THE CHURCH AS KOINONIA OF SALVATION: ITS STRUCTURES AND MINISTRIES

Common Statement
of the
Tenth Round of the
U.S. Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue

Preface

It is a joy to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (JDDJ), signed by representatives of the Catholic Church and the churches of the Lutheran World Federation in 1999. Pope John Paul II and the leaders of the Lutheran World Federation recognize this agreement as a milestone and model on the road toward visible unity among Christians. It is therefore with great joy that we present to the leadership and members of our churches this text, the tenth produced by our United States dialogue, as a further contribution to this careful and gradual process of reconciliation. We hope that it will serve to enhance our communion and deepen our mutual understanding.

Catholics and Lutherans are able to "confess: By grace alone, in faith in Christ's saving work and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit, who renews our hearts while equipping and calling us to good works" (JDDJ §15). We also recognize together that: "Our consensus in basic truths of the doctrine of justification must come to influence the life and teachings of our churches. Here it must prove itself. In this respect, there are still questions of varying importance which need further clarification" (JDDJ §43). In this spirit we offer the following modest clarifications and proposals.

We are united as Christians in our common baptism, common affirmation of Scripture and common life in Christ; as Lutherans and Catholics by our common commitment to the goal of full communion, our common affirmation of justification, and our common understanding that more agreement is necessary before full, sacramental communion can be restored. In this text we recognize the importance of our agreement, propose new stages of agreement, and celebrate the gifts we can receive from one another in our practice and understandings of ministries and structures within the Church as community of salvation.

This dialogue also recognizes that we are not proposing to settle all of the church-dividing issues before us. We have not attempted to resolve the important ecclesiological issues of the ordination of women or the authority by which such a decision is made, nor the full meaning of apostolic succession in ordained ministry and how we might be reconciled. We have not addressed the level of communion in ministries and structures that would be necessary for even interim Eucharistic communion. We are, however, convinced that the clarifications and research represented by this text make an important contribution in the stages toward reconciling these and other elements along the path toward full communion.

The reader will find this text a bit longer than earlier publications of this dialogue. Biblical and historical material that was prepared and presented in supporting essays over the years of this study has been summarized here. Needless to say, not all of the historical, biblical, and theological research on which this text is based is presented here nor is it included in the supporting essays. It will be important for the reader to review some of the earlier research of the U.S. and international dialogues to clarify further the context of these arguments.

This agreed text may be published both by itself and in a volume with some supporting essays. In the volume of essays, only a selection of those which contributed to the dialogue is published. Those not summarized in the final document but which further clarify the historical background, are included. Some of the biblical, historical research, and overview of previous dialogues will be published as articles elsewhere. As we build a common understanding of our biblical and historical heritage, this research becomes an increasingly important resource for our teaching and preaching. It adds to the serious theological literature produced in an ecumenical mode.

The method used to present our conclusions takes account of the "internally differentiated consensus" method employed by the *Joint Declaration*. "Lutheran and the Catholic explications of justification are in their difference open to one another and do not destroy the consensus regarding the basic truths" (JDDJ §40). As our dialogues approach the ecclesiological issues noted above, in the context of the Church as community of salvation, we will continue to seek agreement on matters

that have been seen as church dividing. These agreements, of course, will be tested by the faith of our people and the appropriate leadership structures in our churches before they attain the level of reception and authority we now accord the *Joint Declaration*.

It is only by reappropriating our common heritage in Scripture and the shared tradition that we can follow the call of Christ to that common future for which he so earnestly prayed on the night before he was delivered for us. We can only humbly receive that grace of unity by the power of the Holy Spirit, obediently continuing on the pilgrimage to which God has called us. The labors of our biblical and theological scholarship are one element in the mosaic of our common prayer, service and life together, as we step out into that mysterious and arduous path that lies before the Church.

Bishop Charles Maahs, Bishop Richard Sklba, cochairs
Lutheran Roman Catholic Dialogue in the United States, Round X

Common Statement

THE CHURCH AS KOINONIA OF SALVATION:
ITS STRUCTURES AND MINISTRIES

<div align="center">

Common Statement

THE CHURCH AS KOINONIA OF SALVATION:

ITS STRUCTURES AND MINISTRIES

</div>

PART ONE: DEEPENING COMMUNION IN STRUCTURES AND MINISTRIES

Introduction

1. From 1965 to 1993, the continuing dialogue between Lutherans and Roman Catholics in the United States addressed doctrines and issues that have united or separated our churches since the sixteenth century. Considerable convergences and even at times consensus have been expressed in nine rounds of discussion on the Nicene Creed; baptism; the eucharist; the ministry of the eucharist; papal primacy; teaching authority and infallibility; justification; the one mediator, the saints, and Mary; and Scripture and tradition.[1] The summaries, joint or common statements in these volumes of findings and supporting studies have been important for relations between our churches and for wider ecumenical discussion.

2. A Coordinating Committee[2] was appointed by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs and by the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America after the completion of Round 9 in 1993. It met 1994-96 to plan for a new round of dialogue and to take part in the development and reception process for a statement on justification by faith and the reassessment of the condemnations connected with justification in the sixteenth century. The Coordinating Committee made a common Lutheran/Catholic response to a draft of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* in 1995. It also developed the topic proposal dealt with in this volume, "The Church as Koinonia of Salvation: Its Structures and Ministries," and the guidelines[3] accepted by our sponsoring church authorities for a new dialogue team.

3. This tenth round of Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue, begun in 1998, carried out its study of ecclesiology and ministries with a new basis in the important results from earlier discussions affirmed in a *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (JDDJ). An Official Common Statement confirming the *Joint Declaration*, accompanied by an Annex to the Official Common Statement, was signed by representatives of the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church,[4] at Augsburg, Germany, October 31, 1999.

---

[1]Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue, 9 volumes: 1. *The Status of the Nicene Creed as Dogma of the Church* (1965) (L/RC - 1); 2. *One Baptism for the Remission of Sins* (1966) (L/RC -2); 3. *The Eucharist as Sacrifice* (1967) (L/RC - 3); 4. *Eucharist and Ministry* (1970) (L/RC - 4); 5. *Papal Primacy and the Universal Church* (1974) (L/RC - 5); 6. *Teaching Authority and Infallibility in the Church* (1980) (L/RC - 6); 7. *Justification by Faith* (1985) (L/RC - 7); 8. *The One Mediator, the Saints, and Mary* (1992) (L/RC - 8); 9. *Scripture and Tradition* (1995) (L/RC - 9). Vols. 1-4 were originally published by the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, Washington, D. C., and the U.S.A. National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation, New York, N.Y. Vols. 5-9 were published Minneapolis: Augsburg. Vols. 1-3 have been reprinted together in one volume by Augsburg (n. d.) as has vol. 4 (1979).

[2]Its members included, Catholics, the Rev. Avery Dulles, S. J., Bronx, N.Y.; the Most Rev. Raphael M. Fliss, Bishop of Superior, Wisconsin; the Rev. Patrick Granfield, O.S.B. Washington, D.C.; Brother Jeffrey Gros, F.S.C., Washington, D.C.; the Rev. John F. Hotchkin, Washington, D.C.; Dr. Margaret O'Gara, Toronto; the Most Rev. J. Francis Stafford, Archbishop of Denver (chair); the Rev. Georges Tavard, Milwaukee; Dr. Susan K. Wood, S.C.L., Collegeville, Minn.; Lutherans, the Rev. H. George Anderson, Decorah, Iowa (elected Presiding Bishop of the ELCA in 1995); the Rev. Sherman G. Hicks, Chicago; Dr. David Lotz, New York, N.Y.; Dr. Daniel F. Martensen, Chicago; the Rev. Joan A. Mau, Washington Island, Wis.; Dr. John H. P. Reumann, Philadelphia; Dr. Michael J. Root, Strasbourg, France; Dr. William G. Rusch, Chicago (until 1995); Bishop Harold C. Skillrud, Atlanta (chair). A Consultation involving U.S. and European Lutherans and Catholics, Feb. 18-21, 1993, at Lake Worth, Fla., had assessed the dialogues to date and examined future possibilities.

[3] The Objectives were described thus: "The ultimate goal is to establish full communion between our churches. This round of dialogue should focus on church-dividing issues and communion-hindering differences. There may result mutual instruction of our churches, learning from each other, and convergences that contribute to deeper koinonia between Lutherans and Catholics." "Structures" and "Ministries as Servants and Bonds of Koinonia" were to include the local, regional, national, and international, with "the themes of authority and freedom (collegiality, conciliarity)" running "through the entire document."

[4]*Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification: The Lutheran World Federation and The Roman Catholic Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000). *Gemeinsame Erklärung zur Rechtfertigungslehre* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Otto Lembeck/Paderborn, Bonifatius-Verlag, 1999; Lutherischer Weltbund, Päpstlicher Rat zur Förderung der Einheit des Christen).

4.　　　The U.S. dialogue volume VII, *Justification by Faith*, completed in 1983, was among the resources[5] that contributed to this worldwide agreement, especially with its own Declaration that set forth the gospel we encounter in Scripture and church life:

> Thus we can make together, in fidelity to the gospel we share, the following declaration:

> We believe that God's creative graciousness is offered to us and to everyone for healing and reconciliation so that through the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, "who was put to death for our transgressions and raised for our justification" (Rom. 4:25), we are all called to pass from the alienation and oppression of sin to freedom and fellowship with God in the Holy Spirit. It is not through our own initiative that we respond to this call, but only through an undeserved gift which is granted and made known in faith, and which comes to fruition in our love of God and neighbor, as we are led by the Spirit in faith to bear witness to the divine gift in all aspects of our lives. This faith gives us hope for ourselves and for all humanity and gives us confidence that salvation in Christ will always be proclaimed as the gospel, the good news for which the world is searching.[6]

5.　　　The *Joint Declaration* was a harvest from such statements in the U.S. and international dialogues. In Germany the Joint Ecumenical Commission and Ecumenical Study Group of Protestant and Catholic Theologians dealt between 1981 and 1985 with the condemnations by Catholics and Lutherans in the sixteenth century on justification and related topics.[7] The *Joint Declaration* sets forth a common understanding of justification (§§14-18), in light of the biblical message (§§8-12), with explication in seven problem areas of what Lutherans and Catholics can confess together ecumenically, as well as the distinctive accents of each, now acceptable to the other (§§19-39). In light of the "consensus in basic truths of the doctrine of justification" (§40), the *Joint Declaration* states that "it becomes clear that the mutual condemnations of former times do not apply to the Catholic and Lutheran doctrines of justification as they are presented in the *Joint Declaration*" (Annex §1; *cf.* JDDJ §41; Official Common Statement §1). But it is also recognized that this consensus "must prove itself" in "further clarification" of topics that include "ecclesiology, ecclesial authority, church unity, ministry, the sacraments, and the relation between justification and social ethics" (§43).

6.　　　The *Joint Declaration* has great implications and holds much promise for life in our parishes, in reshaping preaching, teaching, worship, and daily life. It has found expression in agreements and covenants between local congregations, synods and dioceses, and in national celebrations in the U.S., even among Christians neither Catholic nor Lutheran, not to mention reflections in other parts of the world. For our dialogue it has given fresh impulse and encouragement to our work together.

---

[5]Others, listed in the *Joint Declaration* 27-28, include *The Condemnations of the Reformation Era: Do They Still Divide?* ed. K. Lehmann and W. Pannenberg (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), from the work by the Joint Ecumenical Commission of the Roman Catholic Church and churches of the Reformation (Lutheran, Reformed, United), published as *Lehrverurteilungen—kirchentrennend? I. Rechtfertigung, Sakramente und Amt im Zeitalter der Reformation und heute*, Dialog der Kirchen 4 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder/Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, © 1986); *II. Materialien zu den Lehrverurteilungen und zur Theologie der Rechtfertigung*, Dialog der Kirchen 5 (1988)*; III. Materialien zur Lehre von den Sakramenten und vom kirchlichen Amt*, Dialog der Kirchen 6 (1990). The study in Germany dealt especially with the condemnations (anathemas) attached by the Council of Trent to its decree on Justification (1547) and statements of condemnation in the Lutheran Confessions.

[6]The reading continues: "This gospel frees us in God's sight from slavery to sin and self (Rom. 6:6). We are willing to be judged by it in all our thoughts and actions, our philosophies and projects, our theologies and our religious practices. Since there is no aspect of the Christian community or of its life in the world that is not challenged by this gospel, there is none that cannot be renewed or reformed in its light or by its power.

"We have encountered this gospel in our churches' sacraments and liturgies, in their preaching and teaching, in their doctrines and exhortations. Yet we also recognize that in both our churches the gospel has not always been proclaimed, that it has been blunted by reinterpretation, that it has been transformed by various means into self-satisfying systems of commands and prohibitions.

"We are grateful at this time to be able to confess together what our Catholic and Lutheran ancestors tried to affirm as they responded in different ways to the biblical message of justification. A fundamental consensus on the gospel is necessary to give credence to our previously agreed statements on baptism, on the Eucharist, and on forms of church authority. We believe that we have reached such a consensus." L/RC – 7, §§161.–164. 73-74.

[7]See n. 5 *Lehrverurteilungen—kirchentrennend?* esp. Vol. III, and *The Condemnations of the Reformation Era*, where 147-59 deal with the ministry.

7.   As we have dealt with structures and ministries, we have been mindful of how rounds four and five (1968-80) took up the topic of ministry in connection with the eucharist and then papal ministry (also in six, *Teaching Authority and Infallibility*). Our review of much of the work done in rounds four and five made us aware of how helpful and significant these contributions were. Round four dealt only with local ministry in the local congregation where the eucharist is celebrated and the Word preached. Round five dealt with a universal ministry and the possibility of a renewed papacy. The present round considers the interrelation among local, regional, national, and worldwide ministries and church structures, in the context of an understanding of the church as koinonia of salvation.[8] Thus, in continuity with past dialogues and the *Joint Declaration*, our analysis moves from Christ and the gospel of salvation to koinonia. We understand this gospel particularly as the message of justification by grace through faith, and treat koinonia as a lens through which to view ecclesiology and ministries of those ordained, within the whole people of God.

8.   This report will proceed from a general consideration of koinonia ecclesiology (Section I) and the specific concept of the "local church" (Section II) to a consideration of the particular structures of koinonia in our two churches (Section III) and the ordained ministries that serve them (Section IV). A brief discussion of the ecumenically significant question of apostolic succession and its relation to ministry follows (Section V). All of this analysis and description then forms the background for an argument for a fresh vision of how structures and ministry can be understood including recommendations (Sections VI, VII, and VIII).

9.   This new vision confronts us with the wounds to mission and ministry that are the result of our continuing division and calls us to repentance and greater fidelity to the gospel. It invites us to partial mutual recognition of ordained ministry. It opens new paths in the exploration of a universal ministry of unity. The analysis offers a basis for a deeper recognition of each other's churchly reality and of our local, regional, and universal ministries and structures. This recognition will involve stronger acknowledgment of the churchly reality of the parish for Catholics, and of the theological significance of synods for Lutherans.

I. Koinonia Ecclesiology

10.   There are good reasons why viewing the church as koinonia came into prominence ecumenically in the latter decades of the twentieth century (*see* B. (§§15-20) *below*). The basic word, *koinōnia* in Greek, is ancient, occurring 22 times in the Bible,[9] but it was not a term or concept prominent in Catholic or Lutheran documents of the sixteenth century. Thus it has been spared some of the partisan usage that often has made other concepts divisive. Koinonia has never been a church-dividing issue for Lutherans and Catholics. It is a useful lens through which this present dialogue reconsiders our differences concerning ministry and church structures. We speak together about this lens in three propositions: the church shares in salvation; the church shares salvation with others; and the church is a community shaped by salvation. All three are expressed in Scripture through words related to koinonia.

A. The Church Shares in Salvation

11.   We, the justified, share in salvation from God in Christ in a number of ways. We are called by God into the fellowship of his Son (1 Cor. 1:9).[10] We share in the gospel (Phil. 1:5). We share in Christ's body and blood in the bread we break and the cup we share as presentation for us of Jesus'

---

[8] In the international dialogue, attention was given to *Church and Justification: Understanding the Church in the Light of the Doctrine of Justification* Lutheran-Roman Catholic Joint Commission (Geneva: LWF, 1994) (LWF/RC – 9). Apostolicity is the theme of the new round of international dialogue, begun in 1994.

[9] Nineteen of them in the New Testament, three in the Septuagint Old Testament; see further §§126-129.

[10] This calling depends on God's faithfulness and involves election (1 Cor. 1:2, "called [to be] saints"; 1 Thess. 1:4; Rom. 8:33). Paul regularly assumes a response in faith to the message of the gospel (as in 1 Thess. 1:5), followed by baptism (1 Cor. 6:11, "washed, sanctified, justified"), with a resulting koinonia (1 Cor. 1:9, with Christ). No passage in Paul, however, connects *koinon*-terms with baptism. But note 1 John 1:6-9, koinonia with God, the blood of Jesus cleanses us from sin; "if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness"; *cf.* R. Brown, *The Epistles of John*, AB 30 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1982) 242-45.

death on the cross and its benefits for us (1 Cor. 10:16). We participate in the Spirit (2 Cor. 13:13; Phil. 2:1) and share in faith in all the good that is ours in Christ (Phlm. 6). We also share in Christ's and each other's affliction and sufferings (Phil. 3:10; 4:14), amid which there is consolation (2 Cor. 1:7) and the promise of participation in joy and future glory (1 Pet. 4:13; 5:1; 2 Pet. 1:4, future sharing in God's own nature). Witnesses share the kingdom as well as persecution and patient endurance (Rev. 1:9). The sharing in the Spirit that characterizes Christians is also part of the basis for the love and agreement with one another that we, the church, are called to have (Phil. 2:1). The fellowship that 1 John 1:3-7 depicts is with God the Father and his Son, as well as with one another.[11] In God's plan of salvation, Gentile Christians too came to share, as branches, the riches of the olive tree, Israel (Rom. 11:17).

B. The Church Shares Salvation

12. Koinonia characterizes not only the way we receive salvation but the way it is offered to others through the church. Through evangelization we share the gospel with others (Phil. 1:5, 7) as part of its advance (Phil. 1:12, 25; 4:14-15) in mission (Matt. 28:19-20). This sharing transforms the church itself as well as the world. The agreement between Paul and other church leaders to evangelize both Jews and Gentiles cuts across boundaries of racial and ethnic divisions of the day; it was a mutual pledge for mission, unity, and support for the poor (Gal. 2:9-10). We support the proclamation of the gospel through our financial gifts (Phil. 4:15); we share our resources with the poor and those in need throughout the world. In Paul's time, that meant a collection from his Gentile churches for "the saints," impoverished Jewish Christians in Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8:4; 9:13; Rom. 15:26-27), economic aid that showed concern for the unity of the church (Gal. 2:9-10).[12] Acts depicts Christians in Jerusalem as sharing not only the gospel message but also their temporal resources (Acts 2:42, 45; 4:32). In subsequent centuries, such active sharing, koinonia, has become the norm for Christian life and has been manifested in sharing food, time, and the results of all sorts of human abilities, as well as money.

C. The Church is a Community Shaped by Salvation

13. The koinonia of salvation has called forth a type of community, the church, appropriate to the grace and calling we have received. We are a koinonia called in Christ by and for the gospel (1 Cor. 1:9; Phil. 1:5), a community that comes from the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 13:13). The vertical and horizontal fellowship with God and fellow believers (1 John 1:2-7) results in a people conformed to Christ's death on the cross (Phil. 3:10, cross and resurrection of Jesus; 1 Pet. 4:13, suffering and rejoicing). That means for the justified an existence determined by God's love and faithfulness, a life lived with love, in faith and trust, marked by hope. This vertical and horizontal fellowship exists in and with the world and its institutions. It is shaped internally by its relationship with God through Christ and the Spirit and by the participation in Christ and salvation of all members of Christ's body. Externally the church relates to the world, not merely as a social institution, amid the other public structures (*ta koina*) of the Greco-Roman world,[13] but more importantly as a sign of God's will that all share in salvation. Divisions in fellowship blunt the impact of our witness to salvation.

---

[11]Both aspects are stressed by J. Hainz, *Koinonia: "Kirche" als Gemeinschaft bei Paulus* (Biblische Untersuchungen 16; Regensburg: Pustet, 1982). A. Weiser, "Basis und Führung in kirchlicher Communio," *Bibel und Kirche* 45 (1990) 66-71, speaks of "spiritual" dimensions (with God) and "societal."

[12]*Cf.* O. Cullmann, *Katholiken und Protestanten. Ein Vorschlag zur Verwirklichung christlicher Solidarität* (Basel,Reinhardt, 1958); trans. J. Burgess, *Message to Catholics and Protestants* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1958). Cullmann, later a Protestant observer at the Second Vatican Council, suggested, as early as 1957, "a yearly offering by both sides for one another; by Protestants for needy Catholics, and by Catholics for needy Protestants" (9-10) as a step toward Christian solidarity. The collection and *koinōnia* in the New Testament are mentioned, 33-39. It could today take the form of parish and diocesan gathering of gifts.

[13]Thus, *e.g.*, "diocese" (Latin *dioecesis*) reflects terminology from Roman provincial administration, likewise "synod" and "council." *Cf.* A. Brent, *The Imperial Cult and the Development of Church Order: Concepts and Images of Authority in Paganism and Early Christianity before the Age of Cyprian*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 45 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), who claims (77), "The Order of the Christian community, constituted by an apostolate whose *koinōnia* continued the teaching and healing ministry of Jesus along with the breaking of bread (*Acts* 2,42), was the true means of producing the *pax dei*, in contrast to Augustus' *pax deorum*," (*cf.* Luke 2:14; 19:38), thus "a refashioned Christian version of the Augustan *saeculum aureum*."

D. Summary

14.   In sum, therefore, koinonia in the New Testament especially concerns the relationship of justified believers with God and Christ (1 Cor. 1:9; 1 John 1:2-7) and the Spirit (2 Cor. 13:13), thus with the Trinity (The word koinonia does not refer in the New Testament to fellowship within the Godhead, as it does in patristic writers who spoke of koinonia between the Father and the Son[14]). Koinonia has also ecclesiological (Gal. 2:9; 2 Cor.13:13) and eucharistic connotations (1 Cor. 10:16). The concept appears as a basis for ethical admonitions (Phil. 2:1) and can also itself be an admonition to share, both in the church and with the poor (Rom. 15:26-27). The New Testament references speak of sharing in sufferings (Phil. 3:10) and console people through sharing in consolation (2 Cor. 1:7). Koinonia connects with themes like mission, life together (Acts 2:42), stewardship, and future hope.

E. Recent Developments in Koinonia Ecclesiology

15.   From New Testament usage, koinonia came to be employed over the centuries as "communion" (*communio*) and in many other renderings, particularly with reference to the church. While the terminology did not play a role of any importance in sixteenth century Reformation or Catholic theology, it became more prominent in the twentieth century.[15]

16.   In Eastern Orthodoxy, koinonia ecclesiology has recently centered on eucharistic communion with Christ.[16] Ecclesiology can be called "a chapter of Christology"[17] as long as it also is pneumatological. The terminology also came into the World Council of Churches, especially through the work of the Faith and Order Commission: "fuller koinonia" is the goal of life together in Christ.[18] Bilateral dialogues have found the theme helpful,[19] as have theologians from a variety of traditions.[20]

17.   Among Catholics, communion was used to speak in a non-juridical way of "a network of sacramentally focused local churches bound together ultimately by the mutual openness of their eucharistic celebrations," with the bishop of Rome "as the focal point of the network of churches

---

[14]*A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, ed. G. W. H. Lampe (Oxford: Clarendon, 1964), "*koinōnia*" B.3.b., "*community* of essence," of Father and Son, citing Athenagoras (2nd cent.), Dionysius Alexandrinus (3rd cent.), Basil and Gregory of Nyssa (4th cent.), of the Trinity, and Chrysostom (4th-5th cent.).

[15]Christoph Schwöbel, "Koinonia," *RGG* 4th edition, 4 (2001) 1477-79; Rolf Schäfer, "Communio," *RGG* 4th edition, 2 (1999) 435-38.

[16]Nicolai Afanasev, *L'Eglise du Saint-Esprit* (Paris: Le Cerf, 1975). John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion. Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir Seminary Press, 1985) interpreted koinonia in light of the anti-Arian trinitarianism of St. Athanasius. It is an ontological reality founded on the identity of Jesus Christ with the eternal Word of God. Because, by virtue of the Incarnation, substance is seen to possess "almost by definition a relational character," the faithful who are united with Christ by faith and the Spirit are necessarily in the mutual relationships of a Communion that is at the same time spiritual and sacramental. John D. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church,* tr. Elizabeth Theokritoff (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2001).

[17]G. Florovsky, "Le corps du Christ vivant," in Florovsky et al, *La sainte Eglise universelle. Confrontation oecuménique* (Paris: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1948) 12, quoted in Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (above, n. 16), 124. Thus a synthesis of Christology and Pneumatology is manifest in the Communion of the Church and the Churches. Since Pneumatology implies eschatology and communion, which coincide in the Holy Liturgy, one may say that "*eschatology and communion* have determined Orthodox ecclesiology" (131).

[18]See Thomas Best, Gunther Gassmann, eds. *On the Way to Fuller Koinonia*, Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1993. (Santiago) and the earlier working document and discussion paper, "Towards Koinonia in Faith, Life, and Witness," 263-95. "The unity of the Church to which we are called is a koinonia given and expressed in a common confession of the apostolic faith; a common sacramental life entered by the one baptism and celebrated together in one eucharistic fellowship; a common life...; and a common mission..." (Canberra 1991, 2.1, p. 269), thus a gift, as well as a calling.

[19]The *Final Report* of ARCIC-I (1993), in *Growth in Agreement*, Ecumenical Documents II, ed. H. Meyer and L. Vischer (New York/Ramsey: Paulist/Geneva: WCC, 1984) 62-67; ARCIC-II, *The Church as Communion*, in *Growth in Agreement II*, ed. J. Gros, H. Meyer, and W. G. Rusch, Faith and Order Paper 187 (Geneva: WCC/Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 328-43; ARC-USA, "Agreed Report on the Local/Universal Church" (1999) summed the matter up thus, "'Communion' has emerged...as the concept that best expresses the reality of the Church as diverse yet one on faith, as both local and universal," *Origins* 30:6 (2000) 85-95; Pentecostal-Roman Catholic, "Perspective on *Koinonia*" (1989), in *Pneuma* 12 (1990) 117-42, in *Growth in Agreement II* 735-52, and in *Deepening Communion*, ed. W. G. Rusch and J. Gros (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1998) 399-421; Christian Church/Disciples of Christ-Roman Catholic, "The Church as a Communion in Christ" (1992), *Growth in Agreement II* 386-98 and *Deepening Communion* 323-39; Anglican/World Methodist Council, "Sharing in Apostolic Communion" (1996), *Growth in Agreement II* 55-76; Catholic/World Methodist Council, "The Church as Koinonia of Salvation" (2001). *Cf.* S. Wood, "Ecclesial Koinonia in Ecumenical Dialogues," *One in Christ* 30 (1994) 124-45.

[20]Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) and "Kirche als Gemeinschaft: Ekklesiologische Überlegungen aus freikirchlicher Perspektive," *Evangelische Theologie* 49 (1989) 52-76. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction To Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical and Global Perspectives*, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press (2002).

linked together in the catholic, or universal, *communio*."[21] Communion as "the permanent form of the unity of the church" was articulated on the eve of the Second Vatican Council.[22] J.-M. R. Tillard explored communion ecclesiology as conforming "best to the biblical notion and to the intuitions of the great ecclesiological traditions."[23] The 1985 Synod of Bishops recognized communion ecclesiology as "the central and fundamental idea" of the documents of Vatican II.[24] The concept of communion came to be applied in a wide range of contexts. The 1992 statement from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Some Aspects of the Church as Communion," explained that "ecclesial communion is at the same time visible and invisible" and this link "makes the church 'sacrament of salvation.'"[25] The 1993 *Directory for Ecumenism* stressed the presence and activity of the universal church in the particular churches.[26] John Paul II said in 1995 that the "elements of sanctification and truth" shared by "the other Christian communities" show that "the one Church of Christ is effectively present in them." This is the reason for the communion that persists between the Catholic Church and "the other Churches and Ecclesial Communities," in spite of their divisions.[27]

18.   For Lutherans, the term koinonia was used in German discussions in the 1950s on Protestant church fellowship.[28] In the latter part of the twentieth century the Lutheran World Federation increasingly employed koinonia/communio themes.[29] In 1990 it defined itself as "a communion of churches which confess the triune God, agree in the proclamation of the Word of God and are united in pulpit and altar fellowship."[30] Lutherans and Catholics in dialogue have related koinonia to the doctrine of the Trinity and ecclesiology.[31]

---

[21]Ludwig Hertling, *Communio: Church and Papacy in Early Christianity*, trans. with introduction by Jared Wicks (Chicago: Loyola Univ. Press, 1972), 4-5 and 2; German, in *Xenia Piana: Miscellanea historiae pontificiae* 7 (1943) 1-48; *cf.* "Communio und Primat," *Una Sancta* 17 (1962). [J. Reumann, "Toward U.S. Lutheran/Roman Catholic Dialogue on Koinonia," paper for L/RC Coordinating Committee, April 1996]. For a survey of theologians on this see Dennis M. Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology: Vision and Versions* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2000).

[22]See Jérôme Hamer, *L'église est une communion*. Paris: Cerf, 1962. English tr. Ronald Matthews, New York: Sheed and Ward, 1965. Jan Jacobs, "Beyond Polarity: On the Relation between Locality and Universality in the Catholic Church," in *Of All Times and Places: Protestants and Catholics on the Church Local and Universal*, edited by Leo J. Koffeman and Henk Witte (Zoetemeer: Meinema, 2001) 49-68, at 55-58.

[23]*Church of Churches. The Ecclesiology of Communion* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1992) p. xii. This very defective translation of *Eglise d'Eglises: L'ecclésiologie de communion* (Paris: les Editions du Cerf, 1987) 9 ("au donné biblique") should not be used without checking the French text. *Cf.* also Walter Kasper, *Theology and Church* (New York: Crossroad, 1989, German 1987), "The Church as a Universal Sacrament of Salvation" 111-28, and "The Church as Communion: Reflections on the Guiding Ecclesiological Idea of the Second Vatican Council" 148-65 (literature in n. 5). Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974) 56 treated *koinonia* as "a network of friendly interpersonal relationships" and as "a mystical communion of grace" under "The Church as Mystical Communion" (43-57), rev. ed. (1987), 60-61 and 47-62.

[24]The Second Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (1985), *Ecclesia sub Verbo Dei Mysteria Christi Celebrans pro Salute Mundi. Relatio Finalis*, II. C. 1. Available in English in *Origins* 15, 27 (Dec. 19, 1985) 448. John Paul II reaffirmed this in his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Christifideles Laici*, December 30, 1988, §19.

[25]*Communionis notio*, *Origins* 22, 7 (June 25, 1992) 108-12. This text (1) equates "the Church of Christ" with "the worldwide community of the disciples of the Lord" (§7), which is more than "a communion of Churches"; (2) while there is a close connection between the eucharist and the Church, the eucharist is not sufficient by itself to ensure the being of a church; and (3) the communion is also served by institutions, like religious communities, that are not confined to one particular church; unity in diversity is one aspect of the communion. *Cf.* also Jörg Haustein, "Entmythologiseirung einer Zauberformel: Schreiben der Glaubenskongregation über die Kirche als Communio," *MD: Materialdienst der Konfessionskundlichen Instituts Bensheim* 43 (1992): 61-62.

[26]*Directory* §§13-15; Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, "Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism," *Origins* (June 29, 1993) 129, 131-60.

[27]*Ut unum sint* 11, *Origins* 49 (June 8, 1995) 51-72, §11-14.

[28]*Koinonia: Arbeiten des Oekumenischen Ausschusses der Vereinigten Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche Deutschlands zur Frage der Kirchen- und Abendmahlgemeinschaft* (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1957). The essay by Werner Elert, "Abendmahl und Kirchengemeinschaft in der alten Kirche," 57-78, was expanded as a book translated by Norman Nagel as *Eucharist and Church Fellowship in the First Four Centuries* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1966).

[29]Harding Meyer, "Zur Entstehung und Bedeutung des Konzepts 'Kirchengemeinschaft.' Eine historische Skizze aus evangelischer Sicht," in *Communio Sanctorum: Einheit der Christen – Einheit der Kirche, Festschrift für Bischof Paul-Werner Scheele*, ed. Josef Schreiner and Klaus Wittstadt (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1988) 204-30; Eugene L. Brand, *Toward a Lutheran Communion: Pulpit and Altar Fellowship*, LWF Report 26 (Geneva: LWF, 1988); *Communio/Koinonia: A New Testament-Early Christian Concept and its Contemporary Appropriation and Significance*, A Study by the Institute for Ecumenical Research, Strasbourg, 1990, repr. in W. G. Rusch, ed., *A Commentary on 'Ecumenism: The Vision of the ELCA'* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1990) 119-41; *The Church as Communion: Lutheran Contributions to Ecclesiology*, ed. Heinrich Holtze, LWF Documentation 47 (Geneva: LWF, 1997), including "Toward a Lutheran Understanding of Communion," 13-29. [Reumann, April 1999, "'Koinonia' in Lutheran Use"].

