schools, high schools, colleges, universities, and seminaries sponsored by or related to this church embody its ministry of teaching. This church also ministers to society through its institutions of care and education. Lutheran social service agencies help give credibility to this church's stated commitment to care for those in need.

Beyond its institutions, the ELCA needs to recognize and empower all baptized believers to be servants of the Gospel, ministers in the world, and to train and equip them and expect them to account for their ministries. Luther's emphasis on the priesthood of all believers has remained too much an ideal and too little a reality in Lutheran church life. The need to enlist laity in leadership roles within the Church should not, for all of its benefits, be allowed to overshadow the indispensable need for the ministry of all Christians in the world.

Over the last generations the Church has broadened its understanding of the ministry of Word and Sacrament. Pastors have been asked to take on leadership responsibilities in many areas related to critical societal needs. Such developments come from the conviction that the Church should benefit from theologically trained and publicly accountable leaders in areas that communicate the Gospel and God's will for the world. Many of these forms of leadership activities are less explicitly related to Word and Sacrament ministry's traditional center in preaching, teaching, and the administration of holy baptism and holy communion than is pastoral ministry in congregations. The response of the ELCA and its immediate predecessors to this call for specialized leadership in congregations and in other settings has been to stretch its understanding of the ministry of ordained pastors so it can meet these needs for leadership. The church and its pastors have paid a price for this response. When Word and Sacrament becomes an umbrella for all forms of leadership, its unique focus can be diluted or even lost. Unrealistic or confused expectations of pastors can result.

The ELCA and its predecessor churches established certified and commissioned lay ministries to give leadership for mission in areas not requiring an ordained minister of Word and Sacrament. Deaconesses, lay professionals, commissioned church staff, commissioned teachers, deacons, and associates in ministry have all served the church to meet specialized needs for leadership in mission.

### **3. Together for Ministry**

#### **a. Together in the ELCA**

A clear focus on mission draws people together for ministry. This is true for the ministry God exercises as

the Holy Spirit "calls, gathers, and enlightens the whole Christian church on earth."<sup>8</sup> It is true in the local congregation, the universal Church, and the world where Christians exercise ministry. It is also true for the ministries of leadership that have particular institutional forms. Ministry to the mission God has given the Church should be the cause which welds together the traditions that formed the ELCA in 1988. Increased size and administrative merger cannot renew the Church; God's Spirit and commitment to mission can.

#### **b. Together as Laity and Clergy**

Ministry should draw persons together across distinctions such as "laity" and "clergy." Claims of personal privilege and status must never cloud the fundamental purpose of ministry which is service. "It is within this context of ministry [of all its baptized members] that this church calls or appoints some of its baptized members for specific ministries in this church" (ELCA 7.11.).

#### **c. Together Ecumenically**

Focus on mission also holds the potential to draw Christians together for ministry across existing denominational barriers. This can be seen where denominations find ways to cooperate in spite of varying forms of officially recognized ministry. It can be seen, too, in the growing consultative process among church leaders working bilaterally (between two churches) or multilaterally (among several churches) through such cooperative structures as the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. and the World Council of Churches.

It is the very nature of ministry to draw people together. With its eyes fixed on the mission which God has set before us, this church will be a people united and drawn together for ministry.

## **B. The Lutheran Heritage in the Broader Christian Tradition and the World Today**

The canonical scriptures of the Old and New Testaments together with the ecumenical creeds and the Lutheran Confessions are the authorities which govern this church's understanding of the nature of ministry. This report affirms these fundamental authorities. It also proposes new emphases in response to the questions raised in its mandate. Within the norms established by these authorities, this church is free to develop under the guidance of the Spirit.

## 1. The Holy Scriptures

The Bible is an authority shared with all Christians. It is normative for Lutherans in light of their confessional tradition, yet is read with awareness of later, often patristic<sup>9</sup> models for Church and ministry and in light of contemporary ecumenical dialogues.

The theme of “all Christians as a priesthood” is an example of a Reformation emphasis now widely affirmed. This is a New Testament assertion (in 1 Peter 2:9-11 and Rev. 1:6; 5:10; and 20:6),<sup>10</sup> based on Exodus 16:5-6. The priesthood of all baptized believers was stressed by Luther. Today most statements on ministry begin with the whole people of God and often point out how each member of this priesthood is called and has a ministry, especially in daily life and vocation.<sup>11</sup>

In the Bible, “ministry” (whether the Hebrew *‘abad* or Greek *diakonia*) regularly means “service,” carried out in a variety of ways and contexts. It arises out of the divine initiative of a gracious God who accomplishes salvation. Christians respond in faith to God’s initiative through service to one another and to the neighbor in God’s world. “To equip the saints” (including both “laity” and “clergy”) for their ministries, Christ gave gifts which include leaders such as apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers (Eph. 4:11-12).<sup>12</sup> How ministerial leadership is to be structured is not a matter which Scripture answers absolutely. Indeed, New Testament ministries are portrayed in great variety.<sup>13</sup>

To fit needs at different times in history and to reflect various understandings of the Church, subsequent Christian traditions have developed these New Testament examples of ministering along different, even divisive lines—Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, Reformed, Pentecostal; hierarchical and egalitarian; episcopal, presbyteral, congregational. A Lutheran view, recognizing the variety in Scripture,<sup>14</sup> can set forth its model without expecting others to conform to it and can respect alternative structures for good order in other churches without itself adopting them.

According to the New Testament, all Christians and their leaders in the Church are bound together for ministry. Among the ways of expressing this unity between Christian leaders and community are these three: Word of God, God’s gifts, and apostolicity.

The Word of God nurtures all believers, especially in its sense of Gospel or message from and about God in Christ. “Word and Sacrament” is the traditional Lutheran way of identifying pastoral ministry, and while the New Testament references seldom tell who presided at baptism and the Lord’s Supper, the word of promise does mark each sacrament (Titus 3:5-8; Matt. 26:26-28).<sup>15</sup> “Ministers (or servants) of the

word”<sup>16</sup> appear in Luke 1:2, and “the ministry of the word”<sup>17</sup> at Acts 6:4.<sup>18</sup> But alongside such ministry of the word are set other tasks like the care of widows and of financial accounts by the seven (Acts 6:1-2, 5).<sup>19</sup> Paul stressed his apostolic proclamation of the word (1 Cor. 1:18, 23; 2:1-2)<sup>20</sup> as well as the need for hearers in each congregation to pass on the Word through evangelism (1 Thess. 1:5-8)<sup>21</sup> and for a variety of assisting ministries (1 Cor. 12:28; Rom. 12:6-8).<sup>22</sup> The tasks of proclamation (in Word and Sacrament) and of serving (*diakonia*, including teaching, acts of mercy [Rom. 12:7-8]) have continued as necessities in the Church and world to this day.

The gifts of God come to all Christians in the Gospel as justification and eternal life through “the free gift of God”<sup>23</sup> and in specific gifts of grace<sup>24</sup> or gifts of the Spirit.<sup>25</sup> These gifts build up the Church community, which is founded upon the proclamation of the Word. This proclamation happens in preaching and sacraments but also in the Church’s ongoing life through love, healing, helping, and administration (1 Cor. 12:28-30; 8:1).<sup>26</sup> Paul speaks of a “spiritual gift” that comes when apostle and congregation mutually strengthen one another (Rom. 1:11-12).<sup>24</sup> Spiritual gifts include both natural endowments raised to new heights in Christ’s service and fresh outpourings from God for new tasks. Such gifts are intended to be employed by leaders and all members of Christ’s body, as stewards of God’s grace, for the sake of others, to God’s glory (1 Peter 4:10-11).<sup>25</sup> The Lutheran emphasis has been less on grace-gifts (*charisms*) and more on justification by grace through faith and on the stewardship of life.

Apostles have already been noted as the first group mentioned in two of the lists of leaders in Pauline letters (1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11) and as those who, like Paul, proclaimed the Gospel of salvation (1 Cor. 15:1-11). The term “apostle” means “one who is sent (by God)” (Gal. 1:1),<sup>26</sup> and apostleship<sup>27</sup> relates to mission (Gal. 2:8; Rom. 1:5)<sup>28</sup> as well as to a key role in ministry (Acts 1:25; 1 Thess. 2:7).<sup>29</sup> The term was employed by Paul more broadly than in Luke-Acts, and at least once included a woman (Junia, Rom. 16:7, NRSV).<sup>30</sup> Apostles and prophets are the foundation of the Church where Christ is the keystone or cornerstone (Eph. 2:19-20).<sup>31</sup> Lutherans view as normative the Gospel<sup>32</sup> taught by the apostles, its expression in the statements of faith like the Apostles’ Creed, and the deposit of early Christian teaching in the apostolic Scriptures. Ministry is apostolic when it continues in Gospel, mission, Scripture, and creed, whether in any of its several New Testament expressions or in later forms like threefold ministry.

The Word of God, God's gifts, and apostolicity are characteristics of the New Testament Church and ministry. Congregations were founded "from outside" (by the word from apostles and others sent as heralds of Christ to preach). They were built up "from within" through the involvement of the whole community of faith through the Spirit.<sup>33</sup> Community and mission call for leaders and people joined together for ministry.

Within the New Testament churches, leaders regularly appear, locally and sometimes beyond, to minister by proclamation of the Word and by carrying out other supportive functions there required for communal life and mission. Often the term 'presbyter' (or elder) is used for such leaders, an office found first in the synagogue. Presbyters appear in Acts, 1 Timothy, James, 1 Peter, and 2 and 3 John, for example, though never in the earlier or acknowledged letters by Paul. "Pastor" is used occasionally (Eph. 4:11).<sup>34</sup> Bishops<sup>35</sup> and deacons<sup>36</sup> are mentioned together in Phil. 1:1,<sup>37</sup> and presbyters as overseers at Acts 20:17, 28.<sup>38</sup> In the Pastoral Epistles occur the office of bishop (*episkope*, 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:7-9);<sup>39</sup> presbyters (1 Tim. 5:17-19, including "elders who rule";<sup>40</sup> Titus 1:5-6);<sup>41</sup> and *diakonoi* (1 Tim. 3:8-13).<sup>42</sup> Qualifications are listed for such persons but not duties. Teaching the faith is emphasized. The Lutheran Confessions follow the interpretation of Saint Jerome in the early fifth century that presbyter and bishop formed one group of Church leaders and the deacons another, a view widely supported in modern scholarship. In the changing social setting of the Pastoral Epistles, women were still likely serving as deacons<sup>43</sup> and in the important role of "widow," enrolled on a list, for communal life (1 Tim. 5:3-16).

The "laying on of hands" was the characteristic feature of what later came to be called "ordination" (1 Tim. 4:14; 5:22; 2 Tim. 1:6; 2:2, here involving presbyters).<sup>44</sup> Sometimes it was related to the gift of the Spirit in general (Acts 8:17-19),<sup>45</sup> healing (Mark 5:23; 6:5),<sup>46</sup> blessing (Mark 10:13-16),<sup>47</sup> or commissioning for a task (Acts 13:2-3).<sup>48</sup> It was employed by Christian presbyters in designating leaders under the Spirit to exhort and teach others. In Acts 6:6 those on whom the apostles, with prayer, laid their hands (a group not called "deacons" in the text though they "serve") subsequently preached (Acts 6:8ff; cf. 11:19-20) and performed other tasks of service (Acts 6:1-3). There is in the New Testament no connection of such "ordination" with presiding at sacraments, but those who receive the laying on of hands are to proclaim the Word, pass on the Gospel teaching, and engage in other ministries for and with the community.

Thus, according to the New Testament, God instituted leaders—apostles and others—to proclaim the

Word, ensure sound transmission of the faith, and minister to all sorts of needs. This occurred within a Church in which all are gifted by God and called to ministry in some sense. From these origins the pastor-teacher or presbyter became a constant feature in subsequent Christianity, as did some sort of oversight, often by a bishop. Supportive diaconal forms of ministry arose but then declined over the following centuries.

## 2. The Lutheran Confessions

The chief emphasis in the Confessions, which sought to be true to the Scriptures, is the Gospel. This Gospel declares the unconditional promise that God justifies sinners by grace alone through faith apart from works. For the Confessions it is above all the Gospel that is the point under dispute, not forms of ministry. Nevertheless there is discussion of ministry. The Confessions teach that to obtain faith "God instituted the office of ministry, that is provided the Gospel and the sacraments." This office of ministry is essential to the Church.

The order and logic of the Augsburg Confession (1530) and its central and controlling doctrine of justification have continuing significance for understanding both the nature of ministry and the development of forms of ministry in the ELCA. This logic can be seen by looking at the progression of its early articles. The first three articles of the Augsburg Confession move from the revelation of the Triune God to human sinfulness to God's redemptive ministry in Jesus Christ. Article four describes justification and the faith that believes that for Christ's sake sin is forgiven and righteousness and eternal life are given.

God's own ministry (or loving service to humanity), to declare persons righteous through the justifying work of Christ, is the essential starting place and content of Christian ministry. Article five confesses: "To obtain such faith God instituted the office of the ministry, that is, provided the Gospel and the sacraments. Through these, as through means, he [God] gives the Holy Spirit, who works faith, when, and where he pleases, in those who hear the Gospel." This article is about God's ministry. It is not about officially recognized forms of ministry in the Church, lay or ordained. Although this article has been read to refer to pastors or others in authority, its own clear sense makes such a reading difficult to justify.<sup>49</sup> Nonetheless, article five is about God establishing preaching, the Latin text says 'teaching,' and the sacraments, not about the establishment of any one particular pattern of the pastoral office, whether threefold, twofold, or unitary.

Why is this point important? It is important because it establishes the degree to which God allows the Church freedom to order or re-order institutional forms of ministry within the office of ministry to communicate the Gospel. If God established pastors as the only legitimate ministers of the Gospel, then the Church would have no right to change that pattern. But if, as this article asserts, God established the means of grace in Word and Sacrament and not a particular ordering of its forms, then the Church does have legitimate freedom, under confessional authority, to adjust the forms of that ministry. Its criteria for doing so must be fidelity to the Gospel and service to God's will for the world.

The freedom to adapt forms of ministry is not a license for thoughtless change which ignores or despises the life and experience of the Church through the centuries. Lutherans have taken a conservative approach to reforming structures of ministry. Article 28 displays the conservative intent of the reformers in trying to balance inherited structures with the imperative to communicate the Gospel.

If God's own office of Gospel and sacraments is to be effective, then there must be persons charged with public leadership in declaring the Word and administering its Sacramental expressions. It is in article 14 that the Augsburg Confession addresses forms of ministry or "Order in the Church." Here the criterion for calling forth particular forms of ministry and particular ministers is that they must be "regularly called" (*rite vocatus*), that is, called in accordance with official Church procedures. This principle prevents the unwarranted assumption of office in the Church by individuals apart from accepted procedure. It also allows for the reforming of Church ministries for the sake of the Gospel. In accord with the Confessions' stress on God's office of Word and Sacrament (article five), the Reformers were able to re-order the ministries of bishop and presbyter better to serve the Gospel.