[30]LWF Constitution, Art. 3; text in *From Federation to Communion: The History of the Lutheran World Federation*, ed. J. H. Schjørring, P. Kumari, N. A. Hjelm; V. Mortensen, coordinator (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997) 530; the 1947 Constitution said simply "a free association of Lutheran churches" (p. 527).

[31]*Church and Justification: Understanding the Church in the Light of the Doctrine of Justification*, Lutheran-Roman Catholic Joint Commission (Geneva: LWF, 1994).

19. Koinonia encompasses all Christians and the salvation of all who share in the gospel. Koinonia ecclesiology has many aspects but no uniform definition. The New Testament references to koinonia do not directly relate the term to "church," let alone to "ministries," but repeatedly deal with all the faithful. In presenting the church as koinonia, the Lutheran-Roman Catholic International Commission placed the church within a series of biblical images, beginning with "people of God," and added that in both our traditions "we rightly speak of the 'priesthood of all the baptized' or the 'priesthood of all believers.'"[32] All structures and ministries, as instruments of koinonia, serve God's people. Whatever is said, then, of "koinonia ecclesiology" and "ministry in service of community" is to be embedded in this context: the people of God, all Christian believers.

20. This dialogue now wishes to contribute further to these varied understandings of the church as koinonia. The following sections will focus on koinonia ecclesiology in the context of historical and current Lutheran-Catholic relationships. Our ecclesiologies and our ordained ministries of presbyters and bishops are viewed afresh through the lens of koinonia. Our dialogue is intended to foster reconciliation between our churches and is offered to the wider ecumenical community for study and reflection.

II. The Local Church within the Koinonia of Salvation

21. An important element in much recent koinonia ecclesiology of particular significance for this report's analysis is the concept of the "local church," understood in similar but different ways by our two traditions. On the one hand, both Lutherans and Catholics agree that there is a local body which is not merely a part of the church, but is wholly church, even if not the whole church and not in isolation from the rest of the church. Our traditions agree: "The local church is truly church. It has everything it needs to be church in its own situation.... The local church is the place where the church of God becomes concretely realized."[33] To say that the local church is "church" in an integral sense is to say that the essential elements of the community which participates in, shares, and is shaped by salvation are present in a complete and integral way.

22. On the other hand, Lutherans and Catholics differ over what "local church" designates. For Lutherans the local church is the congregation; for Catholics it is most often the diocese.[34] This difference is closely related to a parallel set of differences over the status of the ordained ministers who minister to these two communities: the minister of the congregation or parish (the pastor, priest, or presbyter) and the minister of the regional grouping of these communities (the bishop). This difference is rooted in the complex history of the development of local and regional church bodies (§§159-195).

23. This complex history begins with the variety of community structures and ministries within first-century Christianity. By the second and third centuries the pattern was established of local communities gathered for worship around the bishop, who was surrounded by a council of presbyters and assisted by deacons.[35] During the profound changes of the late patristic and early medieval periods, the role of the bishop and the nature and size of the communities he headed changed. The primary Christian community for most Christians in the West came to be the parish under the care of a presbyter or priest. The diocese headed by the bishop came to include many such parishes.

---

[32]*Church and Justification* (§§51-62).

[33]Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches, *The Notion of "Hierarchy of Truths" and The Church: Local and Universal.* Faith and Order paper no. 150. (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1990), para. 13 ff.

[34]Within Roman Catholicism, the terms "particular church" and "local church" are often used interchangeably. Most often Vatican II uses the term "particular church" to refer to the diocese, but this term can also refer to churches in the same rite, region, or culture. There is no standard practice governing the use of this terminology. In spite of Vatican II's use of the term "particular church," this term has not enjoyed widespread acceptance. Whether or not it refers to a diocese or a larger region has to be discerned from its context. The present document explores the asymmetry between Lutheran and Roman Catholic understandings of what constitutes the basic unit of ecclesiality implied by the term "local" or "particular" church.

[35]A forthright expression of this pattern is found in Ignatius (Smyr. 8.1), but the bishop as head of a local community came to be the common pattern.

These shifts contributed to the medieval uncertainties about the relation between priest and bishop and lie at the root of the Lutheran-Catholic difference about what is to be designated "local church" (§§172-175).

A. The Local Church in Catholic Ecclesiology

24.　In continuity with one aspect of the early church, Roman Catholics define the local church (or, more often, the particular church or diocese) as "a portion of the people of God whose pastoral care is entrusted to a bishop in conjunction with his priests. Thus, in conjunction with their pastor and gathered by him into one flock in the Holy Spirit through the gospel and the eucharist, they constitute a particular church."[36] The basic unit of the church is therefore defined both eucharistically and ministerially. The ministry of the bishop is a constitutive element of the most basic ecclesiastical unit, the diocese, which includes all that is necessary to be a church. The link between the parish eucharist and the bishop is not obvious to most Roman Catholics, however, since they only occasionally experience a eucharistic assembly with their bishop presiding, even though they mention the bishop by name in every eucharistic liturgy the parish celebrates.

25.　The descriptions of the local or particular church in the documents of Vatican II emphasize both elements. On the one hand, it is said that "the faithful are gathered together through the preaching of the gospel" and the eucharist.[37] On the other hand, it also is said, "the principal manifestation of the church consists in the full, active participation . . . at one altar, at which the bishop presides . . . ."[38] Since the bishop cannot always or everywhere preside over the whole flock, he establishes multiple assemblies of believers. "Parishes, organized locally under a parish priest who acts in the bishop's place, are the most important of these, because in some way they exhibit the visible church set up throughout the nations of the world."[39]

B. The Local Church in Lutheran Ecclesiology

26.　Lutherans, in continuity with a different aspect of the early church, have generally held that the congregation is church in the full sense. As the international Roman Catholic–Lutheran Joint Commission expressed it in *Church and Justification*:

> Lutherans understand the *una sancta ecclesia* to find outward and visible expression wherever people assemble around the gospel proclaimed in sermon and sacrament. Assembled for worship the local congregation therefore is to be seen, according to the Lutheran view, as the visible church, *communio sanctorum*, in the full sense. Nothing is missing which makes a human assembly church: the preached word and the sacramental gifts through which the faithful participate in Christ through the Holy Spirit, but also the ministers who preach the word and administer the sacraments in obedience to Christ and on his behalf, thus leading the congregation.[40]

This understanding can be seen as a return to the pattern of the early church in which the basic ecclesial unit was a face-to-face assembly. Nevertheless, such a return involves a break with the pattern, both patristic and medieval, in which the bishop heads the local church. The office of ministry is included as an essential element of the local church in the Lutheran understanding, but this office is seen as exercised by the pastor/presbyter.

---

[36]*Christus Dominus*, 11.
[37]*Lumen gentium*, 26, states that "the faithful are gathered together through the preaching of the Gospel of Christ, and the mystery of the Lord's Supper is celebrated 'so that, by means of the flesh and blood of the Lord the whole brotherhood of the Body may be welded together.'"
[38]*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 41, states, "The principal manifestation of the church consists in the full, active participation of all God's holy people in the same liturgical celebrations, especially in the same eucharist, in one prayer, at one altar, at which the bishop presides, surrounded by the college of priests and by his ministers."
[39]SC, 42.
[40]*Church and Justification*, 85.

C. Catholic-Lutheran Similarities on the Local Church

27. This difference between what Lutherans and Catholics designate as the local church masks a deep structural similarity: Lutherans and Catholics each experience the church in a geographically local, face-to-face assembly where the word is preached and sacraments celebrated: the parish or congregation. In addition, for both of our churches this local assembly is not free-standing, but exists within a regional community of such assemblies, namely, a diocese or synod. These groupings reach to the national and international level, but the diocese or synod, as the primary regional community, forms the immediate institutional context of the life of the congregation or parish. Lutherans and Catholics differ as to whether the face-to-face assembly or the primary regional community is the local church in the theological sense, but the institutional life of both traditions is shaped by this pairing.

28. This pairing of face-to-face assembly and regional community developed over an extended period without a conscious intent to create this pattern. How is this development to be understood theologically? Is it completely fortuitous or does it express an institutional truth about how the koinonia of salvation is rightly realized, namely, the need both for the immediate experience of koinonia in the physical presence of one to another and for the embodiment of the catholicity and diversity of koinonia in a community of such face-to-face communities? It may be a theological mistake to insist that one or the other is "local church" in an exclusive sense without also saying that there is something about this pairing of face-to-face assembly and primary regional community that is ecclesiologically normative. If this pairing is normative, we must inquire what significance this structure has for our understanding of the ministries of those who preside over these communities, the pastor and the bishop.

29. Already in the New Testament, the worshiping community did not live in isolation but joined in koinonia with other communities. Paul took up a collection (koinonia) among his predominantly Gentile churches of Greece and Asia Minor for the church in Jerusalem (Acts 11:29; Rom. 15:25-27; 1 Cor. 16:3-5). This action extended that initial sharing of common life in Jerusalem by which "distribution was made to each as any had need" (Acts 4:35).[41] Typically, in the closing of the various letters of the New Testament, churches sent greetings to other churches (1 Cor. 16:19; Phil. 4:22; 2 Tim. 4:21; Titus 3:15; Heb. 13:24; 1 Pet. 5:13; 2 Jn. 13; 3 Jn. 15).

30. In the post-biblical period various ecclesial practices emphasized the communion among local churches. The practice of regional synods, the development of creedal expressions of the faith and of the common canon of Scripture are exercises of koinonia. Individuals presented letters of communion to be admitted to the eucharist of another bishop, indicating that the two sees were in communion with each other. The participation of three bishops in the ordination of a brother bishop signified that he was being admitted into the episcopal college, and bishops frequently visited and corresponded to maintain communion (§§159-162).[42]

31. Christian communities experience koinonia across both space and time. Across space they experience the catholicity of the church in its extension throughout the world as one church consisting of many particular churches in communion with one another. Across time they experience continuity with the apostolic faith of the originating Christian community, the eschatological community founded on the apostles (Rev. 21:14), and with all communities before and after it that have pursued and will pursue the apostolic mission. The local church is church only within this comprehensive koinonia.

III. Realizations of Ecclesial Koinonia

32. As the concept of local church indicates, the koinonia of salvation is realized in concrete communities with specific structures. The structures and ministries of the church embody and serve

---

[41]Nicholas Sagovsky, *Ecumenism, Christian Origins and the Practice of Communion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 128.
[42]Council of Nicea, canon 4.

the koinonia of salvation. It has been a fruitful ecumenical strategy to work from a renewed theology of communion toward a renewed consideration of longstanding difficult issues in relation to structure and ministries. In this document we attempt on the basis of a reflection on concrete structures of koinonia in our churches to look anew at controversies in relation to structure and ministry that have divided our churches in the past.

33.   Lutherans and Catholics affirm together a variety of interdependent realizations of ecclesial koinonia: the congregation or parish (*i.e.*, a face-to-face worshiping assembly gathered by word and sacrament), a regional community or grouping of congregations or parishes (the synod in the ELCA; the diocese in the Catholic Church), a multiplicity of national structures, and a worldwide organization.

34.   These realizations and our theological understanding of them, however, are not symmetrical in our two churches. As already noted, Lutheran and Catholic ecclesiologies differ on which realizations may actually be called a "church." In addition, Lutherans, unlike Catholics, have no worldwide body that is itself a church. Roman Catholics do not have national churches in the same sense as Anglicans, Lutherans, or Orthodox. These differences in ecclesiology involve parallel differences in evaluations of ministry. For example, Catholics consider the bishop to possess the "fullness of the sacrament of order,"[43] while Lutherans follow the teaching of Jerome that there is no difference other than jurisdiction between a presbyter and a bishop.[44] In Catholicism the ministry of worldwide communion is exercised by the college of bishops, inclusive of the bishop of Rome as member and head, who also can act on the college's behalf. While various ministries occur among Lutherans on a global level, there is no formally recognized minister of worldwide communion.

35.   In each of our traditions the ecclesiological understanding of these various realizations of koinonia requires deeper reflection. Larger Lutheran churches around the world are typified by a structure including face-to-face assemblies or congregations, regional groupings of such congregations (in the ELCA called "synods"), and a national or supraregional body with extensive authority to make doctrinal and ecumenical decisions.[45] This structural pattern has rarely, however, been theologically explicated[46] and does not include the universal church. In Catholicism, more recent general councils have primarily focused upon theologies of ministry, which have then shaped the understanding of the structures of ecclesial koinonia. For example, Vatican I addressed the theology of the papacy, and Vatican II developed a theology of the episcopacy from which emerged a theology of the local church. A theology of the presbyterate remained comparatively undeveloped in LG since only one section discussed the priesthood within the chapter on the hierarchy.[47] It is not surprising, then, that the parish has not been the subject of much theological reflection within Catholicism.[48] An ecumenical reflection on the structures and ministries of koinonia thus promises not only new possibilities for the relation between our churches, but also an occasion for consideration of our own ecclesiological blind spots.

A. The Congregation or Parish

36.   Lutherans and Roman Catholics affirm together that Christians share in the koinonia of salvation most immediately in the worshiping assembly gathered around the baptismal font, the

---

[43]LG, 26. The Latin text speaks of a "sacrament of order" (singular) rather than "of orders" (plural); "Episcopus, plenitudine *sacramenti ordinis* insignitus, est 'oeconomus gratiae supremi sacerdotii' . . . " (emphasis added).

[44]*Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope* (TPPP), para. 63. *The Book of Concord*, ed. by Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 340.

[45]On Lutheran church structures around the world, see E. Theodore Bachmann and Mercia Brenne Bachmann, *Lutheran Churches in the World: A Handbook* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989). The German Lutheran churches are organized regionally within the nation rather than nationally, but they still have this threefold structure. Lutheran churches of course recognize the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.

[46]An exception is Wolfgang Huber, *Kirche*, 2nd ed. (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1988).

[47]LG, 28. *Cf. Presbyterorum ordinis*, 4-6.

[48]For some exceptions see James A. Coriden, *The Parish in Catholic Tradition: History, Theology and Canon Law* (Paulist Press, 1997); U.S. Bishops' Committee on the Parish, "The Parish: A People, A Mission, A Structure," *Origins* 10 (§41, March 26, 1982) 641, 633-646; Philip J. Murnion, "Parish: Covenant Community," *Church* 12.1 (Spring, 1996) 5-10.

pulpit, and the eucharistic table. Within these communities the gospel is preached and the faith professed, the catechumens are evangelized and formed, the community receives the baptized, and all are nurtured. There the faithful partake of one bread and become one body (1 Cor. 10:16). Mission is carried out there to and for the world.[49] For both Catholics and Lutherans, this face-to-face community is of ecclesiological significance; it is a koinonia of salvation, whether or not it is labeled "local church" in the sense discussed above.

1. Lutherans on the Congregation

37.　The interdependence of congregation and the wider community finds expression in the definition of a congregation in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: "a community of baptized persons whose existence depends on the proclamation of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments and whose purpose is to worship God, to nurture its members, and to reach out in witness and service to the world. To this end it assembles regularly for worship and nurture, organizes and carries out ministry to its people and neighborhood, and cooperates and supports the wider church to strive for the fulfillment of God's mission in the world."[50]

38.　Each congregation participates with the wider church in God's mission to the world. The sense of relationship, partnership, and commitment to the wider community of faith is reflected in the basic criteria for recognition of ELCA congregations for they must agree to support the life and work of this church (meaning the whole Evangelical Lutheran Church in America).[51] Furthermore, they must pledge to foster and participate in interdependent relationship with other congregations, the synod, and the churchwide organization.[52]

2. Catholics on the Parish

39.　For Catholics also, the parish, especially as a place of Sunday Eucharistic worship and as the place of Christian initiation, is where the people of God experience the church most immediately. The universal church is actualized in specific places and circumstances, in specific cultures and within particular communities, or not at all. The parish is both gathered together by the preaching of the gospel of Christ[53] and joined together through the flesh and blood of the Lord's body in its celebration of the Lord's Supper.[54]

40.　The theology of the parish has been strengthened by the implementation of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, which presumes a local community that helps the candidates and catechumens throughout the whole process of initiation and their further formation in faith and witness. Within a theology of baptism, the parish is the context and specific *place* of formation in Christian living. The tie to the diocesan church also finds expression within the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, in the "rite of election," when candidates are presented to the bishop by name in the cathedral church.[55]

B. The Synod or Diocese

41.　Catholics and Lutherans affirm together that congregations and parishes cannot exist in isolation, but must be in communion with one another within larger regional communities in order

---

[49]*Ad Gentes*, 37; Provision 9.11., in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, 2001 ed., (Chicago: ELCA), 58. (CBCR)
[50]Provision 9.11. in the *CBCR*, 58.
[51]See Provision 9.21. in the *CBCR*, 58.
[52]Provision 9.41. in the *CBCR*, 60. The same text is found in required provision *C4.03. in the *Model Constitution for Congregations* as contained in the ELCA churchwide constitution, 221-222.
[53]LG, 26.
[54]LG, 26. Even though the document does not actually say that these groups are parishes, it does refer to them as local congregations. The text affirms that Christ, by whose power the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church is gathered together, is present in these communities.
[55]Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, 9.

to realize koinonia and to carry out mission. In both our churches, essential ecclesial functions are carried out within the regional community of the diocese or synod, such as ordaining pastors and priests, pastoral care of clergy and congregations, and important aspects of ecclesial discipline. In both churches, the diocese/synod is understood to be church in the full sense. Most importantly, this community is the primary location of the congregation's or parish's connection with the wider church.

1. Lutherans on Synodical Realizations

42. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) seeks "to function as people of God through congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, all of which shall be inter-dependent. Each part, while fully church, recognizes that it is not the whole church and therefore lives in a partnership relationship with the others."[56] Furthermore, "congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations."[57]

43. The interdependence of congregations, synods, and churchwide organization reflects the earliest Lutheran self-understanding. As early as 1523, "Luther does not speak of the local congregation as being . . . self-sufficient. The practical expression of his conviction is seen in the fact that visitations were carried out. In particular, the observance of the 'evangelical doctrine' (*doctrina evangelica*) is not the concern of the individual congregation [alone]; it is the concern of all those who profess this doctrine."[58]

44. In the ELCA synods are comprised of congregations. Congregations in a synod function together both through the synodical assembly and through the ongoing cooperation that is led by the synodical bishop and guided by the elected Synod Council. The ELCA's churchwide constitution mandates: "Each synod, in partnership with the churchwide organization, shall bear primary responsibility for the oversight of the life and mission of this church in its territory."[59] In the ELCA, synods are the primary locus for the oversight of ordained ministry. All ordinations are regularly performed by synodical bishops. Synods carry out the full range of ecclesial activities and are themselves realizations of the koinonia of salvation.[60]

2. Catholics on Diocesan Realizations

45. For Catholics, the particular church, most often a diocese, already embraces a number of parishes, the face-to-face congregations, in which the word is preached, the eucharist celebrated, and new members initiated. Every particular church must be in communion with other particular churches and in continuity with its apostolic foundations. Each particular church shows solicitude for the entire church, which includes proclaiming the gospel to the entire world, collaborating with one another, keeping unity with the church in Rome, helping the missions, and extending assistance to other churches.[61]

46. A particular church is not a subdivision of the universal church, although there is an interdependence between the particular and universal church. "In and from these particular churches there exists the one unique catholic church. For this reason individual bishops represent their own church, while all of them together with the pope represent the whole church in the bond of peace, love and unity."[62] Within the episcopal college, bishops represent their particular church in the communion of churches, the collegiality of bishops paralleling the communion of churches.

---

[56]Provision 8.11. of the *CBCR*, 50.
[57]Provision 3.02. of the *CBCR*, 20.
[58]Werner Elert, *The Structure of Lutheranism*, translated by Walter A. Hansen (St. Louis: Concordia, 1962) 369.
[59]Provision 10.21. in the *CBCR*, 75.
[60]Provisions †S6.03. and †S8.12. in the *Constitution for Synods* as printed in *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* (2001 version), 187-89 and 193-95.
[61]LG, 23.
[62]LG, 23.

C. National Realizations of Koinonia

47. Lutherans and Catholics affirm together the significance of national elements in the life of the church. Conferences of bishops for the Latin Catholic Church most often serve national groupings. From the time of the Reformation, Lutheran churches have been organized along the lines of national or other political units.[63]

1. Lutherans on National Realizations

48. For historical reasons, such as language and the close relationship between church and state, Lutherans have tended to be organized into national churches for mission, among other purposes.[64] For example, the ELCA is "church" in the theological sense and is not a federation or association of congregations or synods. As church, the ELCA has a pastor, its presiding bishop, who carries out a range of pastoral activities in service of this church.[65] The churchwide organization has extensive authority. Only this churchwide expression can enter into relations of full communion with other churches.[66] Lutherans have rarely sought to provide a theological rationale for the importance that such national churches have played in their life.[67]

2. Catholics on National Realizations

49. In the history of the church, various structures have existed at a level more geographically extensive than the diocese, but less extensive than the church as a whole: e.g., provinces or patriarchates. These structures have varied widely in their powers and responsibilities. The Eastern Catholic Churches have retained synodal structures. Since the Second Vatican Council, national conferences of bishops have come to play an important role in the life of the Latin Catholic Church. They gather bishops of a given nation or territory which foster a closer koinonia among the churches and collegiality among the bishops for the people of that area.[68] The exact theological status of these conferences is not entirely determined.[69] John Paul II's *Motu Proprio, Apostolos Suos,* describes the extent of the conferences' authority:

> The Conference of Bishops can issue general decrees only in those cases in which the common law prescribes it, or a special mandate of the Apostolic See, given either *motu proprio* or at the request of the Conference, determines it. In other cases the competence of individual diocesan Bishops remains intact; and neither the Conference nor its president may act in the name of all the Bishops unless each and every Bishop has given his consent.[70]

---

[63]The Church of Sweden and the German Landeskirchen are examples.

[64]The ELCA is only a slight exception to this pattern of national organization; it includes a Caribbean Synod in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

[65]Provision 13.21. in the *CBCR*, 90.

[66]Provision 8.71. in the *CBCR* 54.

[67]This lack was noted in an important address by E. Clifford Nelson to the 1963 Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, "The One Church and the Lutheran Churches," in *Proceedings of the Fourth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation*, Helsinki, July 30-August 11, 1963 (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1965).

[68]CD, 38. "Pope Paul VI, in his 1966, *Motu Proprio Ecclesiae Sanctae*, called for Episcopal Conferences to be established wherever they did not yet exist; those already existing were to draw up proper statutes; and in cases where it was not possible to establish a Conference, the Bishops in question were to join already existing Episcopal Conferences; Episcopal Conferences comprising several nations or even international Episcopal Conferences could be established. Several years later, in 1973, the Pastoral Directory for Bishops stated once again that 'the Episcopal Conference is established as a contemporary means of contributing in a varied and fruitful way to the practice of collegiality.' These Conferences admirably help to foster a spirit of communion with the Universal Church and among the different local Churches." (John Paul II, *Motu Proprio*, "On the Theological and Juridical Nature of Episcopal Conferences" (*Apostolos suos*), 21 May 1998, §5. *Ecclesiae sanctae* and the *Pastoral Directory of Bishops*, *Origins* Vol. 28, No. 9 (July 30, 1998) p. 153, §5.

[69]*Ibid.*

[70]*Ibid.*

50.   The authority of the episcopal conference is limited by the individual responsibility of each bishop as pastor of his particular diocese and by the supreme authority of the church.[71] Episcopal conferences do not have the ecclesial status of the diocese, the patriarchate, or the worldwide church. They are headed by a president who does not have pastoral authority over the churches represented in the conference. The national bishops' conferences do not play the role in the Catholic Church that the autonomous national churches play within Lutheranism.

D. Worldwide Realization

51.   Lutherans and Catholics affirm together that the worldwide expression of ecclesial life is a communion of churches, embodying the apostolicity and catholicity of the church. Each understands the universal church to be realized in local or particular churches, and these are not parts of the church but realizations of the one church. They are in communion with one another and with their apostolic origins. The universal church as the comprehensive koinonia of salvation forms the context within which all churches are church. Both Lutherans and Catholics have structures of worldwide decision making and action, no matter how these structures and their authority may differ.

1. Lutherans on Worldwide Realization

52.   For most of its history, Lutheranism had no worldwide structural realization. A growing sense of a need for international Lutheran solidarity led first to the gathering of individual Lutherans in the Lutheran World Convention (1923) and later to the organization of Lutheran churches in the Lutheran World Federation (1947). As noted earlier, the LWF does not define itself as a church, but as "a communion of churches which confess the triune God, agree in the proclamation of the Word of God and are united in pulpit and altar fellowship."[72] As a communion of churches, the LWF acts on behalf of its member churches in areas of common interest such as ecumenical relations, theology, humanitarian assistance, human rights, communication, and various aspects of mission and development,[73] but does not perform the full range of ecclesial actions, does not have the authority of a church, and is not structured as a church. The LWF is headed by a President and a General Secretary who are not understood as pastors of world Lutheranism. The LWF has, however, exercised what amounts to discipline in relation to its German-language churches in Southern Africa during the apartheid era, and was the organ by which a consensus of its member churches was formed around the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*. The LWF is a realization of the koinonia of salvation, even if not in itself church.

2. Catholics on Worldwide Realization

53.   The Roman Catholic Church understands itself as one church, which finds concrete, historical objectification in a plurality of particular churches: "The Catholic Church herself subsists in each particular church, which can be complete only through effective communion in faith, sacraments and unity with the whole body of Christ."[74] Thus the universal church does not result from an addition or a federation of particular churches. The particular church embodies the universal church in the sense that it is the specific place where the universal church is found, yet it manifests this universality in communion with other particular churches. The bishops in communion with one another and with the bishop of Rome assure the continuity of the particular churches with the

---

[71]LG, 23 stipulates that "individual bishops, in so far as they are set over particular churches exercise their pastoral office over the portion of the people of God assigned to them, not over other churches nor over the church universal. But as members of the Episcopal college and legitimate successors of the apostles, by Christ's arrangement and decree, each is bound to be solicitous for the entire church; such solicitude, even though it is not exercised by an act of jurisdiction, is very much to the advantage of the universal church."
[72]LWF Constitution, Article III: Nature and Function.
[73]LWF Constitution, Article III: Nature and Function.
[74]John Paul II, address 12 September 1987, printed in *Origins* 17:16 (1 October 1987) 258. Here John Paul II extends the assertion in LG 8, that the Church of Christ subsists in the Roman Catholic Church to the relationship between the universal church and particular churches.

apostolic church and represent their churches in communion with other particular churches. LG refers to the mystical body of Christ also as a "body of churches."[75]

IV. Ministry in Service of Communion

54.   Lutheran-Catholic differences in the understanding of the structure of the church at the local, regional or national, and worldwide realizations are paralleled by differences in the understanding of ministry. Distinct ministries serve the koinonia of salvation in every ecclesial realization. Lutheran pastors and Catholic priests serve face-to-face assemblies. Bishops serve regional communities of such assemblies. In the Roman Catholic Church, the bishop of Rome has a special role in serving the communion of the universal church. Asymmetry between the two traditions occurs because Catholics locate the basic unit of the church in the particular church or diocese, while for Lutherans the basic unit of the church is the congregation. This asymmetry is paralleled by where they locate the fullness of ministerial office. Catholics locate the fullness of ministry in the bishop, while Lutherans find the office of Word and sacrament fully realized in the pastor.

A. A History of the Present Differences Between Lutherans and Roman Catholics

55.   As shown in the accompanying Explanation (New Testament and history sections), the theological understanding of ordained ministry has varied significantly over the history of the church. The New Testament churches knew offices that were present only at the church's origin (*e.g.*, apostle), but also used terms such as *presbyteros* and *episkopos* which became standard titles of offices in later church history. The exact nature and function of these ministries varied in the New Testament. The threefold ordering of bishop, presbyter, and deacon became widespread in the patristic church, but the function of these ministries changed over time, especially with the rise of the parish presided over by the priest as the most widespread form of face-to-face Christian community. As discussed in section 168-170, the nature of the distinction between priest or presbyter and bishop was an unsettled matter even in medieval theology. The Lutheran and Catholic understandings of ordained ministry in the sixteenth century were worked out against the background of this medieval uncertainty.

56.   Peter Lombard, Thomas Aquinas, and many medieval theologians taught that bishop and priest belonged to the same order (*sacerdotium)*. The Lutheran Reformers went further, and held that the distinction in dignity and power between bishop and presbyter was not established by divine law (*jure divino*) but by human authority (*jure humano*) (*see below* §§176-182). Whatever "power" (*potestas*) is needed to "preside over the churches" belongs "by divine right to all who preside over the churches, whether they are called pastor, presbyters, or bishops."[76] Since the congregation is the community gathered by word and sacrament which mediate salvation, the congregation must be church. In a situation of emergency, a church can provide for the needed ministry of word and sacrament by its own pastors ordaining clergy, since in principle a presbyter can do what a bishop can do, however matters may be ordered in non-emergency situations.[77] On this basis, when the Catholic bishops would not ordain evangelical clergy, Lutheran churches within the Holy Roman Empire proceeded in the 1530s to ordain clergy with pastors as the presiding ministers.[78] The Lutheran argument was complex, appealing both to ecclesiological claims about the powers of the church and to claims about the essential equality of presbyter and bishop. This argument reflects the idea that the presbyter could in a situation of necessity exercise all essential functions of the office of ordained ministry.

---

[75]LG, 23.
[76]TPPP, 60f.
[77]TPPP, 72.
[78]See §§187-188 for ordinations in continental Lutheranism by pastors with responsibilities as superintendent; for bishops continuing to ordain in Nordic countries, see §§189-195.

57.   Consistent with this confessional Lutheran understanding, the ELCA is characterized throughout its structures by the interdependence between the assembly and the ordained ministry. The congregation is served by a pastor; the synod is served by a bishop; the ELCA as a whole is served by a presiding bishop. This structure is typical of Lutheran churches and some Lutheran theologians have seen in this structure a normative expression of the Lutheran understanding of the church.[79]

58.   At the Council of Trent, the Catholic Church spoke of "a hierarchy in the church, instituted by divine appointment, consisting of bishops, priests, and ministers," but stopped short of stating that the office of bishop exists in the church *jure divino* or that the episcopate is an order distinct from the presbyterate.[80] It did affirm, however, that bishops in particular belong to this hierarchical order (*gradus*), have been made by the Holy Spirit rulers of the church of God, are higher than priests, and are able to confer the sacrament of confirmation and to ordain the ministers of the church.[81] Those who "have neither been duly ordained nor [been] commissioned by ecclesiastical and canonical authority" are not "legitimate" (*legitimos*) ministers of word and sacraments.[82]

59.   Vatican II, in continuity with the implications of the Apostolic Constitution of Pius XII *Sacramentum ordinis*,[83] affirmed that episcopal ordination alone confers the fullness of the sacrament of Order.[84] The priest or presbyter participates in the sacrament of Order in a less complete manner.[85] That the bishops as a body are successors to the apostles is by divine institution.[86] However, Vatican II left open whether the distinction between bishop and presbyter is of divine institution.[87] Only a bishop confers the sacrament of Order. If the local or particular church possesses all that is needed to be truly church, then it must include within itself all ministries essential to the church. If the bishop alone exercises the fullness of the ministerial priesthood, then only that church which includes a bishop can be such a local or particular church.[88]

B. Ordained Ministry Serving the Congregation or Parish

60.   Catholics and Lutherans affirm together that the ministry of an ordained pastor or priest is a constitutive element of the koinonia of salvation gathered around font, pulpit, and altar. Central to this ministry is preaching the gospel, presiding in the sacramental life of the community, and leading as pastor the community in its life and mission. The activities of this minister are instruments of the life of the congregation as a koinonia of salvation.