Following Saint Jerome, they recognized only a difference in jurisdiction between presbyters and bishops. When sixteenth-century bishops failed to serve evangelical congregations as ministers of Word and Sacrament, reform followed several patterns. Pastors legitimately functioned as emergency bishops in their own parishes, exercising ministries such as confirmation which were once reserved to bishops. For ministries affecting larger territories, some regions such as Germany replaced Roman bishops with evangelical superintendents. Others, such as Sweden, reformed the office of bishop along evangelical lines but retained the same persons as bishops in that reformed office.

### 3. The Tradition of the Christian Church

#### a. Early Church

Evidence from ancient sources, such as the Church orders,<sup>50</sup> indicates that variety in the patterns of church organization and leadership continued for some time after the apostolic era. The struggle to find ways of meeting important needs for leaders in diaconal ministry (service and relief to the poor and needy, administration of the increasing property of the Church, roles in worship, and direct service to bishops) made the office of deacon an important part of the history of this period. Eventually, this variety gave way generally to a pattern where three titles—bishop, presbyter, and deacon—appeared with increasing frequency. *BEM* correctly concludes: "During the second and third centuries, a threefold pattern of bishop, presbyter and deacon became established as the pattern of ordained ministry throughout the Church."<sup>51</sup> But even after this development, this ministry "underwent considerable changes in its practical exercise."<sup>52</sup> Reflecting the orders and structures of the society of the time, these early centuries also gave rise to an increased focus on ordained ministry and its demarcation from "laity." The ministry of the baptized does not disappear during this period, but the evidence which was preserved is found in such places as the stories of martyrs and saints rather than among the treatises on orders and ministry.

#### b. Medieval Church

During subsequent centuries, the three titles—"bishop," "presbyter," and "deacon"—persisted. Significant variations in the understanding of the ministries associated with these titles occurred, especially in Europe. Factors such as the rise of the papacy, the drives for political and ecclesiastical unification in Europe, and the rise of religious orders (monks, friars, and nuns) all influenced the understanding and practice of ministry. Though the title "deacon" persisted in this period, real diaconal ministry which communicated the love of God through the care of the poor, sick, and suffering, and through the work of educating the young, was largely taken over by such monastic orders.

Among the other most noticeable developments was the development of bishops into overseers of large territories with duties as temporal rulers. A second change that occurred gradually during this period was in the presbyterate. This took on more and more responsibility for sacramental ministry as a Christian Priesthood.

Evidence for the contributions of laity to medieval Christianity must be sought among the work of artists,

workers in the crafts, builders, princes and others who helped to make the medieval synthesis of Church and culture work in the West. While traditional ecclesiastical sources do not always record such contributions, the contributions speak for themselves, as do the stories of saintly lives and personal sacrifice preserved from the period.

### c. Reformation

The sixteenth-century Lutheran reformers inherited a particular pattern of ministry from the medieval Western Church. This existing and often corrupt structure colored and shaped many of the practical decisions they made in reforming the institutional Church. Their chief concern for ministry, however, was not its ecclesiastical and institutional side. Rather they were motivated by their attempt to recover the biblical emphasis on God's ministry through the justifying ministry of Jesus Christ. This is their clear priority in the confessional writings. The discussion of the Lutheran Confessions is found on pages 4-5 of this report.

The Lutheran reformers had little acquaintance with any viable form of a ministry of deacon except as a brief transition to the priesthood. In 1528 Luther himself suggested restoring a diaconate on what he took to be a New Testament or early Church model. "There ought to be deacons of the church who ought to serve the bishop and to rule the church in external things according to his counsel."<sup>53</sup> Lutheran reforms did exhibit a renewed commitment to the diaconal content of the Church's ministry in their arrangements for the care and support of the poor and needy and in their emphasis on teaching. This ministry was often made the responsibility of the state rather than the congregation alone or the religious orders which once cared for it. Reforms in Lutheran territories, such as in the city of Nuremberg, became models for the reform of social ministries across Europe. Lutheran church orders—for example, in Braunschweig-Calenburg in the early 1540's—frequently applied the title deacon to persons whose public ministry was the care of the poor and not preparation for the pastorate.<sup>54</sup> Other reformers (e.g., Calvin in Geneva and Bucer in Strasbourg) reclaimed what they took to be an ancient New Testament vision of diaconal ministry and restored it to greater prominence as a particular form of ministry in their programs of church reform.

### d. Lutheranism

Lutheranism came to North America with laity who emigrated from Northern Europe in the seventeenth century. These Lutherans generally assumed that forms of ministry would be like those they had known

in the state churches of their homelands. They often petitioned those European churches to supply ordained ministers to meet the needs of immigrant congregations for leadership in Word and Sacrament ministry. The difficult transition from European patterns to forms that served the American situation is detailed in sources such as the journals of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg (1711-1787). No longer supported by state structures, pastors and laity developed congregational and synodical structures of Church governance. The ordination and licensure of leaders for Word and Sacrament ministry was overseen by such structures.

Diaconal ministry also has been a part of Lutheran church life in North America since earliest times. Lay persons who were elected to congregational offices of deacon served as stewards of the congregation's property and assisted in spiritual ministry with the pastor. Under the influence of pietism, a renewed emphasis on the active ministry of the laity in the Church and in the world blossomed. Diaconal ministry also experienced a renewal as Lutherans established hospitals, homes, orphanages, schools, and other institutions for the care of the needy and the education of children. The establishment of colleges and seminaries to provide trained leadership both for Church and world was an important part of this revival.

Lutheran deaconesses played an important part in this diaconal revival of the nineteenth century. William Alfred Passavant (1821-1894) brought deaconesses from the Kaiserswerth Motherhouse to Pittsburgh in 1849. Other Kaiserswerth deaconesses came to Philadelphia and established institutions of diaconal service, especially hospitals and orphanages. While this was primarily a movement of women in diaconal ministry, male deacons were not unknown.

Other deaconesses came to North America from Neuendettelsau in Bavaria. These deaconesses enjoyed special relationships with the Iowa Synod through their connections with Wilhelm Loehe (1808-1872). Additional deaconesses such as Sister Elizabeth Fedde (1850-1921) came from Norway to establish motherhouses in Brooklyn, Minneapolis, and Chicago. Diaconal work among Swedish Lutherans also benefited from the ministry of deaconesses who founded institutions in Nebraska and Minnesota. A motherhouse affiliated with the General Synod was founded in Baltimore in 1895.

In the nineteenth century new emphasis was placed, in Germany and elsewhere, on *Diakonie*, through the deaconess movement as indicated above and also through the *Diakon*. This term usually referred to "a non-ordained full-time male church

worker, carefully trained to perform a special service" such as teaching, service in hospitals and other institutions of mercy, church music, seamen's missions, and the like.<sup>55</sup> The Inner Mission movement (later "social ministry") has expanded in the past century and a half to include, in Germany and other Lutheran areas, thousands of such persons, church-trained and related, at work, often in public programs and institutions. Male deacons were a part of the Wartburg home in New York.

The views of Lutherans like Johann Hinrich Wichern (1808-81), Amalie Sieveking (1794-1859), and Frederick W. Bodelschwingh (1831-1910), for example, were by no means uniform, any more than those of recent American Lutherans on ministry are in agreement.<sup>56</sup> But Lutheran theology since the sixteenth century and in the face of historical and social development and change has not been silent on ministry issues, including diakonia.

In Lutheran World Federation studies, there has been increasing agreement that the identity of the Lutheran church is shaped both by the past (for example though the confessional heritage) and by contemporary situations and service in the world.<sup>57</sup> Such an approach can reflect both traditional "marks of the Church" (such as "one, holy, catholic, and apostolic") and, encouraged by Luther's seven marks of Christ's "holy people in the world" (the Word of God; baptism; the sacrament of the altar; office of the keys [Matt. 18:15-20, sins forgiven]; ministers; prayer, public praise and thanksgiving to God; and the cross [persecution and suffering]),<sup>58</sup> can emphasize also "responsibility in the world." Such a doctrine of the Church underlies subsequent LWF studies on ministry.<sup>59</sup>

Given the confessional insistence on God's ministry to us, on the office of ministry for the means of grace, and, especially in Luther, on the priesthood of all the baptized, such a view of the Church and its marks implies twin concerns in ministry. Ministerial leadership is expected, on the one hand, to provide Word and Sacrament in congregations and other specialized settings, and, on the other, to stress service to the neighbor and to others in God's world. This study focuses on these dual tasks.

A lasting contribution of this period was the development of seminaries for the training of pastors and the commitment to the ideal of professionally trained full-time pastors. This commitment helped to shape ministerial preparation for generations down to the present time. It finally replaced other models of private study and apprenticeship which had once been used to train pastors. The importance of pastoral leadership was clearly affirmed in this development,

as was the American Lutheran commitment to a close relationship between seminary education and leadership in the Church's ministry.

#### e. Modern Ecumenical Developments

Challenges from society confront all Christian churches today. Divided churches now share these challenges, as well as the quest for unity in Christ for the sake of mission and the renewal of the Church. The result is greater ecumenical convergence across lines of ecclesiastical structure. The question about ministry that *BEM* poses is addressed to all churches today. "A common answer needs to be found to the following question: How, according to the will of God and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is the life of the church to be understood and ordered, so that the Gospel may be spread and the community built up in love?"<sup>60</sup>

A number of Lutheran church responses to *BEM* cautioned against its assumption that a single common answer must be found to the question of Church order and forms of ministerial leadership. The Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, as well as experience with other Lutherans and other Christian churches, demonstrate that a range of faithful answers to this question can be given simultaneously. However, cooperation in the mission of the Gospel may well call for a more common understanding or at least a more flexible attitude and ordering of ministry than is now present among the churches. Forms of ordained ministry that do more to separate than to unite churches are a real ecumenical problem. Ecumenical concerns are not limited to those who hold ministerial offices in the Church. Movements to renew ministry of the laity in Church and world are already broadly ecumenical.

Lutherans are participating in the ecumenical renewal of diaconal ministry. During its investigations the task force has seen the remarkable energy and promise which is characteristic of the revival of diaconal ministry. The task force has also seen the great and sometimes confusing variety associated with it. That variety is reflected in programs of diaconal training and service that have arisen in our own church and in its predecessor churches as well as ecumenically. In addition to deaconesses rostered in each of the predecessor churches, the ELCA also inherited rosters of persons who were "consecrated" deacons in the AELC. While not rostered by the ELCA or its predecessor churches there are also programs such as Diakonia; the Deacon Training Program; synodical programs in Upstate New York, West Virginia, and elsewhere; and the Order of St. Stephen, Deacon. Campus ministry and outreach programs

have also sponsored specially recognized forms of ministry which were not on the churchwide roster of ministers.

Certainly important among these diaconal developments is the decision by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada in 1991 to affirm that it would have bishops, pastors, and diaconal ministers. Since ministers currently move easily between the ELCA and the ELCIC and because the ELCA Deaconess Community and deaconesses of the Lutheran Deaconess Association serve the ELCIC as well as the ELCA diaconal ministry is a matter in need of considered coordination and cooperation between the churches.

In the Roman Catholic and Episcopal churches, the permanent diaconate (in distinction from the diaconate as a stage of preparation for the priesthood) has been restored as an ordained ministry. It has opened new avenues for service for individuals whose vocation is not to Word and Sacrament (presbyteral) ministry. It has also expanded the ability of those churches to provide specialized and trained leadership alongside priests. The United Methodist Church has reclaimed the diaconate as a permanent office which is consecrated, not ordained, together with an ordained diaconate for persons preparing to be ordained as elders.<sup>61</sup> The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and other Reformed churches are re-examining their forms of diaconal ministry. Deaconess communities of various churches are involved in advocating for diaconal ministry today in ways that touch both ordained and lay ministries.

The World Assembly of Diaconal Associations (DIAKONIA) and, in this hemisphere, Diakonia of the Americas and the Caribbean, draw together institutions, communities, and churches involved in this diaconal renewal across church divisions. Diaconal ministry is becoming a vital part of young churches in Africa and Asia.

One recent survey categorizes contemporary forms of diaconal ministry in four models which sometimes co-exist in a single church body: 1) deacons elected within individual congregations to serve at the local level only; 2) deacons who are transitional to the priesthood; 3) "permanent" deacons who receive local training and serve as ordained ministers on a non-stipendiary basis or less frequently on a full-time basis; 4) communities of deacons or deaconesses that came out of the Inner Mission movement. There is historical precedent for these and other possible forms of the diaconate to inform and enrich the shape of diaconal ministry in the Church today.<sup>62</sup>

The task force has made no attempt to frame churchwide proposals on 1) "deacons" elected by local congregations to serve only within their own congrega-

tion. No interest was shown in 2) ordination as a transitional deacon, e.g., for a year, as a step to ordination as a pastor. No recommendation was forthcoming to create throughout the ELCA a new kind of 3) "permanent deacon" identical to those of the Roman Catholic and Episcopal churches, though features of this approach are contained in the proposals that follow. The fourth type calls for further discussion (see pages 9-12).

Inevitably, most of what has been said about the "modern" period has been ecumenical since much of the discussion of ministry according to the Lutheran heritage has been in relation to the broad spectrum of options in ministry throughout Christianity and because of the mandate for this study. "Deacon" has meant many things in Christendom, but seldom has it been the divisive area in ministry among the churches.

#### 4. Society Today

Like most institutions in society, the ELCA is facing dwindling revenues to train and support ordained ministers and associates in ministry. Yet, the need for more such leaders, especially in urban centers with new populations and in many rural areas with shrinking populations, is constantly growing. In anticipation of such needs, the recommendations advocate greater use of non-stipendiary ministers (not paid for ministerial duties but on ELCA rosters) and licensure for persons to serve for a specified period of time in specific settings where pastors are not available.

A strong emphasis on the priesthood and discipleship of every Church member for ministry in daily-life is needed to provide Christian presence and witness in a society ever more complex technologically, vocationally, economically, ideologically, and ethically.

Greater efforts to secure accurate documentation in English which reflects the experience of traditionally under-represented cultures are needed in this society in general and in this church in particular. Studies such as this are handicapped by the lack of such documentation and are forced to rely upon anecdotal information. Readily comparable sources could advance cultural partnership and mission which crosses cultural boundaries.

Trained and committed persons are required for care and advocacy for an aging population, where health resources are often inadequate, especially for children and the poor, and where the disease of AIDS is growing. People cry out for counseling and support in all sorts of crises and problems, including broken homes, drugs, and victimization by injustice. In a church that has long prided itself on education, with schools at every level from nursery through seminary, new emphasis is needed on teaching the faith to inquirers and members of all ages. The Task Force on

Theological Education for Ministry is proposing a broader network in theological education for leaders and the whole Church. This calls for education specialists throughout the Church. In Church music ELCA congregations continue a long Lutheran and ecumenical heritage from the past. They also embrace new songs and patterns of worship from African-American, Asian, Native American, and Hispanic churches and cultures. Yet there is a scarcity of Church musicians to give leadership to the Church in meeting this demand. To meet these and other specialized needs the task force recommends diaconal ministers for the ELCA.