1. Catholics

61.   The pastor, a member of the presbyterate,[89] is the proper shepherd of the parish. He exercises the duties of teaching, sanctifying, and pastoral care in the community entrusted to him under the authority of the diocesan bishop in whose ministry of Christ he has been called to share.[90] In a

---

[79]See the discussions in Kurt Schmidt-ClauSsen, "The Development of Offices of Leadership in the German Lutheran Church: 1918-Present, "in *Episcopacy in the Lutheran Church? Studies in the Development and Definition of the Office of Church Leadership*, edited by Ivar Asheim and Victor R. Gold (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), 72-115; Wilhelm Maurer, *Das synodale evangelische Bischofsamt seit 1918*, Fuldaer Hefte 10 (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1955).
[80]Council of Trent, Session 23, Canons on the sacrament of Order, 6.
[81]Council of Trent, Session 23, Chapter 4.
[82]Council of Trent, Session 23, Canons on the sacrament of Order, 7.
[83]DH 3860. Pius XII, "Sacramentum ordinis," *Acta apostolicae sedis* 40 (1948) 5-7.
[84]LG, 21.
[85]LG, 28; PO, 2.
[86]LG, 20.
[87]Avery Dulles, "Ius Divinum as an Ecumenical Problem," *Theological Studies* 38 (1977) 689.
[88]Vatican II defines the diocese as "a portion of the people of God whose pastoral care is entrusted to a bishop in cooperation with his priests" (CD, 11).
[89]Code of Canon Law, can. 521 º1.
[90]Code of Canon Law, can. 519.

certain sense, presbyters make the bishop present in the individual local congregation.[91] Together with the bishop presbyters constitute one presbyterium,[92] evidence of the collegial character of the order. A presbyter carries out the duties of teaching, sanctifying, and governing with the cooperation of other presbyters or deacons and the assistance of other members of the Christian faithful. In their own locality priests also make visible the universal church.[93] The pastor of a parish works with the bishop and with the presbyterate of the diocese to ensure that "the faithful be concerned for parochial communion and that they realize that they are members both of the diocese and of the universal church and participate in and support efforts to promote such communion."[94]

2. Lutherans

62.　　Lutherans have historically emphasized the single office of word and sacrament exercised by all ordained ministers. The vast majority of such ministers are congregational pastors. In preaching the word and celebrating the sacraments, their ministry is essential to the congregation as church and intimately related to the character of the congregation as a koinonia of salvation. They "stand both within the congregation and over against it. They stand with the whole people of God because all share in the one ministry of the church. They stand over against the congregation because in God's name they proclaim the saving gospel to God's people, and therefore bear the authority of God's word, but only insofar as their proclamation is faithful to the gospel."[95]

C. Ordained Ministry Serving Regional Communities

63.　　Lutherans and Catholics affirm together that the realization of koinonia in the primary regional community is presided over by an ordained minister, called a bishop. Lutherans and Catholics agree that the bishop exercises a priesthood or ministry of word and sacrament also shared in by the priest or pastor. Episcopal ministry finds its center in word, sacrament, and pastoral leadership. This ministry serves the unity of the church, both within the regional community and in the relation of this regional community with the church of all times and places.[96]

1. Catholics

64.　　In the Catholic Church a bishop is a priest who has the "fullness of the sacrament of order."[97] Ordination to the episcopacy confers the offices of sanctifying, teaching, and governing.[98] By virtue of his ordination, the bishop's authority in his diocese is "proper, ordinary, and immediate,"[99] which means that it is not delegated by higher ecclesiastical authority. He is able to exercise this authority, however, only in communion with the college of bishops and the bishop of Rome. Among his duties, "the preaching of the gospel occupies the pre-eminent place."[100] He is the pastor of a particular church, which includes multiple parishes.

65.　　In the Catholic Church, bishops function within the college of bishops to which they are admitted by virtue of their episcopal ordination and hierarchical communion with the bishop of

---

[91]LG, 28.
[92]LG, 28. PO, 8.
[93]LG, 28.
[94]CIC, can. 529 º2.
[95]Lutheran World Federation, *The Lutheran Understanding of Ministry* (1983), reprinted in *Ministry: Women, Bishops*, LWF Studies (1993), para. 21.
[96]Presbyterian polities stress the interrelation of the face-to-face assembly and the regional community of such assemblies. Ministry at the regional level, however, is exercised by the presbytery as a college rather than by a single ordained minister such as a bishop. The possibility of such a polity has not been a part of the discussions of this dialogue. While Lutheran churches have generally included a regional ordained minister of oversight, a presbyterian polity has not been seen as unacceptable, and the ELCA is in full communion with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Catholic theology requires the presence of a bishop.
[97]LG, 26.
[98]*LG,* 21.
[99]LG, 27.
[100]LG, 25.

Rome.[101] A bishop represents his own church within this college, and all the bishops together with the bishop of Rome represent the whole church[102] and share responsibility for preaching the gospel to the whole world.[103] The college of bishops does not constitute a legislative body apart from the bishop of Rome, but includes the pope as member and head of the college.

66.   The Second Vatican Council did not specify what constitutes the fullness of the sacrament of Order given in ordination as a bishop. This "fullness of the sacrament of order" can refer (among other things) to the regional bishop's representing his particular church in the communion of churches. The very nature of the episcopacy requires that a bishop exercise his office, even within his own particular church, only in communion with the college of bishops into which he is "incorporated" by his sacramental ordination. The college of bishops symbolizes the unity among the particular churches that each bishop represents in his office. The episcopacy is a relational office, connecting eucharistic communities with one another across space and time as well as fostering the ministry of the local church in faith and love. The collegiality of the episcopacy represents the catholicity of the churches. The episcopacy also connects eucharistic communities with the college of the apostles, and thus represents the apostolicity of the churches.[104]

2. Lutherans

67.   At the time of the Reformation, Lutherans in the Holy Roman Empire organized ministries of oversight in their territorial churches to replace those of the bishops who they judged had abandoned the gospel and who would not ordain evangelical clergy. While these ministers of oversight had various titles, their ministry was understood to be episcopal.[105] Various Lutheran church orders spoke of this office of oversight as necessary to the life of the church[106] because it was oriented to the church's faithfulness in those ministries that served its life as a koinonia of salvation. Following 1918 and the end of the state-church system within which the princes played a quasi-episcopal role, the German Lutheran churches reintroduced the title "bishop."[107] The Nordic Lutheran churches, in lands where the entire nation became Lutheran, preserved the pre-Reformation episcopal order, with varying degrees of continuity with their predecessors in office (*see below* §§189-195). The predecessor bodies of the ELCA introduced the title "bishop" in the second half of the twentieth century (*see below* §232).

68.   In the ELCA, a bishop is called to be a "synod's pastor" and as such "shall be an ordained minister of Word and Sacrament."[108] Like all pastors, the bishop shall "preach, teach, and administer the sacraments." In addition, the bishop has "primary responsibility for the ministry of Word and Sacrament in the synod and its congregations, providing pastoral care and leadership."[109] The ministry and oversight of the bishop thus relate directly to that which makes the synod a realization of the koinonia of salvation.

69.   Lutherans also affirm the role of the episcopacy in linking regional churches to the universal church. The ELCA constitution stipulates that the synodical bishop shall provide "leadership in

---

[101]*LG,* 19.
[102]*LG,* 22.
[103]LG, 24.
[104]*LG,* 20.
[105]See especially Luther's Preface to the 1528 Saxon Visitation Articles (LW 40, 271) and, more comprehensively, Werner Elert, "Der bischöfliche Charakter der Superintendentur-Verfassung." *Luthertum* 46 (1935): 353-367.
[106]See orders cited in Werner Elert, "Der bischöfliche Charakter der Superintendentur-Verfassung." *Luthertum* 46 (1935): 355f.
[107]Kurt Schmidt-Clausen, "The Development of Offices of Leadership in the German Lutheran Church: 1918-Present," in *Episcopacy in the Lutheran Church? Studies in the Development and Definition of the Office of Church Leadership*, edited by Ivar Asheim and Victor R. Gold (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), 72-115.
[108]Provision †S8.11. of the *Constitution for Synods* as printed in *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* (2001 version), 193.
[109]Provision †S8.12. of the *Constitution for Synods* as printed in *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* (2001 version), 193.

strengthening the unity of the Church."[110] This responsibility is affirmed by the ELCA-Episcopal Church agreement "Called to Common Mission:" "By such a liturgical statement [entrance into the episcopate through the laying on of hands by other bishops] the churches recognize that the bishop serves the diocese or synod through ties of collegiality and consultation that strengthen its links with the universal church."[111] Similarly, in the Northern European "Porvoo Common Statement," the participating Lutheran and Anglican churches "acknowledge that the episcopal office is valued and maintained in all our churches as a visible sign expressing and serving the Church's unity and continuity in apostolic life, mission and ministry."[112]

D. Ordained Ministry Serving the Universal Church

70.   Catholics and Lutherans affirm together that all ministry, to the degree that it serves the koinonia of salvation, also serves the unity of the worldwide church. A specific ministry that serves universal unity is affirmed by Catholics and not excluded by Lutherans. Lutherans and Catholics together need to discuss how such a ministry can be formed and reformed so that it can be received by a greater range of the world's churches and thus better fulfill its own service to unity.

1. Catholics

71.   As bishop of the particular church of Rome, the bishop of Rome, successor of Peter, has a unique responsibility as pastor and teacher to the universal church. He is, in his Petrine ministry, the visible "principle of the unity both of faith and of communion."[113] The common statement, *Papal Primacy and the Universal Church*, spoke of a "Petrine function" to describe "a particular form of Ministry exercised by a person, officeholder, or local church with reference to the church as a whole," a function that "serves to promote or preserve the oneness of the church by symbolizing unity, and by facilitating communication, mutual assistance or correction, and collaboration in the church's mission."[114] Since he must ensure and serve the communion of the particular churches, he is the first servant of unity.[115] While the pope does not take the place of the diocesan bishop, his pastoral authority and responsibility extends throughout the church around the world. He must assure that the local churches keep and transmit the apostolic faith with integrity. He promotes and coordinates the activities of the churches in their missionary task. He speaks in the name of all the bishops and all their local churches when necessary and has the authority to declare officially and solemnly the revealed truth in the name of the whole church. The bishop of Rome always fulfills his office in communion with the college of bishops as a member and its head.[116] His office is not separate from the mission entrusted to the whole body of bishops.

72.   In *Ut unum sint*, John Paul II's concern for the unity of the churches is not limited to the Catholic communion, but extends to all Christian communities. He acknowledges that the exercise of the papacy has at times been an obstacle to Christian unity. Therefore, he seeks "a way of exercising the primacy which, while in no way renouncing what is essential to its mission, is

---

[110]Provision †S8.12.h. of the *Constitution for Synods* as printed in *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* (2001 version), 194.

[111]"Called to Common Mission: A Lutheran Proposal for a Revision of the Concordat of Agreement" (Chicago: ELCA, November 1998), 12. (CCM)

[112]*Porvoo Common Statement*, in *Together in Mission and Ministry: The Porvoo Common Statement*. London: Church House Publishing, 1993, para. 58a vi. (Porvoo)

[113]*LG,* 18; *cf.* 22-23.

[114]*Papal Primacy and the Universal Church*. Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue V, ed. by P. C. Empie and T. A. Murphy (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1974) II 34, p. 30. As early as 1972, the "Malta Report" stated "But in the various dialogues, the possibility begins to emerge that the Petrine office of the Bishop of Rome also need not be excluded by Lutherans as a visible sign of the unity of the church as a whole 'insofar as [this office] is subordinated to the primacy of the gospel by theological reinterpretation and practical restructuring'" (66).

[115]John Paul II, UUS, 94.

[116]*Ibid.*, 95.

nonetheless open to a new situation."[117] To this end he has called upon church leaders and theologians to engage with him in a patient and fraternal dialogue on this subject.[118]

2. Lutherans

73.   Openness to a rightly exercised primacy is part of the Lutheran theological legacy. The Lutheran Reformers' rejection of the papacy focused on "the concrete historical papacy as it confronted them in their day" rather than on the very idea of a universal ministry of unity.[119] In *Against the Papacy in Rome, Instituted by the Devil* (1545), perhaps his sharpest writing against the papacy, Luther nevertheless affirms that the pope might have a primacy of "honor and superiority" and "of oversight over teaching and heresy in the church."[120] This "conditional openness" to papal primacy is dependent upon a reformed papacy, subject to the gospel, that would not arbitrarily restrict Christian freedom.[121]

74.   The Lutheran argument did not merely contest abuses, however; it also challenged the alleged *jure divino* character of the papacy. Philip Melanchthon added to his subscription to the Smalcald Articles that, if the pope "would allow the gospel," the papacy's "superiority over the bishops" could be granted *jure humano*.[122] Historical criticism has significantly altered understandings of divine and human law and criteria for distinguishing them.[123] Especially in relation to the papacy, but also in relation to other traditionally controversial questions relating to ministry, the categories of divine and human law need to be re-examined and placed in the context of ministry as service to the koinonia of salvation.

V. Ministry and the Continuity with the Apostolic Church

A. Succession in Apostolic Mission, Ministry, and Message

75.   Both Lutherans and Catholics have a strong commitment to maintaining apostolicity in the Christian faith.[124] The koinonia of salvation requires continuity in the mission, ministry, and message

---

[117]*Ibid.*
[118]*Ibid.*, 96.
[119]U.S. Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue, *Papal Primacy and the Universal Church*, para. 30.
[120]WA 54, 231; LW 41, 294; *cf.* Harding Meyer, "Suprema auctoritas ideo ab omni errore immunis: The Lutheran Approach to Primacy" in *Petrine Ministry and the Unity of the Church*, ed. by James Puglisi (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1999) 16-18.
[121]On the shape of such reforms, see *Papal Primacy and the Universal Church*, paras. 23-25.
[122]*BC*, ed. by Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), p. 326.
[123]This ambiguity with regard to the precise nature of the *ius divinum/ius humanum* distinction was pointed out in the international Roman Catholic–Lutheran dialogue on "The Gospel and the Church" ("Malta Report," 1972), §31: "Greater awareness of the historicity of the church in conjunction with a new understanding of its ecclesiological nature, requires that in our day the concepts of the *ius divinum* and *ius humanum* be thought through anew.... *Ius divinum* can never be adequately distinguished from *ius humanum*. We have *ius divinum* always only as mediated through particular historical forms." The problem was addressed by George Lindbeck in his article, "Papacy and *Ius Divinum* : A Lutheran View" in *Papal Primacy and the Universal Church*.
[124]The issue of "apostolic succession" was taken up by the USA Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue IV, *Eucharist and Ministry* (1970), 138-188 in articles by McCue, Burghardt, and Quanbeck. Note the Common Statement, §44. It expands the notion of apostolic succession beyond that of a succession in episcopal office to include transmission of the apostolic gospel and grants that Lutherans have preserved a "form of doctrinal apostolicity," leading to the tentative conclusion of the Catholic participants that they "see no persuasive reason to deny the possibility of the Roman Catholic Church recognizing the validity of this Ministry" (54). See more recently the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Joint Study Commission, *The Ministry in the Church* (1981), 62: "The apostolic succession in the episcopal office does not consist primarily in an unbroken chain of those ordaining to those ordained, but in a succession in the presiding ministry of a church, which stands in the continuity of apostolic faith and which is overseen by a bishop in order to keep it in communion with the Catholic and Apostolic church" (quoted also in *The Niagara Report. Report of the Anglican-Lutheran Consultation on Episcope, 1987*, 53). See also *Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry*. Report of the Faith and Order Paper No. 111 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982), 35: "The primary manifestation of apostolic succession is to be found in the apostolic tradition of the church as a whole. *Cf.* the ELCA-Episcopal Church full communion agreement, "Called to Common Mission" (1999), 12.

It should be noted that the Dogmatic Constitution of Vatican II on the Church stated: "Among those various ministries which, as tradition witnesses, were exercised in the Church from the earliest times, the chief place belongs to the office of those who, appointed to the episcopate in a sequence running back to the beginning (*per successionem ab initio decurrentem*), are the ones who pass on the apostolic seed." (LG 20 [tr. W. M. Abbott (ed.), 39]). Other translations of the cited Latin phrase wrongly use the word "unbroken." Thus A. P. Flannery (ed.), *Documents of Vatican II* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 371: "in virtue consequently of the unbroken succession, going back to the beginning." Similarly, S. Garofalo (ed.), *Sacro Concilio Ecumenico Vaticano II: Constituzioni, Decreti, Dichiarazioni*

(continued...)

of the apostles. The discussion of ordained ministry between Lutherans and Catholics, however, has often been dominated by the issue of apostolic succession understood as a succession of episcopal consecrations. As a result, the question of apostolicity has been discussed in a narrowly canonical and mechanistic manner. The renewed ecclesiology of koinonia has instead sought first to understand ministry as a bond of koinonia within the church and then to recover the rich patristic sense of the bonds of the church to the apostles' mission, ministry, and message across space and time.

76. Lutherans and Catholics agree that the continuity of the apostolic church and the continuity of its mission, ministry, and message are promised to it by its Lord.[125] In the mission given by Jesus to the apostles the Lord has promised to be present until the end of the age (Mt. 28:19-20). There is one household of God, founded on the apostles and prophets, with Christ as the cornerstone (Eph. 2:20). The gates of Hell shall never prevail against this church (Mt. 16:18). Lutherans and Catholics agree that "apostolic succession" in this comprehensive sense is essential to the church's being. Such succession is continuity with both the past and the future, both with the apostles as witnesses of the resurrection two thousand years ago and with the apostles whose names will be on the twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:14). Such continuity is an element of "the Church's communion which spans time and space, linking the present to past and future generations of Christians."[126]

77. Continuity in apostolic mission, ministry, and message is not a human achievement, but a gift of the Spirit. God is faithful to his promise, despite our failings. Our confidence in this continuity is not based upon our fidelity, but upon God's promise. God maintains the church in the apostolic mission, ministry, and message through concrete means: the apostolic scriptures, faithful teachers, the creeds, and the continuity of ordained ministry. Through these various means, the community as a whole remains apostolic.[127]

B. The Bishop as Sign and Instrument of Apostolic Succession

78. As a regional minister of oversight, the bishop is called to foster the koinonia that extends beyond any one local community. The bishop maintains koinonia with the church's apostolic foundations through proclamation of the gospel and apostolic faith. A truly evangelical oversight will focus on the church's faithfulness to the gospel and thus seek to safeguard and further its true apostolicity. The episcopal task is thus inherently bound up with a concern for apostolic continuity. As the ELCA-Episcopal Church agreement stated, a ministry of *episcopé*, conferred through the laying on of hands by other bishops and prayer for the gift of the Holy Spirit, is one of the ways "in the context of ordained ministries and of the whole people of God, in which the apostolic succession of the church is visibly expressed and personally symbolized in fidelity to the Gospel through the ages."[128]

79. While a focus on a continuity in ordinations or consecrations can make the concept of succession appear simply human, such a focus should bring to the fore the divine initiative in preserving the church. The laying on of hands is a classical form of intensive prayer. In both of our churches, the laying on of hands for the episcopal office is accompanied by a prayer for the pouring out of the Spirit upon the new bishops to empower their ministry. The church thus celebrates the continuity of apostolic ministry, a continuity that lies ultimately in the hands of God. The church must pray for that ministry to continue, and it prays confidently in the knowledge that God will be

[124](...continued)
(Milan: Editrice Ancora, 1966) 189: "per successione che decorre ininterrotta dall'origine." See also *Ecclesia de eucharistia*, *Origins* 32:46 (1 May 2003) 753-768, 28, 29.
[125]*Augsburg Confession* VII.1; *LG, 20.*
[126]Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Church as Communion*, §31.
[127]Anglican-Lutheran International Continuation Committee, *The Niagara Report*, paras. 28-30; in J. Gros, et al., *Growth in Agreement II*, 17f.
[128]CCM 12.

faithful to the promise that goes with the command to "go out into all the world" (Mt. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:14).

80.   Prior to the late 1530s, the theme of succession played little role in Reformation debates on the role and authority of the bishop. The authority and ministry of the bishop, not any particular concept of succession, were the subject of debate. The Lutheran Confessions explicitly regret the loss of the "order of the church"[129] that resulted from the presbyteral ordinations the Lutherans judged to be necessary for the life of their churches, but neither Article 28 of the *Augsburg Confession* on the power of bishops nor the response by the imperial Catholic theologians to it in the *Confutation* refers explicitly to succession.[130] Thus, when the Lutheran churches felt compelled to ordain pastors apart from the Catholic hierarchy, they were not consciously rejecting any concept of episcopal succession, for such a concept was not current in theological discussions of the period . Only with the renewed attention to patristic sources in the subsequent debates was such a concept reasserted.[131] Unfortunately, when the writings of such figures as Irenaeus were taken up in the debate, they were used within a canonical argument over validity which the Lutherans could only reject.[132] More recent ecumenical discussions of succession as a sign of the continuity of the church (*e.g.*, the Anglican-Lutheran *Niagara Report*, 1987) have found much greater (though not universal) acceptance in Lutheran circles.[133]   In 2001, the ELCA entered a new relation with The Episcopal Church, committing both to "share an episcopal succession that is both evangelical and historic."[134] Similar Lutheran-Anglican agreements in Canada and Northern Europe in which Lutherans have affirmed episcopal succession put Lutheran-Catholic relations in a new context.

81.   The Roman Catholic Church has preserved the succession of episcopal consecrations; this succession was broken in continental Lutheranism, maintained in parts of Nordic Lutheranism, and has been reclaimed by the ELCA. What is the significance of either preserving or breaking this succession? That question must not be isolated and made to bear the entire weight of a judgment on a church's ministry. Whether a particular minister or church serves the church's apostolic mission does not depend only upon the presence of such a succession of episcopal consecrations, as if its absence would negate the apostolicity of the church's teaching and mission.[135] Recent ecumenical discussions of episcopacy and succession do not remove our former disagreements, but they do place them in a richer and more complex context in which judgments made exclusively on the basis of the presence or absence of a succession of consecrations are less possible.

VI. Local and Regional Structures and Ministries of Communion

A. The Relationship between Local and Regional Churches

82.   The interdependent polarity between "face-to-face eucharistic assembly" and "primary regional community of such assemblies" elaborated above (*see* §§27-29, 33) forms the background for a reconsideration of the relation between bishop and presbyter. Bishop and pastor are the

---

[129]*Apology* XIV.1.
[130]*BC* Kolb and Wengert, 90-103; Robert Kolb and James A. Nestingen, *Sources and Contexts of the Book of Concord* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 137-139.
[131]Georg Kretschmar, "Die Wiederentdeckung des Konzeptes der 'Apostolischen Sukzession' im Umkreis der Reformation," in *Das bischöfliche Amt: Kirchengeschichtliche und ökumenische Studien zur Frage des kirchlichen Amtes*, edited by Dorothea Wendebourg (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1999), 300-44.
[132]For an example of a vehement rejection by the Reformers of the argument that episcopal succession is essential to a valid ministry, see Philip Melanchthon, "The Church and the Authority of the Word," in *Melanchthon: Selected Writings*, translated by Charles Leander Hill (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1962), 130-86. Latin original in *Melanchthons Werke im Auswahl*, vol. 1, 323-386.
[133]See also World Council of Churches Faith and Order Commission, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Faith and Order Papers, 111 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982), M38.; Warren A. Quanbeck, "A Contemporary View of Apostolic Succession," in *Eucharist and Ministry: Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue IV*, p. 187; The Lutheran responses to BEM on ministry and succession are analyzed in Michael Seils, *Lutheran Convergence? An Analysis of the Lutheran Responses to the Convergence Document "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" of the World Council of Churches Faith and Order Commission*, LWF Report 25 (Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, 1988), 126-131. A more positive reading of Lutheran responses is in Michael Root, "Do Not Grow Weary in Well-Doing: Lutheran Responses to the BEM Ministry Document." *dialog* 27 (1988): 23-30.
[134]CCM 12.
[135]*Cf. Niagara Report*, paras. 54-55.

presiding ministers, respectively, of the synod or diocese and of the congregation or parish gathered around word and sacrament.[136] Church unity rests in koinonia or sharing in word and sacrament. Because ordained ministry of word and sacrament is essential to the church's sharing in and sharing salvation, such ministry is intrinsically related to the church's unity and koinonia.

83. The relation between bishop and pastor parallels in important ways the relation between synod or diocese on the one hand and parish or congregation on the other. Within this parallelism, the differing understandings of the structure of church held by Lutherans and Catholics have each grasped an essential dimension of the church: the primacy of the face-to-face community gathered around font, pulpit, and altar, on the one hand, and the essential character of koinonia with other such communities for the life of any eucharistic assembly, on the other. In seeking to determine which is "local church" in the theological sense noted above, however, false choices have been forced upon theological reflection. As a result, both Lutherans and Catholics suffer from an imbalance in their theological account of the church.

84. With respect to Roman Catholics, the international Roman Catholic–Lutheran Joint Commission has noted that, despite the definition of the local church as the diocese, "in actual fact it is the parish, even more than the diocese, which is familiar to Christians as the place where the church is to be experienced."[137] The Second Vatican Council recognized this role of the parish when it stated: "parishes set up locally under a pastor who takes the place of the bishop...in a certain way represent the visible Church as it is established throughout the world."[138] For Catholic doctrine, however, the church is identified by the minister who presides over it. The presence of the bishop signals the continuity of the local church in the apostolic faith as well as the communion of that church with other churches, essential components in the definition of a local church in the Roman Catholic tradition. But Catholics do not often perceive their eucharistic community as headed by the bishop. Although the bishop directs and is named in every celebration of the eucharist in the diocese,[139] and there is an understanding that the priest in some sense makes present the bishop,[140] in the experience of most Roman Catholics, the diocese is not the primary eucharistic expression of the church.

85. With respect to Lutherans, the local/presbyteral realization of the church in the congregation has priority. A theological understanding of the need to realize regional koinonia with ongoing structures remains underdeveloped. The church is identified as "the assembly of saints in which the gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly."[141] But the church is not limited to the congregation, for Luther says: "The church is the number or gathering of the baptized and the believers under one pastor, whether this is in one city or in one province or in the whole world."[142] Herein lies the difficulty. While a community gathered by word and sacrament suggests a local congregation, the Reformers and most of later Lutheranism[143] have stressed the need for regional structures and discipline. In the same text to the Bohemians in which he urges them to ordain their own ministers, Luther also suggests that if a number of communities do this, then "these bishops may wish to come together and elect one or more from their number to be their superiors, who would serve them and hold visitations among them, as Peter visited the churches, according to the account in the Book of Acts. Then Bohemia would return again to its rightful and evangelical archbishopric,

---

[136]This analysis presumes that bishops and pastors working within congregational, parochial, and diocesan structures are paradigmatic for ecclesiology.
[137]Roman Catholic-Lutheran Joint Commission, 1994, para.93.
[138]SC, 42.
[139]CD, 15.
[140]LG, 28.
[141]*AC,* 7.
[142]WA 30II: 421 quoted in Althaus 1966, 288, n. 10.
[143]The major exception here might be The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod. For a significant Missouri discussion of these issues, see Pieper 1950-1957, vol. 3, 419-435.

which would be rich, not in large income and much authority, but in many ministers and visitations of the churches."[144]

86.   Here Luther clearly urges a regional structure. The term "particular church" was applied by later Lutheran theology equally to the congregation and to the regional or national body.[145] What Lutheranism lacks is a clear and convincing theological rationale for its actual practice of embedding the congregation in a regional body, which is also called "church."   The temptations of congregationalism and the understanding of regional structures as merely sociological necessity have recurred within Lutheran history.[146]   The theological basis for the realization of the essential catholicity of the face-to-face assembly in lived koinonia with other such assemblies is theologically underexpressed.

87.   Lutherans and Catholics agree that neither the local congregation or parish nor the regional community of these congregations or parishes is sufficient unto itself without the other. Due weight must be given both to the assembly of word and sacrament and to the regional community of such assemblies. Catholics are challenged to develop more fully a doctrine of the parish and to address the contemporary implausibility of its depiction of the diocese as "local church" or eucharistic assembly. The Lutheran viewpoint suffers from an incompleteness in its theological account of the significance of the regional church. Each viewpoint tends to treat ministry in the same way that it treats ecclesiology. Lutheran ecclesiology emphasizes the congregation and the pastor while Catholics ecclesiology emphasizes the bishop and the regional structure.

88.   A way forward beyond this contrast between the two traditions is to regard the regional/episcopal and the local/presbyteral difference as a normative complementarity, both in relation to ecclesiology and in relation to the doctrine of ministry. The exclusive prioritizing of either the regional or the geographically local is a false alternative. An initial agreement on this point already has been reached in relation to ministry by the international Roman Catholic-Lutheran Joint Commission: "*If* both churches acknowledge that for faith this historical development of the one apostolic ministry into a more local and a more regional ministry has taken place with the help of the Holy Spirit and to this degree constitutes something essential for the church, then a *high degree of agreement* has been reached."[147] If the difference between a local and a regional ministry, paralleling a difference between the face-to-face assembly and the regional community of such assemblies, is a development helped by the Holy Spirit, then an ecclesiology that devalues this difference by reducing one side of it to theological insignificance fails to follow where the Spirit has led.

89.   If the church as the koinonia of salvation is born from and borne by the gospel proclaimed in word and sacrament, and if the eucharist, including the proclamation of the word and the celebration of the supper, is the event from which and toward which the church lives,[148] then the face-to-face eucharistic assembly must be a basic unit of the church. It is a place where "church" is essentially realized.[149]   Indeed, there can be no church without such face-to-face eucharistic

---

[144]"Concerning the Ministry," *Luther's Works,* American Edition 40:41.

[145]See Quenstedt, cited in Heinrich Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (1899; rpt. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1961), p. 591.

[146]See Conrad Bergendoff, *The Doctrine of the Church in American Lutheranism*, The Knubel-Miller Lecture, 1956 (Philadelphia: Board of Publication of the United Lutheran Church in America, 1956).

[147]Roman Catholic-Lutheran Joint Commission, *The Ministry in the Church*, 1981, 49 (emphasis in original text).

[148]See SC, 10.

[149]See SC, 41. Karl Rahner makes this point in "Theology of the Parish," in *The Parish: From Theology to Practice*, ed. by Hugo Rahner (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1958) 23-35. He identifies the parish as "the representative actuality of the Church; the Church appears and manifests itself in the event of the central life of the parish" (25). Rahner argues that the church is necessarily a local and localized community. It achieves its highest degree of actuality where it acts, that is, where it teaches, prays, offers the Sacrifice of Christ, etc. For Rahner the parish is not a division of a larger segment of the church, but "the concentration of the Church into its own event-fullness" (30). The parish is "the highest degree of actuality of the total church" (30). See also Jerry T. Farmer, *Ministry in Community: Rahner's Vision of Ministry*, Louvain Theological and Pastoral Monographs §13 (Leuven: Peeters Press and Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1993) 134-136.

assemblies. In that sense, they are fundamental.[150] That which is realized in this face-to-face eucharistic assembly is truly "church," the Body of Christ, the assembly of all the saints across time and space. This relation is manifest in the Supper, where the congregation praises God "with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven."

90. Each eucharistic assembly lives out its constitutive relation with the wider church by its concrete relations with other assemblies in a network of koinonia. The WCC-Catholic Church Joint Working Group affirmed the importance of this koinonia for the local church. "The local church is not a free-standing, self-sufficient reality. As part of a network of communion, the local church maintains its reality as church by relating to other local churches."[151] This relationship with other local churches is essential to the catholicity that every church must embody. "Communion with other local churches is essential to the integrity of the self-understanding of each local church, precisely because of its catholicity. Life in self-sufficient isolation...is the denial of its very being."[152] The same must be said about the relation of the eucharistic assembly to the wider church. For Catholic theology, the communion of the local face-to-face eucharistic assemblies with their bishop is essential for their ecclesiality, and they cannot be considered "churches" apart from that communion. For these communities, catholicity requires not only communion with other local churches, but communion with the ministry of the bishop. It was stated forcefully in the context of an LWF study on church unity that "the already existing spiritual unity of the Church of Jesus Christ demands the realization of concrete, historical, tangible church fellowship."[153] Thus, "all local *ecclesiae* in the whole world should stand in a concrete, actually lived, legally effective koinonia."[154]

91. The most immediate and concrete way this network of relations among face-to-face eucharistic assemblies is realized is in some primary regional community: a Catholic diocese, a Lutheran synod. These primary regional communities embody in an explicit way the essential interconnection of every eucharistic assembly within the one koinonia of salvation. Such a regional community is itself church, and not just a collection of churches, for it is the assembly (even if only representatively) of assemblies, each of which relates to the others internally, and not merely externally,[155] for koinonia with other communities is essential to the catholicity and thus the ecclesiality of each. The assemblies come together as one church. If the ecclesial reality of any larger grouping is inseparable from that of face-to-face eucharistic assemblies, the converse is also true: the ecclesial reality and catholicity of face-to-face eucharistic assemblies requires their existence within regional communities. The complementarity of face-to-face eucharistic assembly and primary regional community is thus theologically normative.