Because of these complex currents in society, this church needs greater flexibility for the future. Its need for expanded and specialized forms of ministry, consonant with its past and open to the challenges of coming years, has helped shape this report and its recommendations.

## C. The Question of Threefold Office within the People of God: A Lutheran Proposal

### 1. The Question of Threefold Office

The mandate of this study asks that it pay special attention to the “possibility of a Lutheran understanding and adaptation of the threefold ministerial office of bishop, pastor, and deacon and its ecumenical implications” (ELCA 10.11.A87. [1987 edition]). This also is the question which *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (BEM)* has posed to all churches for consideration. In 1991 this task force produced a report with three possible models in answer to this question. That report outlined a reaffirmation of the unitary office of ministry with rosters of lay ministry to supplement it. It outlined a twofold proposal which argued for the establishment of a diaconate (either ordained or consecrated). It also outlined three versions of the threefold office for considerations.<sup>63</sup>

In the course of five years of discussion, and particularly in response to its 1991 proposals, this task force has learned that the question that is so much at the heart of *BEM*—can threefold ministry, in some adapted form, be a path to unity?—is not the way in which most of the people of this church approach the issues either of unity or mission. In two rounds of churchwide hearings and forums, thousands of pages of documentation and correspondence, and scores of presentations, requests for a classic threefold ministry were expressed, but relatively infrequently. The task force discovered that for most people in the ELCA the

natural starting place for serious discussion is not forms or “folds” of ministry. The natural starting place is mission. Answering questions about the overall pattern of officially recognized forms of ministry (threefold, twofold, or unitary) did not answer the questions the people of this church regard as most important. Approaching the question as this part of the mandate and *BEM* suggested repeatedly left many of the questions about mission posed by the task force’s larger mandate unanswered.

The responses of Lutheran churches to *BEM* have been varied, as have reactions to the 1991 ELCA Report on Ministry by seminary faculties and individual theologians.<sup>64</sup> A typical response to the models in the 1991 report from ELCA pastors, bishops, associates in ministry, and laity was to express no strong preference for any of the models as they stood and to wonder why they were being proposed at all. Repeatedly, respondents expressed the sentiments: “I guess I could live with any of these models if I knew that it was really important to the Church’s mission to proclaim the Gospel in the world today.” “What will these forms of ministry allow the Church to do that it cannot do now?” “How will these proposals affect pastors?” “How will they affect the role of all the baptized?” These were the important issues to persons in this church.

### 2. A Lutheran Proposal

Rather than recommending forms of ministry that strictly follow a threefold, twofold, or unitary model, this report proposes a Lutheran adaptation that includes elements of several models. The elements recommended have emerged in response to needs for expanded and more flexible forms of officially recognized leadership which the task force has seen during its work. It is the mission question that must be asked first and only then the question of forms of ministry to serve that mission.

#### a. The Ministry of the Baptized

Commitment to the ministry of the whole people of God is an ecumenical concern. It is expressed in *BEM* and in the mandate of this study. The task force has consistently tried to integrate this issue with discussions of officially recognized forms of ministry to determine whether particular forms have the potential to draw more and more of the baptized into ministry both in the Church and in the world. This report affirms both the ministry of the whole people of God and the ministry of officially recognized, though not ordained, forms of lay ministry. This is a clear affirmation of the ministry which associates in ministry

have provided in the ELCA since 1988 and which other officially recognized ministries contributed to predecessor church bodies.

## **b. Ordained Ministry**

### 1) PASTORS AND BISHOPS

The pastoral ministry of Word and Sacrament is essential to the life of the Church. The proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments are the means of grace through which faith is bestowed by the Holy Spirit (CA 5). Everything should be done to strengthen and affirm this ministry and to encourage those who serve in it.

### 2) DIACONAL MINISTERS

Diaconal ministry as recommended in this report will be a ministry of service and witness, exemplifying the life of Christ-like service to persons in need and leading and equipping the baptized for their life of service within and beyond the congregation. Diaconal ministers will support the ministry of the baptized in the world, work with laity in discerning gifts for ministry, and equip their lives of service.

Diaconal ministers will be ministers of the Word in that they will be spokespersons for the Gospel, the apostolic faith, and the theological emphases of this church to God's world. They will also bear special responsibility to speak for the needs of God's world to the Church. They will, therefore, be trained in knowledge and understanding of the Word of God, in the Lutheran understanding of the Gospel, in personal spiritual formation and in theological reflection on issues of faith and life. This training will equip them to witness to the faith verbally and in action.

Diaconal ministers also will need training in specific areas of Christian service, often at a professional level, not merely to do the service themselves but to inspire, motivate, equip, and provide official leadership for others as well.

#### *a) Basic Standards<sup>65</sup>*

Basic standards for diaconal ministry would be identical to those for pastoral ministers:

Persons admitted to and continued in the ordained ministry of this church shall satisfactorily meet and maintain the following, as defined by this church in its governing documents and in policies developed by the Division for Ministry, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council: a. commitment to Christ; b. acceptance of and adherence to the Confession of Faith of this church; c. willingness and ability to serve in response to the needs of this church;

d. academic and practical qualifications for ministry; e. life consistent with the Gospel and personal qualifications including leadership abilities and competence in interpersonal relationships; f. receipt and acceptance of a letter of call; and g. membership in a congregation of this church (ELCA 7.31.11.).

#### *b) Qualifications and Preparation*

1. Diaconal ministers must have gifts for their chosen area of ministry to be discerned by the person, by the congregation(s) of which they have been a part, by the seminaries or other institutions involved in their preparation, and by synodical candidacy committees.

2. They must receive biblical, theological, and communication training appropriate to all ministers of the Word.

3. Many areas of diaconal ministry will require professional training appropriate to their particular responsibilities (see categories of service below).

4. Commitment to this ministry, as to pastoral ministry, should be for life. Such ministers should be open to serve where needed and called in the Church.

5. Specific criteria and requirements will be established by the Division for Ministry, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council. (See Appendix B, "A Proposed Model for Preparation.")

#### *c) Endorsement and Certification*

The process of candidacy for diaconal candidates will be as thorough as the one for pastoral candidates. It will be carried out by synodical candidacy committees according to standards and guidelines to be established by the Division for Ministry in consultation with the Conference of Bishops.

#### *d) Areas of Service*

Since the particular form of diaconal ministry proposed here would be new to the ELCA, the following are examples, not an exhaustive list. Diaconal ministry should develop in response to emerging needs and, therefore, must be flexible enough to enable diaconal ministers to move into areas of service where the needs of persons and society are pressing the Church for leadership and response.

Diaconal ministers could serve in congregations, clusters, conferences, agencies, institutions, synods, and churchwide expressions of the ELCA. They also could be sent out beyond the institutional Church on its behalf into areas where the Church's presence, leadership, and service are needed.

- Diaconal Ministry of Education: congregational education leadership, parish and Lutheran high

school teaching, possible college and seminary teaching. Child care and day care centers, congregation youth ministries, church camping.

- Diaconal Ministry of Mission and Evangelism: in areas and among, groups usually untouched by the Church's proclamation of the Gospel, involving, e.g., evangelists and catechists.
- Diaconal Ministry of Care: parish nurse, hospital ministries, ministering to the physically challenged, the poor, homeless, addicted, prisoners, immigrants, the aged. Some counseling ministries. This area should include advocacy and justice ministries.
- Diaconal Ministry of Administration: congregation business administrators, administrators of church related institutions and agencies.
- Diaconal Ministry of Music and the Arts: cantors, directors of church music programs, teachers of church musicians in colleges and universities.

*e) Call, Accountability, and Discipline*

Since diaconal ministers will be officially recognized ministers of the church they must be "called" by entities authorized to do so (see ELCA 7.41.A91.). Diaconal ministers must also be accountable for their life and ministry as are pastoral ministers. They must be accountable to the calling entity and to the synod of which they are members. Standards for discipline will be identical (except as specifically related to Word and Sacrament ministry in 20.21.01.c.) to those for pastoral ministers (ELCA 20.21.01.).

**c. The Question of Ordination for Diaconal Ministers**

How is ordination to be understood in relation to the Church's mission? Ordination should have as its prime purpose, as in the "laying on of hands" in the Pastoral Epistles, to assert that those who hold public office in and for the Church are to hold to its Gospel and teachings. Ordination calls upon designated leaders to transmit faithfully that Gospel to others and to the whole Church (1 Tim. 6:20; 2 Tim. 1:13-14; 2:21).<sup>66</sup> Other terms to designate this responsibility, such as consecration, are no clearer than ordination and have sometimes been used interchangeably with it. This understanding of ordination is also consistent with article 14 of the Augsburg Confession which links public teaching to the call of the Church.

It is clear to most Lutherans that pastors exercising a ministry of preaching and sacramental celebration fit this definition. The definition is often used more broadly than Lutherans in North America are accus-

tomed to. The authority of the ordained ministry is also important for the "mission and caring ministry" of the Church. This ministry is expressed not only in preaching and sacraments but in deeds and service that communicate the Gospel. Historically Christians have used ordination in connection with other forms of ministry as well.

Ordaining diaconal ministers finds precedent in the history of the Church. The New Testament describes a "laying on of hands" to set persons apart for a variety of ministries (see page 4). From the third century there is evidence that persons were ordained to diaconal ministry. Ecumenically, the practice of ordaining deacons is found in churches with episcopal forms of ministry (Roman Catholic, Anglican, Orthodox) and in churches with other forms (Presbyterian and Reformed churches). Because they share the public leadership and teaching aspects of the office of ministry, it is appropriate to ordain persons for service as diaconal ministers. The obligations of such ordination require education, training, and discipline commensurate with other ordained ministers.

Ordained diaconal ministers will be clergy of this church who are charged with leadership of this church's diaconal mission of witness and service. Pastors and bishops will continue to exercise the ordained ministry of preaching the Word and administering the Sacraments.

Ordaining diaconal ministers is consistent with the task force's understanding of ordination as it is practiced by this church (see page 15 below).

**d. Officially Recognized Lay Ministries**

The ministry of the Church is never limited to ordained persons. The ELCA and its predecessors have benefitted from a variety of ministries carried out by laity in Church vocations. In its recommendations, this report will support that ministry in this church. Associates in ministry and their predecessors enrich this church's ministry and as laity bring to this church important competencies and a commitment to ministry.

Many persons who have already met demanding educational criteria for certification and who are called to diaconal ministry may find this new form of ordained service a welcome vision for service. However, for those who do not, and for others called to lay service in the Church's vocations, the present program of associates in ministry offers an important alternative.

**e. Church Employees Not Rostered by the ELCA**

Every expression of this church, its congregations, synods, and churchwide organization, should continue

to employ laity who bring special gifts and competencies to its ministry and who serve faithfully. Church employees must be compensated equitably, supported, and encouraged through continuing education and collegial relationships with the officially recognized ministers of this church.

#### **D. Summary**

Throughout its history the Christian Church has organized and reorganized its institutional forms to serve its mission from God. This was true in apostolic times when apostles appointed and laid hands upon others to serve the needs of the whole community so that they might continue preaching. It was true as presbyters and bishops were chosen and set apart for leadership in the Pastoral Epistles. The subsequent history of the Church details changing forms of leadership in service of the Church's mission in a changing world. Even the Reformation of the sixteenth century, whose main focus was on the Gospel message, effected changes in the structures of officially recognized forms of Church leadership to serve that message. Movements of Church renewal within Lutheranism gave rise to new forms of service by deaconesses and deacons in Europe and the United States. The world's needs today also call for reexamination of forms of ministry that will help to organize this church's life for mission and ministry together.

This report urges this church to affirm and embrace a wide variety of forms of ministry. It begins with a call to deepen the Church's commitment to the ministry which is the responsibility of all the baptized people of God. This ministry embraces responsibilities in the Church but is particularly focused on witness, vocation, and stewardship in the world.

Within this ministry of all baptized Christians, ministries of leadership are called for. These officially recognized forms are not at odds with the ministry of the baptized but exist to support and give specific leadership. They can be seen as a continuum of service linking groups long familiar and new possibilities: ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament, together with ordained diaconal ministers; officially recognized laity, including associates in ministry and the ELCA deaconess community; and all the baptized in ministry who complete the continuum and extend it into the world. The ELCA has inherited a variety of forms of this ministry. This report affirms the important contribution all the various aspects of this continuum can make to ministry together.

The vision of ministry undergirding this range of ministries is one not of competition but of mutual support. Leaders are set apart for leadership, not personal prestige. This diverse set of forms will enrich this church's ability to respond to God's call to ministry in the world.

# PART II: RATIONALE AND ACTIONS OF THE CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

## A. The Ministry of All the Baptized

### 1. Rationale

God calls all people through the Gospel into community. In baptism persons are joined to Christ, to other baptized persons, and to the Church, which is the people of God and the body of Christ. Through that same baptism each person is called to minister in the name of Christ. All Christians are commissioned by baptism to announce the message of reconciliation with God (2 Cor. 5:18-6:2). As Christ is a priest for others, so Christians intercede for others with God and proclaim the existence of a gracious God. Baptism not only seals the promise of salvation to individuals, it joins persons together for ministry in Christ.

All Christians need support for ministry, whether in the Church or in the world. They need to be affirmed as bearers of the Gospel; equipped through appropriate preparation; supported through affirmation, celebration, prayer, and encouragement; given financial support for training and renewal; and be accountable to God and to the body of believers for this ministry.

It is essential that these needs be addressed directly and fully for all the baptized. The precise application of these elements will be different for various forms of ministry. The critical challenge is to find specific ways to make them available to all.

A goal of this report is to articulate a vision of the Church's ministry which does not build up its officially recognized forms at the expense of all the baptized engaged in ministry. The call to ministry is rightly understood in a variety of senses: God's call to be justified in Christ (Romans 1:6; 8:30; 9:24; 10:14);<sup>67</sup> God's call to each justified person to live a life of faith, hope, and love (1 Thess. 2:11-12; 1:3; Eph. 4:2);<sup>68</sup> God's call to officially recognized ministries of leadership in the Church (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:28);<sup>69</sup> and God's call to vocations in the world. Christians respond to God's call and work for justice and compassion wherever they are. What is done in home or factory is no less a fulfillment of this call (vocation) than what is done in church or parish hall. God's call sends people into all the roles and responsibilities of everyday life. It joins them together for ministry. The whole world is the arena for ministry.

Amid the varied cultures that flourish in North America, the importance of deepening the awareness

of shared mission among all the baptized and between laity and those who serve in officially recognized ministries is crucial. It will be through the witness of laity that the Word of God will touch persons who never come into contact with pastors and bishops. If laity are to make this witness most effectively, then training, beyond basic confirmation instruction, must be provided for them by this church.<sup>70</sup> The leadership of diaconal ministers will be of special relevance here. This imperative for the ministry of the baptized in the world also will mean that education and preparation for ministries need to be extended to laity throughout this church. This means deploying resources for theological education differently than in previous generations. It means developing systems for support and mutual accountability that reach beyond the officially recognized ministries of this church to the ministry of all the baptized. While the Church has benefitted from the expanding role of all the baptized in leadership roles in its liturgical life, governance, and other internal arenas, it has yet to realize the full potential of the ministry that God calls the baptized to exercise in the arenas or stations in which they (and not the officially recognized ministers) are the indispensable witnesses to the Gospel and stewards of God's world.

The Lutheran heritage has a rich tradition of theological concepts such as vocation and the universal priesthood of the baptized. What is needed is to articulate these concepts more clearly and persuasively and to make these beliefs real within the life-experience of each member of the ELCA. It is difficult to overestimate the potential of this ministry. The seriousness with which the ELCA commits itself to this aspect of our being together for ministry may well determine the effectiveness of our influence for mission in an increasingly secular world.

### 2. Actions of the 1993 Churchwide Assembly:

**To adopt, as amended by the 1993 Churchwide Assembly, the following recommendations regarding the ministry of the baptized, in keeping with recommendations of the Task Force on the Study of Ministry and the board of the Division for Ministry:**

- 1. To reaffirm the universal priesthood of all believers, namely, that all baptized Christians are called to minister in the name of Christ and, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to proclaim the promise of**

God in the world and in their various callings and to bear God's creative and redeeming Word to all the world, to meet human needs, to work for dignity and justice for all people, and peace and reconciliation among the nations, while praying for one another, hearing confession and forgiving one another, and in unusual circumstances<sup>71</sup> and where authorized, to administer the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion.

2. To direct the Division for Ministry and the Division for Congregational Ministries to lift up and develop further this church's commitment to encourage all baptized members to understand, be equipped for, and live out their ministries in the world and in the Church. This Church's commitment shall be demonstrated by integrating the emphasis on the ministry of the baptized into the life of this church in and through its various expressions [that is, congregations, synods, and Churchwide organization], units, institutions, laity movements, but especially through congregations. The Division for Ministry and the Division for Congregational Ministries shall make a progress report and appropriate recommendations to the 1995 Churchwide Assembly.
3. To direct the Division for Ministry to arrange for a two-year period (1993-1995) of theological study and action-reflection on the ministry of the baptized in the world and on the ways in which faithful people are expected to account for their ministries to both God and the community of believers.

## B. Call and Ordination

### 1. Rationale

#### a. Call

Call can be rightly understood in several senses.

1) God calls all persons through the Gospel to faith in Jesus Christ. The Gospel is the call of God in Jesus Christ to justification and forgiveness of sins for all people. Through the Gospel God calls people to be Christians, and to a life of faith, salvation, and service. Living in the fellowship of all Christians in the Church, their life is nourished by the "means of grace" (the Word and Sacraments) and identified with Christ's own call to the cross and resurrection.

2) God calls all Christians to share the ministry of Jesus Christ. Through baptism God calls and empowers all Christians to share the ministry of Jesus Christ. This ministry is committed to all Christians, who are to proclaim what God has accomplished in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Equipped with a

variety of spiritual gifts, Christians carry the Gospel, in many ways, to each other and to the world.

3) God calls all Christians to a life of vocation. To have a "vocation" means to live out one's call. For Christians that call is answered in the structures of daily life—family, work, state, service to the neighbor, care of creation—as the setting in which to live out their identity in the Gospel.

4) God calls some Christians into the office of ministry. Lutherans teach that the Gospel is proclaimed through the means of grace which the Augsburg Confession calls the office of ministry. Through these means the Holy Spirit imparts to sinners the reality of the Gospel—justification by grace through faith apart from human effort or works. The means of grace require that there be persons to speak the Word and administer the Sacraments. God calls such persons through the Church to fill the office of ministry. In the language of the Augsburg Confession (article 14) a regular call<sup>72</sup> is mandated. Presupposed are an "inner call" from God to the office of ministry and an "external call" working through the assembly of all believers and the regular ecclesiastical procedures of this church. Requiring these persons to be "regularly called" is a way to comfort and encourage both the officeholders and the laity that it is the Gospel and not something else that will be served.

5) The office of ministry, divinely instituted<sup>72</sup> can be humanly<sup>73</sup> structured in various ways. Christians are free to order the office of ministry in ways that creatively reflect commitment to God's mission through the Church and the centrality of God's ministry to all people through the means of grace. It is the right of the Church to call pastors whose exercise of the office is the proclamation of the Word and the administration of the sacraments. It is the right of the Church to call other persons who exercise the office in ways that enhance and support this foundational ministry of the means of grace.

6) The word "call" is also used for a document attesting the decision by a congregation or other appropriate entity, in accord with the procedures of this church, to appoint a person to a specific field of labor in the office of ministry. All persons serving in officially recognized ministries of this church, lay or ordained, will be called by an appropriate expression of this church and be issued letters of call by that expression.

#### b. Ordination

Ordination, which is always related to call, is an action of the Church of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, to set persons apart for the ministry of the Church who have been called to a specific ministry

according to the standards and procedures of this church. By ordination the call of God through the Church (see paragraphs 4 and 6 on page 14) is publicly attested; the authority to minister in accord with Christ's command and promise is publicly bestowed; and the gifts of God to guide and empower that ministry are confidently sought through prayer for the Holy Spirit.

Prayer for, and the laying on of hands upon, persons set apart for such ministry are enjoined in the New Testament. As context and purpose for ordination, these passages emphasize mission (Acts 13:2-3; 6:6)<sup>74</sup> and the public proclamation, preservation, and faithful transmission to others of the Gospel and teaching of the apostles, as the true treasure of the Church (1 Tim. 6:20; 2 Tim. 1:13-14, 2:2).<sup>75</sup>

The rite of ordination occurs in a public service of worship that may be set "within the liturgy of Holy Communion."<sup>76</sup> Ordination always needs clearly to proclaim the ministry to which a person is being ordained, whether Word and Sacrament or diaconal. It includes: a) attestation of the call and approval of the candidate; b) exhortation to the candidate and assembled congregation together with their promises in response; c) intercessory prayer; d) laying on of hands by the presiding minister (and other ordained persons) together with prayer for the Holy Spirit; e) presentation of symbols of the ministry to which the candidate is called and ordained; and f) proclamation of the Word of God in readings and preaching.

Ordination is an act of the whole Church in which the assembly of the baptized and the ordained each play an indispensable role. The bishop as the synod's pastor "exercises solely this church's power to ordain (or provide for the ordination of) approved candidates..." (ELCA †Synod 8.12.i.). The assembled congregation acts on behalf of the whole Church. Other ordained ministers join the bishop in the laying on of hands. Only persons duly called in accordance with the established procedures of this church are eligible for ordination.

Ordination inaugurates a particular calling from God and the Church that is normally life-long. It is not repeated. Lutherans have held that ordination is life-long but not in the sense of "once ordained, always authorized to exercise ordained ministry." For the ordained minister is expected to function in the specific ministry to which that minister is called and in which she or he is installed. Ordained ministers never exercise ministry "on their own," but serve in ministry subject to a specific call from a congregation or other recognized source of call of this church. Retired

pastors continue to be ordained and listed on this church's roster. They also continue to be subject to the procedures of this church and recognized standards of ministerial ethics. In every case the ordained including retired pastors are subject to the discipline of this church and its synods through the bishops and procedures indicated in its constitutions and bylaws.

Ordination designates those baptized Christians who are called to serve as clergy of the Church. Ordination does not constitute authority to act arbitrarily or unilaterally but binds the ordained to a relationship with this church and the Church, the whole people of God which is personal, collegial, and communal.

## **2. Actions of the 1993 Churchwide Assembly:**

**To adopt, as amended by the 1993 Churchwide Assembly, the proposals of the Task Force on the Study of Ministry, as recommended by the board of the Division for Ministry, related to call and ordination:**

- 1. To reaffirm this church's understanding that ordination commits the person being ordained to present and represent in public ministry, on behalf of this church, its understanding of the Word of God, proclamation of the Gospel, confessional commitment, and teachings. Ordination requires knowledge of such teachings and commitment to them. Ordained persons are entrusted with special responsibility for the application and spread of the Gospel and this church's teachings.<sup>77</sup>**
- 2. To reaffirm that ordination to the ministry of this church requires that all candidates will meet Churchwide standards of preparation and will be called.<sup>78</sup>**
- 3. To reaffirm that installation be the rite by which ordained ministers are placed into specific ministries of this church.**
- 4. To specify pastors, as well as the bishop (or the person whom the bishop authorizes in providing for the ordination), to participate in the laying on of hands at ordination.<sup>79</sup>**
- 5. To declare that movement among the officially recognized ministries of this church be determined by the standards and specific requirements for approval prescribed by this church for call, ordination, and installation into those ministries.<sup>80</sup>**

## C. This Church's Officially Recognized Ministries

This church is free to organize its officially recognized ministry in ways that reflect commitment to God's mission through the Church and the centrality of God's ministry to all people through the means of grace. This task force recommends that pastors and diaconal ministers be its officially recognized ordained ministries. It also affirms the ministries of associates in ministry and deaconesses as officially recognized (though not ordained) forms.

### Ordained Ministries: Pastors and Bishops 1. Rationale

The ordained ministry of the Church, Lutherans agree, is "basically one ministry, centered in the proclamation of the Word of God and the administration of the Holy Sacraments. This ministry embraces both the ministry of pastor within and for a local community of believers and of bishop within and for a communion of local communities."<sup>81</sup> Such pastoral and oversight functions have, from New Testament times, often been supported and augmented by deacons and in other ways for wider service in Church and world.

What Lutherans term "ministry of Word and Sacrament" or the "pastoral office" emerged gradually and with many names in the New Testament decades (see pages 3-4, above). The apostles provided no one pattern for subsequent Church leadership except that leaders were to set forth the Gospel which the apostles proclaimed and all that Gospel implied for life and witness. Prophets flourished at times, arising where God willed. Preaching and teaching to communities of believers as well as to potential believers in the vast world outside the Church are often mentioned (see the lists in 1 Cor. 12, Rom. 12, and Eph. 4, referred to above). Presbyter (or "elder") may be the most common term in the New Testament writings for local ministers. "Pastor" as a term for those whom the ascending Christ gave to the Church as leaders, to equip all believers, appears first in Eph. 4:11.<sup>82</sup> The figure of the Shepherd (God, in Ezek. 34:11-16 and Psalm 23; Christ, in John 10, 1 Peter 2:25, Heb. 13:20)<sup>83</sup> was a powerful influence toward the eventual understanding of "pastor" (the term means "shepherd" of a flock). The complex history of how ministerial leadership developed over the centuries, with presbyters becoming "priests," under the bishops (and pope, in the West), has been sketched only briefly above

(Section I.A.3.). How the Lutheran Reformation put great emphasis on the pastoral office of proclamation has been noted in more detail as has been the Reformation's freedom to make adaptations in the office of ministry in light of changing situations and needs (see pages 9-12). A recent example of drawing new conclusions from the biblical material, in spite of long Church tradition, has been the inclusion of women together with men as pastors and bishops.

For all the changes, in society and world, that face the Church today, the task of proclaiming God's Word of reconciliation, "in order that human beings might believe in Jesus Christ and through Christ be reconciled to God,"<sup>84</sup> remains a constant and a necessity. This is so because it is the ordained pastoral ministers, most of whom serve in congregations, "to whom is committed the public administration of the Means of Grace."<sup>85</sup> This point was reiterated in an American Lutheran Church statement, for example, even while recognizing that "the shape of a pastoral ministry may and must adapt to the many situations which cry out for the Word of grace through the Gospel," especially as clergy are "sent into a troubled world with a ministry of reconciliation."<sup>86</sup> It is, in part, to preserve traditional Lutheran emphasis on the basic and constitutive nature of the pastoral ministry of Word and Sacrament for the Church's life in our day, that diaconal ministers are now being proposed for greater service in world and Church so that the crucial ministry of Word and Sacrament can be focused on proclamation of Word and Sacrament.

Often in Church reports on ministry the pastor in the congregation has been taken for granted. Those who engage in ministry of Word and Sacrament in noncongregational service have also been overlooked. The Lutheran Church in America response to the 1982 Faith and Order statement suggested, indeed, that even in *BEM* "the pastoral sense of the ordained ministry, which the Lutheran tradition has always stressed, is insufficiently in focus...."<sup>87</sup> In spite of an ELCA mandate for the present task force to give attention to ministry of "bishop, pastor, deacon" and "all the baptized," there is danger that we may overlook the vast number of faithful pastors on whom the life of this church depends for ministrations of the means of grace in specific places and situations. Those who serve publicly in "the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:18; Luther Bible, "the office that preaches reconciliation") are of critical importance to the Church and all its people. If "the church is apostolic when it carries out the function of ministry,"<sup>88</sup> it is Word and Sacrament ministry that equips and nurtures us all in accord with the apostles' Gospel.

In any comprehensive strategy for encouraging and equipping baptized members of the ELCA for their ministries in world and Church, local pastors must play an important role. In some places other leaders may also be present and in all congregations laity may provide examples and leadership in ministry in daily life. The pastor, as “resident theologian,” will be a key leader through attitude, teaching, and proclamation, to meet these concerns. Recommendation c. below links the ordained pastor to the ministry of all the baptized in the ministry of every congregation.

Since pastors and bishops are ministers of Word and Sacrament in differently specified expressions of the Church (e.g., congregations for pastors and synods for bishops), it is important for a proper understanding of the ministry of bishop, as a part of the office of ministry, that bishops actually exhibit the Word and Sacrament character of this ministry explicitly and consistently, and that this office not be misunderstood as only administrative or executive in nature.

Since bishops are ministers of Word and Sacrament, they should be elected from the roster of pastors of this church, called and ordained for a ministry of Word and Sacrament, not from any other roster. Since election by a synodical or churchwide assembly should express confidence and affirmation of the newly elected bishop, a term of six years, is recommended.<sup>89</sup> This term would enhance continuity and minimize the disruptive effect of more frequent elections while preserving the right of the assembly to review the incumbent and evaluate alternative nominees. Proposals by Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue III regarding bishops will be before this church at a later time (1993-1997). To demonstrate the cooperative and collegial relationship among the bishops of this church, bishops should normally preside at the installation of bishops.