B. The Relation between Priest/Presbyter/Pastor and Bishop

92. The preceding analysis leads to the conclusion that the complementarity of local and regional ministry is normative within the ordained ministry of the church, paralleling the normative complementarity of the face-to-face eucharistic assembly and the primary regional community. It would be a mistake to insist that either the parish/congregation or the diocese/synod is exclusively *the* local church. Likewise, the doctrine of ministry would be distorted by insisting that either the presbyter or the bishop is the only theologically necessary ordained minister, thereby dismissing the other, bishop or presbyter, as practically necessary but theologically insignificant. Lutherans often have insisted that the bishop is a pastor with a larger sphere of ministry, without seeing the distinctiveness of the role of a pastor to a communion of communities, each led by its own ordained

---

[150]In the reference just cited, Rahner also makes the point that the parish and the pastor are *jure divino* in the same way that the Church, papacy, and episcopate are, even though a canonist would not easily concede this point. *Ibid.*, 25.
[151]Joint Working Group, para. 13.
[152]Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, 1991, para. 39.
[153]Peter Brunner, "The Realization of Church Fellowship." In *The Unity of the Church: A Symposium*, papers presented to the Commission on Theology and Liturgy of the Lutheran World Federation (Rock Island, Illinois: Augustana Press, 1957): 22.
[154]*Ibid.*, 18f.
[155]CN, 7.

minister. Recent Catholic theology often fails adequately to explain why priests are theologically necessary, in addition to bishops, and not merely practically necessary to the church.

93.   If we think of the ordained ministry as structured by this complementarity, the specific emphases of each tradition might come to be seen in a new light. Because the regional grouping served by the bishop manifests in a fuller way the unity of the church by manifesting the unity of the communities within it more fully than any one of these communities can do alone, one can say that the ministry of the bishop is *in this sense* fuller than that of any single presbyter. As the minister of the actual face-to-face eucharistic assembly, however, the presbyter might be said *in this sense* to have a richer, more fundamental ministry. Each ministry depends upon the other.

94.   At the same time we strive to show what is distinctive and complementary between the office of bishop and that of pastor/priest/presbyter with respect to their service to different levels of ecclesiality, it is also important to keep in mind the profound similarities in these two offices. In many ways they are distinct but inseparable offices. Both bishops and presbyters are ordained to serve word, sacrament, and the pastoral life of the church. For Lutherans, both bishops and pastors exercise the one office of word and sacrament. In Roman Catholic theology the sacrament of Order is one; both bishops and presbyters are priests; priests are associated with their bishop in one presbyterium. What these ministries share is much greater than that which distinguishes them.

VII. Recommendations for an Ecumenical Way Forward

A. Toward a Recognition of the Reality and Woundedness
of our Ministries and Churches

95.   What follows for the relations between our churches from the analysis above, supported by the biblical and historical explanations that follow below? Building upon the earlier Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogues, *Eucharist and Ministry* and *Facing Unity*,[156] we propose steps toward a full, mutual recognition and reconciliation of our ministries and the ultimate goal of full communion. We are aware of common challenges to overcome. Nevertheless, the mutual recognition of ministries need not be an all-or-nothing matter and should not be reduced to a simple judgment about validity or invalidity. In order to assess the degree of our koinonia in ordained ministry, a more nuanced discernment is needed reflecting the way that an ordained ministry serves the proclamation of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments, stands in continuity with the apostolic tradition, and serves communion among churches.

96.   **We recommend that our churches recognize our common understanding of the interdependent structures of church life and ministry, namely, the diocese/synod with its bishop and parish/congregation with its pastor or priest. This common understanding is reflected in a shared sense of the single sacrament of Order (*sacramentum Ordinis*) or the one office of**

---

[156]U.S. Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue Round IV, *Eucharist and Ministry*, proposed, "As Lutherans, we joyfully witness that in theological dialogue with our Roman Catholic partners we have again seen clearly a fidelity to the proclamation of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments which confirms our historic conviction that the Roman Catholic church is an authentic church of our Lord Jesus Christ. For this reason we recommend to those who have appointed us that through appropriate channels the participating Lutheran churches be urged to declare formally their judgment that the ordained Ministers of the Roman Catholic church are engaged in valid ministry of the gospel, announcing the gospel of Christ and administering the sacraments of faith as their chief responsibilities, and that the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ are truly present in their celebrations of the sacrament of the altar" (paragraph 35); and "As Roman Catholic theologians, we acknowledge in the spirit of Vatican II that the Lutheran communities with which we have been in dialogue are truly Christian churches, possessing the elements of holiness and truth that mark them as organs of grace and salvation. Furthermore, in our study we have found serious defects in the arguments customarily used against the validity of the eucharistic Ministry of the Lutheran churches. In fact, we see no persuasive reason to deny the possibility of the Roman Catholic church recognizing the validity of this Ministry. Accordingly we ask the authorities of the Roman Catholic church whether the ecumenical urgency flowing from Christ's will for unity may not dictate that the Roman Catholic church recognize the validity of the Lutheran Ministry, and, correspondingly, the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the eucharistic celebrations of the Lutheran churches" (paragraph 54). The International Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission text, *Facing Unity*, which built on earlier agreements, outlines a proposal for Lutheran-Catholic unity by stages including mutual teaching of the apostolic faith, mutual engagement in apostolic mission, and recognition and reconciliation of apostolic ministries by mutual installation/ordination of bishops. Unlike "Called to Common Mission," it does not propose immediate, full mutual recognition of ministry, but a phased recognition and reconciliation.

ministry (*Amt*). **The differences between us in emphasis and terminology need not be church dividing even though they challenge each church to overcome imbalances in its own tradition.**

97. Our affirmations about ordained ministry go together with our affirmations about our communities (*see* §§85-89), for ministry parallels the ordering of the church. If real but imperfect recognition exists between our ministers and our communities, neither community can lack churchly reality. Movement toward deeper mutual recognition of our ministries is both rooted in and contributes to our growing sense of the ecclesial reality of each of our communities. In particular, the Catholic non-recognition of Lutheran ministries has hindered Catholic affirmation of the Lutheran churches as churches. If our proposal for deeper mutual recognition of ministries is accepted, then new possibilities should open for reconsideration of mutual recognition as churches. Mutual recognition of our churches and ministries need not be an all-or-nothing matter.[157]

98. We recommend that each church recognize that the other realizes, even if perhaps imperfectly, the one church of Jesus Christ and shares in the apostolic tradition.

99. We recommend that each church recognize that the ordained ministry of the other effectively carries on, even if perhaps imperfectly, the apostolic ministry instituted by God in the church.

100. To say that each church understands itself and the other to exercise the apostolic ministry is not to say that either church escapes the damage done to our ministries by the ongoing scandal of our division. To the extent that the ordained ministry of one church is not in communion with the ordained ministry of other churches, it is unable to carry out its witness to the unity of the church as it should. Such a ministry inevitably bears a wound or defect. Ministry carries this wound whenever the koinonia among eucharistic communities and different realizations of the church are broken. Because our relationships are broken, our ministry is wounded and in need of healing by God's grace.

101. This need affects both of our churches. The Roman Catholic Church acknowledges that it is wounded by a lack of communion. As the *Decree on Ecumenism* stated, "The divisions among Christians prevent the church from realizing in practice the fullness of catholicity proper to her...."[158] The 1992 letter from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Some Aspects of the Church as Communion," after noting the wound that lack of communion inflicts on the Orthodox and Reformation churches, concluded that this division:

> ...in turn also wounds (*vulnus iniungitur*) the Catholic Church, called by the Lord to become for all "one flock" with "one shepherd," in that it hinders the complete fulfillment of her universality in history.[159]

The entire Catholic priesthood, including the bishop of Rome, is wounded in an important dimension of its ministry insofar as unity and communion are lacking with other churches and their ministries.

102. The same must be said of the Lutheran churches and their ministries. Lutherans understand their ministries to be realizations of the one ministry of the one church, and yet they cannot manifest communion in this one ministry with many other churches. This woundedness provides a helpful basis for a new understanding of the Catholic assertion of *defectus* in the sacrament of Order in Lutheran churches (§§108-109).

103. We recommend a mutual recognition that:

1. our ordained ministries are wounded because the absence of full communion between our ecclesial traditions makes it impossible for them adequately to represent and foster the unity and catholicity of the church; and

2. our communities are wounded by their lack of the full catholicity to which they are called and by their inability to provide a common witness to the gospel.

---

[157]*Unitatis redintegratio*, 3. Lutherans long had a complex view of the ecclesial status of the Roman church, stressing both its character as church and its perceived failings that were asserted to undercut its faithfulness in a fundamental way. On Rome as church despite its failings, see LW 26.24; for an apparently contrary assertion, see LW 41.144.
[158]UR 4.
[159]CN, *Origins* 22/7 (June 25, 1992), para. 17.

104.   Addressing these wounds in our churches will require repentance and conversion. Each church must examine its theology and practice of ministry and ask whether they truly serve the mission and unity of the church. Division offers occasions for sin, to which our churches have sometimes succumbed.[160] The Second Vatican Council teaches, "There can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without a change of heart."[161] Pope John Paul II concluded on this basis, "The Council calls for personal conversion as well as for communal conversion."[162]

105.   We recommend that our churches pray together for the grace of repentance and conversion needed for healing the wounds of our division.

1. Catholic Discernment

106.   Repentance and conversion call for steps toward healing the wounds of our division. For Catholics, a necessary step will be a reassessment of Lutheran presbyteral ordinations at the time of the Reformation. This reassessment on the part of proper church authorities can now take into account the nature of the presbyteral ministry and its relation to episcopal ministry, the nature of apostolic succession, the sort of community that decided to carry out such ordinations, the intent behind these ordinations, and the historical situation that led to such a decision. The argument presented above about the normative complementarity between presbyter and bishop holds significance for the evaluation of the ministries in continuity with these Reformation actions. The historical findings (*see below* §§171-182) show that the theology that supported the Lutheran action was not a conscious rejection of all earlier tradition, but bore significant continuities with New Testament, patristic, and medieval understandings. The recent commitment of the ELCA to enter into episcopal succession for the sake of ecclesial koinonia[163] is a new and significant factor in this regard.

107.   Catholic judgment on the authenticity of Lutheran ministry need not be of an all-or-nothing nature. The *Decree on Ecumenism* of Vatican II distinguished between relationships of full ecclesiastical communion and those of imperfect communion to reflect the varying degrees of differences with the Catholic Church.[164] The communion of these separated communities with the Catholic Church is real, even though it is imperfect. Furthermore, the decree positively affirmed:

> Our separated brothers and sisters also celebrate many sacred actions of the Christian religion. These most certainly can truly engender a life of grace in ways that vary according to the condition of each church or community, and must be held capable of giving access to that communion in which is salvation.[165]

Commenting on this point, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, prefect of the Congregation on the Doctrine of the Faith, wrote in 1993 to Bavarian Lutheran bishop Johannes Hanselmann:

> I count among the most important results of the ecumenical dialogues the insight that the issue of the eucharist cannot be narrowed to the problem of 'validity.' Even a theology oriented to the concept of succession, such as that which holds in the Catholic and in the Orthodox church, need not in any way deny the salvation-granting presence of the Lord [*Heilschaffende Gegenwart des Herrn*] in a Lutheran [*evangelische*] Lord's Supper.[166]

If the actions of Lutheran pastors can be described by Catholics as "sacred actions" that "can truly engender a life of grace," if communities served by such ministers give "access to that communion in which is salvation," and if at a eucharist at which a Lutheran pastor presides is to be found "the

---

[160]*Cf. Church and Justification*, 153-156.
[161]*Decree on Ecumenism*, 7.
[162]John Paul II, UUS, 15.2.
[163]"Called to Common Mission" describes the ELCA's relationship of full communion with The Episcopal Church.
[164]UR, 3.
[165]UR, 3.
[166]Briefwechsel von Landesbischof Johannes Hanselmann und Joseph Kardinal Ratzinger über das Communio-Schreiben der Römischen Glaubenskongregation," *Una Sancta*, 48 (1993): 348.

salvation-granting presence of the Lord," then Lutheran churches cannot be said simply to lack the ministry given to the church by Christ and the Spirit. In acknowledging the imperfect koinonia between our communities and the access to grace through the ministries of these communities, we also acknowledge a real although imperfect koinonia between our ministries.

108. Ecumenical understanding would be furthered if in official Roman Catholic documents Vatican II's reference to *defectus* in the sacrament of Order among "ecclesial communities" were translated by such words as "defect" or "deficiency."[167] As Walter Cardinal Kasper has stated: "On material grounds [*aus der Sachlogik*], and not merely on the basis of the word usage of the Council, it becomes clear that *defectus ordinis* does not signify a complete absence, but rather a deficiency [*Mangel*] in the full form of the office."[168] Translations of *defectus* as "lack" misleadingly imply the simple absence of the reality of ordination. Translation as "defect" or "deficiency" would be consistent with the sort of real but imperfect recognition of ministries proposed above. While short of full recognition, such partial recognition would provide the basis for first steps toward a reconciliation of ministries as envisioned, e.g., in the international Roman Catholic–Lutheran statement *Facing Unity*.[169]

109. **We recommend that Roman Catholic criteria for assessing authentic ministry include attention to a ministry's faithfulness to the gospel and its service to the communion of the church, and that *defectus ordinis* as applied to Lutheran ministries be translated as "deficiency" rather than "lack."**

2. Lutheran Discernment

110. In ecumenical discussions, Lutherans have shown little hesitancy in recognizing the ordained ministries of the Catholic Church. During the Reformation era, the Lutheran churches did not re-ordain Catholic priests who joined the evangelical movement.[170] At times in the past, Lutherans doubted that the Catholic priesthood was in fact the one evangelical ministry of word and sacrament of the one church, because Lutherans thought the Catholic priesthood was oriented toward an unevangelical understanding of the Mass.[171] These doubts have been removed by convergence and agreement on the gospel[172] and by such affirmations as that of the Second Vatican Council that "among the principal tasks of bishops the preaching of the gospel is pre-eminent."[173]

111. Lutherans also need repentance and conversion to take steps toward healing the wounds of our division. They must constantly reassess some of their own traditions of ordained ministry. Regarding "the order of the church and the various ranks in the church" including bishops, the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* testifies that the "greatest desire" of the Reformers was to retain this ministerial structure.[174] This desire stated in the Lutheran Confessions still is normative for present-day Lutheranism. The office of bishop as regional pastor is the normal polity of the church,

---

[167]Roman Catholic/Lutheran Joint Commission, *The Ministry in the Church* (Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, 1982), paras. 75-77. *Defectus* is translated as "lack" in the English edition of *UR* on the Vatican Web site (para. 22c), in UUS, para. 67, and in the official English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, para. 1400. See also *Ecclesia de eucharistia*, 30.
[168]Walter Kasper, "Die apostolische Sukzession als ökumenisches Problem," in *Lehrverurteilungen - kirchentrennend?: III Materialien zur Lehre von den Sakramenten und vom kirchlichen Amt*, edited by Wolfhart Pannenberg (Freiberg i.B.: Herder, 1990), 345.
[169]*Growth in Agreement II*, 443-484.
[170]See Arthur Carl Piepkorn, "A Lutheran View of the Validity of Lutheran Orders." In *Eucharist and Ministry: Lutheran and Catholics in Dialogue*, vol. IV, edited by Paul C. Empie and T. Austin Murphy (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1979), p. 215; Wolfgang Stein, *Das kirchliche Amt bei Luther* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1972), 192f.
[171]For example: "It is a definite conclusion that no one confers holy orders and makes priests less than those under the papal dominion. A semblance, indeed, of ordination and of making priests is magnificently present but it behooves the king of semblance to grant nothing but semblance so as to guarantee his abominations" (LW 40.15; WA 12, 176). See further Helmut Lieberg, *Amt und Ordination bei Luther und Melanchthon* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), 168-171.
[172]JDDJ, 40.
[173]LG, 25.
[174]Kolb and Wengert, Apology to the Augsburg Confession, 14, 222-223.

"a gift of the Holy Spirit,"[175] and implies bishops in communion with other ministers exercising *episcopé*. A church may be compelled to abandon such a shared episcopal office for a time, but should return to it whenever possible. Recent actions by the ELCA and some other Lutheran churches to reclaim shared episcopal ordering, both among themselves and as an aspect of communion with Anglican churches, are signs of a willingness to engage in such a reassessment.[176]

3. Common Challenges

112. Asymmetry exists between our churches in relation to our mutual recognition of ordained ministry. Lutheran churches are able fully to recognize Catholic ordained ministries on the basis of ecumenical developments, but the Catholic Church has not fully recognized the ordained ministries of a church such as the ELCA.[177] This asymmetry makes life together more difficult. Any reconciliation of ministries needs to find ways of addressing this asymmetry that accord with the self-understanding of each church.

113. The ordination or non-ordination of women is a significant difference between our two traditions. The decision to ordain both women and men to the ministry of word and sacrament involves questions about the church's authority. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, continuing the practice of its predecessor bodies, holds itself free under the gospel to ordain women.[178] The Catholic Church does not hold itself authorized to make such a decision.[179] The reconciliation or full mutual recognition of ministries will need to address this sensitive difference.

B. Universal Church and Universal Ministry

114. In relation to a universal ministry at the service of the unity of the universal church, this dialogue is far less ready to propose any official actions. The bishop of Rome, the only historically plausible candidate for such a universal ministry, remains a sign of unity and a sign of division among us. Pope John Paul II has called for an ecumenical dialogue on the papacy and its exercise as a pastoral office in service of the unity of Christians.[180] We are hopeful that this invitation for "a patient and fraternal dialogue"[181] on the papacy and its exercise might be taken up with a renewed commitment to overcoming the divisions of the past and present.

1. Catholic Reflections on Universal Ministry

115. Pope John Paul II in *Ut unum sint* (1995) emphasized the bishop of Rome's responsibility to serve the unity and communion of the church: "The mission of the Bishop of Rome within the College of all the Pastors [Bishops] consists precisely in 'keeping watch' (*episkopein*) . . . . With the power and authority without which such an office would be illusory, the Bishop of Rome must ensure

---

[175]Church of Sweden Church Ordinance of 1571, in John Wordsworth, *The National Church of Sweden* (London: Mowbray, 1911), p. 232; on this Ordinance and its importance for later Swedish theology, see Sven-Erik Brodd, "The Swedish Church Ordinance of 1571 and the Office of Bishop in an Ecumenical Context," in *The Office of Bishop: Swedish Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue* LWF Studies (Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, 1993), 147-157.

[176]"Called to Common Mission: A Lutheran Proposal for a Revision of the *Concordat of Agreement*" (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 1999), esp. paras. 15-21; *Together in Mission and Ministry. The Porvoo Common Statement with Essays on Church and Ministry in Northern Europe* (London: Church House Publishing, 1993), esp. paras. 34-57 of the Common Statement; *Called to Full Communion: The Waterloo Declaration* (*http://generalsynod.anglican.ca/ministries/departments/doc.php?id=71 &dept=primate*), esp. paras. A 3, 5.

[177]Although there is no general Catholic ruling on Lutheran orders, consistent Catholic practice has been to re-ordain Lutheran ministers entering the Catholic priesthood.

[178]John Reumann, "The Ordination of Women: Exegesis, Experience, and Ecumenical Concern," in *Ministries Examined* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1987).

[179]*Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, 4 (*cf. Origins* 24 [June 9, 1994], 51). *Cf.* Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *From "Inter Insigniores" to "Ordinatio Sacerdotalis,"* (Washington: U.S. Catholic Conference, 1996).

[180]*UUS,*§79.1.4.

[181]UUS, para. 96.

the communion of all the Churches. For this reason, he is the first servant of unity."[182]   In this encyclical John Paul II invited a consideration of reform and change in the papal office in order that this office would not be a stumbling block to Christian unity.

116.   Catholics see the papal office as part of the mission entrusted to the whole people of God. A renewed exercise of the papacy will need to witness to its communal dimension by reconciling a number of tensions within the exercise of authority: the bishop of Rome's primacy and the collegiality he shares within the college of bishops; the authority reserved to clerics and the participation of the laity in governance; the relationship between the proper, ordinary, and immediate authority of a bishop in his diocese and the universal jurisdiction of the pope; the communion within a universal church and a decentralization which respects the particularity of a local church; and finally, a common Catholic identity and increased openness to diversity.[183] Vatican II's *Decree on Ecumenism* (*Unitatis redintegratio*) provides a guiding principle for this task:

> While preserving unity in essentials, let all members of the Church, according to the office entrusted to each, preserve a proper freedom in the various forms of spiritual life and discipline, in the variety of liturgical rites, even in the theological elaborations of revealed truth. In all things let charity be exercised. If the faithful are true to this course of action, they will be giving even richer expression to the authentic catholicity of the Church, and, at the same time, to her apostolicity.[184]

117.   We recommend that Catholics explore how the universal ministry of the bishop of Rome can be reformed to manifest more visibly its subjection to the gospel in service to the koinonia of salvation.

2. Lutheran Reflections on Universal Ministry

118.   In light of *Ut unum sint* and other Catholic and ecumenical statements on papacy, Lutherans have been involved in considerable discussion of universal ministry. If, as the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran churches affirmed in the *Porvoo Common Statement*, "the personal, collegial, and communal dimensions of oversight find expression at the local, regional, and universal levels of the Church's life,"[185] then the question cannot be avoided of who might exercise such a personal ministry of oversight at the universal level, and how it might be exercised in subservience to the gospel. Again, if the interdependence of assembly and ordained ministry is typical of the structure of the church at the local, regional, and national level, then why should such an interdependence not also be found at the universal level?[186]

119.   Lutherans have been concerned with whether the papal office is necessary for salvation. Today, when the pastoral nature of the papacy and its reform have been taken seriously by the Catholic Church itself, the question of the papacy may be perceived in a different way, in terms of

[182]UUS, 94.

[183]Recent discussion on the reform of the papacy in the light of UUS includes Carl Braaten and Robert Jenson (eds.), *Church Unity and the Papal Office: An Ecumenical Dialogue on John Paul II's Encyclical UUS* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2001); Michael J. Buckley, *Papal Primacy and the Episcopate: Towards a Relational Understanding* Ut unum sint: Studies on Papal Primacy (New York: Crossroad, 1998); William Henn, *The Honor of my Brothers: A Short History of the Relation between the Pope and the Bishops* Ut unum sint: Studies on Papal Primacy (New York: Crossroad, 2000); Hermann J. Pottmeyer, *Towards a Papacy in Communion: Perspectives from Vatican Councils I & II* Ut unum sint: Studies on Papal Primacy (New York: Crossroad, 1998); John R. Quinn, *The Reform of the Papacy: The Costly Call to Christian Unity* (New York: Crossroad, 1999); James Puglisi (ed.) *Petrine Ministry and the Unity of the Church* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999).

[184]UR, 4.

[185]*Porvoo Common Statement*, para. 45.

[186]"Therefore we ask the Lutheran Churches: 1) if they are prepared to affirm with us that papal primacy renewed in the light of the gospel, need not be a barrier to reconciliation; 2) if they are able to acknowledge not only the legitimacy of the papal Ministry in the service of the Roman Catholic communion but even the possibility and the desirability of the papal Ministry, renewed under the gospel and committed to Christian freed, in a larger communion which would include the Lutheran churches; 3) if they are willing to open discussion regarding the concrete implications of such a primacy to them." from "Toward the Renewal of Papal Structures" Part C, "Lutheran Perspectives" paragraph 32, 22-23.

the ecclesial necessity of the papal office. To what extent may such an office of universal ministry be needed for the unity of the church in a koinonia of salvation?[187] Exploring these questions might clarify what Lutherans mean when they insist that any universal ministry of unity must be "under the gospel." What would be the characteristics of a universal ministry "under the gospel?"

120.   We recommend that Lutherans explore whether the worldwide koinonia of the church calls for a worldwide minister of unity and what form such a ministry might take to be truly evangelical.

VIII. Toward Deeper Communion

121. *Ut unum sint*, Pope John Paul II's encyclical on ecumenism, echoes the Second Vatican Council's *Decree on Ecumenism* in affirming a certain but imperfect communion between the Roman Catholic Church and other churches and ecclesial communities.[188] Roman Catholics and churches of the Lutheran World Federation agree on the good news of justification.[189] If the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Roman Catholic Church are in imperfect communion, it follows that the ministers within these communities are also in imperfect communion with one another, for ministry serves the communion of the church. Too often in our past, the judgment of the "wound" or the "defect" in another's orders based on juridical categories of validity prevented our recognition of the ministry that is truly shared. We share a common ministry of baptism, proclamation of the Word, and pastoral care, and recognize that each other's eucharist gives "access to that communion in which is salvation."[190] This present study of the structures and ministries of the church through the lens of koinonia asks our churches to seek ways of implementing the imperfect ministerial communion we already experience.[191] Truly living out our communion, albeit imperfect, may provide a foundation for living toward the full communion we seek.

122.   We recommend that our churches recognize the real but imperfect communion among our ministers and encourage appropriate forms of pastoral collaboration between our ministries. Specifically, we propose:

1. that common activities among Lutheran and Roman Catholic bishops be promoted in order to signify the level of communion that exists between them, such as regular joint retreats, co-authored pastoral letters on topics of mutual concern, and joint efforts on matters of public good;

2. that mutual activities be intensified among ordained ministers, such as regular retreats, homily or sermon preparation study, participation in non-eucharistic prayer services and weddings, and common sponsorship of events or services in the life of the church, including as appropriate other leadership ministries;

3. that the faithful, in light of their common baptism into the people of God, engage together in catechesis, evangelization, peace and justice ventures, social ministry, and attendance at each other's diocesan and synodical assemblies; and

4. that social ministry organizations, educational institutions, chaplaincies, and other church agencies engage together in activities that further the gospel and the common good.

---

[187]*Cf. Papal Primacy and the Universal Church*, its use of the "Petrine principle" and questions to Lutheran churches, including "that papal primacy, renewed in light of the gospel, need not be a barrier to reconciliation" (§32), and including to the Roman Catholic Church, "if it is prepared to envisage the possibility of a reconciliation that would recognize the self-government of Lutheran churches within a communion" (§33); *The Ministry in the Church*, Roman Catholic/Lutheran Joint Commission (Geneva: LWF, 1982) §§67-73 = *Growth in Agreement* 269–71; Harding Meyer, "Suprema auctoritas" in *Petrine Ministry and the Unity of the Church*, 15–34, esp. 29.
[188]*UUS,* 11. *Cf.* UR, 3.
[189]JDDJ, 15.
[190]UR, 3.
[191]*Facing Unity* (1985), §92-93; §120-122.

123. On our journey toward full communion, including mutual recognition of ministry and churchly reality, this round of dialogue has sought to help Lutherans and Catholics move toward that goal:

- by accepting koinonia of salvation as an interpretive lens for this study;
- by proposing an analysis of the varying local, regional, national, and worldwide realizations of the koinonia of salvation as a framework within which to consider mutual recognition of ministries;
- by recalling the issues of recognition of ministries as discussed in Round IV in *Eucharist and Ministry* and of reconciliation of ministries stressed in *Facing Unity;*
- by relating ministerial communion to ecclesial communion, with recognition of imperfect ecclesial communion leading to recognition of imperfect ministerial communion;
- by clarifying ministerial identity in relation to service to various levels of ecclesial communion;
- by demonstrating the normative complementarity of congregational and regional structures and ministries; and
- by examining in a preliminary way the role of national and worldwide structures and urging a "patient and fraternal dialogue" on the possibility of a worldwide minister of unity.

124. A fuller mutual recognition of ministries cannot be separated from a fuller common life in Christ and the Spirit. Lutherans and Catholics have together found a greater common basis in the Gospel as can be seen in the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*. Mutual recognition of doctrine, ministries, and ecclesial realities, rooted in a common existence in the one Body of Christ, can bear fruit by the grace of God in life shared together.

125. Ministry and structures of communion are at the service of the koinonia of salvation realized in the life of the church. Mutual recognition of ministry and of ecclesial reality are important conditions for our full and uninhibited common participation in the salvation given us in Christ and the Spirit. We offer our work to our respective churches with the prayer that it may foster the koinonia in salvation we are convinced is the will of our Risen Lord.

PART TWO: FURTHER BIBLICAL AND HISTORICAL SUPPORT
FOR DEEPENING COMMUNION IN STRUCTURES AND MINISTRIES
I. Biblical Foundations for the Church as Koinonia of Salvation
in Jesus and the Christ Event

126.   "Salvation," "church," and "ministries" will be treated chronologically below in various segments of the New Testament. Koinonia as a biblical term has been introduced above (§§11-13). A term with a range of meanings,[192] *koinōnia* and its related verbs and adjectives occur 38 times in the New Testament. The background for this terminology lies entirely in the Greek world, with no counterpart term in Hebrew and little significant use of *koinōnia* in the Greek translations of the Hebrew Scriptures.[193] There is no recorded usage by Jesus, and little about it in the gospels (Luke 5:10, "partners" in the fishing business). *Koinōnia* is preeminently a Pauline term.

127.   One possible starting point in the Greek world is the adjective *koinos*,[194] "common" or "communal," as at Acts 2:44, believers "had all things in common (*koina*)," or Titus 1:4, our "common faith" (NRSV "the faith we share"). Thus, *to koinon* could refer to the state, the public treasury, the commonwealth, or (with *agathon*) the common good. A "public" and financial side may cling to the terminology in Christian usage. The Greek adage "Friends have all things in common," is reflected in Acts 4:32, "No one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common (*koina*)."

128.   A second approach is through the verb *koinōnein*, which can mean (1) "have a share" of something (Heb. 2:14, human beings all share in flesh and blood) or (2) "give a share" of something (the Philippian church shared funds with Paul, Phil. 4:15).[195] Language of participation can also be used, "having a part" in something or being a partner.

129.   Pioneering studies, mainly by Protestants, emphasized "participation" or "fellowship."[196] Later commentators, often Catholic, stressed "association," "community," and "(church) fellowship,"

---

[192]*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (hereafter BDAG), rev. and ed. F. W. Danker (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2000) 552-53 offers four basic definitions (in boldface type, meanings, functional use; English equivalents in italics):

[1] "close association involving mutual interests and sharing, *association, communion, fellowship, close relationship*," as in marriage or friendship or the bond of life that unites Pythagoreans; Phil. 1:5 a close relation with the gospel, or with the poor (Rom. 15:26);

[2] "attitude of good will that manifests an interest in a close relationship, *generosity, fellow-feeling, altruism*," 2 Cor. 9:13, generosity in sharing;

[3] abstract term for the concrete "*sign of fellowship, proof of brotherly unity*; even *gift, contribution*"; Rom.15:26 might fit here, so might 1 Cor 10:16ab, "a means for attaining a close relationship with the blood and body of Christ";

[4] *participation, sharing* in something, Christ's sufferings (Phil. 3:10), the body and blood of Christ (1 Cor. 10:16), the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 13:13), faith (Phlm. 6).

Cf. further F. Hauck, "*koinos, ... koinōnia*, etc.," (German 1938), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans) 3 (1965) 789-809, supplement in *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer) 10/2 (9179) 1145-46; J. Hainz, "*koinōnia* etc.," (German 1981), *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans) 2 (1991) 303-5.

[193]In the Old Testament the noun, verb, and adjective occur 25 times. There are seven more New Testament examples if compounds (*synkoinōnos, synkoinōnein*) are counted, for a New Testament total of 45 instances. There are a maximum 119 occurrences in the entire Greek Bible if *koinos*, "common" or "impure," is included. Examples that do occur are mainly in later (deuterocanonical) books under Hellenistic influence; *koinōnia* occurs only at Wisdom of Solomon 6:23 and 8:18, for associating with wisdom and her words. Charts on *koinon*-terms in J. Reumann, "Koinonia in Scripture: Survey of Biblical Texts," in *On the way to Fuller Koinonia*, ed. T. F. Best and G. Gassmann, Faith and Order Paper no. 166 (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1994) 39, where all New Testament passages are treated, and bibliography provided, some of which cannot be included here.

[194]BDAG 551-52.

[195]BDAG 552. The verb *metechō*, "have a share in, partake of something," is sometimes associated with *koinōnein*, as at 1 Cor. 10:17 (*cf.* 16) and 10:21, 30; and Heb. 2:14. *Cf.* N. Baumert, *KOINONEIN und METECHEIN—synonym? Eine umfassende semantische Untersuchung*, SBB 51 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2003) distinguishes them and gives a variety of meanings to *koinōnein*, not a single sense that some like Hainz (n. 11 above) sought.