## **2) Actions of the 1993 Churchwide Assembly:**

To adopt, as amended by the 1993 Churchwide Assembly, the proposals of the Task Force on the Study of Ministry, as recommended by the board of the Division for Ministry, related to ministry of Word and Sacrament:

- 1. To reaffirm the ministry of Word and Sacrament, which God has instituted and to which this church calls and ordains qualified persons. Each person ordained into the pastoral office is to minister in the name of Christ and with power conferred by the Holy Spirit. Such persons shall proclaim God’s Word: through preaching, teaching, sacraments, conduct of public worship, and**

**pastoral care; through speaking for justice, especially in behalf of the poor and oppressed; and through declaring God’s love.<sup>90</sup>**

- 2. To urge that these tasks of the ordained pastoral ministry of Word and Sacrament, essential for the life of the community because they involve the means of grace from God, be carried out together with all baptized believers and officially recognized ministers and with their support and encouragement.**
- 3. To call upon those in ordained pastoral ministry to work especially for the understanding and expansion of the ministry of all the baptized in daily life through efforts in each congregation or groups of nearby congregations.**

### **CONCERNING BISHOPS**

- 1. To retain the use of the title “bishop” for those ordained pastoral ministers who exercise the ministry of oversight in the synodical and Churchwide expressions of this church.**
- 2. To declare that the ministry of bishops be understood as an expression of the pastoral ministry. Each bishop shall give leadership for ordained and other ministries; shall give leadership to the mission of this church; shall give leadership in strengthening the unity of the Church; and shall provide administrative oversight.**
- 3. To initiate amendment of the constitutions of the ELCA and its synods in describing the ministry of the bishop to reflect more clearly the pastoral and oversight functions of the bishop.**
- 4. To retain the present constitutional description of membership in the Conference of Bishops (ELCA 15.41.) which limits membership to those serving in office.**
- 5. To stipulate that the term of office for bishops shall be six years. Bishops may be reelected and synods may establish term limitations.<sup>91</sup>**
- 6. To specify that only persons ordained into the pastoral ministry of Word and Sacrament be eligible nominees for election as bishop.**
- 7. To specify that a service of installation be used for those called to serve as bishops of this church and that the bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a member of the Conference of Bishops appointed by the bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America install each newly elected synod bishop; and that at the installation of the bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the presiding minister be the retiring ELCA bishop or, where**

**that is not possible, a bishop designated by the Church Council.**

## **Diaconal Ministers**

### **1. Rationale**

What reasons are there for the ELCA to establish a diaconal ministry as an officially recognized ministry of this church? This task force has identified nine basic reasons, summarized here and described more fully in the paragraphs that follow: 1) Christ's ministry calls the Church to diaconal ministry; 2) the needs of the world call for diaconal ministry; 3) diaconal ministry will serve the ministry of all the baptized; 4) diaconal ministry will serve the ministry of Word and Sacrament; 5) diaconal ministry will help the ELCA fulfill its mission; 6) diaconal ministry will give flexibility for response to emerging needs; 7) persons with gifts for diaconal ministry are available to the Church; 8) diaconal ministry has its own integrity; 9) diaconal ministry will be a contribution to our ecumenical relationships.

1) Christ's ministry calls the Church to diaconal ministry. Diaconal ministry proclaims important aspects of the ministry of Christ. Service to persons in need was and is an essential aspect of the ministry of Jesus. Christ came not to be served but to serve. Such service is also the calling of the Church and of every Christian. Since Christ's ministry is basic to all Christian ministry, both proclamation and service to persons in need are essential to all Christian ministry. Proclamation without service results in a disembodied message. Because pastors are also called to exemplify servant ministry the diaconal emphasis is not set in contrast to pastoral ministry but emphasizes the crucial dimension of servanthood for every Christian and for the Church as an institution.

Diaconal ministers will have the special responsibility of exemplifying service in Christ's name to the needy and for motivating and equipping the laity for servanthood in their daily life. In addition, diaconal ministers will be trained in the Word of God and affirmed as spokespersons for the faith. They will be expected to witness to Christ by word as well as deed, often in a teaching capacity in congregations as well as in their daily life.

2) The needs of the world call for diaconal ministry. The world needs a Church that reflects Christ the servant as well as Christ the Savior and Lord. At a personal and societal level, suffering, confusion, helplessness, discrimination, intolerance, ignorance, alienation, self-gratification, greed, and loneliness seem to be more prevalent than ever before. Injustice is not on the decline. Depersonalization is the inevita-

ble companion of technology and bureaucracy. The world needs to see and experience the reconciling Word in Christ through a Church that cares deeply and responds effectively to human need. This Church needs a group of persons whose specific calling is leadership of the Christian community's service in the world.

3) Diaconal ministry will serve the ministry of all the baptized. Through the centuries, baptized Christians have been active in lives of service. The Church, however, has yet to acknowledge and achieve the full potential of the priesthood of all believers. There are, of course, many instances of dedicated and inspiring service by individuals and groups, but we are far from being a church where each member is a little Christ to the neighbor. Establishing a diaconal ministry would be a clear commitment of the Church to take the universal priesthood of believers more seriously than ever. Because such service is essential to the Church's life, it is important to highlight it by calling persons to exemplify it and equip others for it. This recognition has led many other Christian communions to give renewed attention to the possibility of a revised and renewed diaconate.

4) Diaconal ministry will serve the ministry of Word and Sacrament. It will help pastors to concentrate on their basic and all-important task of preaching and teaching the Word of God, sacramental ministry, pastoral care, and general leadership of the congregation or local ministry in a specialized setting. Today, a nearly impossible load of expectations is laid upon many pastors, partly because too little has been done by way of recognizing, affirming, and utilizing the variety of gifts and charisms with which God blesses the Church for its mission. To establish a diaconal ministry would be a significant way of recognizing such gifts and uncovering and encouraging them among the people.

5) Diaconal ministry will strengthen the ELCA in the fulfillment of its declared mission. Among the components of that mission are:

- Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations (ELCA 4.02.a.).
- Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all (ELCA 4.02.b.).

- Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, and standing with the poor and powerless and committing itself to their needs (ELCA 4.02.c.).
- Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service (ELCA 4.02.d.).

To fulfill these purposes this church has committed itself to:

- Encourage and equip all members to worship, learn, serve, and witness; to fulfill their calling to serve God in the world; and to be stewards of the earth, their lives, and the Gospel (ELCA 4.03.b.).
- Call forth, equip, certify, set apart, supervise, and support an ordained ministry of Word and Sacrament and such other forms of ministry that will enable this church to fulfill its mission (ELCA 4.03.c.).
- Lift its voice in concord and work in concert with forces for good, to serve humanity, cooperating with Church and other groups participating in activities that promote justice, relieve misery, and reconcile the estranged (ELCA 4.03.g.).
- Study social issues and trends, work to discover the causes of oppression and injustice, and develop programs of ministry and advocacy to further human dignity, freedom, justice, and peace in the world (ELCA 4.03.1.).

Recognizing that all the ministries of this church are committed to this mission, these purposes still confront the Church with many unfulfilled challenges. In partnership with all the laity, officially recognized lay ministries, and pastoral ministry, a diaconal ministry would signal a commitment to new ways of augmenting our present ministries. This does not imply that we have had a defective ministry but only shows that the nature of the Gospel, the needs of the day, the mission of this church, and the resources of the ELCA seem to point clearly in this direction. The Church has the freedom and the responsibility of shaping its ministry in ways that in the judgment of the Church will best serve the Gospel.

6) Diaconal ministry will give flexibility for response to emerging needs. A diaconal ministry will give this church the personnel to respond in a planned way to mounting personal and societal needs and the flexibility to send out persons, in the name of this

church and with its authorization and support, into areas of developing need. Diaconal ministers could be sent out to function on the frontiers of the Church's interaction with society where they would be encouraged to venture into areas where this church's presence and influence are lacking and to try new approaches in service to individuals and social systems. Such ministers will be bearers of Christ's love in deed and word. They will serve under the direction of this church and with clear channels of accountability. They, like diaconal ministers called to service within the structures of the Church, would be expected to be active participants in the life of a congregation of this church.

7) Many persons with gifts for diaconal ministry are available to this church. The call to public ministries of the Church, other than pastoral, is sensed by an increasing number of members of this church who are rendering excellent service as associates in ministry. Significant numbers of students in ELCA seminaries today are preparing for ministries other than pastoral.<sup>92</sup> In other programs as well, men and women are developing their God-given gifts for service in Christ's name. Among our present associates in ministry and rostered persons from the predecessor church bodies many would welcome the opportunity to become candidates for diaconal ministry and a part of the Church's officially recognized ministry.

8) Diaconal ministry has its own integrity. Whatever its particular focus all diaconal ministry must:

- Be oriented to the alleviation of human need;
- Exemplify service in Christ's name and equip others for it;
- Witness to the Gospel in word and deed;
- Provide public, accountable spokespersons for the faith of the Church; and
- Support the ministry of Word and Sacrament and the ministry of all the baptized.

The diaconal ministry here proposed is in harmony with the variety of ministries in the New Testament. Its justification lies in both the New Testament variety and in the freedom of the Church to order the ministry of the means of grace in response to the needs of the time. The Church's responsibility is to be faithful to its heritage and open to its calling.

Since the Reformation, caring ministries similar but not identical to this proposed diaconal ministry have been part of the life of many Lutheran churches, especially in response to great social problems accompanying industrialization. Today, in one form or another, many Lutheran churches of the world have greater variety in their ministries than is the case in the United States. Evangelists, catechists, teachers, deacons, deaconesses, and others carry out ministries that

are sometimes commissioned, sometimes ordained, sometimes lay.

9) Diaconal ministry will be a contribution to our ecumenical relationships. Diaconal ministry is experiencing a renaissance in many churches. European Lutherans have been substantial contributors to this movement. The restoration of a permanent diaconate inaugurated this revival among Roman Catholics. American Episcopalians have also established a form of permanent diaconate. Reformed churches and Presbyterians with long-standing traditions of diaconal ministry are studying and revising their forms. The United Methodist Church has been engaged in extensive study and change in its understanding and practice of diaconal ministry. None of these other churches is urging the ELCA to adopt just what they have. The form proposed in this report might well be a provocative and helpful contribution to the efforts of all the churches to redefine the character of the diaconate today.

#### *Significant Features of this Proposal*

1) Diaconal ministers will be ministers of the Word of God. They will be publicly charged to transmit, defend, and teach it and to be spokespersons for the faith of the Church. The message and its expression in service are not to be separated. In pastoral ministry, the Word of God preached and celebrated sacramentally is primary. In diaconal ministry, the Word of God in specialized service and witness is primary.

2) Diaconal ministers will be charged to equip the baptized for service in all aspects of their life. This is undoubtedly stronger in the diaconal ministry proposed here than in some other forms of diaconal ministry. It is, however, fully in harmony with the Gospel and is needed in the Church today.

3) Diaconal ministers will be ordained. The reason for this proposal is that their ministry is a ministry of the Word of God and will support and enhance pastoral ministry. Ordination is the most appropriate rite because:

- On behalf of the whole Church, ordination affirms and authorizes a call to a public and accountable ministry of the Word of God.
- Ordination makes clear to the Church and the world that this is a ministry of the Word of God.
- It affirms that persons with various kinds of gifts can be authorized for this ministry if they meet the standards of preparation and accountability.
- It clearly joins pastoral and diaconal ministers collegially.
- It will be the least hierarchical way to set apart persons for public ministry since ordination

would be the rite for all in the office of the Word of God.

4) The two forms envisioned here should be reciprocal. This will allow pastors to meet the standards for diaconal ministry and diaconal ministers to meet the standards for pastors if they discern a change in call and gifts. Since ministry belongs to the entire people of God, no ministries are completely exclusive and all may overlap. The difference between them is in focus and emphasis, preparation and education, call and gifts. None is higher nor lower.

5) Since the ministries of pastor and diaconal minister, though closely related, are not identical and since the gifts and preparation for these ministries also differ, the task force proposes separate rites of ordination. Ordination to pastoral ministry centers in proclamation of the Word and administration of the Sacraments. Ordination to diaconal ministry centers in witness to the word and leadership in serving ministries. A call and subsequent ordination from diaconal to pastoral ministry, and vice versa, would require approval by the synod and would terminate the authorization to function in the previous form of ministry. One cannot be simultaneously both a diaconal and a pastoral minister. If one should later be re-approved and called to the previous form of ministry, one would not be ordained to that ministry a second time. (For additional material on diaconal ministry see page 10 in this report.)

## **2. Actions of the 1993**

### **Churchwide Assembly:**

**To adopt the following resolutions in relation to proposals of the Task Force on the Study of Ministry and actions by the board of the Division for Ministry:**

#### **ESTABLISHMENT OF A DIACONAL MINISTRY**

- 1. To establish a diaconal ministry as part of the officially recognized, rostered ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.<sup>93</sup>**
- 2. To designate, as recommended by the board of the Division for Ministry, such a diaconal ministry as part of the lay rostered ministries of this church for which individuals could be certified and approved for the roster of diaconal ministers, according to the criteria, standards, policies, and procedures of this church.<sup>94</sup>**
- 3. To declare that diaconal ministers be called by this church to a public ministry which exemplifies the servant life, equips and motivates others to live it, and shares the Word of God in Law and Gospel through word and deed wherever possible and in a great variety of ways, in order to serve**

officially in interdependence with other laity, pastors, and bishops of this church, sharing with them responsibility for the Word of God in service to the Church and the world, to empower, equip, and support all the baptized in the ministry and mission of Jesus Christ—with an initial and illustrative, but not an exhaustive, list of categories of diaconal ministry to include education, mission and evangelism, care, administration, and music and the arts.<sup>95</sup>

4. To assign the care and guidance of candidates for diaconal ministry to this church's candidacy system, with the Division for Ministry to provide appropriate assistance and training for synodical candidacy committees to deal with diaconal candidates.<sup>96</sup>
5. To affirm that specific requirements for approval be developed by the Division for Ministry, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.<sup>97</sup>
6. To specify that any person on the ELCA roster of ordained ministers at the time a roster of diaconal ministers is begun shall be able to remain on the roster of ordained pastors of Word and Sacrament, even if the call in which that person is serving might more appropriately be termed diaconal. If the person wishes to change to the diaconal roster, she or he may do so by meeting the then existing standards and requirements of a specific type of diaconal ministry.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF DIACONAL MINISTRY

1. To direct that the Division for Ministry, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops and the approval of the Church Council—and in consultation with the appropriate officials of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada—make the necessary revisions in related documents necessary for their application to diaconal ministers.
2. To direct the Division for Ministry to hold a consultation(s) with persons engaged in diaconal ministry of various kinds in this church and with those engaged in training persons for diaconal service in this and other churches as a part of the design and preparation of programs for training ELCA diaconal ministers.

#### RECOMMENDATION ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF DIACONAL MINISTERS AND ASSOCIATES IN MINISTRY

To direct the Division for Ministry to study the relationship between associates in ministry and diaconal ministers with the results and any recommendation emerging from such a study to be presented to the 1995 Churchwide Assembly.<sup>98</sup>

## Lay Ministries Inherited from Predecessor Churches

### 1. Rationale

The individuals most immediately affected by the mandate for the study of ministry are the more than 1,300 persons who were officially recognized as “lay” ministers in the ELCA’s predecessor church bodies (AELC, ALC, and LCA).<sup>99</sup> In 1988, the rosters (official lists) of the persons in these ministries were “frozen” (no new candidates could be added) until the outcome of the ELCA Study of Ministry. Persons serving in these ministries are awaiting a decision about their place in the ministry of the ELCA.

Efforts to clarify and structure the ministries of these rostered persons have resulted in confusion and a sense of loss of affirmation of these treasured and necessary leaders in our church. Despite this, persons serving on these rosters have maintained steadfast and faithful service. The task force expresses its gratitude to these persons for their commitment in this extended period of transition.