[196]J. Y. Campbell, "*KOINŌNIA* and its Cognates in the New Testament," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 51 (1932) 352-82; H. Seesemann, *Der Begriff KOINŌNIA im Neuen Testament*, BZNW 14 (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1933); Hauck (n. 192, above). A. R. George, *Communion with God in the New Testament* (London: Epworth, 1953) took communion as "have a share, give a share," and sharing, partly in reaction to those who made "the Fellowship" a name for the church, as was argued by C. A. Anderson Scott, *Christianity According to St Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1927, reprinted 1961) 158-69.

sometimes with a sacramental emphasis, *cf.* Latin *communio*.[197] Increasingly it was concluded that no single clear-cut meaning is possible; *koinōnia* is a multivalent term.[198] One may speak of church fellowship, grounded in participation in Christ.[199] New Testament studies sometimes have an eye toward ecumenical implications.[200]

130. How much of the structured church as *koinōnia* of salvation can be traced back to Jesus of Nazareth himself? As a general principle one must take care "not to read in evidence from later sources or theories."[201] "The church" is known from the earliest Pauline writings, which antedate the written Gospels (*e.g.* 1 Thess. 1:1; 2:14; Gal. 1:2, 22; 1 Cor. 1:2; 4:17; 7:17; 2 Cor. 8:1). *Hē ekklēsia* often denotes in such passages a particular or local church in a certain area, but it eventually comes to mean "the church" in a sense transcending local or geographical boundaries (see below). Significantly, however, *ekklēsia*, in either a local or a transcendent sense, is not mentioned in the Gospels of Mark, Luke, or John—or in other New Testament writings such as Titus, 2 Timothy, 1-2 Peter, 1-2 John. *Ekklēsia* (church) is used in Matthew 16:18: "You are Peter (*Petros*), and on this rock (*petra*) I will build my church" (*cf.* 18:17 of the local assembly). This church-founding statement is paralleled in John 21:15-17 in a post-resurrection setting, without the word *ekklēsia*; Peter's role is to feed the "flock" of Christ.[202] There is little more that one can cull from the Gospels about the structure of Jesus' church to be built.[203]

131. Jesus had followers (Mark 1:18; 2:15; Matt. 4:20; Luke 5:11, 28; John 1:37, 40), eventually called "disciples,"[204] *i.e.* those taught by Jesus (Mark 2:16; Matt. 5:1; Luke 6:13; John 2:2), and even

---

[197]K. Kertelge, "Abendmahlsgemeinschaft und Kirchengemeinschaft im Neuen Testament und in der Alten Kirche," in *Interkommunion – Konziliarität. Zwei Studien im Auftrag des Deutschen ökumenischen Studienausschusses,* Beiheft zur Ökumenischen Rundschau 25 (1974) 2-51, reprinted in *Einheit der Kirche: Grundlegung im Neuen Testament,* ed. F. Hahn, K. Kertelge, & R. Schnackenburg, Quaestiones Disputatae 84 (Freiburg: Herder, 1979) 94-132, and "Kerygma und Koinonia: Zur theologischen Bestimmung der Kirche des Urchristentums," in *Kontinuität und Einheit,* Festschrift for F. Mussner, ed. P.- G. Müller & W. Stenger (Freiburg: Herder, 1981) 317-39. R. Schnackenburg, "Die Einheit der Kirche unter dem Koinonia-Gedanken," in *Einheit der Kirche* (1979) 52-93. J. Hainz, *Koinonia* (1982), above n. 11.

[198]So J. M. McDermott, "The Biblical Doctrine of KOINŌNIA," *Biblische Zeitschrift* N.F. 19 (1975) 64-77 and 219-33. J. Hainz, *Koinonia:* (see note 11 above), was critical of earlier studies for failing to find an underlying unity or for reading in traditional dogmatic theology (178, 185, 188); history of research and results, 162-204.

[199]F. Hahn, "Einheit der Kirche und Kirchengemeinschaft in neutestamentlicher Sicht," in *Einheit der Kirche* (above, n. 197) 9-51. Hahn (13-14) suggested that the Greek *koinōnia* is like the Latin *participatio* and partly like *communio*, while the German *Gemeinschaft* is like Latin *societas*.

[200]J. G. Davies, *Members One of Another: Aspects of Koinonia* (London: Mowbray, 1958), originally presented to the World Council of Churches' Division of Interchurch Aid and Service to Refugees; G. Panikulam, *Koinōnia in the New Testament: A Dynamic Expression of Christian Life,* Analecta Biblica 85 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1979); J. Hainz, *Ekklesia: Strukturen paulinischer Gemeinde-Theologie und Gemeinde-Ordnung,* Biblische Untersuchungen 9 (Regensburg: Pustet, 1972); Hainz' *Koinonia* (above, n. 11) includes sections on Roman Catholic, Reformation, and Orthodox views on the concept (206-72). Reumann's tradition-history approach (above, n. 193) was presented at the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order in 1993. Further, S. Brown, "Koinonia as a Basis of New Testament Ecclesiology?" *One in Christ* 12 (1976) 157-67; J. D. G. Dunn, "'Instruments of Koinonia' in the Early Church," *One in Christ* 25 (1989) 204-16; K. Kertelge, "Koinonia und Einheit der Kirche nach dem Neuen Testament," in *Communio Sanctorum: Einheit der Christen – Einheit der Kirche, Festschrift für Bischof Paul-Werner Scheele,* ed. Josef Schreiner and Klaus Wittstadt (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1988) 53-67.

[201]J. Reumann, "Church Office in Paul, Especially in Philippians," *Origins and Method: Toward a New Understanding of Judaism and Christianity: Essays in Honour of John C. Hurd* (JSNTSup 86; ed. B. H. McLean; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993) 82-91, esp. 83. See J. P. Meier, "Are There Historical Links between the Historical Jesus and the Christian Ministry?" *Theology Digest* 47/4 (2000) 303-15; E. Schweizer, *Church Order in the New Testament* (SBT 32; London: SCM, 1961) 20-33 (2 a-m).

[202]Today it is widely recognized among New Testament interpreters that the added assertions in Matthew 16:16b-19 may be a retrojected account of an episode in the gospel tradition rooted in a post-resurrection appearance of the risen Christ, such as that preserved in John 21:15-17. In other words, Matt. 16:16b-19 may be a Matthean version of the "feed my lambs/sheep" conversation of John 21. See, e.g., R. E. Brown *et al.* (eds.), *Peter in the New Testament: A Collaborative Assessment by Protestant and Roman Catholic Scholars* (Minneapolis: Augsburg; New York: Paulist, 1973) 83-101. *Cf.* J. Roloff's estimate: "Vielmehr tritt Petrus an dieser Stelle lediglich als Garant der Jesusüberlieferung in Erscheinung, die die Grundlage von Verkündigung und Leben der Gemeinde darstellt" (*Exegetische Verantwortung in der Kirche: Aufsätze* (ed. M. Karrer; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990) 339. *Cf.* P. Perkins, *Peter: Apostle for the Whole Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000) 86. Such an interpretation of the Caesarea Philippi scene would not deny that Jesus founded a "church," but it would reveal rather an awareness that his early followers had of themselves as the "flock" or "church," which developed during the course of the decades between A.D. 30 and 90, when the Matthean and Johannine Gospels were eventually composed. In other words, Matthew would have interpreted with hindsight the meaning of Peter's acknowledgment and the implications of Jesus' reaction to it in thus formulating the church-building statement, which appears on Jesus' lips.

[203]In Luke 22:31-32, Jesus prays for the repentant Simon that he might "strengthen" his "brethren." This supportive Petrine function, however, is set out in a context making no mention of *ekklēsia*.

[204]This title seems to be derived by the evangelists from the Hellenistic world, because *talmîd* is almost wholly absent from the Old Testament (save in 1 Chr. 25:8, used of pupils in the Temple choir!). *Mathētēs* occurs in the Septuagint of Jer. 13:21; 20:11; 46:9, but always with a variant reading that makes the deriving of the New Testament usage from it problematic. See further J. A. Fitzmyer, "The

"apostles," *i.e.* those sent forth by him to carry on his mission (Mark 6:30; Matt. 10:2; Luke 6:13). One can speak of a "Jesus-movement," but such disciples or apostles are not portrayed in the Gospels as aware of themselves as "church" during Jesus' earthly ministry. The charge to "make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19-20; differently formulated in Luke 24:47) comes from the risen Christ.

132. It is as an effect of the Christ-event that the New Testament speaks of salvation (*sōtēria* and the verb *sōzein*), *e.g.* Matt. 1:21 ("he will save his people from their sins"); John 3:17 ("that the world might be saved through him") and John 12:47 ("I came not to judge the world, but to save the world"). He is said to "save" individuals as he heals them (Matt. 9:21-22; Mark 5:34; 10:52), and in Luke Jesus is announced as *sōtēr*, "savior," (Luke 2:11; *cf.* 19:9-10).

133. Jesus lays hands on individuals during healings or cures (Mark 6:5; 8:23, 25; Matt. 19:13, 15; Luke 4:40; 13:13), but never for commissioning or ordaining, as occurs in the Old Testament (*e.g.*, Moses commissioning Joshua, Num. 27:18-19; Deut. 34:9).[205] Church structures develop as the Jesus-movement evolves after the resurrection.[206]

II. The Shape of Early Christian Communities

134. In the Acts of the Apostles "the fellowship" (*hē koinōnia*) is the first term that occurs for Jesus' followers as they share their faith and life in common (2:42). Another early name for them is "the Way" (*hē hodos;* 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22).[207] *Ekklēsia* becomes in later chapters of Acts the standard and enduring designation of Christians as a group (8:1, 3),[208] in Jerusalem (11:22; 15:4) and elsewhere (11:26; 13:1; 14:23, 27; 15:3, 41). In time, there also appears an awareness of *ekklēsia* that transcends local boundaries (9:31 ["the church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria"]; 12:5; 15:22; 20:28 ["the church of God"]).

135. The Twelve and the apostles function in the early chapters of Acts. The Twelve initially guide the early Jerusalem church, with Peter as its spokesman (Acts 1:15; 2:14). Later, the Seven are chosen "to serve tables" (Acts 6:2-5; *cf.* 21:8): "These men they presented to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them" (6:6),[209] which is the last time the Twelve are mentioned. The apostle James, the brother of John, is not replaced at his death (12:1-2), as was the case after the death of Judas Iscariot (1:16-17). "Apostles" still are mentioned as having a part in the Jerusalem "Council" (Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23), where they are always linked with *hoi presbyteroi* in the Jerusalem church. After 16:4, the apostles disappear from the Lucan story. In the subsequent Christian tradition there is no office called either the "apostolate" or "the Twelve."[210]

---

[204](...continued)
Designations of Christians in Acts and Their Significance," in Commission Biblique Pontificale, *Unité et diversité dans l'Eglise* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1989) 223-36, esp. 227-29.

[205]See further E. Lohse, *Die Ordination im Spätjudentum und im Neuen Testament* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1951) 19-21. *Cf.* J. Newman, *Semikhah (Ordination): A Study of Its Origin, History and Function in Rabbinic Literature* (Manchester: Manchester University, 1950) 1-3. From Old Testament passages, rabbinic tradition developed its practice of ordination, a practice attested only several centuries later in the Tannaitic Midrashim (*Sifre* Num. 27:18 §140; *Sifre* Deut. 34:9 §357); *cf.* Str-B, 2. 647-48.

[206]J. Roloff has summed up the matter: "Jesus, to be sure, neither founded the Church nor installed office-holders, but even so by his *calling of followers*, by *establishing a community of disciples*, and by his *summons to service* he supplied the momentum, without which the post-Easter development of the Church would not be explicable" ("Amt / Ämter / Amtsverständnis IV," *TRE* 2 [1978] 510). Similarly, H. von Lips, "Amt, IV. Neues Testament," *RGG*[4] 1 (1998) 424-26.

[207]See further J. A. Fitzmyer, "The Designations of Christians in Acts" (above, n. 204), 227, 229-32.

[208]The first occurrence (Acts 5:11) is a comment of the author himself about the effect of Ananias's deception as he uses a term current in his own day to report how "fear fell upon the whole church," *i.e.* the whole Jerusalem church.

[209]J. Fitzmyer, "The Acts of the Apostles," *Anchor Bible* 31 (New York: Doubleday, 1998) 343. Although the Seven are chosen *diakonein trapezais*, "to serve tables," they are not called *diakonoi* by Luke. The later ecclesiastical tradition often considered them to be the first "deacons." See 1 Clem. 42:4. Luke hardly intended his readers "to see the origin of the diaconate in this episode."

[210]Bishops in the Catholic tradition are regarded as successors of the Apostles (Vatican II, LG §20); *cf.* F.A. Sullivan, *From Apostles to Bishops: The Development of the Episcopacy in the Early Church* (New York: Newman, 2001). Does that mean successors of the "Twelve Apostles" (Matt. 10:2; Rev. 21:14)? In the New Testament, others beyond the Twelve bear the title *apostolos*: Matthias, Acts 1:26; Barnabas and Paul, Acts 14:4, 14; unnamed "apostles," 2 Cor. 8:23; and possibly Andronicus and Junia, Rom. 16:7. See further J. Hainz, *Kirche im Werden: Studien zum Thema Amt und Gemeinde im Neuen Testament* (ed. J. Hainz; Munich/Paderborn: Schöningh, 1976) 109-22.

136. Pauline use of *ekklēsia* for a local or particular church often involves "house churches" (1 Cor. 16:19; Rom. 16:5; Phlm. 2; Col. 4:15).[211] Such groupings of Christians were usual in the pre-Constantinian period for various functions, but nothing in the Pauline letters links the house church with the eucharistic celebration.[212] In some Pauline letters the phrase, "the church(es) of God" (1 Thess. 2:14; Gal. 1:13; 1 Cor. 11:16; 15:9), seems to refer to the mother-communities of Jerusalem or Judea; but it eventually is extended to the Corinthian community (1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1), as the idea of the church regional and universal begins to emerge (1 Cor. 6:4; 10:32; 11:22). The latter idea becomes even clearer in the Deutero-Paulines (Col. 1:18, 24; Eph. 1:22; 3:10, 21), even if it is never said to be *mia ekklēsia*, despite the emphasis in Ephesians on the unity of the church.

137. *Ekklēsia* occurs in 3 John 6, 9, 10 for a local congregation, but there is otherwise no awareness in the Johannine Gospel or Epistles of *ekklēsia* in either a local or a universal sense. Commentators speak either of a "Johannine community," "Johannine circle," or "a community of the Beloved Disciple," characterized by their contrast with those they opposed: "the Jews" (*e.g.* 2:6, 13; 5:1, 16; 6:4; 8:48, 52; 19:40); crypto-Christians (9:22, 30-38); disciples of John the Baptist (4:1).[213]

138. Many Pauline and Johannine verses using *koinōnia*-terms have been cited above (§§11-13). No New Testament passage using *koinōnia* is directly related to *ekklēsia*, but "the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:9) is the underlying reality expressing the union of Christ and Christians in the "one body" of Christ, which is the church. Passages using *koinōnia* or *koinōnein* tell us little about the structure of such fellowship or the ministries exercised by Christians in it. Paul's description of Titus as "my partner (*koinōnos*)" in 2 Corinthians 8:23 says nothing about Titus's specific ministry. Galatians 6:6, in a reference to oral instruction, possibly a baptismal catechesis, says, "Let the one who is taught the word share (*koinōneitō*) all good things with the one who teaches."[214]

139. Salvation, as an effect of the Christ-event, is an important element in Pauline theology. In light of Old Testament imagery of Yahweh delivering his people Israel (Isaiah 45:15; Zechariah 8:7), Paul sees that deliverance now coming through Christ: Christians "are being saved" by the cross of Christ (1 Cor. 1:18, 21). 1 Corinthians 15:2 speaks of "the gospel...by which you are saved" (*cf.* 2 Cor. 2:15). Paul identifies "the gospel" as "the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes" (Rom. 1:16). Only in Philippians 3:20 does Paul call Jesus *sōtēr*, and as such he is still awaited. The end result is still something of the future, having an eschatological aspect (1 Thess. 2:16; 5:8-9; 1 Cor. 3:15; 5:5; Rom. 5:9-10; 8:24 ["In hope we have been saved!"]; 10:9-10, 13). He urges the Philippians, "Work out your own salvation in fear and trembling" (2:12), adding immediately, however, "for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (2:13), lest anyone think that salvation is achieved without God's grace.[215] In the passages cited, Paul addresses Christians in the plural; a corporate sense of salvation is thereby expressed. Hebrews 2:3 cautions Christians, "...how shall we escape if we neglect such great salvation, which was initially announced by the Lord and attested to us by those who heard him?".

---

[211]Although the phrase *hē kat' oikon ekklēsia* does not occur in Acts, the idea may be found in Acts 2:46; 5:42; 12:12 and may be derived from the conversion of individuals and their "households" (Lydia, Acts 16:15; the jailer, 16:34; Crispus, 18:8; possibly also "the house of Jason," 17:5). On the house church, see R. Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community: The Early House Churches in Their Historical Setting* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980); F. V. Filson, "The Significance of the Early House Churches," *JBL* 58 (1939) 105-12; H. J. Klauck, *Hausgemeinde und Hauskirche im frühen Christentum* (SBS 103; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1981); A. J. Malherbe, "House Churches and Their Problems," *Social Aspects of Early Christianity* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University, 1977) 60-91; W. Rordorf, "Was wissen wir über die christlichen Gottesdiensträume der vorkonstantinischen Zeit?" *ZNW* 32 (1986) 476-80.

[212]In such gatherings the *paterfamilias* or *prostatis*, "patroness" (Rom. 16:2), presumably provided the leadership in the house church, which eventually came to be called *episkopē* (1 Tim. 3:1).

[213]See further P. Benoit, "L'Unité de la communion ecclésiale dans l'Esprit selon la quatrième Evangile," *Unité et diversité dans l'Eglise* (see n. 204 above), 265-83; R. E. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Paulist, 1979); F.-M. Braun, "Le cercle johannique et l'origine du quatrième évangile," *RHPR* 56 (1976) 203-14; R. Fernández Ramos, "La comunidad joánica," *Ciencia Tomista* 106 (1979) 541-86; H.-J. Klauck, "Gemeinde ohne Amt? Erfahrungen mit der Kirche in den johanneischen Schriften," *BZ* 29 (1985) 193-220.

[214]See further J. Hainz, *Koinonia: "Kirche" als Gemeinschaft*, 62-89 (above, n.11); idem, "*Koinōnia*," *EDNT* 2. 303-5, esp. 304. *Cf.* J. Reumann, "Koinonia in Scripture" (n. 193 above), 48-49.

[215]See further N. Brox, "*Sōtēria* und Salus: Heilsvorstellungen in der Alten Kirche," *EvT* 33 (1973) 253-79; K. H. Schelkle, "*Sōtēr*" and "*Sōtēria*," *EDNT*, 3. 325-29.

140. In the New Testament, explicit indications of the early church's ministries are diverse and lack uniformity.[216] In his earliest letter, Paul counsels Thessalonians to "respect those who labor among you and who are over you (*proïstamenous*) in the Lord and admonish you" (1 Thess. 5:12),[217] but with no details about their specific titles or functions. The three participles (laboring, standing over, admonishing) refer to one group, either a group of leaders or all members of the community together.[218]

141. In Philippians, Paul greets the saints at Philippi, along with *episkopoi kai diakonoi*, often rendered, "overseers and ministers,"[219] possibly meaning two ministries not otherwise defined. Some see "overseers and ministers" as referring to the same reality (a *hendiadys*), and thus to one ministry, "overseers who serve."[220] The two titles, however, more likely arose in Philippi out of the Greco-Roman distinct usage of *episkopos* and *diakonos* in government, guilds, and societies.[221] Possibly *episkopoi* designates leaders of Philippian house churches. *Diakonoi* may imply agents of the overseers, perhaps in financial matters.[222]

142. In 1 Corinthians the conception of the church as "the body of Christ" first emerges in 12:27-28 and becomes an important notion in the Deutero-Paulines (Col. 2:17; Eph. 4:12; *cf.* Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:15-16). In that body, where all members have some function, Paul lists, among the various gifts (*charismata*) coming from the Spirit and endowing the members, those whom "God has appointed in the church": apostles, prophets, teachers, miracle-workers, healers, helpers, administrators, and speakers in tongues (12:28). Romans 12:6-8 lists them in abstract form: prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhorting, contributing, leading, and acts of mercy. Note also the gifts

---

[216]In 1 Corinthians 3:5-15, Paul hints at the role that all ministers in the church are to play for its upbuilding; they are there as "God's fellow workers," as he comments on his own and Apollos' role.

[217]As translated by the RSV, similarly in NABRNT; the NRSV has "those who labor among you, and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you." So too J. Roloff, "Amt," *TRE* 2 (1978) 521: "Vorsteher"; F. Neugebauer, *In Christus: En Christō: Eine Untersuchung zum paulinischen Glaubensverständnis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1961) 139-40; C. Masson, *Les deux épîtres de saint Paul aux Thessaloniciens* (CNT 11a; Neuchâtel/Paris: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1957) 71-72,

In Rom. 12:8, the same participle appears, *ho proistamenos en spoudē*, which the RSV there renders, "he who gives aid, with zeal," but the NRSV has, "the leader, in diligence"; and the NAB, "if one is over others, with diligence." Compare 1 Tim. 5:17, where the perfect participle of the same verb is used, *proestōtes presbyteroi*, "elders who rule" (RSV, NRSV), "presbyters who preside" (NAB). *Cf.* 1 Tim 3:4, 5, 12; Josephus, *Ant.* 8.12.3 §300 ("govern"); 12.2.13 §108 ("chief officers").

Some commentators, however, would rather translate the three verbs thus: "who labor, give care, and admonish." Thus J. Reumann, "Church Office" (n. 201 above), 89; A. J. Malherbe, *First Thessalonians* (AB 32B; New York: Doubleday, 2000) 310-14; R. F. Collins, "The First Letter to the Thessalonians," *NJBC*, art. 46, §37; E. J. Richard, *First and Second Thessalonians* (Sacra Pagina 11; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995) 267-68.

[218]See J. Hainz, *Ekklésia: Strukturen paulinischer Gemeinde-Theologie und Gemeinde-Ordnung* (BU 9; Regensburg: Pustet, 1972) 37-42; also idem, "Die Anfänge des Bischofes- und Diakonenamtes," and "Amt und Amtsvermittlung bei Paulus," in *Kirche im Werden* (n. 210 above) 91-108, 109-22.

[219]NRSV has "bishops and deacons," but with a marginal note, "overseers and helpers." The same twosome occurs later in *1 Clement* 42:4-5 (supposedly based on the LXX of Isa. 60:17); *Didache* 15:1.

[220]See G. F. Hawthorne, *Philippians* (WBC 43; Waco, TX: Word, 1983) 9-10; A. Lemaire, *Les ministères aux origines de l'église: Naissance de la triple hiérarchie: évêques, presbytres, diacres* (LD 68; Paris: Cerf, 1971) 27-31, 96-103, 186; "The Ministries in the New Testament," *BTB* 3 (1973) 133-66, esp. 144-48.

[221]The origin of the office of "overseer" is debated. See H. Lietzmann, "Zur urchristlichen Verfassungsgeschichte," *ZWT* 55 (1914) 97-153, repr. in *Das kirchliche Amt im Neuen Testament* (Wege der Forschung 189; ed. K. Kertelge; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1977) 93-143; J. M. Balcer, "The Athenian Episkopos and the Achaemenid 'King's Eye,'" *AJP* 98 (1977) 252-63; H. W. Beyer, "*Episkopos*," *TDNT*, 2. 618-20; L. Porter, "The Word *episkopos* in Pre-Christian Usage," *ATR* 21 (1939) 103-12; A. Adam, "Die Entstehung des Bischofsamtes," *Wort und Dienst* 5 (1957) 104-13; W. Nauck, "Probleme des frühchristlichen Amtsverständnisses (I Ptr 5,2f.)," *ZNW* 48 (1957) 200-220, esp. 202-7; H. Braun, *Qumran und das Neue Testament* (2 vols.; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1966), 2. 329-32; W. Eiss, "Das Amt des Gemeindeleiters bei den Essenern und der Christliche Episkopat," *WO* 2 (1959) 514-19; J. A. Fitzmyer, "Jewish Christianity in Acts in Light of the Qumran Scrolls," *Studies in Luke-Acts: Essays Presented in Honor of Paul Schubert...* (ed. L. E. Keck and J. L. Martyn; Nashville: Abingdon, 1966) 233-57, esp. 245-48; J. Hainz, "Die Anfänge des Bischofs- und Diakonenamtes," *Kirche im Werden* (n. 210 above), 91-107; R.E. Brown "*Episkopē* and *Episkopos*: The New Testament Evidence," *TS* 41 (1980) 322-338. On house churches and episcopacy, see E. Dassmann, "Zur Entstehung des Monepiskopats," *JAC* 17 (1974) 74-90; "Haus-gemeinde und Bischofsamt," in *Vivarium: Festschrift Theodor Klausner...* (JAC Ergänzungsband 11; Münster in W.: Aschendorff, 1984) 82-97; *Ämter und Dienst in den frühchristlichen Gemeinden* (Hereditas 8; Bonn: Borengässer, 1994); G. Schöllgen, "Hausgemeinden, *Oikos*-Ekklesiologie, und monarchischer Episkopat," *JAC* 31 (1988) 72-90; "Bischof, I. Neues Testament," *RGG*[4], 1. 1614-15; J. Reumann, "Church Office" (n. 201 above), 87-89; "One Lord, One Faith, One God, but Many House Churches," *Common Life in the Early Church: Essays Honoring Graydon F. Snyder* (ed. J. V. Hills et al.; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998) 106-17. *Cf.* B. L. Merkle, *The Elder and Overseer: One Office in the Early Church*, Studies in Biblical Literature 57 (New York: Peter Lang, 2003).

[222]See J. N. Collins, *Diakonia: Re-interpreting the Ancient Sources* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990) 235-37; *cf.* BDAG, 230: "agent, intermediary, courier." J. Roloff suggest that it was "aus der Funktion beim Gemeindemahl entwickelt" ("Amt," *TRE* 2 [1978] 522).

to the church from the ascended Christ in Ephesians 4:11: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Apropos of such passages, an earlier round of this dialogue commented that "some of these categories belong in the special Ministry of the church (*e.g.* apostles, prophets, teachers) and that others reflect the ministry of the people of God (acts of mercy, aid, and helping), and that some are hard to categorize (healing, teaching)."[223]

143. In Acts 14, it is said of Paul and Barnabas "In each church they installed presbyters (*presbyterous kat' ekklēsian*) and with prayer and fasting commended them to the Lord" (v. 23).[224] In Paul's own uncontested letters, "presbyters" are never mentioned. At Acts 20:17, the Apostle addresses the Ephesian *presbyterous tēs ekklēsias*, counseling them to keep watch over themselves and "over the whole flock, of which the Holy Spirit has appointed you overseers (*episkopous*), to shepherd the church of God" (Acts 20:28).[225] Here the "church of God" is clearly under the supervision of "presbyters," who are called "overseers" appointed by the Holy Spirit. So the question arises, What is the difference in the New Testament between *presbyteros* and *episkopos*? Moreover, it is noteworthy that *episkopoi* in this passage are understood as "appointed" by "the Holy Spirit," and not by apostles; so even if they carry on a ministry begun by apostles, there is no indication that their authority to do so is transmitted to them by apostles.[226]

144. The Pastoral Epistles stress structured ministry and orthodox teaching, especially Titus and 1 Timothy. But *ekklēsia* appears only three times: in 1 Timothy 5:16 (probably meaning the local congregation in Ephesus); 3:5 (*ekklēsia tou theou*, "God's church," with a more universal connotation); and 3:15 ("the household of God..., the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth," probably meant in a universal sense). The concept of the body of Christ is absent from the Pastoral Epistles, as is the term *koinōnia*. The church is the collectivity of Christians that must be properly managed and governed in the interest of sound doctrine.

145. In the Pastoral Epistles, ministry is described, first, apropos of Titus and Timothy and, second, of other members of the church. In the first case, Titus and Timothy function as emissaries of the author, but they are called neither *episkopos* nor *presbyteros*.[227] The author seeks to make sure that the apostolic gospel will continue to be preached without contamination or perversion. Timothy is instructed to administer the church of Ephesus, above all to "teach" (1 Tim. 4:11, 16; 6:2; *cf.* 2 Tim. 2:2, 24), and "not be hasty in the laying on of hands" (1 Tim. 5:22).[228] Titus too is to exercise his "authority" (*epitagē*, Titus 2:15), to amend what is defective in the church of Crete, and appoint presbyters (1:5); he is also to "teach what befits sound doctrine" (2:1). In the second case, among the tasks that others are to carry out in Ephesus and Crete are teaching (1 Tim. 4:13, 16; 5:17; Titus 1:9); "the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim 4:5); preaching the Word (2 Tim. 4:2; *cf.* 1 Tim. 5:17); exhorting (1 Tim. 4:13); guarding the deposit (1 Tim. 6:20); caring for the "public reading of Scripture" (1 Tim. 4:13); and common prayer (1 Tim. 2:8). There is, however, no reference to eucharistic ministry in the Pastoral Epistles, nor any indication about who would preside over it.

146. The titles for Paul,[229] "herald," "apostle," and "teacher of the Gentiles" (1 Tim. 2:7), are given to no one else in these letters. Timothy is to be *kalos diakonos*, "a good minister," of Christ

---

[223]*Eucharist and Ministry* (Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue 4; New York: USA National Committee of the LWF; Washington, D.C.: USCC, 1970) 10 n. 6.

[224]J. Fitzmyer, "Acts" (n. 209 above) 534-535. Roloff considers this as unhistorical ("ganz sicher ungeschichtlich"), "Amt," *TRE* 2 (1978) 521.

[225]J. Fitsmyer, "Acts" (n. 209 above), 673.

[226]See F. A. Sullivan, *From Apostles to Bishops*, 65 ("such authority was seen as coming directly from the Holy Spirit or the risen Christ").

[227]"The anachronistic comparisons of these figures with 'apostolic delegates' or 'metropolitans' or 'monarchical heads' or 'coadjutors' are seductively charming, but the text of the Pastoral Epistles employs the father-child model for expressing the way in which the apostolic task was shared and transmitted" (J. D. Quinn, *The Letter to Titus* (AB 35; New York: Doubleday, 1990) 71.

[228]Our translation. This might refer to the commissioning or ordaining of an *episkopos* or *presbyteroi*, but its meaning is debated. Some commentators have even understood it as a penitential rite because of the following clause about participation in the sins of another. See N. Adler, "Die Handauflegung im NT bereits ein Bussritus? Zur Auslegung von 1 Tim. 5,22," *Neutestamentliche Aufsätze: Festschrift für Prof. Josef Schmid...* (ed. J. Blinzler; Regensburg: Pustet, 1963) 1-6; J. P. Meier, "*Presbyteros* in the Pastoral Epistles," *CBQ* 35 (1973) 323-45, esp. 325-37.

[229]The Pastoral Epistles are widely regarded as Deutero-Pauline, perhaps by a disciple or disciples in the Pauline School. *Cf.* Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997) 662-68: "*about 80 to 90 percent of modern scholars would agree that the Pastorals were written after Paul's lifetime*," having "some continuity with Paul's own ministry and thought, but not so close as manifested in Col. and Eph. and even 2 Thess." (668). On various hypotheses, see J. D. Quinn, "Timothy and Titus, Epistles to," *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992) Vol. 6 568-69.

Jesus (1 Tim. 4:6),[230] but here *diakonos* is used generically and hardly means that he was a "deacon." Timothy has been commissioned[231] by the laying on of hands by the presbyteral college (*presbyterion*, 1 Tim. 4:14), and by the laying on of hands by the writer (2 Tim. 1:6); *i.e.* a grace (*charisma*) has been conferred on Timothy, which was not simply the "authority" (*epitagē*) of an office bestowed. Nothing similar is said of Titus, who is directed "to appoint presbyters in every town" (Titus 1:5).

147. The Pastoral Epistles list qualities to be sought in individuals who are called *episkopos*, "overseer" (in the singular),[232] *presbyteroi*, "presbyters" (in the plural),[233] *diakonoi*, "ministers" or "intermediary agents,"[234] and *chērai*, "widows."

148. The qualifications of the *episkopos* are set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7:[235] eight positive, five negative, with the most important being "skillful in teaching" (*didaktikos*, 3:2), but he is also to "provide for (*epimelēsetai*) God's church" (3:5), implying an administrative role.[236]

149. The term *presbyteros* is used in Pastoral Epistles in two senses: (1) as an adjective denoting dignity of age, "older" (1 Tim. 5:1, "older man"; 5:2, "older woman");[237] and (2) as a substantive, a title for a Christian community official, "presbyter" (Titus 1:5; 1 Tim. 5:17, 19). In Titus 1:5-9, the author lists many of the same qualifications, required for the *episkopos* in 1 Tim. 3:1-7, as requirements for the *presbyteroi*, and Titus 1:5-9, which begins with qualifications of "presbyters," suddenly shifts in v. 7 to *episkopos*, "an overseer," where the qualifications are ten positive and seven negative. The most important differences from 1 Timothy is that the *episkopos* is now called *theou oikonomos*, "God's steward" (1:7) and an exhorter with sound doctrine (1:9). Moreover, in 1 Timothy 5:17, the author speaks of "presbyters who preside well" and "those who labor in preaching and teaching," which may denote two different kinds of presbyters.[238]

150. In the Pastoral Epistles, *diakonos* and *diakonia* are used in a generic sense: "minister" and "ministry" (1 Tim. 4:6; 2 Tim. 4:5); and also in a specific sense of a group often called "deacons." The qualifications for the latter are given in 1 Timothy 3:8-13, five positive, three negative; some of them echo the qualifications for the presbyters and overseers. This institution in the early church may be a development of the action taken in Acts 6:1-6, resulting in the appointment of the Seven (Acts 21:8); but they are never called *diakonoi* in Acts, even though their function is said to be *diakonein trapezais*, "to serve tables."[239] Scholars debate whether *gynaikas* (1 Tim. 3:11) refers to women deacons (somewhat like Phoebe of Rom. 16:1) or to the wives of deacons.[240]

151. Finally, mention must be made of the enrolled *chērai*, "widows," of 1 Timothy 5:3-16, where the qualifications are set forth for those who may be considered such. What their function would be in the structured church is not explained.[241]

152. Of the four groups, *episkopos* seems to be the most important, being called *theou oikonomos*, "God's steward" (Titus 1:7; 1 Tim. 1:4; *cf.* 1 Tim. 3:15).

---

[230]In 2 Tim. 4:5 the author charges: "Do the work of an evangelist (*ergon euangelistou*), fulfill your ministry (*diakonian*)."

[231]Or "ordained," since it is not easy to say precisely what is implied by this "laying on of hands." Acts 8:18 associates it with the gift of the Spirit. Note also *lectio varia* in some MSS of 1 Tim. 4:14: *presbyterou*. *Cf.* Heb. 6:2.

[232]Often translated later "bishop."

[233]This term often is rendered "elders." That translation is acceptable for members of local councils in various towns in pre-Christian Judaism: *e.g.* among Jews in Jerusalem (Acts 4:5; 6:12), or in the Old Testament (Josh. 20:4; Ruth 4:2). As a designation for those with a special function among Christians, "presbyters" is preferred (as in Acts 11:30; 15:2, 4, 6, 22; 21:18).

[234]Later called "deacons."

[235]The abstract noun *episkopē* means "the act of watching over" or "visitation," as in Luke 19:44 and 1 Pet. 2:12; in Acts 1:20 it denotes a "position" or "assignment"; but in 1 Tim. 3:1 it is used in the sense of "engagement in oversight, supervision," of leaders in Christian communities, *i.e.* the office of overseer (BDAG, 379).

[236]The term is used in a generic sense in 1 Pet. 2:25 of Christ, who is called *episkopos tōn psychōn hymōn*, "guardian of your souls."

[237]Corresponding substantives *presbytēs* and *presbytis* occur in Titus 2:2-3.

[238]See R. E. Brown, *Priest and Bishop: Biblical Reflections* (New York: Paulist, 1970) 34-40.

[239]It is debatable whether one should understand "tables" in a dining sense or in a banking sense (*i.e.* "to look after financial tables"). See W. Brandt, *Dienst und Dienen im Neuen Testament* (NTF 2/5; Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1931; repr. Münster: Antiquariat Th. Stenderhoff, 1983); E. Schweizer, *Church Order* (n. 201 above), 49 (3 o), 70 (5 i).

[240]See Ambrosiaster, *Ad Tim. prima* 3.11 (CSEL 31/3. 268); J. N. D. Kelly, *Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (HNTC; New York: Harper & Row, 1963) 83-84; R. M. Lewis, "The 'Women' of 1 Timothy 3:11," *BSac* 136 (1979) 167-75.

[241]See B. B. Thurston, *The Widows: A Women's Ministry in the Early Church* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1989) 36-55.

153. The real problem is how to distinguish *presbyteroi* from *episkopos* in the Pastoral Epistles, and to say what the difference is in function or role that they are thought to play.[242] Interpreters debate whether in the Pastoral Epistles the church-structure involves two or three offices: either deacons and bishop/presbyters; or deacons, presbyters, and bishop, each clearly distinct.[243]

154. In other New Testament writings, presbyters (*presbyteros/-oi*) appear widely for Christians serving as community leaders (Acts 11:30; 20:17; Heb. 11:2; Jas. 5:15; 1 Pet. 5:1, 5; 2 John 1; 3 John 1), with no hint of accompanying *episkopos* or *diakonos*. The author of 1 Peter even speaks of himself as "fellow elder" (*sympresbyteros*) as he exhorts other *presbyteroi*.[244] Whatever its origin, "presbyter" was a frequent designation of office in the New Testament, even if the term tells us little about the nature of this office.

155. Churches in the New Testament period were related to each other in terms of concern and sharing. For instance, in Acts 15, Paul and Barnabas are sent by the Antiochene church to the apostles and presbyters of Jerusalem to consult them about whether Gentiles have to be circumcised and observe the Mosaic law in order to "be saved" (Acts 15:1-2; the so-called Jerusalem Council; *cf.* Gal 2:1-10). Concern for other churches is found in the decision of James and other Jerusalem leaders to send a letter to the particular churches of Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia about *porneia* ("fornication" [NRSV] or "unlawful marriage" [NABRNT]) and dietary matters (Acts 15:13-29).[245] Here one sees the mother-church of Jerusalem guiding the activity of daughter-churches.

156. Paul manifests concern for *koinōnia* in his appeals to his churches for a contribution for "the saints" in Jerusalem (1 Cor. 16:1; 2 Cor. 8:1-5; Gal. 2:9-10).[246] Often the churches of one area send greetings to other churches (1 Cor. 16:19 [Aquila and Prisca and their house church]; Rom. 16:23; *cf.* Col. 4:13, 15-16). Such a sharing of concern for other ecclesial communities of a certain region is a form of *koinōnia*, even if the term itself is not used.

157. To summarize, the New Testament evidence reveals that after the resurrection of Jesus his followers became aware of themselves as *ekklēsia*, a community united by faith in him and sharing a destiny of salvation. They spoke of the *koinōnia* in which they shared. Leadership always existed in the earliest Christian churches, some of it Spirit-appointed, some of it established by Apostles or others; but no one pattern of leadership emerged. Jesus' words to Simon Peter imply a Petrine function among his followers in his church to be built or flock to be fed, but they supply no specific form of that function. According to Acts, the Twelve impose hands on the Seven, who are to "serve tables," but some of whom act as preachers and teachers. Others appoint presbyters in local churches, and Paul greets *episkopoi kai diakonoi* as distinct from the rest of the Christians of Philippi. Yet the specific function of these ministers is never fully stated. Even when desired qualities of *episkopos*, *presbyteroi*, or *diakonoi* are spelled out in the Pastoral Letters, the precise function of such ministers of the Christian community remains unclear.

---

[242]Even though one might argue from Titus 1:5-9 that *episkopos* and *presbyteroi* stand for one administrative office in the Cretan church, one cannot predicate that one office so easily of the Ephesian church, because the qualifications of the *episkopos* are treated in 1 Timothy 3, quite distinctly and independently of what is said about *presbyteroi* in 1 Timothy 5, so that the church in Ephesus might have been structured with these administrators separately considered. This might affect one's consideration of regional churches and the way they received each other in hospitality or eucharistic sharing more so than in structural uniformity. See J. Reumann, "Koinonia in Scripture" (n. 193 above), 63 (§52); R. Schnackenburg, "Ephesus: Entwicklung einer Gemeinde von Paulus zu Johannes," *BZ* 35 (1991) 41-64; W. Thiessen, *Christen in Ephesus: Die historische und theologische Situation in vorpaulinischer und paulinischer Zeit und zur Zeit der Apostelgeschichte und der Pastoralbriefe* (TANZ 12; Tübingen/Basel: Francke, 1995).

[243]See G. W. Knight, "Two Offices (Elders/Bishops and Deacons) and Two Orders of Elders (Preaching/Teaching and Ruling Elders): A New Testament Study," *Presbyterion* 12 (1986) 105-14; F. M. Young, "On *episkopos* and *presbyteros*," *JTS* 45 (1994) 142-48 (on the origin of the presbyterate as distinct from that of the episcopate and the diaconate); R. A. Campbell, *The Elders: Seniority within Earliest Christianity* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1994); J. D. Quinn, "Ministry in the New Testament," *Eucharist and Ministry* (see n. 183 above), 69-100, esp. 97.

[244]For *presbyteroi* as derived from the "elders" of the Jewish synagogue, see J. T. Burtchaell, *From Synagogue to Church: Public Services and Offices in Earliest Christian Communities* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992); and "Amt, III. Antikes Judentum," *RGG⁴1* (1998) 424. For backgrounds in the Greco-Roman world, see in contrast R. A. Campbell, *The Elders* (n.243 above), 67-96, 246, 258-59.

[245]Note that Paul is informed about this decision in Acts 21:25, on his return to Jerusalem at the end of his third missionary journey. Nothing is said about it in Galatians 2. See further J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles* (AB 31; New York: Doubleday, 1998) 538-67, 691-94; on *porneia* as "illicit marital union," rather than the traditional "unchastity" or "prostitution," 557-58; *i.e.*, *BDAG porneia* 2, rather than 1.

[246]In Romans 15:26 *koinōnia* is the word for "contribution," which in this case comes from Achaia and Macedonia.

III. Historical Development after the New Testament

158.   The ministry and structures which serve the church as a *koinōnia* of salvation have changed in various ways over 2000 years. In what follows, we attempt to present the phases of that development that are most relevant to this dialogue. There will be a single narrative for developments up to the Reformation (*see* §§159-170); distinctive Catholic and Lutheran developments starting with the Reformation will receive separate treatments (*see* §§171-242).

A. Developments in Service to Koinonia

1. Church Structures and Leadership

159.   After, or even in some cases contemporary with, the developments exhibited in the New Testament, a certain variety in the structure of the churches[247] began to yield to the pattern that became normal after Constantine. It became customary for each church to have a single principal leader, who was often assisted by counselors and one or more deputies; the terminology used by Ignatius of Antioch has become standard for these roles: bishop, presbytery or group of elders, and deacons.[248] Together these leaders were responsible for the activity and especially the cohesion of the church they served.[249] Cohesion between churches was part of their task, and it was carried out by letter,[250] personal travel,[251] and meetings (synods), even in the second and third centuries.

160.   A special role in this maintenance of koinonia was played by the consecrated eucharistic bread itself, whether taken to those who were unable to attend the common liturgy,[252] offered as a sign of koinonia from one bishop to another,[253] or shared from the bishop's liturgy to the altars of other eucharistic celebrations in the neighborhood of his city, the so-called *fermentum*.[254] The exclusion of a Christian from the eucharistic assembly was intended to bring about conversion, serving as a grave warning to repent, and even in serious cases of apostasy in persecution this koinonia could be restored as death approached.[255] Likewise the refusal to be "in communion" was the most solemn declaration that koinonia did not exist.[256]

---

[247]In the New Testament, Apostolic Fathers, and apologists we encounter apostles, prophets and teachers, then bishops and deacons, presbyters (*Didache* 11,3-12; 13,1-7; 15,1-2; *1 Clement* 42,4; 44,1-6; Polycarp, *Ep. Phil.* praef.; 5,1-6,3), teachers and leaders (Justin speaks of the "president," *1 Apol.* 61, 65 and 67; he himself was a teacher [*Mart. Iust.* recension C, 3,3]), and various others in service to their communities.

[248]For the three titles in conjunction with each other, see Ignatius, *Magn.* 2; 6; 13,1; *Trall.* 2,3; *Philad.* praef. and 7,1; *Polyc.* 6,1. For the presbytery as a group, see *Eph.* 2,2; 4,1; 20,2; *Magn.* 6,1; 7,1; 13,1; *Trall.* 2,2; *Philad.* 7,1. The bishop is to be respected as the grace of God, in the place of God, as Jesus Christ or the Father or the commandment, or followed as Jesus Christ follows the Father. The presbytery is to be respected as the law of Jesus Christ, God's council or the apostles. The deacon is to be respected as the one who serves Jesus Christ or his mysteries, or as Jesus Christ himself, or as God's commandment.

[249]In the bishop Ignatius says he meets the bishop's church (*Ephes.* 1,3 and *Magn.* 6,1; in *Magn.* 2 he meets their church in all three ranks). He asks for messengers to be sent to his own people to give them encouragement, and for his church to be remembered in prayer.

[250]See the section "*Communio* through Letters" in Hertling, *Communio* (above n. 21) 28-36; Werner Elert, *Eucharist and Church Fellowship in the First Four Centuries*, tr. N. E. Nagel (St. Louis: Concordia, 1966) 125-160; and also the papyrus letters of recommendation studied by Hans Reinhard Seeliger, "Das Netzwerk der *communio*: Überlegungen zur historischen Soziologie des antiken Christentums und ihrer Bedeutung für die Ekklesiologie," in Communio—*Ideal oder Zerrbild von Kommunikation*?, edited by Bernd Jochen Hilberath (Freiburg: Herder, 1999) 19-38.

[251]*1 Clement, e.g.* 51,1-4 (Rome even sends official emissaries: 65,1).

[252]Justin, *1 Apol.* 65,5 and 67,5. The absent are not only the sick: Otto Nussbaum, *Die Aufbewahrung der Eucharistie* (Bonn: Hanstein, 1979) 177.

[253]The practice of sending *eulogia*, portions of consecrated bread from one bishop—especially a metropolitan—to bishops of nearby or dependent churches was condemned by a Synod of Laodicea in the late fourth century (Synod of Laodicea, can. 14 [Mansi 2.566E]), which implies that the practice existed earlier. See Robert F. Taft, "One Bread, One Body: Ritual Symbols of Ecclesial Communion in the Patristic Period," in *Nova Doctrina Vetusque: Essays on Early Christianity in Honor of Fredric W. Schlatter*, edited by Douglas Kries and Catherine Brown Tkacz (New York: Peter Lang, 1999) 30-31.

[254]In Rome in the fifth century, the bishop sent a particle of his eucharist to presbyters conducting services at *tituli* within the walls (but not beyond), according to a letter of Innocent I to Decentius of Gubbio, March 19, 416; see Taft, art.cit. 32-34.

[255]Tertullian, *Apol.* 39,4; on readmission to communion in the end, Cyprian, *ep.* 18,1; 55,13 (but repentance is required, 55,23).

[256]Hertling, *Communio*, (above, n. 21) 36-42, *e.g.*, "In some circumstances, a layman or the people could break off communion with their own bishop.... In these ruptures of fellowship, the essential issue is sharing in eucharistic communion (37).... From our point of view, it is striking that nowhere in antiquity do we find a precise statement as to who had the right to excommunicate someone. Instead, it appears that everyone had this right—which, however, corresponds exactly with the early Christian conception of *communio*" (41).

161. Koinonia was exhibited through the participation by other neighboring bishops in the ordination of a new colleague.[257] Letters of communion established the same kind of link with bishops farther away, attesting both to the orthodoxy of a new bishop's belief and the integrity of his election, thus certifying his place as a successor to the apostles. Among the criteria which made communion with other bishops possible, we should note the use of orthodox scriptures,[258] the common celebration of the principal Christian festivals,[259] and the exclusion of those denounced by other churches as heretics.[260]

162. The oldest and largest churches played a leading role in maintaining these bonds.[261] Sometimes prominence was determined by Roman imperial organization, *e.g.*, the early importance of the see of Caesarea Maritima in Palestine, the Roman provincial capital, whose prerogatives are preserved even at the Council of Nicaea (325); and the sudden rise to prominence of Byzantium, renamed Constantinople, as the eastern capital of the Roman Empire, recognized at the Council of Constantinople (381) and even more emphatically in the 28th canon of Chalcedon (451), which was not accepted by the church of Rome. Another sort of prominence derived from Christian history: Thus in the fourth century Jerusalem, which had an insignificant place in the Roman scheme, came to take precedence of honor over Caesarea Maritima in Palestine, the capital city of the province, and was deemed a fifth patriarchate at the Council of Chalcedon (451).

163. Up into the third century, there seems not to have been a clear distinction between the titles "bishop" and "presbyter:" the former could be seen as a presbyter with the main responsibility for a church, and the authority and powers necessary for carrying out that responsibility.[262] At first churches could be designated by a pair of terms, *ekklesia* and *paroikia*, as in "the church of God which sojourns (*paroikousa*) at...."[263] Even if quite small, churches would normally be led by someone who could be called a "bishop;" village and rural churches were headed by country bishops (chorbishops) until the fourth century.[264] The collegial presbyterate was concerned mainly with decision-making and doctrine and cannot be shown to have priestly liturgical duties until the mid-third century.[265] Apart from that, we are poorly informed about the ways in which pastoral leadership and care were exercised in different settings.

2. The Special Nature of Metropolitan Churches

164. In very large city churches such as the one in Rome, there might be a number of different Christian communities or "schools," existing side-by-side, serving different populations, sometimes complementing each other, sometimes competing with each other. The several congregations faced the rest of the Christian world with a single voice, which we call that of the "bishop," but the internal

---

[257]Council of Nicaea I (325), canon 4, says that all the bishops of a province should take part, but in any case at least three.

[258]The growth of agreement concerning authoritative texts, what is called the "formation of the canon" of scripture, involved the inclusion of some texts and the exclusion of others. The condemnation of Marcion in the 140s solidified the Christian commitment to their Jewish biblical heritage, and through exchange and copying the churches came to possess and use quite similar collections of their own basic texts.

[259]Easter is a good example. See the controversy described in Eusebius, *H.E.* 5,23-25, and the resolution of the date at the Council of Nicaea (325), mentioned in its synodal letter, paragraph 3, Socrates, *H.E.* 1,9.

[260]Warnings about heretics, *e.g.*, Eusebius, *H.E.* 4,7,6; 5,13,1-4; 5,18,1; 5,19,1-4; 6,43,3; 7,30; Socrates, *H.E.* 1,6 and Theodoret, *H.E.* 1,4 (regarding Arius).

[261]On the importance of the principal churches in maintaining and documenting koinonia via letters and lists of the orthodox, see Hertling, *Communio*, (above n. 21) 30-35.

[262]New Testament texts cited by the Fathers in this connection include especially Acts 20:17-28; Phil. 1:1; Titus 1:5-10; 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and 4:14. Ignatius of Antioch addresses Polycarp of Smyrna as "bishop" (*ep. ad Polyc.* praef.), but Polycarp's own letter to the Philippians never mentions the term, suggesting that titles were fluid in the mid-second century.

[263]Numerous examples include *1 Clement*, Polycarp *To the Philippians*, the Letter of the martyrs at Lyons and Vienne (Eusebius, *H.E.* 5,1-3). When the term "dioecesis" was taken into Christian use later, it bore no resemblance to the imperial (civil) diocese.

[264]See the *Dictionnaire de droit canonique*, ed. R. Naz, s.v. "Chorévèque" (Jacques Leclef). In the East, the institution survived into the 8th century, although Canon 57 of the Synod of Laodicea (Mansi 2.574B) in the fourth century calls for the replacement of such village or country bishops by pastors who travel amongst these small communities (*periodeutas*). The Synods of Ancyra, Neocaesarea, and Nicaea's "regulations consistently emphasize the full dependence of the *chorepiscopus* on the real head of the community, who alone defined the sphere of his functions," says Karl Baus in *The Imperial Church from Constantine to the Middle Ages*, volume two of *History of the Church*, edited by Hubert Jedin and John Dolan (New York: Seabury Press, 1980) 233.

[265]Alexandre Faivre, *Ordonner la fraternité: Pouvoir d'innover et retour à l'ordre dans l'Église ancienne* (Paris: Cerf, 1992) 33 and 80-82.

arrangements of the church in Rome and in other large centers of Christian population are unclear to us. In Rome a unified structure can be seen by the third century.[266] At the beginning of the 250s, Cornelius lists the membership of his community as, in addition to the bishop, "forty-six presbyters, seven deacons, seven sub-deacons, forty-two acolytes, fifty-two exorcists, readers and door-keepers, above fifteen hundred widows and persons in distress, all of whom are supported by the grace and loving-kindness of the Master...."[267] Such large numbers could hardly have met in a single place, but Cornelius does not inform us about the various congregations which must have existed in Rome and how they were related to each other.

165. The church of Rome and its bishop claimed a certain precedence[268] and broad responsibility in the church as a whole, founded upon its connection with the apostles Peter and Paul, who preached in Rome and were martyred there,[269] and this claim was generally accepted by other churches, though they did not hesitate to speak up for their own rights and traditions.[270] Irenaeus of Lyon made a case for the continuous orthodoxy of the church of Rome and its presiding bishops, one after another,[271] and though he insisted that a similar case could be made for the other ancient churches, such as Ephesus, Rome's role as a benchmark of orthodoxy only grew with the passage of time.

B. Communion and Ministry in the Patristic and Medieval Church

166. With the legalization of Christianity in the Roman Empire,[272] the number of Christians rose rapidly, and structure and ministry in the church developed to meet the task of assuring continuity of doctrine among those newly added to the church, consistency of discipline in the many new Eucharistic communities, and communion in the apostolic faith in the church as a whole. The boundary between laity and clergy became more distinct, and certain tasks (*e.g.* catechesis) were absorbed by the clergy, especially the presbyters.[273] Larger churches, instead of subdividing into smaller ones headed by their own bishops, developed in the opposite direction, with the suppression of the institution of chorbishop[274] and the delegation of pastoral responsibility to presbyters under

---

[266]Peter Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen in den ersten beiden Jahrhunderten*, 2nd ed. (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1989) 334-342, suggests as early as the late second century; Allen Brent, *Hippolytus and the Roman Church in the Third Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1995) 417-432, would put the date of a monarchical bishop in Rome later.

[267]Eusebius, *H.E.* 6,43,11.

[268]One of the best treatments of the development of Rome's preeminence, up till the sixth century, is Robert B. Eno, *The Rise of the Papacy* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1990). Eno participated in many earlier rounds of the U.S. Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue. See also James F. McCue and Arthur Carl Piepkorn, "The Roman Primacy in the Patristic Era," in *Papal Primacy and the Universal Church*, edited by Paul C. Empie and T. Austin Murphy (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1974), 43-97.

[269]Irenaeus, *haer.* 3,1,1 (*cf.* Eusebius, *H.E.* 5,8,2-4) and 3,3,2. Willy Rordorf, "Was heisst: Petrus und Paulus haben die Kirche in Rom 'gegründet'? Zu Irenäus, Adv. haer. III,1,1; 3,2,3," in *Unterwegs zur Einheit*, FS Heinrich Stirnimann, edited by Johannes Brantschen and Pietro Salvatico (Freiburg/Schweiz: Universitätsverlag, 1980), says that they "founded" it by their oral preaching, constituted it by the installation of bishops.

[270]See the examples of Victor and Irenaeus in the Easter controversy (Eusebius, *H.E.* 5,23-25); Stephen, Firmilian, Dionysius of Alexandria and Cyprian in the dispute about rebaptizing heretics (Cyprian, *ep.* 69-75 and Eusebius, *H.E.* 7,9,1-5).

[271]Irenaeus, *haer.* 3,3,3. In the huge literature on this passage, which has been rather tendentiously summarized by Domenic Unger in "St. Irenaeus and the Roman Primacy," *Theological Studies* 13 (1952) 359-418, and "St. Irenaeus on the Roman Primacy," *Laurentianum* 16 (1975) 431-445, one can discern the desire of scholars to maximize or to minimize the basis of the Roman church's importance. Walter Ullmann, "The Significance of the *Epistola Clementis* in the Pseudo-Clementines," *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 11 (1960) 310-11, contends that Linus and Cletus may have been Roman bishops, but the first proper successor or "heir" of Peter, succeeding to his powers, was Clement, and that the language in Irenaeus supports this. Enrico Cattaneo, "*Ab his qui sunt undique*: una nuova proposta su Ireneo, *Adv. haer.* 3,3,2b," *Augustinianum* 40 (2000) 399-405, thinks that Irenaeus is referring to the succession of presbyters, and emends *undique* to *presbyteri*.

[272]Edict of Galerius, 311, Eusebius, *H.E.* 8,17,3-10; Licinius and Constantine's declaration of toleration ("Edict" of Milan), 313, Eusebius, *H.E.*10,5,2-14. In 380, Christianity was given almost exclusive legal status in the Roman Empire (*Codex Theodosianus* XVI 1,2; see *Creeds, Councils and Controversies*, edited by J. Stevenson [New York: Seabury, 1966] 160-161). We are less well informed about the legal circumstances in other parts of the Christian world.

[273]Faivre, *Ordonner la fraternité*, 77-84, 93-96. Faivre calls the process "sacerdotalization."

[274]In the West, these first appear early in the eighth century in Germany, especially Bavaria and Frankish lands, but have virtually disappeared by the eleventh and twelfth centuries. From the first they are assistants to the bishop, and teach, oversee, confirm, consecrate altars and churches, ordain clergy (even major orders), take part in synods. *Dictionnaire de droit canonique,* s.v. "Chorévèque," 691-93. Archpriests were an earlier phenomenon (Merovingian times): as the number of country converts grew, they needed more service than a deacon could give, and the priest in charge of them came to live with them. He did not have authority over several churches, nor could he ordain (A. Amanieu, "Archiprêtre," *DDC* 1,1007-1009). See also note 264 above.

the bishop's authority.[275] Cities in the western church seem not to have been divided into parishes before the ninth century.[276] In rural areas, the rising number of proprietary churches erected by newly converted feudal lords[277] and the many local congregations cared for by monasteries[278] were gradually integrated into this episcopal structure as well. Bishops tried to foster the unity of the congregations under their care by gathering their clergy regularly[279] and by encouraging the urban clergy to live in community.[280]

167.   The emperor Constantine and his successors encouraged the bishops to continue the practice of meeting in councils or synods, and Canon 5 of the Council of Nicaea, which Constantine convened, legislated that provincial and regional councils should be held regularly. This legislation, which was reiterated by later directives, was observed to a varying degree in different times and regions.[281] Greater councils, including those technically known as "ecumenical" councils,[282] were of great importance for the maintenance of communion, though they were not always successful in achieving church unity.[283] In addition, communion among churches coexisted with and even benefitted from a hierarchical grouping, under the metropolitan (bishop of the metropolis of the civil diocese)[284] and the patriarch, through whom each congregation was in communion with the rest of the church.[285] A high level of leadership, both doctrinal and disciplinary, was offered by the patriarchs: the bishops of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch, to which were later added Constantinople as the "new Rome" and seat of the emperor, and Jerusalem as the church of origin of Christianity and a focus of pilgrimage.[286] Though as a practical matter "the organization of the church in five

---

[275]The late ninth century saw the replacement of earlier archpriests and chorbishops by rural deans and archdeacons, who supervised all types of parishes. Ewig, in Friedrich Kempf, Hans-Georg Beck, Eugen Ewig and Josef Andreas Jungmann, *The Church in the Age of Feudalism*, "History of the Church 3," edited by Hubert Jedin and John Dolan (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), 165-66.

[276]Bernard M. Kelly, *The Functions Reserved to Pastors*, Catholic University of America Canon Law Studies 250 (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1947) 4; he adds (8), "This parochial unity of the city (*civitas*) was one of the most characteristic marks of the ancient diocese. The cathedral was the only parish church in the city. Around the ninth century, however, other parishes appeared in the city, administered by collegiate chapters."

[277]See the article by R. Schieffer, "Eigenkirche," *Lexikon des Mittelalters* III (München: Artemis-Verlag, 1986) 1705-08.

[278]Pierre Riché, in *Évêques, moines et Empereurs (610-1054)*, ed. Gilbert Dagron *et al.* (Paris: Desclée, 1993), 768-69, writing about the late ninth and early tenth century, says that some bishops sold off churches to lay patrons, and rural churches were fortunate if they belonged to monasteries. On 697, he gives as a rough estimate that during the ninth century, the proportion of monks who were priests and deacons rose from 20 percent to 60 percent.

[279]See Riché (note 278 above) 695: "Every year the bishop gathered the urban and rural clergy at his palace. At that time, the diocesan statutes would be formulated...." He is speaking of the ninth century.

[280]One focus in the Carolingian reform of the clergy under Louis the Pious (814-840) was to bring urban priests together in a canonical life and to draw rural priests closer together. Kempf, in Kempf *et al.*, 307-311; *cf.* 330-332.

[281]Ewig points out, in Baus *et al.*, 532, that while church synods were separate in the sixth century, later "the boundaries begin to become blurred" with royal councils. Y. M.-J. Congar, *L'Ecclésiologie du haut Moyen Age* (Paris: Cerf, 1968) 133, n. 11 speaks of a great number of councils in the 6th-8th centuries, declining in the 9th and especially the 10th.

[282]For example, the first reference to Nicaea I (325) as "ecumenical" came in 338, borrowing a term used by the world-wide associations of professional athletes and Dionysiac artists, according to Henry Chadwick, "The Origin of the Title, 'Oecumenical Council,'" *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s. 23 (1972) 132-135. Constantinople I (381) was called "ecumenical" soon after the fact, in 382. The ecumenical status of Ephesus II (449) never was achieved, despite the fact that it seems to have complied with the proposed conditions for that designation as well as the acknowledged ecumenical councils; see Wilhelm De Vries, "Das Konzil von Ephesus 449, eine 'Räubersynode'?" *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 41 (1975) 357-398.

[283]The conciliar attempts to hold the churches of the East together in the face of disagreements over the theology of the Incarnation, from Ephesus I (431) through Constantinople III (680-681), ended in church division. For the painful story, see W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement: Chapters in the History of the Church in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), or *Les Églises d'Orient et Occident*, edited by Luce Pietri (Paris: Desclée, 1998) 387-481: "Justinien et la vaine recherche de l'unité."

[284]Wilhelm de Vries, "Die Patriarchate des Ostens: Bestimmende Faktoren bei ihrer Entstehung," in *I Patriarcati orientali nel primo millennio*, "Orientalia Christiana Analecta 181" (Roma: Pontificium Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1968) 20-21, says, "The bishops were fundamentally equal, but their cities were not." The leader of the Christian churches of each province was the bishop of its metropolis; he oversaw the election and ordination of bishops, presided at synods and served as a court of appeal from the local bishops.

[285]These groupings were reflected in an important liturgical affirmation of communion, where in the Eucharistic prayer itself the presider prayed explicitly for the bishop of the place and for the patriarch or patriarchs through whom the congregation was in communion with the rest of the church. This practice is well attested from at least the sixth century in both East (the "diptychs") and the West (the prayer "Memento" in the Roman rite); see Joseph A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, tr. Francis A. Brunner (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1955) II 154-156.

[286]Constantinople's importance was recognized at the Council of Constantinople (381); Jerusalem was first under the metropolitan of Caesarea in Palestine and overseen by the church of Antioch, but its unique place in Christian history and piety was recognized when it was named a fifth patriarchate at the Council of Chalcedon (451). Bernard Flusin, in *Les Églises d'Orient et d'Occident*, ed. Luce Pietri (Paris: Desclée, 1998) 510-511, says that "if the system of five patriarchs ever existed, it was not yet fully developed"; at the time of Chalcedon, "patriarch" was not yet a technical term.

patriarchates did not last long,"[287] the ideal has continued to be a powerful symbol of the compatibility of distinction between churches and effective communion.[288]

168.   While these developments made it difficult to envisage every local parish as embodying everything which is required in order to be "church," the ancient equivalence of presbyter and bishop was not forgotten. Jerome insists upon that equivalence when he is making the argument that it is normal for bishops to be chosen from among the presbyters of the church, rather than from the deacons.[289] He argued, "For also at Alexandria, from Mark the evangelist down to bishops Heraclas and Dionysius, the presbyters always chose one of themselves and, having elevated him in grade, named him bishop–just as if an army might make an emperor by acclamation, or deacons choose one of themselves, whom they know to be hard-working, and call him archdeacon. For what, apart from ordaining, does a bishop do which a presbyter does not?" "Ambrosiaster" (thought to be Pelagius), in his comments on the Pauline epistles, makes the same point regarding New Testament usage.[290]

Both Jerome and Ambrosiaster are reflected in the *De ecclesiasticis officiis* of Isidore of Seville (c. 560-636). He tells us that "'Bishop,' as one of the prudent says, is the name of a work, not of an honor.... Therefore we can say in Latin that the bishop *superintends*, so that someone who would love to preside but not to assist may understand that he is not a bishop."[291] For Isidore, presbyters correspond to Old Testament priests as bishops do to the high priest. Presbyters and bishops are alike in regard to the Eucharist, teaching the people, and preaching; he adds:

> and only on account of authority is ordination and consecration reserved to
> the high priest, lest if the discipline of the church were arrogated by many it might
> dissolve concord and generate scandals.[292]

Isidore, like Jerome and Ambrosiaster, cites 1 Tim. 3:8, Tit. 1:5; Phil. 1:1, and Acts 20:28, and his other sources are as follows: the line about bishops as superintendents is from Augustine;[293] the statement about the common duties of bishops and presbyters, with a purely disciplinary restriction of certain powers to the former, comes from an anonymous treatise "On the Seven Orders of the Church;"[294] and the comments on Scripture are from Pelagius' commentary on 1 Timothy. All Isidore's observations about the bishop/presbyter relationship are taken up by later canonical and

---

[287]Vittorio Parlato, *L'ufficio patriarcale nelle chiese orientali dal IV al X secolo: Contributo allo studio della 'communio'*, (Padova: Edizioni Cedam, 1969), 26-27, assigns several causes: "heresies, schisms, political factors, persecutions, occupation of Christian territories by the Muslims, and not least the revival of nationalism in the Greek-speaking parts of the empire." By 543, Antioch had a Monophysite hierarchy, and its Melkite (imperial or Chalcedonian) bishop preferred to live in Constantinople from 609-742, so a third patriarch of Antioch was chosen by the North Syrians; from 566 there were competing Monophysite and Melkite patriarchs in Alexandria.