As a “temporary matter” (ELCA 23.17.) the constitution indicates that the term “associate in ministry” will expire at the opening of the churchwide assembly which receives the Study of Ministry report. “Associates in ministry” provides a common terminology, but is in no way intended to erase the identities of those on the inherited rosters. Some of these people will need to be specifically identified for tax and other purposes. For the sake of ministry, it is important that associates in ministry be recognized, named, supported, and included in continuing educational events, regional gatherings, mailing lists for resources, and the like. All of these things enhance their ministries. We also recognize that, during this five-year time, the term “associates in ministry” has become very significant for partnership among these people. Not all of those on inherited rosters embrace the term, but many do. Although intended as an interim category, it has become a significant name.

During the course of its study, the task force has also been made aware of the important role of congregational support and program staff not rostered churchwide and not subject to churchwide accountability and liability, as well as lay persons employed by synodical and churchwide expressions of this church. Persons serving the Church in these capacities merit respect, support, and access to theological and other continuing education resources for their ongoing leadership development.

### 2. Actions of the 1993 Churchwide Assembly:

To adopt, as amended by the 1993 Churchwide Assembly, the proposals of the Task Force on the

Study of Ministry, as recommended by the board of the Division for Ministry, regarding officially recognized lay ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

1. To retain persons rostered as ALC commissioned Church staff, AELC deaconesses and deacons, ALC deaconesses, LCA deaconesses, LCA lay professional leaders, AELC commissioned teachers, in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in the recognized category of ministry of their previous church body for as long as they are in good standing according to the standards and procedures of this church. Any of these persons may resign from the roster or may elect to be rostered in another ELCA category by meeting the appropriate criteria established in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
2. To determine that the ELCA *Constitutions, By-laws, and Continuing Resolutions*, continues to refer to the above inherited rosters from the three predecessor bodies and the ELCA associates in ministry as “associates in ministry.”
3. To affirm that, consistent with the statement on “call” [on page 14 above], persons on inherited rosters may be issued letters of call by the appropriate expression of this church.

#### VOTING IN SYNOD ASSEMBLIES

To direct that all active inherited associates in ministry, all current ELCA-certified associates in ministry, and all future associates in ministry be given voice at synod assemblies and vote in addition to the 60 percent of lay voting membership.<sup>100</sup>

## ELCA Associates in Ministry

### 1. Rationale

Interim criteria and procedures for certification of 157 associates in ministry were developed in order for the ELCA to continue to support and to exercise its constitutional responsibilities toward associates in ministry until the Task Force on the Study of Ministry has completed its study in 1993. The official standing of persons who have met the interim criteria and who are rostered as ELCA associates in ministry ends when the ministry study’s recommendations are implemented.

The following recommendations are made in fairness to these persons and in recognition of the valuable ministry that they provide for the mission of the Gospel in this church.

## 2. Actions of the 1993

### Churchwide Assembly:

To adopt, as amended by the 1993 Churchwide Assembly, the proposals of the Task Force on the Study of Ministry, as recommended by the board of the Division for Ministry, regarding officially recognized lay ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

1. To retain all persons rostered in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as certified associates in ministry at the time of the adoption of the recommendations of the Task Force on the Study of Ministry on that roster as long as they are in good standing according to the standards and procedures of this church. Any of these persons may resign from the roster or may elect to be rostered in another ELCA category by meeting the appropriate criteria established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
2. To affirm that, consistent with the recommendations on “call” [on page 14 above], persons on this roster serve under call by this church and may be issued letters of call by the appropriate expression of this church.
3. To direct that this church retain ELCA-certified associates in ministry as an officially recognized lay roster category.
4. To urge that persons now in the associate-in-ministry endorsement process continue and have the option of becoming associates in ministry or of moving toward becoming diaconal ministers.
5. To determine that approved and called candidates for associate in ministry enter into that form of officially recognized lay ministry in a service of commissioning.

## Deaconesses

### 1. Rationale

Because of the unique nature of the Deaconess Community of the ELCA as a community with a carefully defined membership and a tradition of churchwide rostering for members of that community, it is important to see the roster of deaconesses as distinct from the other lay rosters of this church. The ongoing nature of that community and its relationship with this church also means that a simple “grandparenting” of the roster of deaconesses does not reflect their actual relationship to this church. The task force has affirmed the community’s contribution and urged its continuance in the ELCA. The following recommendations reopen the roster of deaconesses

and address the question of how deaconesses shall be rostered.

## 2. Actions of the 1993 Churchwide Assembly:

To adopt, as amended by the 1993 Churchwide Assembly, the proposals of the Task Force on the Study of Ministry, as recommended by the board of the Division for Ministry, regarding officially recognized lay ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

1. To recognize the long history of the Lutheran deaconess movement in the United States and encourage the continued service of the Deaconess Community of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and ELCA members of the Lutheran Deaconess Conference in the life of this church.
2. To end the frozen roster status of the ELCA roster of the Lutheran Deaconess Community of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and authorize the setting apart and rostering of qualified persons for service as deaconesses by meeting the appropriate criteria for roster status established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
3. To recognize the appropriateness of deaconesses who meet the standards and requirements for ordained ministry, upon call to such a ministry, becoming ordained pastors or who meet the standards and requirements for diaconal ministers becoming diaconal ministers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.<sup>101</sup>

## Discipline and Roster Management

### 1. Rationale

While the study of ministry was in progress the constitution of the ELCA provided for discipline of inherited rosters and ELCA associates in ministry under various categories. With the opening of the 1993 Churchwide Assembly, a new set of provisions for discipline will be required.

### 2. Actions of the 1993 Churchwide Assembly:

To adopt, as amended by the 1993 Churchwide Assembly, the proposals of the Task Force on the Study of Ministry, as recommended by the board of the Division for Ministry, regarding officially recognized lay ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

## DISCIPLINE OF PERSONS IN OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED LAY MINISTRIES

1. To direct that, in matters of discipline, all rosters of "associates in ministry"—those inherited, the 1988-1993 associate-in-ministry roster, and any new lay roster(s) established by this church—shall be subject to the same definitions, guidelines, and procedures.
2. To direct that the definition and guidelines for discipline for "associates in ministry" (rostered laity) shall be substantially similar to that of ordained ministers in accordance with the responsibility and nature of the category of ministry.
3. To direct that the procedure for discipline of "associates in ministry" shall be substantially similar to that for ordained ministers.

## OTHER MATTERS CONCERNING OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED LAY MINISTRIES

1. To direct that all rosters of "associates in ministry"—those inherited, the 1988-1993 associate-in-ministry roster, and any new lay roster(s) established by this church—shall be subject to the same guidelines and procedures in matters related to the management of the roster, including "on leave" designation, retirement, and removal.
2. To direct that all rosters of "associates in ministry"—those inherited, the 1988-1993 associate-in-ministry roster, and any new lay roster(s) established by this church—shall be subject to the same principles governing representation in synod assemblies.
3. To direct that the process for terminating a congregation's call of a rostered lay person shall be substantially similar to the provisions for termination of a call of an ordained minister found in ¶S14.13. in the *Constitution for Synods* of this church.
4. To direct that once a person is removed from an inherited roster, there will be no reinstatement to that roster. Rather, persons seeking to return to active roster status must apply for acceptance to the new roster by whatever criteria are in effect.
5. To direct that any person on a grandparented roster shall relinquish such status upon being accepted on any new roster which is established.
6. To instruct the Church Council, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, to provide for the adoption of appropriate services to mark entry into diaconal ministries, commissioning of associates in ministry, and their respective services of installation.<sup>102</sup>

## D. FLEXIBILITY FOR MISSION

### 1. Rationale

Needs are rapidly increasing for officially recognized forms of ministry that broaden this church's ability to deploy persons for leadership in ministries of Word and Sacrament and of diaconal service and witness.

The ELCA'S Division for Outreach estimates that this church already has more than 2,500 rural congregations each with fewer than 70 persons at Sunday worship. Most of these congregations - assuming present synodical guidelines for support of pastors within ten years will no longer be able to support a full-time pastor. Another 900 urban congregations are in the same situation of size and support. To meet the crisis in such congregations, different ways of providing leadership are needed or will be soon. One proposal below involves "non-stipendiary" ministry: ministers who make their living in a secular occupation ("tent-making") and serve in congregations and other expressions of this church, often only part-time, and who do not receive full financial remuneration from this church for the ministry they provide. These non-stipendiary ministers, pastoral or diaconal, are to be accountable in their synods, under the oversight of the bishop and appropriate committee, as provided under procedures to be developed by the Division for Ministry in consultation with the Conference of Bishops.

A second proposal involves "licensing." Programs already exist across the ELCA, as they did in its predecessor churches, to try to meet the needs in small, often isolated congregations or for outreach ministries. Some examples include the Deacon Training Program in North Dakota, the Diakonia Program in New Jersey and Metropolitan New York, programs of diaconal training in New York and West Virginia, and another program in Michigan.

Specialized ministries such as "catechist" and "evangelist" also are identified as needs for the mission of this church. The Division for Outreach estimates that 400 "domestic missionaries" will be needed to serve in various settings across the country, identifying and training local leaders. This pattern of ministry has proven effective in ethnic communities, but it is not currently reflected in the official forms of ministry that the ELCA can authorize at the churchwide level. The proposal for diaconal ministers provided earlier in this report, including an alternate route to service, can help here. A program of licensing persons synodically, based on churchwide standards, also can be an important tool.

Another potential mission resource is ordained persons "on leave from call." Reasons for such leave include family obligations such as rearing children, care of parents, spouse employment, extended graduate study, and a host of personal reasons. At present, ordained persons are removed from the church's roster after three years without call. Such persons, who can be used for part-time ministry, are a valuable resource. The Conference of Bishops should be able to grant exceptions to the three-year limit in cases of demonstrated mission need. Persons on leave from call should be evaluated annually as to whether they are contributing to this church's mission as ordained persons. The goal here is not primarily to accommodate rostered persons but to expand the leadership resources available to bishops.

The following recommendations are designed to extend and deepen ways in which this church can respond to needs for ministry. In doing this they assume as norm the ordained ministry of Word and Sacrament and seek to maintain the unity of this church in synodical programs of temporary licensure, in non-stipendiary ministries, and with regard to "on leave from call" policy by employing churchwide standards, administered with appropriate flexibility in synods. Flexibility for mission also calls for continued cooperation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.

### 2. Actions of the 1993

#### **Churchwide Assembly:**

**To adopt, as amended by the 1993 Churchwide Assembly, the proposals of the Task Force on the Study of Ministry, as recommended by the board of the Division for Ministry, related to flexibility for mission:**

#### **NON-STIPENDIARY MINISTRY**

- 1. To determine th at this church may have stipendiary and non-stipendiary ministers among its rostered ministries; and**
- 2. To direct that churchwide standards for non-stipendiary ministers be developed by the Division for Ministry, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council.**

#### **LICENSED MINISTRY**

- 1. To agree that, where needed to provide pastoral or diaconal leadership for a congregation or other ministry of this church, the synod bishop in consultation with that ministry may license a rostered person, or a baptized person not on any roster, to provide that ministry in a particular place for a specific period of time.**

2. To determine that, to be eligible for such ministry, persons must meet churchwide standards approved by the Division for Ministry, the Conference of Bishops, and the Church Council.
3. To specify that authorization and accountability for such ministries, which will be supervised by an appropriate synodically-appointed ordained minister, rest with the synodical bishop and appropriate synodical board or commission.

#### MINISTRY WHILE ON LEAVE FROM CALL

To provide for the possibility that ordained persons rostered by this church but no longer holding a letter of call from a source officially recognized by this church may continue on the roster, subject to careful annual synodical review for the Church's mission, under specific policy to be developed by the Division for Ministry, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council. Retention on the roster beyond three years must be approved by the Conference of Bishops.

#### COOPERATION WITH EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

To direct that this church, through the Division for Ministry, engage in careful consultation on all major issues of ministry with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, in order to preserve their shared mission in North America, particularly in the areas of ministry in daily life, diaconal ministry, and other shared forms of officially recognized ministry.

#### REVIEW

1. To direct the Division for Ministry to review the effects of the recommendation of the Study of Ministry adopted by the 1993 Churchwide Assembly and, as a part of its on-going work, report its findings to the 1999 Churchwide Assembly.
2. To direct the Division for Ministry to report to the Churchwide Assembly no later than 1999 any implications that ecumenical agreements may have on the ordained and/or diaconal ministry of this church.<sup>103</sup>

## Appendix A

### The Process Employed for The Study of Ministry 1988-1993

The process for this study was developed by the Division for Ministry and approved by the Church Council of the ELCA in July 1988. The study was designed around the work of a task force of 17 persons selected by the board from churchwide nominations. The following persons were selected and have served since 1988: the Reverend John H. P. Reumann, chair, Teresa Bailey, the Reverend Carl E. Braaten, the Reverend Norma Cook Everist, John Graff, Gracia Grindal, the Reverend LaVern Grosc, the Reverend Will Herzfeld, the Reverend April Ulring Larson, Marjorie Leegard, secretary, the Reverend Fred W. Meuser, the Reverend José David Rodriguez, the Reverend Paul Seastrand, Sue Setzer, Elizabeth Steele, Nelvin Vos, the Reverend Wayne Weissenbuehler. The Reverend Connie A. Miller was appointed as liaison member from the board of the Division for Ministry. The Reverend James Cobb was appointed as liaison member from the Church Council. The Reverend Joseph Wagner, executive director of the Division for Ministry participated in each task force meeting. Honoring a commitment of ten to fifteen days of meetings each year, these task force members have served generously and selflessly throughout the years of the study. The staff members for the study are the Reverend Paul R. Nelson, director, and Phyllis Stewart, support.

This task force met three times each year, January, June, and October throughout 1988-1992. In 1993 it met in January for its final regular meeting. In March 1993 it will meet to confer with the board of the Division for Ministry. The full task force also is scheduled to participate in the Churchwide Assembly in August 1993.

During 1988-1991 the task force heard formal presentations on issues related to its mandate and work from the following presenters: Carl E. Braaten, Roy A. Harrisville, Karl Donfried, Robert H. Smith, Eric Gritsch, Gerhard O. Forde, Teresa Bailey, H. George Anderson, Todd Nichol, Robert Fischer, L. DeAne Lagerquist, Betty DeBerg, Stella Ogunwole, Nancy Sederberg, Karen Bloomquist, Robert C. Holland, David A. Krueger, Judith A. Larsen, Philip Hefner, Linda Hartke, Serge Castigliano, Herbert Cleveland, Judith Cobb, Ronald Hasley, Mark Jerstad,

Patrick Persaud, Judith Simonson, Madelyn Busse, Jeff Daehn, Netsie Griffith, Jerry Johnson, Katherine Miller, Jane Prestbye, Ronald Stedman, Stephen Bouman, William Hurst, Susan McArver, Sherry Kiefel, Mel Kieshnick, Cynde Kuck, Don Vetter, Lorraine Brugh, Paul Westermeyer, Louise Williams, Diane Greve, Jan Janzow, Frieda Gatzke, Gunnel Sterner, Rose Kroger, Esther Aus, Olive Hanson, Samson Mushemba, William Dexheimer, Esther Tse, Monica Melanchthon, Peri Rasolondraibe, Yoshiro Ishida, Bonnie Jensen, Joseph Burgess, Timothy Lull, Elizabeth Nordbeck, Robert Wilken, Gerald Moede, Roger Fjeld, Robert Wright, Wayne Weissenbuehler, Carl Peter, George Lindbeck, Martin Marty, William Lazareth, Patrick Kiefert, Herbert Anderson, Ralph Smith, Margaret Krych, Gladys Hod ge, Victor Leonard, Pat Miles, Dean Ryerson, Michael Root, Gregory Pierce, Franklin D. Fry, Gayle Bintliff, William Diehl, James Echols, Dorothy Marple, Walter Bouman, William Rusch, and Paul Berge.