[288]See H. Marot, "Notes sur la Pentarchie," *Irénikon* 32 (1959) 436-442; Ferdinand R. Gahbauer, *Die Pentarchie-Theorie. Ein Modell der Kirchenleitung von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Frankfurt: Josef Knecht, 1993).

[289]Hieronymus, *ep.* 146 1,6, ed. I. Hilberg, CSEL 66 (Vienna: F. Tempsky, 1918) 310: "nam et Alexandriae a Marco euangelista usque ad Heraclam et Dionysium episcopos presbyteri semper unum de se electum et in excelsiori gradu conlocatum episcopum nominabant, quomodo si exercitus imperatorem faciat aut diaconi eligant de se, quem industrium nouerint, et archdiaconum uocent. quid enim facit excepta ordinatione episcopus, quod presbyter non facit?"

[290]Pelagius, Commentarii in Ep. 1 ad Tim. 3, 8, edited by A. Souter in three volumes, Texts and Studies 9,1-3 (Cambridge: University Press, 1922-31), reprinted in *Patrologiae Latinae Supplementum* 1.1110-1374; the treatment of 1 Tim. 3.8 is at PLS 1.1351.

[291]"Episcopatus autem, ut quidam prudentium ait, nomen est operis non honoris.... Ergo episcopum Latine superintendere possumus dicere; ut intelligat non se esse episcopum qui non prodesse sed praeesse dilexerit." Isidorus Hispaliensis, *De ecclesiasticis officiis* II 5,8, ed. Christopher M. Lawson, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 113 (Turnholti: Brepols, 1989) 59 (PL 83.782).

[292]II 7,2 (ed. Lawson [note 291 above] 65): "Praesunt enim ecclesiae Christi, et in confectione diuini corporis et sanguinis consortes cum episcopis sunt, similiter et in doctrina populorum et in officio praedicandi; ac sola propter auctoritatem summo sacerdoti clericorum ordinatio et consecratio reseruata est, ne a disciplina ecclesiae uindicata concordiam solueret, scandala generaret."

[293]Augustine, *civ.dei* 19,19.

[294]The treatise, *De VII ordinibus Ecclesiae,* appears among the *spuria* of Jerome in PL 30.148-162; the cited text from chapter 6 is in columns 155-56. J. Lécuyer, "Aux origines de la théologie thomiste de l'Épiscopat," *Gregorianum* 35 (1954) 65, n. 24, says that PL gives a faulty text; see the critical edition by A. Kalff (Würzburg, 1935). Lest we assume that the unknown author of "De VII ordinibus Ecclesiae" thought of bishops as simply presbyters with special duties, we should note that the quoted words come from section six of that little treatise; the seventh section exalts the *ordo episcopalis* remarkably (PL 30.158-159A). In contrast to later lists of the seven orders, this treatise lists diggers (*fossarii*), porters, readers, subdeacons, levites or deacons, priests, bishops.

theological authors, particularly Peter Lombard,[295] and become part of the standard repertory of authorities with which western Christian theologians had to deal.[296]

169. How undefined the distinction between presbyters and bishops was can also be seen occasionally on the practical level, where there were some striking instances of presbyters exercising powers typical of bishops when the occasion called for it. For example, two eighth-century missionaries, Willehad and Liudger,[297] whom Charlemagne had sent to convert the Saxons on his eastern border, ordained clergy for the churches they founded, long before they themselves received consecration as bishops. In the fifteenth century, three different popes delegated the power to ordain to abbots who had not been ordained to the episcopate; in two of those cases, the privilege included ordination to the priesthood.[298] For many medieval theologians, the limiting of ordination to bishops was associated with the episcopal dignity, but not with orders as such. After the introduction of pseudo-Dionysius' *De ecclesiastica hierarchia* into Latin theology in the early thirteenth century, Dionysius' pervasive arrangement of everything in patterns of three seems to have deepened the sense of a distinction among the orders of deacon, presbyter, and bishop.[299]

170. While the communion among local congregations was primarily the charge of the bishop, there were various attempts to assure unity in the church on a wider scale during the Middle Ages. In the East, the rise of Islam, the Russian adoption of Christianity, and the growth of autocephalous churches led to the type of structure characteristic of the Orthodox communion. In the West, the church of Rome maintained and developed an ascendancy which was often advanced by the desire of other particular churches to free themselves from domination from lay feudal lords. The bishops of Rome claimed that anyone in the church might appeal to them,[300] and that they inherited the power of St. Peter.[301] The Symmachan Forgeries of the sixth century,[302] the "Donation of Constantine" of

---

[295]*IV Sent*. dist. 24, c. 11 and 12.

[296]Thomas Aquinas, for example, in his lectures on Philippians 1:1, 1 Timothy 3:1, 4:14, and Titus 1:6 accepts the New Testament equivalence; *Super Epistolas S. Pauli lectura*, ed. Raphael Cai, 8. ed. revisa (Torino: Marietti, 1953) II, 91, 231, 245, 305.

[297]*Vita s. Willehadi* 5-8, in Monumenta Germaniae Historiae, Scriptorum t. II 380-83; *Vita s. Liudgeri* 19-20, same volume, 410-11. These presbyters were mentioned already in a paper by the late A. C. Piepkorn, a member of an earlier round of the present dialogue, *Eucharist and Ministry*, edited by Paul C. Empie and T. Austin Murphy (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1979) 221-22.

[298]The popes were Boniface IX (Bull "Sacrae religionis," February 1, 1400), Martin V (Bull "Gerentes ad vos," November 16, 1427), Innocent VIII (Bull "Exposcit tuae devotionis," April 9, 1489). See Ludwig Ott, *Das Weihesacrament*, Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte IV 5 (Freiburg: Herder, 1969) 106-107, and his *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, 6th ed. (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1964), 459, and other Catholic manuals since the discovery of Martin V's bull in 1943, such as H. Lennerz, *De Sacramento Ordinis* (2 vols.; Rome: Gregorian University, 1953) 145-53 (Appendix I). A. C. Piepkorn cited these instances in *Eucharist and Ministry*, 222-23. For a full discussion, see John de Reeper, "Relation of Priesthood to Episcopate," *Jurist* 16 (1956) 350-358.

[299]Dionysius was thought to have been Paul's convert, so his testimony conflicted with the equivalence of bishop and presbyter in the New Testament. Medieval theologians like Thomas Aquinas tried to resolve the conflict by postulating a very rapid development from Paul to Dionysius. Not until the sixteenth century did theologians recognize that Dionysius wrote much later than the first century. In two of the passages of Thomas Aquinas cited above, he notes that Dionysius gives the triple order; Thomas explains the difference by saying it was not that way at the very beginning.

[300]Baus, 38-39 and 260, n. 58, describes the origins of this claim, which was strongly resented by the Eastern churches. Hamilton Hess, *The Canons of the Council of Serdica A.D. 343* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), 52, says, "None of the early references to the canons which were made by the Roman church ascribe them to the Council of Serdica. Their attributed source, when given, is invariably the Council of Nicaea."

[301]According to Walter Ullmann, "Leo I and the Theme of Papal Primacy," *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 11 (1960) 25-51., Leo's innovation was a legal theory of the pope's inheritance of Peter's fullness of power, which Peter in turn had received from Christ. The notion of heir turned up first in a letter written by Siricius (384-399): "We carry the burdens of all who are heavy laden–or rather, the blessed apostle Peter in us bears them, he who protects us and keeps us safe as his heir in all points of his ministry, as we believe" (30-31). As Ullmann observes, the heir in Roman law acts in all things with the full rights of the testator, and if he were not of the same moral stature as the testator, he would be unworthy (*indignus*), but heir nonetheless–in this case, of Peter's office and fullness of power. Ullmann insists on several points: that it is Peter's office which is inherited, not his apostolic commission; "that no pope succeeds another pope, but succeeds St. Peter immediately"; that this is not a matter of orders, so a layman can become pope; and that "bishops received their (jurisdictional) *office* (not their sacramental *ordo*) from the pope" (33-35; 43; 50; 44-45). No unbroken line of succession is needed in this theory.

[302]Their "aim . . . was to prove by the example of alleged cases from the history of the papacy the principle that the first episcopal see cannot be subjected to any court–*Prima sedes a nemine iudicatur*" (Baus, in Baus *et al.*, 621). The Latin axiom has been retained in the Roman Catholic *Code of Canon Law* (1917 Code: Can. 1556; 1983 Code: Can. 1404; 1990 *Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium*: Can. 1058).

the eighth,[303] and the False Decretals brought in from France in the ninth century[304] all tended to support and promote the papal primacy. Bernard of Clairvaux hailed that primacy as universal[305] and despite challenges from figures like Marsilius of Padua and scandals like the Great Schism of the West papal primacy persisted into Reformation times. The struggle against feudal control of the church was not an unmixed success, however: in the process, bishops, abbots, and the popes themselves became feudal lords and consequently a part of that system;[306] and the pope's success in divesting kings of responsibility for the *ecclesia universalis* laid the groundwork for the rise of the autonomous state and the dichotomy between sacred and secular.

IV. The Lutheran Reformation

171.   The traditional, though varied and often unsettled, medieval structures of church and ministry provided the background for the Lutheran reformers of the sixteenth century and "the impact of the gospel"[307] that they brought to the fore. They sought removal of unacceptable aspects and renewal of the existing church, not wholesale restructuring, as part of their conservative reformation. But, with some exceptions outside the Holy Roman Empire,[308] the bishops of the day, many of whom had feudal positions to protect, refused to endorse the aims of the Wittenberg reformers and would not ordain candidates committed to the Reformation gospel. In spite of this opposition, the reformers continued the principle of one ordained ministry, employing a variety of approaches to structure, on the basis of biblical and patristic sources and medieval precedents. Self-appointment to the ministry was not even considered, nor was direct appointment by the Spirit. The steps Lutherans took in this emergency situation were not all intended to be permanently normative. New situations in later times stimulated further development and often variety in Lutheran praxis for church and ministry within the framework of the confessional commitments of the sixteenth century.

A. The Nature of the Church as Communion and its Ministry

1. Communion and Local Church

172.   Communion as a term applied specifically to the church is not found in the writings of the Reformers or their opponents. But Luther does apply the closely related notions of the communion of saints and eucharistic communion. His sermon on *The Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True Body of Christ and the Brotherhoods*[309] seeks to provide a basis for Christian life in both church and city. The transforming power of love, the bonds of unity, and participation in the Body of Christ (comprehending both Christ and fellow Christians) are all centered in the Lord's Supper:

> [T]he blessing of this sacrament is fellowship and love.... This fellowship
> is twofold: on the one hand we partake of Christ and all saints; on the other hand we

---

[303]Itself based on fifth-century forged acts of Pope Silvester (Baus, in Baus *et al.*, 247), the *Constitutio Constantini* or "Donation of Constantine" appeared in Rome under mysterious circumstances "not later than the early fifties of the eighth century," writes Walter Ullmann, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages*, 3rd edition (London: Methuen, 1970), 74-86.

[304]Ewig, in Kempf *et al.*, 168. On 169, he adds that the effect of these texts was not fully felt until they were incorporated into canon law collections in the 11th century. For the decretals themselves, see PL 130 or the edition by P. Hinschius, *Decretales Pseudo-Isidorianae et Capitula Angilramni* (Leipzig, 1863).

[305]Colin Morris, *The Papal Monarchy: The Western Church from 1050 to 1250* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 206, says that *plenitudo potestatis*, fullness of power, "had a long history beginning with the letter of Leo I [*ep*. 14,1], but up to the time of Gratian it had attracted little notice. Its use was confined to Leo's letters and two pseudo-Isidorian texts based on it, and it simply contrasted the authority of the apostolic see with those (such as legates or metropolitans) who had been authorized to perform a subordinate function. It was Bernard's *De consideratione* [*consid*. II 8,16; *Opera* III 424] which introduced a new interpretation.... Bernard understood it as referring to the universal power of the Roman pontiff to intervene in all parts of the church."

[306]Morris, *Papal Monarchy*, 388, observes, "The prince-bishop was not (or not only) produced by original sin, but by the structure of ecclesiastical property."

[307]The phrase "der evangelische Ansatz" is from Werner Elert, *Morphologie des Luthertums*, Bd. 1: *Theologie und Weltanschauung des Luthertums hauptsächlich in 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1931, 3rd ed. 1965); Bd. 2, *Soziallehren und Sozialwirkung des Luthertums* (1932), as trans. by Walter A. Hansen, *The Structure of Lutheranism, Vol. 1, The Theology and Philosophy of Life of Lutheranism in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1962), p. xix for discussion on the rendering; on this impact and "The Office of the Ministry," 1:297-307 = Eng. trans. 339-51.

[308]For example, Georg von Polentz, Bishop of Samland, and Erhard of Queiss, Bishop of Pomesania.

[309]Preached in 1519; LW 35. 49-73.

permit all Christians to be partakers of us, in whatever way they and we are able. Thus by means of this sacrament, all self-seeking love is rooted out and gives place to that which seeks the common good of all; and through the change wrought by love there is one bread, one drink, one body, one community. This is the true unity of Christian brethren.[310]

The faithful truly participate in Christ and Christ in them.[311] In this relationship they share the goods or gifts that are the fruits of that communion. These goods include a sharing not only in each other's joys, but also in each other's sufferings.[312] Such mutual participation is communicated through the means of grace, a sacramental reality that presumes ministers of the word.[313] The existence of ministers, in turn, presumes an ecclesiastical ordering or structure, in short, a church as communion.[314]

173. According to the *Augsburg Confession*, "The church is the assembly of saints in which the gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly" (CA 7), and "...no one should teach publicly in the church or administer the sacraments unless properly called" (CA 14). Because the local congregation has the word proclaimed and the sacramental gifts of God, it is "church," in that place, in the full sense. In lands that embraced the teaching of Luther, the local church continued to be geographically and often physically the same as that which had existed previously, in village, town, or city. Lutheran immigrants in the United States and Canada formed local congregations where they settled.[315] In such assemblies Lutherans participate in Christ and live out their faith.[316]

174. For Luther and the Lutheran tradition, the local church, to use biblical language (as in Ezek. 34, John 10, 1 Pet. 5:1-4), consists of a shepherd and the flock. The term "shepherd" refers to the pastor with tasks of word and sacraments, "the flock" to the people of God in a particular place. The pastor as minister of word and sacrament also has oversight responsibilities in the congregation. Luther could describe the pastor/bishop as a supervisor or watchman, *i.e.*, one who carefully observes his flock to see to it that among them the word is taught and proclaimed in its purity, that the sacraments are used rightly, and that the community strives to live according to the word and command of God.[317] Such a function is common to all ordained ministers whether they preside over a congregation or a diocese, and it takes the form of personal oversight.[318]

---

[310]LW 35.67. The "Brotherhoods" (*Brüderschaften*) were societies of laymen who practiced devotional exercises and good works (*BC* p. 54 n. 103). They are here regarded by Luther as a distortion of true *communio*.

[311]While Luther and his colleagues emphasized Christ the word, they did not exclude the Trinitarian tradition; see, *e.g.*, Luther's explanation of the Third Article of the Creed in his *Large Catechism*. *Cf. Luther und die trinitarische Tradition: Ökumenische und philosophische Perspektiven*, Veröffentlichen der Luther-Akademie Ratzeburg, 23, ed. Robert W. Jenson (Erlangen: Martin-Luther-Verlag, 1994).

[312]From the New Testament understanding of koinonia and this Sermon by Luther on "The Blessed Sacrament," Paul Lehmann has, more recently, understood the church as a place where God's acts become concrete in the world, a place or field of relationships for ethical reflection; see his *Ethics in a Christian Context* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963); Nancy J. Duff, *Humanization and the Politics of God: The* Koinonia *Ethics of Paul Lehmann* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992).

[313]CA 5; 28.8-9.

[314]See several articles in *The Church as Communion*, ed. Heinrich Holze, LWF Documentation No. 42/1997 (Geneva: LWF, 1997), especially Alejandro Zorzin, "Luther's Understanding of the Church as Communion in his Early Pamphlets," 81-92; Simo Peura, "The Church as Spiritual Communion in Luther," 93-131. David Yeago, "The Church as Polity? The Lutheran Context of Robert W. Jenson's Ecclesiology" in C. Gunton, ed., *Trinity, Time, and Church: A Response to the Theology of Robert W. Jenson* (Grand Rapids; Cambridge, U.K, 2000) 236, states, "[T]he goal of Luther and the early Lutheran movement was not to isolate the eschatological from the outward and bodily church but to ask how the communion of the church could and should 'take up space in the world' in a manner appropriate to its eschatological character as the body of Christ. On this reading, therefore, the Lutheran tradition already contains elements of something like a 'communion-ecclesiology' in its normative sources."

[315]E. Clifford Nelson (ed.), *The Lutherans in North America*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 52-56.

[316]*Cf.* Gerd Haendler, *Luther on Ministerial Office and Congregational Function* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981); Dorothea Wendebourg, "The Ministry and Ministries," *Lutheran Quarterly* 15/2 (Summer 2001) 159-94, esp. "The Local Ministry of the Pastor as the Primary Form of the Ordained Ministry," 163-66.

[317]LW 28.283; LW 39.154-155. *Cf.* LW 37.367: "The bishops or priests are not heads [of the church] or lords or bridegrooms, but servants, friends, and–as the word 'bishop' implies–superintendents, guardians, or stewards." Such tasks are so important that subsequently in local congregations the elected leadership of lay people, usually the congregational council, is assigned also a part in the task of oversight, shared with the pastor(s); ELCA *Model Constitution for Congregations*, C12.04., "The Congregational Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation, and in particular its worship life, to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God and the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America." *Cf.* *C9.03. for what ordained ministers are to do, including (besides preaching) sacraments, conduct of public worship, and pastoral care, "and supervise all schools and organizations of this congregation."

[318]See Dorothea Wendebourg, "The Reformation in Germany and the Episcopal Office" in *Visible Unity and the Ministry of Oversight* (London 1997) 54: "the Wittenberg theologians generally envisage [*episcope*] as taking place in personal rather than synodical form" (this is in the context of visitation in parishes, on which see §184 below).

175.   It can further be argued, as of critical importance, that all visible means and structures, all the institutional realities of the church, must reflect and embody the gospel in as clear and as unmistakable a manner as possible. Therefore koinonia can neither be forced, nor can it exist apart from *faith*. A true faith (*i.e.*, one that is a participation in *Christ*) will foster a communion that is authentic (*i.e.*, one that is a real *participation* in Christ).

2. The One Office of Pastor/Bishop

176.   That the office of presbyter and bishop was one and the same was a teaching widespread in the Middle Ages inherited ultimately from Jerome and the New Testament. Luther asserted the position from 1519 on.[319] He wrote in 1520:

> according to the institution of Christ and the apostles, every city should have a priest or bishop, as St. Paul clearly says in Titus 1[:5].... According to St. Paul, and also St. Jerome, a bishop and a priest are one and the same thing. But of bishops as they now are the Scriptures know nothing. Bishops have been appointed by ordinance of the Christian church, so that one of them may have authority over several priests.[320]

Luther's point was "that originally the *episcopus* was the leader of the congregation in one city, *i.e.*, the pastor, and not the leader of a diocese with many such congregations."[321]

177.   In the Lutheran Confessions, this position is forcefully expressed in the *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope*:

> It is universally acknowledged, even by our opponents, that this power is shared by divine right by all who preside in the churches, whether they are called pastors, presbyters, or bishops. For that reason Jerome plainly teaches that in the apostolic letters all who preside over churches are both bishops and presbyters.... What, after all, does a bishop do, with the exception of ordaining, that a presbyter does not?"[322]

178.   The Reformers, while denying any *jure divino* difference between presbyter (pastor) and bishop, also allowed, however, for the later, historical development of the episcopal office beyond the individual congregation and even for "distinctions of degree" between bishops and pastors. But this is by human authority, not by divine right.[323]

179.   This understanding of the relation between bishop and presbyter not only opened possibilities for needed reform of the episcopate, but also justified the establishment of new (though recognizable) forms through which the ministry of oversight could be exercised alternatively, if necessary and as circumstances required. Melanchthon applied this reasoning and developed it to meet the urgent

---

[319]Martin Brecht, "Die exegetische Begründung des Bischofsamt," 10-14, and Heinz-Meinolf Stamm, "Luthers Berufung auf die Vorstellungen des Hieronymus vom Bischofsamt," 15-26, esp. 15-17, in *Martin Luther und das Bischofsamt*, ed. M. Brecht (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1990).

[320]LW *44.175 "An Open Letter to the Christian Nobility," *The Christian in Society I* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, ed.) =WA 6:440.21-29.

[321]Wendebourg, "The Ministry and Ministries," 184 n. 32, but she goes on, "Luther does recognize a difference between bishops and presbyters at a time as early as that of the Pastoral Epistles, but it is a difference—and this is his point—within a single congregation led by one pastor-bishop: Here the bishop had presbyters and deacons as his assistants." *Cf.* WA 6:440,33-35; LW 44.175, the pastor or bishop should "have several priests and deacons by his side..., who help him rule the flock and the congregation through preaching and sacraments."

[322]Kolb and Wengert, *BC*, p. 340. On Jerome, see §§163, 168 above.

[323]As Melanchthon put it in the TPPP: "Jerome, then, teaches that the distinctions of degree between bishop and presbyter or pastor are established by human authority [*humana auctoritate*]. That is clear from the way it works, for, as I stated above, the power is the same. One thing subsequently created a distinction between bishops and pastors, and that was ordination, for it was arranged that one bishop would ordain the ministers in a number of churches. However, since the distinction in rank between bishop and pastor is not by divine right [*jure divino*], it is clear that an ordination performed by a pastor in his own church is valid by divine right." Kolb and Wengert, *BC*, p. 340. In this connection, Wendebourg speaks of "the office of diocesan bishop" as "a secondary phenomenon, owing its existence to historical circumstance"; the tasks of pastor and bishop remain the same, though their areas of jurisdiction differ; in principle, even the right to ordain is still embodied in the office of the local pastor. "The Ministry" 165.

practical problem of providing for the orderly succession of ministers in areas that embraced the movement for reform. He maintained that, inasmuch as in the ancient church presbyters had been permitted to ordain, presbyters may once again assume this function in the absence of responsible bishops, as the current crisis clearly demanded, for the sake of the gospel. When bishops become heretics or refuse ordination, Melanchthon said, then "the churches are by divine right compelled to ordain pastors and ministers for themselves."[324] Luther also had claimed that the church should not be deprived of ministers on account of neglectful, cruel, or renegade bishops. "Therefore, as the ancient examples of the church and the Fathers teach us, we should and will ordain suitable persons to this office ourselves...."[325] Such action should not be regarded as a deliberately provocative or independent attempt to forge a new ecclesiastical structure. One index of their firm hope to avoid schism is that, while one Lutheran ordination may have taken place in Wittenberg in 1525, there were no more till 1535.[326] The Lutherans believed they were proposing the *more* ancient, and thus original, ministerial structure more conducive to authentic koinonia.

180. The Reformers, as indicated above, embraced the view that the office of bishop developed historically, after the New Testament period, as that of a presbyter with special oversight in an area larger than a single congregation or town. While established by human authority, this structure, "was instituted by the Fathers for a good and useful purpose."[327] As early as 1522, Luther sketched what an Evangelical bishop would be like, oriented to the gospel of justification and the church as a *communio* for salvation. His tract, *Against the falsely named Spiritual Estate of the Pope and Bishops*, was an appeal for support from, and reform by, the then reigning bishops.[328] It has been argued that, "Had this attempt been successful, the German Lutheran churches—and most of the United ones [Lutheran and Reformed]—would today have a similar appearance to those of Scandinavia."[329] But none of the bishops within the Holy Roman Empire supported the Reformation. The Lutheran charges against them therefore increasingly became that they were not true bishops but princes, and ultimately opposed the gospel.

181. Fundamental was the problem of the *power* of bishops. The *locus classicus* of the Lutheran argument regarding this power is found in *Augsburg Confession* Article 28, "In former times there were serious controversies about the power of bishops, in which some people improperly mixed the power of the church and the power of the sword." The reformers requested that bishops restrict themselves to doing what is according to the gospel: "the power of the keys or the power of the bishops is the power of God's mandate to preach the gospel, to forgive and retain sins, and to administer the sacraments.... If bishops possess any power of the sword, they possess it not through the command of the gospel but by human right, granted by kings and emperors...." The reformers' indictment of the bishops was that they were using the power of the sword to impose and enforce religious practices contrary to the gospel.[330]

182. While *Augsburg Confession* Article 28 was immediately concerned with the practical need to distinguish temporal from spiritual power, it also contained a positive proposal to reform and reorient the church's episcopal structure by returning it to its evangelical, spiritual, and pastoral foundations.

---

[324]TPPP, 72. On the historical and political context of the early Lutheran situation concerning the problem of episcopacy, see especially Wendebourg, "The Reformation in Germany," 49-55.

[325]*Smalcald Articles*, Part 3, Art. 10.3, Kolb and Wengert, p. 324; *Cf.* Formula of Concord Solid Declaration 10.19.

[326]Archdeacon Georg Rörer was ordained to some office in the *Stadtkirche* at Wittenberg, on May 14, 1525; see Wendebourg, "The Ministry" 191 n. 91; at least this was Rörer's claim, Schwiebert, *Luther and His Times* 621; *cf.* WA 16:226; 17, xvii, xxxviii, 243; 38, 403. *BC*, ed. Kolb-Wengert, p. 324 note 159 (on Smalcald Articles III.10,3) says, "The first ordination by the Wittenberg reformers in Wittenberg took place on 20 October 1535." See the more detailed note in BSLK (1930 ed., 458 note 2); involved is Luther's understanding that call (by a congregation) was the decisive matter (WA 38, 238, 7f.; 41, 240-42 and 457f.).

[327]*Apology* 14.2, Kolb and Wengert, p. 222.

[328]WA 10/2, 105-58; *cf.* Gottfried Krodel, "Luther und das Bischofsamt nach seinem Buch 'Wider den falsch genannten geistlichen Stand des Papstes und der Bischöfe,'" in *Martin Luther und das Bischofsamt*, 27-65.

[329]Wendebourg (n. 318 above), "Reformation," 55. The pre-Reformation dioceses would have had bishops "who could look back to a chain of predecessors into the Middle Ages and in some cases even into antiquity" but after acceptance of Reformation teaching "committed to proclaiming the Gospel according to the teaching of the Wittenberg Reformation and to undertaking their specific duties in accordance with it."

[330]CA 28.1, 5, 19. Kolb and Wengert, p. 91-93.

> Consequently, according to the gospel, or, as they say, by divine right, this jurisdiction belongs to the bishops as bishops (that is, to those to whom the ministry of the Word and sacraments has been committed): to forgive sins, to reject teaching that opposes the gospel, and to exclude from the communion of the church the ungodly whose ungodliness is known—doing all this not with human power but by the Word. In this regard, churches are bound by divine right to be obedient to the bishops according to the saying [Luke 10:16], "Whoever listens to you listens to me."[331]

B. Structures for Regional Oversight

1. The German Lands

183. It soon became apparent in Reformation territories that, if the aims of the reformers were to be carried through in the life of the churches, the oversight that they believed was a special task of the bishops continued to be necessary to congregations embracing the Evangelical faith. A number of steps were taken to carry this out in an Evangelical way.

184. (a) The traditional system of episcopal *visitation* of congregations had collapsed and the reigning bishops would scarcely carry out visits with encouragement and admonishment along the lines of Reformation theology. Therefore Melanchthon provided an "Instruction" for visitation of the churches and schools of Electoral Saxony, to which Luther wrote a preface (1528). This *episkopē* was to be conducted by centrally appointed visitors from outside the individual parish, to measure what was being done by the standards of the word of God.[332] Catholicity and accountability to the gospel criterion were involved.[333]

185. (b) In some exceptional instances, Catholic bishops in German lands joined the Reformation.[334] Luther watched such developments with interest but was disappointed that no similar cases of bishop and region becoming Lutheran occurred within the Empire.[335] Thus, outside of Prussia (and Sweden and Finland), existing bishops did not come into the Lutheran orbit with their regional churches.

186. (c) In three instances, pastors holding to the Reformation were appointed bishops of existing dioceses in Saxony.[336] In one case, an attempt to involve an existing bishop in the consecration came to nothing.[337] Luther and superintendents and pastors from nearby cities conducted the laying on of hands in the ordination/installation service for two of these bishops; neighboring superintendents laid hands on the third. An episcopate without political power and finance proved unworkable within the structure of the Holy Roman Empire.[338] With the Smalcald War and eventually the Peace of Augsburg, such experiments with Evangelical bishops came to an end. The Protestant princes took

---

[331]CA 28.20-22. Kolb and Wengert, p. 95.

[332]In the sense of Luke 19:44, oversight visitation; *Besuchdienst.*

[333]WA 26:195-240; LW 40.269-320; Wendebourg, "The Ministry" 169-70.

[334]*Cf.* J. Höß, "The Lutheran Church of the Reformation. Problems of its formation and organization in the middle and north German territories," in *The Social History of the Reformation. Festschrift H. J. Grimm,* ed. L. P. Buck, J. W. Zophy (Columbus, 1972) 317-39; "Episcopus Evangelicus. Versuche mit dem Bischofsamt im deutschen Luthertum des 16. Jahrhunderts," in *Confessio Augustana und Confutatio,* ed. E. Iserloh (Münster, 1980) 499-516. See also Merlyn E. Satrom, "Bishops and Ordination in the Lutheran Reformation of Sixteenth-Century Germany," *Lutheran Forum* 33/2, Summer 1999, 12-15; Gerhard Tröger, *Das Bischofsamt in der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche* (1965) and "Das evangelische Bischofsamt," TRE 6. Two of these were in Prussia, which was not part of the Holy Roman Empire, namely, Georg von Polentz, bishop since 1519 of the Samland (his see in Königsberg) and Erhard von Queiß, elected bishop of Pomesania in 1523 but not yet confirmed by the pope or consecrated.

[335]Wendebourg, "Reformation" 56-57. In the 1540s, Hermann von Wied, Archbishop and Elector of Cologne, was forced to abdicate when he sought to reform his diocese along Evangelical lines (and died under excommunication in 1552), and Franz von Waldeck, in Osnabrück, had to renounce his turn to Protestantism in order to remain bishop. The one exception was the Bishop of Brandenburg, Matthias von Jagow (bishop 1516-1544), who continued to serve as a Lutheran bishop, for the territory under his secular control was not under the Emperor. Literature in Wendebourg, "Reformation," nn. 63-66.

[336]Nikolaus von Amsdorff (1483-1565) in Naumberg (1542), Georg von Anhalt (1507-53) in Merseburg (1544), and Bartholomäus Suave in Pomeranian Kammin (1545).

[337]Hermann von Wied of Cologne, Matthias von Jagow, or one of those in Prussia.

[338]See Wendebourg, *Reformation*, 58-62.

over as governors of the episcopal sees, an inheritance of the prince-bishop of the Middle Ages. It was not until 1918, after the First World War and the collapse of the Empire and creation of a republic in Germany, that the role of the prince as *summus episcopus* finally was abolished.[339]

187.   (d) There emerged, nonetheless, an office of oversight for the German Lutheran churches, called *Superintendent*[340] (etymologically a Latin-derivative equivalent of *episkopos*, one who oversees), *Dekan*, or *Propst*. In so doing, the reformers "held fast to the episcopal office itself."[341]

188.   The domination of the church by the princes, especially after the Peace of Augsburg, and the appropriation by the princes of the authority of the former bishops meant that the church in Germany tended to be organized along the political lines of the principalities (not nationally, as in Sweden and England, which were more unified politically). The problem that *Augsburg Confession* 28 originally addressed, namely, the confusion of temporal and spiritual authority that had existed with the medieval episcopate, continued to require solution.