Several consultations were held on special topics. A consultation on Ministry in Daily Life was held in October 1990 (presenters included in above listing). Consultation on the diaconate in June of 1991 included Gerald Moede and Rosalie Bentzinger of the United Methodist Church; Samuel Nafzger of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod; Constantino Ferriola of the Conference of Catholic Bishops; Edwin Hallenbeck of The Episcopal Church; and Roger DeYoung of the Reformed Church in America. A multicultural consultation with members of the staff and board of the Commission for Multicultural Ministries of the ELCA was part of the 1991 meetings.

Beginning in January of 1992 the bulk of the task force's meeting time was devoted to reports and discussions of the work of its internal working groups. These materials became the foundation for the recommendations and rationale found in the present report.

To further engage teaching theologians of this church, the study co-sponsored with the Division for Ministry the first two Convocations of Teaching Theologians of the ELCA (1990 and 1992). Task force members participated in the 1990 convocation and papers were invited from all participating theologians. ELCA seminary faculties also were invited to respond to the 1991 Report. These responses have become a part of the record of the task force's work.

To reach beyond the theological and academic establishment, a round of churchwide open hearings was conducted in 1989. Task force members and staff, with the assistance of deployed Division for Ministry staff, were available in some 30 locations across the church to hear comments, concerns, and suggestions from ELCA members who wished to address them

directly. More than 1800 persons availed themselves of this opportunity. After its 1991 Report was issued, the task force held a round of churchwide forums to discuss its content with interested persons. Again, some 30 locations were chosen across the church. More than a thousand interested persons attended these forums.

To assist in its educational objective, the study has made videotaped segments of presentations available to interested persons through SELECT at Trinity Seminary. It also developed an adult curriculum resource entitled *The Shape of Ministry: A Study of Ministry in the ELCA* (Leader Guide and Participant Booklet), which was published by Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, in 1990, and invited congregational study groups to share their opinions with the task force. Following its consultation on Ministry in Daily Life, the study, in cooperation with the Division for Ministry, published the presentations: *On Assignment from God, The Ministry of the Baptized*, available from the Division for Ministry.

To keep channels of communication open to all interested persons, the director distributed a *Synopsis* of meetings to nearly 2,000 persons who requested it. In addition, a *Report* was regularly distributed to all rostered persons in the ELCA via the *Action Packet*.

In 1991 the task force issued its interim report to the church, *The Study of Ministry Report to the 1991 Churchwide Assembly: Study Edition* (Chicago: ELCA Division for Ministry, 1991). Some 30,000 copies of this report were distributed to rostered persons, laity, study groups, seminarians, and interested persons from other churches.

To encourage partnership with Spanish speaking persons in this church and beyond, the task force has prepared translations of several of its reports and distributed them to interested persons. A regularized system for preparing translations of ELCA materials would have enhanced this process had it been available. Learning from the experience of Hispanic Lutherans would also have been enhanced, had a body of comparable study materials reflecting Hispanic experiences been available in English to all members of the task force. The lack of such materials for all traditionally under-represented communities forces decision makers to rely upon anecdotal materials to a large degree.

During the course of its work the task force has made regular reports to the board of the Division for

Ministry through its director, liaison member, and selected task force members, as well as Joseph Wagner, executive director of the Division for Ministry. It has reported to the Conference of Bishops at each of the meetings of that body since 1989. The Church Council has also received regular reports from the director. Other boards and staffs of churchwide units also have asked for and received briefings on the work of the study. Reports were distributed to synod assemblies in 1990 and 1992.

As the list of presenters above illustrates, careful attention has been given to consultation with ecumenical dialogue partners of the ELCA. All dialogues that have touched on ministry have reported to the task force. Attention has been given to work in progress with the Lutheran-Episcopal and Lutheran-Reformed dialogues. Invitations were extended for member churches of the Lutheran World Federation to share informal responses to the task force's work. Special attention has been given to cooperation with the ongoing work of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and its study of ministry. Members of the ELCIC board responsible for its study have been regular participants in the meetings of the ELCA task force. The ELCA has shared materials and made written reports with the ELCIC, including the participation of John Reumann at one of its meetings. This relationship is a key one since ministers are now readily transferred between the two churches. Moving in divergent directions could complicate that wholesome relationship.

The director's office has maintained an extensive file of written materials submitted as letters or papers addressed to the task force. These, together with the extensive printed literature on the topic of ministry, have served as resources to the task force during its study process and in the formulation of its recommendations.

Consultation with the full Division for Ministry staff, the Secretary, and the General Counsel of the ELCA also have been a part of the study process, especially in its final stages.

The design of this study called for it to be: "participatory and educational, providing opportunities for persons representing various issues and points of view regarding ministry to be heard and to take part in the study." The means detailed above were all employed in response to that goal.

## Appendix B

# Model for the Preparation of Diaconal Ministers

This model was provided for consideration by the Division for Ministry in connection with the consultation for the design and preparation of programs for training ELCA diaconal ministers. It suggests at least two tracks for preparation: one which is based on more traditional forms of academic preparation though with increased access through distance learning and nonresidential programs, and one which is based on alternate routes of preparation relying more heavily on equivalency and experience. Both tracks include the same components.

The ELCA Study of Theological Education for Ministry engaged in careful review and made recommendations on how to use this church's resources for theological education. Theological education is a critical component of diaconal training. If theological education can be made more broadly accessible through distance learning, non-residential programs of many kinds, cooperation between existing institutions, such as seminaries, continuing education centers, and church colleges, theological education for diaconal ministers need not be seen as restrictive. This church's commitment to theological education need not be sacrificed to any one system for delivering that education to the persons in need of it.

At its April 1995 meeting, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America determined that diaconal ministers would enter public ministries of this church by a rite of consecration by adopting the following action:

CC95.04.07 To affirm that diaconal ministers will enter service in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through a rite of consecration.

Consequently, a rite of consecration was approved for use throughout this church in 1996.

### I. Components of training for diaconal ministers

- Comprehensive study of the Bible
- Lutheran confessional theology
- Historical studies with special emphasis on diaconal ministry
- Worship

- Evangelism
- Mission studies with special emphasis on contemporary society
- Basic care and counseling skills
- Field work
- Formational diaconal studies and colloquies
- Specialized training in particular service area (e.g., education)

### II. Requirements

- A. Bachelor's degree (or equivalent)
- B. Demonstrated competence in specialized service area
  1. Academic major at bachelor's or graduate level
  2. Professional certification (e.g., teaching certificate)
  3. Continuing education
- C. Theological training  
Two year theological degree from a seminary approved by synodical candidacy committee (Master of Arts, Master of Religious Education, Master of Theological Studies), residential or by extension; or the equivalent
- D. Diaconal studies
  1. Integrated with theological degree or
  2. Supplementary courses for candidates whose theological degree did not contain them
  3. Participation in formational courses and colloquies
- E. Practice of diaconal ministry
  1. Internship in diaconal ministry
  2. Diaconal field work
  3. Equivalent experience and reflection

### III. Alternate route to diaconal ministry

As with preparation for ordained ministry as a pastor, it is important that this church provide an alternate route to rostered service as a diaconal minister. This alternate route should be especially targeted at mission needs related to diaconal service such as in communities whose primary language is other than English, isolated communities, ethnic communities, or persons of more advanced age and experience.

Churchwide standards for this alternative route were developed by the Division for Ministry, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council.

## Appendix C

### Minority Comments

In accordance with procedures established by the Task Force the following question was posed to all seventeen task force members in a postal ballot:

That the report, *Together for Ministry*, be recommended to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in fulfillment of the mandate to study the nature of ministry, leading to decisions regarding appropriate forms of ministry that will enable this church to fulfill its mission (ELCA 10.11.A87.); and

That the recommendations to the 1993 Churchwide Assembly in the report be presented for decision, with the sections "Part One" and "Part Two" being regarded as guide and resource for interpretation and implementation in this church's faith and practice.

The final vote was recorded as fifteen voting "yes," two voting "no," with no abstentions.

In accordance with procedures established by the Task Force the following "minority comments" are presented at the request of the individual task force members named. All other votes were submitted without written comment.

#### Teresa Bailey

"*Together for Ministry* fails adequately to meet the mandate to recommend 'appropriate forms of ministry...[for] mission.'<sup>104</sup> While an admirable attempt was made to be inclusive regarding TFSM membership, this document fails to reflect concerns raised by members within the project.

"To ordain deacons with M.A. plus professional training<sup>105</sup> effectively excludes most minority, poor, and non-English speaking Lutherans. They must petition to be 'excused' from white middle class 'Standards.'<sup>106</sup> Participation by minority, poor, and non-English speakers was systematically excluded on the basis of unavailability<sup>107</sup> of published (English) documentation, as well as the location, timing, and structure of hearings and consultations.<sup>108</sup>

"Professionalizing deacons furthermore removes them from their traditional role as indigenous congregational leaders who required no extra training prerequisite to recognized calling."<sup>109</sup>

#### John Graff

"While I support all the recommendations, they do not reflect my preference for ordering ministry. Task force discussions convinced me it would be neither biblically nor confessionally forbidden to ordain everyone working within the various expressions of the institutional Church (except clerical and support services) into one office of public ministry and install them into functional offices.

"I would do this. Far from diminishing anyone, it would provide a single, clear distinction based on

situs—the ordained minister variously within the Church, the unordained minister in the world. Church workers not wishing ordination for whatever reason could be accommodated but would not be rostered, commissioned, or otherwise 'set apart.'

"Spirited action on the recommendations for support of lay ministry will assure that it is recognized and affirmed."

#### Gracia Grindal

##### Minority Report Rejecting *Together for Ministry*

"After inconclusive debate, over one million dollars, and a change of course at the last moment, the TFSM has given the church an unacceptable report. The report claims Lutheran confessional standards but undercuts them.

"DEACONS: This proposal violates the priesthood of all believers. Adoption would create a vaguely described order of almost-pastors, create another layer of hierarchy, provoke contention, and detract from the proper role of both laypeople and pastors in the mission of the Church. Expense is not addressed. The use of two ordinations will only add to, and not resolve, the problems associated with multiple rosters of officials.

"BISHOPS: The accountability of bishops is reduced by the recommendation to abolish term limits. This ought to remain a matter for each synod."

#### John H. P. Reumann

"1] Page 22, c and d: The rationale is not persuasive for *ordaining* diaconal ministers. Better, 'commissioned,' within the ELCA'S officially recognized ministry, with hopes for ecumenical agreement on 'deacons.'

"2] Page 24, e: If diaconal ministers are commissioned, associates in ministry should enter their lay ministry through 'induction' (not 'commissioning'), thus avoiding unclear hierarchy."

#### José D. Rodríguez

"I want to express my approval of the report with the following qualification that I would like to be included as a minority comment in the final and official document.

"The document is still clearly dominated by a middle-class-Euro-American Lutheran perspective. The rationale did not emphasize the prophetic dimension of ministry, especially as it was experienced in the Scriptures and Lutheranism. We highlighted the notion of 'service,' yet we failed to emphasize the prophetic dimension of that service. This effectively marginalized the very important dimension of prophecy which is central to the witness of ministry in traditionally underrepresented communities. It is prophecy that can help us address more adequately the problems of inequality, classism, racism, sexism, and other 'isms.' This prophetic perspective rediscovers a forgotten dimension of the Biblical and theological tradition that needs to be central to the Church in its efforts to define its ministry and mission."

## ENDNOTES

1. Recommendation of the board of the Division for Ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, March 19, 1993.
2. This letter accompanied the Final Report and Recommendations booklet prepared by the Task Force on the Study of Ministry.
3. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions* (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 1991), 10.11 .A87. Citations that follow will include ELCA followed by chapter designations.
4. *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry. Faith and Order Paper No. 111.* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982), M 7b, 21. Hereafter cited as BEM.
5. Worship, witness, and service are categories found in: *The Lutheran Understanding of Ministry: Statement on the Basis of an LWF Study Project* (Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, 1983), 7-8. Hereafter cited as LUM. Proclamation and unity are concerns found in ELCA 4.02.
6. The original Task Force text: "How can the ELCA witness to the growing religious communities of Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and others that are increasingly important in American society?" Amended by the board of the Division for Ministry.
7. George Gallup Jr., and Jim Castillo, *The People's Religion: American Faith in the 1990s* (New York: Macmillan; London: Collier Macmillan, 1989), 60.
8. Martin Luther, Small Catechism, explanation of the Third Article of the Creed, in *The Book of Concord, The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert in collaboration with J. Pelikan, R. Fischer, and A. C. Piepkorn (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 345.
9. "Patristic" refers to the early "fathers" of the Christian Church who wrote between the end of the first century and the close of the eighth.
10. "But 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); "... and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 1:6); "... you have made them to be a kingdom and priests serving our God, and they will reign on earth" (Rev. 5:10); "Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. Over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:6).
11. *The Study of Ministry Report to the 1991 Churchwide Assembly: Study Edition* (Chicago: ELCA Division for Ministry, 1991) paragraphs 20-24, 133-159; BEM M paragraphs 1-6; LUM paragraphs 1-10.
12. "The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ..." (Eph. 4:11-12).
13. 1991 Report, paragraphs 19, 28, 29; Various ministries of leadership appear in the New Testament communities. The evidence ranges from the Gospel of John where there is little such structure to the Pastoral Epistles, where bishops, presbyters, and deacons are mentioned, with lists of qualifications (not duties) for each. The book of Acts speaks of elders as 'overseers' (*episkopoi*) at 20:17-28. Deaconesses and widows are also mentioned as recognized groups."
14. 1991 Report, footnotes 19-20.
15. "... he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit ..." (Titus 3:5); "While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat, this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins' " (Matt. 26:26-28).
16. *hyperetai ... tou logou.* "... just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, ..." (Luke 1:2).
17. *diakonia tou logou*
18. "... while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word" (Acts 6:4). Luke 1:2 refers to the apostles as eyewitnesses (cf. Acts 1:21-22) or to a group of witnesses after the apostles, prior to Luke's day, who passed on the story of Jesus; Acts 6:4, to the twelve who preached the word of God.
19. "Now during those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food. And the twelve called together the whole community of the disciples and said, 'It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables'" (Acts 6:1-2); "What they said pleased the whole community, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch" (Acts 6:5).
20. "For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18); "... but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ..." (1 Cor. 1:23); "When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:1-2).
21. "... because our message of the Gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of persons we proved to be among you for your sake. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith in God has become known, so that we have no need to speak about it" (1 Thess. 1:5-8).
22. "And God has appointed in the Church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues" (1 Cor. 12:28); "We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness" (1 Cor. 12:6-8).
23. *Charisma*, Romans 6:23.
24. *charismata*
25. *pneumatika*
26. "And God has appointed in the Church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles?"

- Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?" (1 Cor. 12:28-30); "Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that 'all of us possess knowledge.' Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up" (1 Cor. 8:1).
24. "For I am longing to see you so that I may share with you some spiritual gift to strengthen you – or rather so that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine" (Romans 1:11-12).
  25. "Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God, whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen" (1 Peter 4:10-11).
  26. "Paul an apostle—sent neither by human commission nor from human authorities, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead..." (Gal. 1:1).
  27. *apostole*
  28. "... (for he who worked through Peter making him an apostle to the circumcised also worked through me in sending me to the Gentiles)..." (Gal. 2:8); "...through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name..." (Romans 1:5).
  29. "... to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place" (Acts 1:25); "... though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children" (1 Thess. 2:7).
  30. "Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives who were in prison with me; they are prominent among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was" (Romans 16:7).
  31. "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone" (Eph. 2:19-20).
  32. *kerygma*
  33. Report p. 11, n. 27: Cf. E. Schillebeeckx, *The Church with a Human Face: A New and Expanded Theology of Ministry* (New York: Crossroad, 1985), 114-115. The phrases above correct the hierarchical suggestion of churches founded "from above" but built up "from below," with language of external word and internal working of God's Word and Spirit for the upbuilding of the community. In each instance, God is at work, from outside through authoritative apostle or other herald, and from within, among Spirit-gifted members.
  34. "The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers..." (Eph. 4:11).
  35. *episkopoi* (overseers)
  36. *diakonoi* (helpers, ministers)
  37. "Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons..." (Phil. 1:1).
  38. "From Miletus he sent a message to Ephesus, asking the elders of the church to meet him" (Acts 20:17); "Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the Church of God that he obtained with the blood of this own Son" (Acts 20:28). Note that the term *diakonos* never occurs in Acts.
  39. "The saying is sure: whoever aspires to the office of bishop desires a noble task. Now a bishop must be above reproach, married only once, temperate, sensible, respectable, hospitable, an apt teacher, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way – for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how can he take care of God's Church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may be puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace and the snare of the devil" (1 Tim. 3:1-7); "For a bishop, as God's steward, must be blameless; he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or addicted to wine or violent or greedy for gain; but he must be hospitable, a lover of goodness, prudent, upright, devout, and self-controlled. He must have a firm grasp of the word that is trustworthy in accordance with the teaching, so that he may be able both to preach with sound doctrine and refute those who contradict it" (Titus 1:7-9).
  40. "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching; for the scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain,' and 'The laborer deserves to be paid.' Never accept any accusation against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses" (1 Tim. 5:17-19).
  41. "I left you behind in Crete for this reason, so that you should put in order what remained to be done, and should appoint elders in every town, as I directed you: someone who is blameless, married only once, whose children are believers, not accused of debauchery and not rebellious" (Titus 1:5-6).
  42. "Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not indulging in much wine, not greedy for money; they must hold fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them first be tested; then, if they prove themselves blameless, let them serve as deacons. Women likewise must be serious, not slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be married only once, and let them manage their children and their households well; for those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and great boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 3:8-13).
  43. *diakonoi* (1 Tim. 3:11, NRSV note).
  44. "Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders" (1 Tim. 4:14); "Do not ordain anyone hastily, and do not participate in the sins of others; keep yourself pure" (1 Tim. 5:22); "For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands" (2 Tim. 1:6); "...and what you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well" (2 Tim. 2:2). The practice also arose among Jewish rabbis by the second half of the first Christian century (cf. Num. 27:18-23; Deut. 34:9 for background).
  45. "Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:17).
  46. "...and begged him repeatedly, 'My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live'" (Mark 5:23); "And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them" (Mark 6:5).
  47. "And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them" (Mark 10:16).
  48. "While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off" (Acts 13:2-3).
  49. Note the later title and the note in the *Book of Concord*, critical edition and the English translation (ed. Tappert, 1959) which make clear that this article is not about clerical forms of ministry. Note too that the condemnation of the Anabaptists contained in this article is

leveled against them not because they do not have pastors, but because they deny that God has established and works through external means of grace.

50. e.g., Didache, Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus, Didascalia Apostolorum.
51. BEM, M 19.
52. BEM, M 19.
53. Martin Luther, WA 26, 59.
54. A complicating factor here is that some Lutheran churches used the term "deacon" to refer to assisting pastors in parishes with more than one pastor. See Arthur Carl Piepkom, "The Sacred Ministry and Holy Ordination in the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church" in *Eucharist and Ministry: Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue IV*, eds. Paul C. Empie and T. Austin Murphy (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1979), 109.
55. "Deacon," *The Encyclopedia of the Lutheran Church*, ed. Julius Bodersieck (Philadelphia: Fortress, Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1965) 1:659.
56. Philip Hefner, "The Church," in *Christian Dogmatics*, ed. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984) 2:223-37. See also *Called and Ordained*, ed. Todd Nichol and Marc Kolden (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), and *The New Church Debate: Issues Facing American Lutheranism*, ed. Carl E. Braaten (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983).
57. Materials are conveniently summarized in *Studies on the Identity of the Church* (Geneva: LWF Department of Studies, 1979), 7-19.
58. Martin Luther, "On the Councils and the Church" Eric W. Gritsch (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1960), 148-66; WA 50, 628-43.
59. LUM; Bishops; Women.
60. BEM, M 6.
61. Discussion of ordaining diaconal ministers in the United Methodist Church was still continuing at the time of the original report.
62. Jeannine E. Olson, *One Ministry Many Roles: Deacons and Deaconesses through the Centuries* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1993), 399.
63. 1991 Report, section IV, Models for the Ordering of Ordained Ministry, 27-42.
64. See: *Churches Respond to BEM: Official Responses to the "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" Text*, vols. 1-6 ed. Max Thurian (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1986-1988). See also the unpublished responses of ELCA seminary faculties to the 1991 Report of the Study of Ministry which are available from the Division for Ministry.
65. Subsequent to the Final Report of the Task Force of the Study of Ministry, the 1993 Churchwide Assembly adopted the recommendation of the board of the Division for Ministry that diaconal ministry be a lay, rather than ordained, roster. In 1995 the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America determined that diaconal ministers will enter public service in this church through a rite of consecration. Any reference in this Final Report to an "ordained" ELCA diaconal ministry shall be understood as "consecrated."
66. "Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you. Avoid the profane chatter and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge" (1 Tim. 6:20); "Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us" (2 Tim 1:13-14); "All who cleanse themselves of the things I have mentioned will become special utensils, dedicated and useful to the owner of the house, ready for every good work" (2 Tim. 2:21).
67. "...including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ" (Romans 1:6); "And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified" (Romans 8:30); "...including us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?" (Romans 9:24); "But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him?" (Romans 10:14).
68. "As you know, we dealt with each of you like a father with his children, urging and encouraging you and pleading that you lead a life worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. 2:11-12); "...remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 1:3); "...with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ..." (Eph. 4:2).
69. "For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness" (Romans 12:3-8); "And God has appointed in the Church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues" (1 Cor 12:28).
70. The original Task Force text: "If laity are to make this witness effectively, then training, beyond basic confirmation instruction, must be provided for them by the Church." Amended by the board of the Division for Ministry.
71. The 1993 Churchwide Assembly amended the recommendation by substituting "in unusual circumstances" in place of "in emergencies" by a vote of 521-Yes; 445-No.
72. *de jure divino*
73. *de jure humano*
74. "While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off" (Acts 13:2-3); 'They had these men stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them' (Acts 6:6).
75. "Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you. Avoid the profane chatter and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge" (1 Tim. 6:20); "Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us" (2 Tim. 1:13-14); "...and what you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well" (2 Tim. 2:2).
76. *Occasional Services: A Companion to the Lutheran Book of Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House; Philadelphia: Board of Publication, Lutheran Church in America, 1982), 192.
77. The 1993 Churchwide Assembly amended the recommendation by addition of "special responsibility for" by a vote of 573-Yes; 390-No.

78. The original Task Force text: "To reaffirm that ordination to the ministry of this church requires that all candidates will meet Churchwide standards of preparation." Amended by the board of the Division for Ministry.
79. The 1993 Churchwide Assembly amended the recommendation by deletion of "(and ordained diaconal ministers)" in view of the assembly's decision to establish a lay, rather than ordained, roster of diaconal ministers.
80. The 1993 Churchwide Assembly approved an amended proposal to replace the text of a final recommendation that stated, "To instruct the Church Council to provide for the review of and revision of the services of ordination and installation" in view of the assembly's decision to establish a lay, rather than ordained, roster of diaconal ministers. The following text replaced the original recommendation, "To instruct the Church Council, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, to provide for the adoption of appropriate services to mark entry into diaconal ministries, commissioning of associates in ministry, and their respective services of installation" by a vote of 906-Yes; 37-No.
81. LUM #28.
82. "The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers," (Eph. 4:11).
83. "For thus says the Lord God: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord God. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice" (Ezek. 34:11-16); "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (John 10:11); "For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls" (1 Peter 2:25); "Now may the God of peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, ..." (Hebrews 13:20).
84. 1991 Report #162.
85. *Constitution of The American Lutheran Church* 7.11.
86. "Guidelines for the Calling and Sending of Clergy," policy statement adopted at the Eighth General Convention of The American Lutheran Church, GC76.11.93, 1060, 1061.
87. The Churches Respond to BEM vol. 1, p. 35, point 4.c.
88. ALC Response, *ibid.*, 83.
89. The original Task Force text: "Since election by a synodical or churchwide assembly should express confidence and affirmation of the newly elected bishop, a term of six years, without limitation on the number of terms, is recommended." Amended by the board of the Division for Ministry.
90. Punctuation was altered from the original Task Force text to clarify the meaning of the last sentence; the text of the last sentence was edited to read felicitously and to conform to the meaning of ELCA bylaw 7.31.12., †S14.02.a. in the *Constitution for Synods*, and \*C9.03.a. in the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.
91. The original Task Force text: "To stipulate that the term of office for bishops shall be six years and that bishops may be re-elected." Amended by the board of the Division for Ministry.
92. According to Division for Ministry figures, in 1992 221 persons were enrolled in a first professional degree other than Master of Divinity (the usual theological degree for pastors) in ELCA seminaries. Of the total enrollment in ELCA seminaries in 1992 of 1,461, a total of 671 students were pursuing non-M. Div. degrees (including Master of Arts in Religion, Doctor of Philosophy or Doctor of Theology, Sacred Theology Master, or Doctor of Ministry).
93. The original Task Force text: "To establish a diaconal ministry as part of the officially recognized ministry of this church." The change was recommended in order to specify more clearly the reference to "this church."
94. Based on recommendation of the board of the Division for Ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, March 19, 1993. Adoption of this recommendation by the 1993 Churchwide Assembly meant that the following recommendations of the Task Force on the Study of Ministry no longer were applicable:
- c. To determine that approved and called candidates for diaconal ministry shall be ordained as diaconal ministers within the officially recognized ministry of this church.
  - d. To direct that there be a rite of ordination for pastors and a rite of ordination for diaconal ministers into the officially recognized ministry of the ELCA.
  - e. To direct that this church maintain one roster (official list) for diaconal ministers and one roster for pastors.
  - i. To determine that at synodical assemblies, diaconal ministers have the same voice and vote, rights and privileges, as pastoral ministers. That in order to retain the 60-40 ratio of lay and ordained minister voting members, the number of lay voting members be increased proportionately, and that for the Churchwide Assembly, ordained voting members include both pastoral and diaconal ministers.
  - j. To direct that standards, definitions, policies, and procedures for discipline for diaconal ministers be the same as those contained in the ELCA *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions* for ordained pastoral ministers. [This now is addressed under provisions related to associates in ministry.]
95. The original Task Force text: "To declare that diaconal ministers be called by this church to a public ministry which exemplifies the servant life, equips and motivates others to live it, and shares the Word of God in Law and Gospel through word and deed wherever possible and in a great variety of ways. 1) To serve officially to empower, equip, and support all the baptized in the ministry and mission of Jesus Christ. 2) To serve in interdependence and accountability with pastors and bishops, and share with them responsibility for the Word of God in service to the Church and the world. 3) An initial and illustrative, but not an exhaustive, list of categories of diaconal ministry includes: education; mission and evangelism; care; administration; music and the arts." This recommendation was amended to conform more clearly to the recommendation of the board of the Division for Ministry regarding lay diaconal ministry and the implications of such a definition.
96. The original Task Force text was amended by substituting "to the same candidacy system as for candidates for pastoral ministry," with "to this church's candidacy system" in view of the assembly's decision to establish a lay, rather than ordained, roster of diaconal ministers.

97. The original Task Force text was amended by deleting “that the standards for ordained ministry (ELCA 7.31.10. and 7.31.11.) apply fully to diaconal ministers, and” that followed “To affirm...” in view of the assembly’s decision to establish a lay, rather than ordained, roster of diaconal ministers.
98. Recommendation of the board of the Division for Ministry, March 19, 1993.
99. The use of the term “lay” in this context must be understood to distinguish these ministries from the “ordained” ministry of the predecessor church bodies. Persons serving as called teachers and as consecrated deacons were not regarded as lay persons but as special expressions of the ministry of the Gospel.
100. The original Task Force text: “To direct that all inherited associates in ministry and all future associates in ministry be given voice at synod assemblies and the freedom to be elected as lay voting members of synod assemblies” The board of the Division for Ministry amended the recommendation by substituting, “the freedom to be elected as lay voting members of synod assemblies” with “vote as part of the 60 percent of lay voting membership.” The 1993 Churchwide Assembly further amended the recommendation by substituting “as part of” with “in addition to” by a vote of 666-Yes; 329-No.
101. The original Task Force text was amended to include, “or who meet the standards and requirements for diaconal ministers becoming diaconal ministers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” in view of the assembly’s decision to establish a lay, rather than ordained, roster of diaconal ministers.
102. The 1993 Churchwide Assembly, by a vote of 906-Yes; 37-No, approved this recommendation, in view of the assembly’s decision to establish a lay, rather than ordained, roster of diaconal ministers.
103. The 1993 Churchwide Assembly accepted as a friendly amendment the second paragraph of this recommendation.
104. See continuing resolution 10.11.A87. of the Constitution of the ELCA, cited in *Together for Ministry*, p. vi.
105. I.C.2.b.2.a and b Diaconal Ministers Basic Standards and Qualifications and Preparation, *Together for Ministry*, p. 12.
106. Cf. p. 25 II.D.1, paragraph 167, refers to “proven effective in ethnic communities” and alternate route to service, *Together for Ministry*, p.29.
107. To the TFSM.
108. Cf. *Together for Ministry*, p.vi and Appendix A.
109. Cf. From Piety to Politics: Elizabeth of Braunschweig & the Introduction of the Reformation in Braunschweig-Calenberg, 1540-1545, Dissertation by Teresa Bailey. 1987 Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, pp. 163-165, 256, 295, 305-306.