2. Nordic Countries

189.   The political and ecclesiastical situation in the Nordic lands was different from that of the Holy Roman Empire. In both Nordic kingdoms (Sweden-Finland and Denmark-Norway-Iceland), civil wars, more political than religious in motivation, opened the way for the introduction of the Reformation. Since the ruling authorities in both kingdoms came to support the Reformation, the political realities that forced the creation of new church structures in continental Europe did not exist in the North. Thus, the Lutheran intention to preserve the episcopal structure was realized in the Nordic countries.[342]

190.   In Sweden and Finland (under Swedish rule until 1809), the medieval episcopal structure was preserved relatively intact. In the Swedish Lutheran *Church Ordinance* of 1571, the importance of episcopacy was stressed as "an irreplaceable order of the church."[343] This document maintains that, while "the distinction which now exists between bishops and simple priests was not known at first in Christendom, but bishop and priest were all one office," the "agreement that one bishop among them [the pastors] should be chosen, who should have superintendence over all the rest...was very useful and without doubt proceeded from God the Holy Ghost...so it was generally approved and accepted over the whole of Christendom," a ministerial function that has remained in the church "and must remain in the future, so long as the world lasts, although the abuse, which has been very great in this as in all other useful and necessary things, must be set aside."[344] This text has been reaffirmed in modern Swedish church statements.[345]

---

[339]A. F. von Campenhausen, "The Episcopal Office of Oversight," 175.

[340]A *Superintendent* was usually a prominent pastor from one of the cities who frequently worked with a consistory, to supervise, coordinate and provide for the area's pastoral needs. Pastors of principal congregations in the territorial capitals, as was the case, *e.g.*, in Electoral Saxony, were sometimes called *Generalsuperintendenten*. Whatever the drawbacks might have been, such arrangements preserved a personal (rather than collective) form of oversight, involving the authority (delegated by the prince) to make visitations.

[341]A. F. von Campenhausen, "The Episcopal Office of Oversight in the German Churches, its Public Status and its Involvement in Church Decision in History and the Present," in *Visible Unity and the Ministry of Oversight. Second Theological Conference held under the Meissen Agreement between the Church of England and the Evangelical Church in Germany* (London: Church House Publishing, 1977), 171-83, who gives the other terms sometimes used, like *Landessuperintendent*, *Kreisdekan*, or *Prälat*; quotations above from p. 173 and 181 n. 10 (P. Brunner, who thought that Superintendent matched well the office of bishop in the early church). See further, D. Wendebourg, "The Office of Superintendent as a Distinct Type of Episcopate," in "Reformation," 63-66, noting the "flexibility in the practical exercise of *episkope*" that "characterizes the form which the episcopal office takes in protestant churches to the present day."

[342]Dorothea Wendebourg, "The Reformation in Germany and the Episcopal Office," in *Visible Unity and the Ministry of Oversight: The Second Theological Conference held under the Meissen Agreement between the Church of England and the Evangelical Church in Germany* (London: Church House Publishing), 55f.

[343]So Sven-Erik Brodd, in an excursus, "The Swedish *Church Ordinance* 1571 and the Office of Bishop in an Ecumenical Context," attached to *The Office of Bishop*. Report of the Official Working Group for Dialogue between the Church of Sweden and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Stockholm (Geneva: LWF, 1993) 148; compare 45-47 and 82 in the dialogue report itself. Brodd notes that in Petri's other writings both the monarchy and the episcopacy are divinely-ordained institutions.

[344]The translation is that of John Wordsworth, *The National Church of Sweden* (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1911), 232-233.

[345]See Bishops' Conference [Church of Sweden], *Bishop, Priest and Deacon in the Church of Sweden: A Letter from the Bishops Concerning the Ministry of the Church* (Uppsala: Bishops' Conference, 1990), 23–24.

191.	While a succession of episcopal consecrations was threatened during the sometimes tumultuous sixteenth century, it was not broken and has been continued in Sweden down to the present.[346] In 1884, all three Finnish bishops died within a short period of time. As a result, no bishop was available to consecrate a new bishop. After some debate, focusing on the question of inviting a Swedish bishop to consecrate a bishop in Russian-ruled Finland, a new Archbishop was consecrated by a professor of theology at the University of Helsinki.[347] After independence from Russia in 1917, Swedish bishops were invited to participate in Finnish episcopal consecrations and a succession of consecrations was re-established.

192.	In 1536, the Reformation was carried through in Denmark, which at that time ruled Norway and Iceland.[348] The previous bishops were replaced in 1537 by "superintendents"[349] for the Danish and Norwegian dioceses, consecrated by Johannes Bugenhagen, city pastor of Wittenberg. While a succession of consecrations was thus broken, the medieval diocesan and cathedral structures were preserved and bishops continued to exercise a ministry of oversight.[350] A significant episcopal continuity or *sucessio sedis* or *localis* was preserved.

193.	The ecclesial structures of the Baltic lands went through complex changes as political power shifted among the Teutonic Knights, Poland, Sweden, and Russia.[351] Episcopal structures remained in place for the most part in Estonia until Russian rule arrived in the early eighteenth century. Lutheran churches in Latvia and Lithuania tended to follow patterns more like those in Germany with consistories and superintendents. In the early twentieth century, following the independence of all three of the Baltic republics, the Estonian and Latvian churches turned to episcopal structures. Swedish and Finnish bishops were invited to participate in their episcopal consecrations and thus these churches deliberately entered episcopal succession. World War II and the Soviet annexation led to a severe disruption of church life, including the interruption of succession, but in both countries such succession was re-established when it again became possible to invite foreign bishops to participate in episcopal consecrations. The Lithuanian church gave the Chair of the Consistory the title "Bishop" in 1976 and the first bishop was consecrated by the Estonian archbishop.

194.	In the Porvoo Declaration (*see* §§69, 111, 118, 241) all the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran churches (with the exception of Denmark and Latvia) have committed themselves theologically to "the episcopal office . . . as a visible sign expressing and serving the Church's unity and continuity in apostolic life, mission and ministry" and procedurally "to invite one another's bishops normally to participate in the laying on of hands at the ordination of bishops as a sign of the unity and continuity of the Church."[352] As a result, all the Nordic and Baltic churches are episcopally structured and all but Denmark have taken on succession as a sign of unity and continuity.

---

[346]On the history of episcopacy in Sweden, see Sven-Erik Brodd, "Episcopacy in Our Churches: Sweden," in *Together in Mission and Ministry: The Porvoo Common Statement with Essays on Church and Ministry in Northern Europe* (London: Church House Publishing, 1993), 59–69.

[347]On these events, see "The Church of England and the Church of Finland: A Summary of the Proceedings at the Conferences Held at Lambeth Palace, London, on October 5th and 6th, 1933, and at Brandö, Helsingfors, on July 17th and 18th, 1934," in *Lambeth Occasional Reports 1931–8* (London: SPCK, 1948), 154–55 and Fredric Cleve, "Episcopacy in Our Churches: Finland," in Porvoo, 77–78.

[348]On these events in Denmark, see Lars Österlin, *Churches of Northern Europe in Profile: A Thousand Years of Anglo-Nordic Relations* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 1995), 83–87 and Svend Borregaard, "The Post-Reformation Developments of the Episcopacy in Denmark, Norway, and Iceland," in *Episcopacy in the Lutheran Church? Studies in the Development and Definition of the Office of Church Leadership*, Episcopacy in Lutheran Church? (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), 116–24.

[349]The use of the term "superintendent" alongside that of bishop is not seen as indicative of a significant break with earlier understandings of the role of the bishop; see Österlin, *Churches of Northern Europe*, 85 and Gerhard Pedersen, "Episcopacy in Our Churches: Denmark," in Porvoo, 87. The term "bishop" was made standard again in 1685.

[350]On the episcopate in Denmark, Iceland, and Norway, see the essays in Porvoo, 85–108.

[351]Information in this paragraph is all taken from Porvoo, 109–23.

[352]Porvoo, paras. 58a(vi) and 58b(vi); in Porvoo, 30–31.

195.   In other nearby countries, the Swedish episcopal succession was reintroduced into Finland early in the twentieth century;[353] into Latvia after World War I (but later interrupted);[354] and into Estonia in the 1960s.[355] *The Porvoo Common Statement* envisions the process extending to Norway and Iceland (Denmark otherwise).[356]

C. Beyond the Local and Regional: the Universal Church

196.   Reformation critiques of the papacy were shaped by the contrast developed during the Middle Ages between that which was *jure divino* and that which was *jure humano*. For the Lutheran Reformers, this distinction was exhaustive and exclusive: every practice in the church was either *jure divino* or *jure humano*. No practice could be both; no practice could be neither. For the most part, the Lutherans held that only practices mandated by God within Scripture or practices directly implied by the gospel could be *jure divino*. That which was *jure divino* could not be changed by human design; that which was *jure humano* was open to human alteration. Because the Lutherans could not find an unambiguous institution of the papacy in Scripture, they denied its *jure divino* character.

197.   Luther subscribed to the universal ministry of the bishop of Rome, but especially in view of what he saw as a long history of abuses, he could not accept the claim that papal primacy existed by divine right (*jure divino*). The bishop of Rome could claim such primacy (even given the history of abuse), he acknowledged, but only by human right (*jure humano*). As Luther became convinced that the pope was deliberately obstructing the preaching of the gospel, he did not hesitate to draw on the traditional popular apocalyptic imagery and call the pope "Antichrist"[357] Luther saw the pope's intransigence as a sure indication that the last days were at hand. Such a strong reaction need not be read as a simple rejection of his earlier acknowledgment of a possible universal ministry, but rather as an expression of despair regarding the apparently irreformable nature of the papacy. The pope appeared unlikely to do what all ministry was established to do, namely proclaim the word of God, administer the sacraments, and guard the truth of the gospel.[358]

198.   This negative assessment of the papacy did not rule out the possibility that Lutherans might accept a universal ministry involving the bishop of Rome, provided its authority was based clearly in the gospel and spoke for it.[359] As Luther states in his commentary on Galatians (1531-35):

> All we aim for is that the glory of God be preserved and that the righteousness of faith remain pure and sound. Once this has been established, namely that God alone justifies us solely by his grace through Christ, we are willing not only to bear the pope aloft on our hands but also to kiss his feet."[360]

V. The Sixteenth-Century Catholic Reformation

199.   Even before the Council of Trent, priestly ministry had begun to develop in new ways in the Catholic church. The need for renewal, which was already widely recognized, was answered by the creation of specially trained priests not restricted to particular parishes or dioceses in their work. More than a dozen new religious orders of priests were founded in the sixteenth and early

[353]Martii Parvio, "Post Reformation Developments of the Episcopacy in Sweden, Finland, and the Baltic States," in *Episcopacy in the Lutheran Church? Studies in the Development and Definition of the Office of Church Leadership*, edited by Ivar Asheim & Victor Gold (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), 132-135; Frederic Cleve, "Episcopacy in Our Churches: Finland," in Porvoo, 77f.
[354]Ringolds Muziks, "Latvia," in Porvoo, 117-120.
[355]Tiit Pädam, "Estonia," in *Together in Mission and Ministry*, 109-115.
[356]Porvoo (note 352 above), p. 31; Gunnar Lislerud, "Norway," and Hjalti Hugason, "Iceland," in Porvoo, 93-99 and 101-108.
[357]*Cf.* Scott Hendrix, *Luther and the Papacy: Stages in a Reformation Conflict* (Philadelphia, 1981), who, on the basis of Luther' s later reflections on his early career, labels Luther's attitude toward the papacy even prior to 1517 as essentially "ambivalent" (p. 7). Melanchthon, in TPPP, 38, expressed himself similarly: "Even if the Bishop of Rome did possess the primacy by divine right, he should not be obeyed inasmuch as he defends impious forms of worship and doctrines which are in conflict with the gospel. On the contrary, it is necessary to resist him as Antichrist." Bernard McGinn, *AntiChrist: Two Thousand Years of the Human Fascination with Evil*, San Francisco: Harper San Francisco (1994). Luther's usage is consistent with venerable predecessors of the period, such as St. Birgitta of Sweden.
[358]See *e.g.*, Hendrix, 42-43, 69-70, 84, 156-159. *Cf.* Luther's *Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (LW 36.113). See also LW 36.115.
[359]Empie, Murphy, *Papal Primacy*, 23-32, *cf.* Raymond Brown, et. al., *Peter in the New Testament* (New York: Paulist Press, 1973).
[360]LW 26.99.

seventeenth centuries, *e.g.* Jesuits, Theatines, etc., to preach the gospel both in Europe and in newly discovered lands, to promote deeper piety among the clergy and the faithful, and to work in education and care for the sick. Reform of the older orders and of the diocesan clergy took place in many countries, and was reinforced by the Council's insistence that bishops reside in their dioceses and visit parishes regularly. While the religious priests were ordained for the work of their orders, not as pastors of local churches, they brought a more vigorous and consistent preaching of the Gospel and a revival of congregational life to Catholic parishes, and their example stimulated the diocesan clergy to greater zeal.[361]

A. The Council of Trent

200.   In the face of the controversy and restructuring of the church involving the Lutherans, the Council of Trent attempted to sort out what it understood to be Catholic teaching regarding ordination. It undertook this task cautiously and conservatively, with a view toward addressing the most pressing of the contemporary challenges enumerated above. During the debates at the Council of Trent, many of the issues with which this dialogue is concerned made their appearance.[362] Long discussion was devoted to questions about the ministry of bishops, including whether bishops' ministry was *de iure divino*: how could one avoid eroding papal primacy or dismissing the respectable tradition which saw *sacerdotium* as adequately exemplified in the simple priest?[363] Regarding the latter issue "it became clearer and clearer that the gradations of Order, the steps of the *sacramentum ordinis*, lead not to the simple priest but to the bishop,"[364] but the issue of the relation between bishop and pope remained intractable.[365] In the end, lest there be no decree on the sacrament of Order at all, the Council fathers produced simplified canons which left untouched several matters in dispute.[366] While the debate about the sacrament of Order was longer and more complex than any other besides the debate over justification, the decree itself with its canons was brief, owing mainly to the variety of theological and canonical approaches which existed to the understanding of priesthood. Both the Lutheran attempts at reforming the presbyterate and episcopate described earlier and Trent's extended and sometimes contentious debates on the sacrament of Order should be considered in light of this variety.

201.   Trent's doctrine on the sacrament of Order was formulated in a decree of session XXIII (15 July 1563).[367] Priesthood *(sacerdotium)* itself is linked to sacrifice in the Old Testament; the new visible priesthood to which Jesus Christ entrusted "...the power to consecrate, offer, and administer his body and blood," along with the power of forgiving sin, is linked to the eucharist, the sacrifice of the New Testament. The New Testament prescribes only how priests and deacons are to be ordained, but other orders of ministers, ascending by degrees to the priesthood, go back to the

---

[361]For a brief overview of the new orders, particularly the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), see Karl Bihlmeyer and Hermann Tüchle, *Church History* (Westminster: Newman Press, 1966), III 83-98.

[362]A summary can be found in Josef Freitag, "Church Offices: Roman Catholic Offices," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, edited by Hans J. Hillerbrand (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996) I 342-46, and in A. Duval, "The Council of Trent and Holy Orders," in [Centre de Pastorale Liturgique], *The Sacrament of Holy Orders* (London: Aquin Press, 1962) 219-258. Fuller particulars are in Josef Freitag, "Schwierigkeiten und Erfahrungen mit dem 'Sacramentum ordinis' auf dem Konzil von Trient," *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 113 (1991) 39-51, and Josef Freitag, *"Sacramentum ordinis" auf dem Konzil von Trient*, Innsbrucker theologische Studien 32 (Innsbruck: Tyrolia, 1991).

[363]Freitag, *ibid.,* 41-42.

[364]Freitag, *ibid.*, 44.

[365]The question of papal authority was discussed at Trent in this context. "To prevent the cumulation of benefices with the cure of souls, the Spaniards and the French requested the council to declare that the obligation of residence is *jure divino* and both of these national groups supported the thesis that episcopal jurisdiction comes directly from God and not from the pope. The Italians vigorously opposed this opinion. Thus the old controversy regarding *episcopal jurisdiction* and *papal primacy* was revived. Finally...it was agreed to dismiss this question without a decision." Bihlmeyer and Tüchle, *Church History* III 110.

[366]Duval, "Council of Trent" 244-45; Freitag, "Schwierigkeiten" 48-50. Freitag goes so far as to say that "Trent did not make any decision about a determinate approach to understanding the sacrament of Order" (50).

[367]Thus almost at the end of the Council, which closed December 4, 1563, and after the deaths of Luther and Melanchthon. The decree and canons can be found in *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta,* ed. G. Alberigo et al. (Bologna: Instituto per le Scienze Religiose, 1973) 742-744, and translations of that text such as *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, edited by Norman P. Tanner (London: Sheed & Ward, Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990), and in *DH* 1763-78.

beginning of the church. Scripture, the apostolic tradition, and patristic tradition all say that grace is conferred by ordination, which must therefore be accounted a sacrament of the church. Because ordination, like baptism and confirmation, "imprints a character that cannot be destroyed or removed," the council insists the priesthood that ordination confers is permanent and not to be confused with the spiritual power received by all the baptized. Regarding the difference between priests and bishops, the Council says that bishops, who succeed the apostles and receive from the Spirit the task of "ruling the church of God," are superior to the priests, and can confer confirmation, ordain, and "do many other functions for which the lower order has no power." As for the laity, whether congregations or civil magistrates, the Council denies that they have a necessary, much less a sufficient, role in ordination. It is important to note, however, that while the council fathers maintained that the hierarchy was instituted by divine ordinance, they took no position on whether the declared superiority of bishops over priests was instituted *jure divino*.[368]

202. Eight canons condemning views opposed to the Council's doctrine were attached to the doctrinal decree. It can be said of them that they "are purely 'defensive.' They simply defend the legitimacy and validity of Catholic ordinations but say nothing whatever about the ministries of the Protestant churches."[369] While canon 3 boldly says that ordination is "a sacrament ... instituted by Christ the Lord" (*a Christo domino institutum*), canon 6 says that the hierarchy of bishops, presbyters, and other ministers was "instituted by divine ordinance" (*divina ordinatione institutam*), a slightly less lofty claim which still distinguishes hierarchy from mere human invention.[370] Canon 7 insists upon the power of bishops, in particular that power which they do not have in common with presbyters and which makes them higher than the latter,[371] namely the power to confirm and ordain.

203. The eighteen canons of the reform decrees of session XXIII reinforced the connection between the power of Order and the power of jurisdiction, located above all in the bishop. Between the first canon, on the requirement of residency for all who have the care of souls, and the eighteenth, which prescribed the formation of seminaries, come canons concerned with fitness for ministry and the proper procedure for advancing people though the degrees of ordination. The central role of the bishop was underlined again and again, and privileges granted earlier to other prelates or church bodies were rescinded.[372] This reorientation of the sacrament of Order in the direction of the bishop could not be carried through completely at Trent because the council was unable to clarify the relation of episcopacy and papal primacy, but it did succeed in articulating the difference between bishop and priest in sacramental, and not merely jurisdictional, terms.[373]

204. Modern ecumenical dialogue has included a re-examination of the decrees of the Council of Trent and the debates which led up to them. One of the fullest studies of the eight canons on the sacrament of Order has been produced by the *Ökumenische Arbeitskreis (Ecumenical Working Group)*[374] as part of their study of the Tridentine anathemas on the sacraments. It noted a difference

---

[368]Session 23, chap. 4, can.7. *DH* 1768, 1776-1777. *Cf. Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue IV, Eucharist and Ministry*, "Reflections of the Roman Catholic Participants," paragraph 40: "When the episcopate and presbyterate had become a general pattern in the church, the historical picture still presents uncertainties.... For instance, is the difference between a bishop and a priest of divine ordination? St. Jerome maintained that it was not; and the Council of Trent, wishing to respect Jerome's opinion, did not undertake to define that the preeminence of the bishop over presbyters was by divine law. If the difference is not of divine ordination, the reservation to the bishop of the power of ordaining Ministers of the eucharist would be a church decision. In fact, in the history of the church there are instances of priests (*i.e.*, presbyters) ordaining other priests, and there is evidence that the church accepted and recognized the Ministry of priests so ordained." See also §169 above and notes 297, 298.

[369]Harry J. McSorley, "Trent and the Question: Can Protestant Ministers Consecrate the Eucharist," in *Eucharist and Ministry*, 295.

[370]Freitag, *"Sacramentum ordinis"*, 374, says that canon 6 goes beyond the rejection of any Lutheran claim that there was no fundamental difference of priesthood between priest and lay person: "[n]ow the sacerdotium is seen as a hierarchy of Order and as such is oriented on the bishop, not on the priest," priest being a concept embracing both presbyter and bishop.

[371]Karl J. Becker, "Der Unterschied von Bischof und Priester im Weihedekret des Konzils von Trient und in der Kirchenkonstitution des II Vatikanischen Konzils," in *Zum Problem Unfehlbarkeit*, ed. Karl Rahner (Freiburg-im-Breisgau: Herder, 1971), 289-327.

[372]The privileges granted to abbots to give tonsure and minor orders to members of their religious orders, were not abrogated (can. 10), but even religious order candidates for subdiaconate, diaconate, and presbyterate had to be examined and approved by the bishop (can. 12).

[373]Freitag, *"Sacramentum ordinis"*, 388

[374]This group of Evangelical and Catholic theologians began working just after World War II; its work formed an important part of the background to the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*. For its history, see Barbara Schwahn, *Der oekumenische Arbeitskreis evangelischer und katholischer Theologen von 1946 bis 1975* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996).

of emphasis between the Reformers, who stressed the primacy of the task of proclamation of the gospel including the administration of the sacraments, and the bishops at Trent, who "still held fast to the concept of *sacerdos*, or priest, and the relationship of this to the sacrifice of the mass."[375] It is not apparent whether the decree describes or refutes the positions of the Lutheran reformers, and with what accuracy; canons 2, 6, and 8 rejected opinions of radical Reformers such as the Anabaptists, which were not shared by Luther. The group's study concluded that canons 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6 are not applicable to Lutherans today; canon 7 is still applicable in part, since in Catholic teaching and practice priests are ordained by bishops only.[376]

B. The *Roman Catechism* (1566)

205.   While the Council of Trent itself was quite guarded in many of its statements about the sacrament of Order, the *Roman Catechism* issued at the Council's behest attempts some simple explanations. It distinguishes between the internal priesthood by which "all the faithful are said to be priests" and the external priesthood which pertains "only to certain men who have been ordained and consecrated to God by the lawful imposition of hands and by the solemn ceremonies of holy Church, and who are thereby devoted to a particular sacred ministry."[377] In regard to the external priesthood, whose office "is to offer Sacrifice to God and to administer the Sacraments of the Church," the *Catechism* says,

> Now although (the sacerdotal order) is one alone, yet it has various degrees of dignity and power. The first degree is that of those who are simply called priests.... The second is that of Bishops, who are placed over the various dioceses to govern not only the other ministers of the Church, but the faithful also, and to promote their salvation with supreme vigilance and care.[378]

There follow three higher degrees: Archbishops, Patriarchs, Supreme Pontiff.[379] The bishop is declared to be the exclusive administrator of the sacrament of Order, although "It is true that permission has been granted to some abbots occasionally to administer those orders that are minor and not sacred."[380] One can observe in these texts the absence of the sharp polemic or analytical intensity that appear in other genres and later Catholic authors.

VI. Subsequent Catholic Developments Regarding Structures and Ministry

A. Responses to Reformation Positions on Pastor/Bishop

206.   The Council of Trent itself, as we have just noted, defended Catholic doctrine about the sacrament of Order without dealing specifically with the Reformers' arguments. After the Council of Trent, Catholic theologians like Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621) responded more directly to the Protestant Reformers' views on church structure and ministry. In his *Disputations on the*

---

[375]Karl Lehmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg, *The Condemnations of the Reformation Era: Do they still apply?* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 149. The original, *Lehrverurteilungen–kirchentrennend?* vol. I, was published in 1985.
[376]*Ibid.* 157.
[377]*The Catechism of the Council of Trent for Parish Priests*, tr. with notes by John A. McHugh and Charles J. Callan, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Joseph F. Wagner, 1934), 330-31.
[378]*Ibid.* 332.
[379]"Above all these, the Catholic Church has always placed the Supreme Pontiff of Rome, whom Cyril of Alexandria, in the Council of Ephesus, named the Chief Bishop, Father and Patriarch of the whole world. He sits in that chair of Peter in which beyond every shadow of doubt the Prince of the Apostles sat to the end of his days, and hence it is that in him the Church recognizes the highest degree of dignity, and a universality of jurisdiction derived, not from the decree of men or Councils, but from God himself. Wherefore he is the Father and guide of all the faithful, of all the Bishops, and of all the prelates, no matter how high their power and office; and as successor of St. Peter, as true and legitimate vicar of Christ our Lord, he governs the Universal Church" (*ibid.* 333). This is one of only two passages in the *Roman Catechism* that discuss the place of the Pope; the other, in the discussion of the unity of the church in Part I on the Creed, refers to him simply as (after the Church's "one ruler and governor, the invisible one, Christ") "the visible one, the Pope, who, as legitimate successor of Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, fills the Apostolic chair. It is the unanimous teaching of the Fathers that this visible head is necessary to establish and preserve unity in the Church. . . ." (*ibid.* 102).
[380]*Ibid.* 334.

Controversies of the Christian Faith,[381] Bellarmine defended the traditional medieval doctrine that bishops and presbyters share one priesthood, but he argued for bishops' superior power of both order and jurisdiction.[382] He dealt at length with the New Testament texts in which bishops and presbyters seem to be one and the same (Phil. 1, 1 Tim. 3-4, Titus 1, Acts 20), and especially with arguments drawn from Jerome's interpretation of those passages in his Letter to Evangelus. In an apparent rebuttal to Reformers like Melanchthon, Bellarmine questions the inference from the letter that every presbyter is a bishop. If at the start all presbyters were true bishops, then the distinction which was already known to Jerome must have arisen when some accepted ordination of a lower degree. This, says Bellarmine, would not help Jerome to prove his argument that presbyters had more claim than deacons to be promoted to bishop; therefore it is more likely that bishops arose as a higher degree of Order than the presbyterate.[383]

207. Bellarmine was influential, but his solution to this question of the origin of the hierarchy was not the only one proposed by Catholic scholars. At the end of the 19th century, Pierre Batiffol proposed a more complicated evolution. First, the successors of the missionary leadership in the primitive church were overseers (*i.e.*, *episcopoi*) in each community, perhaps several of them working in partnership at first but eventually just one. Presbyter, thought Batiffol, was the name applied in each place to the first converts, benefactors, and owners of house-churches.

> Thus one could be a presbyter without priesthood, and that must have been the case with many of the first presbyters. But it was from among these presbyters without priesthood that they chose—if not by necessity, at least in fact—the members of the community who were raised to the function of *episkopé*.... This primitive presbyterate was the original envelope of the hierarchy; as a simply preparatory form, it disappeared. Just the word was preserved to designate the priests, that is, the bishops subordinated to the chief bishop.[384]

Thus, unlike Bellarmine, Batiffol theorized that later presbyters *did* come into being as bishops of inferior rank: the role of bishop began as

> a liturgical, social and preaching function, the episcopate–an episcopate of several persons, like the diaconate; the plural episcopate disappears when the apostles disappear, and separates to give rise to the chief episcopacy of the bishop and the subordinated priesthood of the priests.[385]

That meant that later priests were really descendants of the bishops, not of the early presbyters.[386] While this might seem to favor the Reformers' view, Batiffol's theory was diametrically opposed to an ecclesiology which saw bishops as a human invention, necessary only for practical reasons; such a description would apply more properly to presbyters.

208. For two centuries after Trent, Catholic theology took the form of treatises (often polemical) on particular topics; but eventually the demand for comprehensive theological education called forth new-style scholastic textbooks known as "manuals." One of the first of the sets of manuals included

---

[381]*Disputationes de controversiis Christianae fidei* (Ingolstadt, 1586-93), cited here from Roberto Bellarmino, *Opera omnia* (Naples: C. Pedone Lauriel, 1872). In the sections on ministry and the sacrament of Order, he argues with writings by Chemnitz, Calvin, and Melanchthon, as well as Luther himself.

[382]*Secunda controversia* I 14 (*Opera omnia* II 167-69). Chief among the bishops' special powers of order is the power to ordain; among the Fathers, Bellarmine cites Jerome in his Letter to Evangelus ("What does a bishop do beyond what a presbyter does, except ordain?") not only in this section on order but on 170 against Chemnitz, 171 against the Franciscan Miguel de Medina, and in his book *De Sacramento Ordinis* I 11 (*Opera omnia* III 773).

[383]II Controv. I 15 (II 170-71).

[384]Pierre Batiffol, *Études d'histoire et de théologie positive*, 2nd edition (Paris: Victor Lecoffre, 1902) 265. Batiffol's essay, "La hiérarchie primitive," occupies 223-75 of this second edition; it appeared first in *Revue biblique* in 1895.

[385]*Ibid.*, 266.

[386]*Ibid.*, 264.

a volume on the sacrament of Order by Thomas Holtzclau, S.J. (1716-1783).[387] He set himself against many of the Reformers' ideas. He denounced any claim that civil rulers have a God-given right to authorize ordinations,[388] and argues that Jerome's Letter to Evangelus "attributes to bishops a different degree of Order, by apostolic tradition or *jure divino*, a greater dignity in the Church as Aaron excelled the Levites."[389] He was aware of disagreements among Catholics concerning the extraordinary minister of Order, including whether a simple priest could ordain by papal delegation.[390] He rejected the idea that a simple priest could confer the presbyteral order under any circumstances, even with papal delegation, and he could find neither actual instances nor plausible arguments, though he cited alleged instances.[391] Later manuals continued to report the view of some other Catholic theologians that all the powers of bishops are radically contained in the sacrament of Order conferred in the ordination of presbyters, though incapable of exercise until enabled by the granting of appropriate jurisdiction.[392] Already in Holtzclau we can observe a trait of the manuals which contributes to the incomplete way in which more recent Catholic tradition has treated the issues of the present dialogue: the theology of the church appears early in the manuals, as an argument for the authority and credibility of the church's teaching[393]; the theology of the sacrament of Order, on the other hand, resides in the final section of the manuals, usually between anointing of the sick and marriage.[394] In this arrangement of the material, there is no occasion to ask how the relation of bishop and presbyter might be paralleled by the relation between diocese and parish.[395]

B. Vatican I and Subsequent Developments

209. Vatican Council I (1869-1870) approved two dogmatic constitutions: *Dei filius*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith, on the relationship between faith and reason, and *Pastor aeternus*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ, on the primacy of the papacy and the infallibility of papal pronouncements *ex cathedra*. Three positions were represented at the Council: a group of ultramontane infallibilists led by Manning and Senestrey, who upheld the infallibility of all papal teaching, including the Syllabus of Errors, and who advocated papal infallibility as the source of the Church's infallibility; the majority of the bishops who wanted to strengthen papal authority, and who were thus open to defining papal infallibility; and a third group, comprising about one fifth of the Council, who vehemently opposed defining papal infallibility. Because more than 60 members of this third group deliberately left Rome before the final vote, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Pastor aeternus*) was passed on July 18, 1870, with only two

---

[387]Known generally as the "Theologia Wirceburgensis," it represents Jesuit instruction at the University of Würzburg, and Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, "Systematic Theology: Task and Methods," *Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991) I 30, calls it the first text to present church teaching in the form of theses, followed by arguments. The first edition in fourteen volumes appeared in that city between 1766-71; citations are from Holtzclau's "Tractatus de Ordine et Matrimonio," in *Theologia dogmatica, polemica, scholastica et moralis*, second edition, vol. 5,2 (Paris: Julien, Lanier, 1854), 295-584.

[388]Diss. 1, c. 1, art. 3, §30-33, *ibid*. 325-27.

[389]Diss. 1, c. 2, art. 7, §97, *ibid*. 367; cp. §105, *ibid*. 374.

[390]Diss. 1, c. 2, art.9, §129, *ibid*. 394.

[391]Diss. 1, c. 2, art. 9, §129-142, *ibid*. 394-401. One is the passage from John Cassian about Paphnutius and Daniel, which was cited also by Arthur Carl Piepkorn, *Eucharist and Ministry*, 221. Holtzclau thought that a priest probably could not even be empowered to ordain a deacon, despite the faculty conceded by Innocent VIII to Cistercian abbots in 1489; one key reason was that the Bull of concession had not been found (§143-44, *ibid*. 401-402).

[392]*Cf., e.g.* the manuals of H. Lennerz (see above n. 298); E. Hugon, *De Sacramentis in communi et in speciali*, 5th ed. (Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1927) 729-730; Francisco a P. Sola, "De sacramentis initiationis christianae," *Sacrae Theologiae Summa* IV, 3rd ed. (Madrid: B.A.C., 1956) 215.

[393]See Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, *Foundational Theology: Jesus and the Church* (New York: Crossroad, 1984) 67-71. Besides the "Theologia Wirceburgensis," many other manuals follow this pattern, such as the often-revised *Manuale Theologiae Dogmaticae* of J. M. Hervé (Paris: Berche et Pagis, 1924-26 and on into the 1950's), where "De ecclesia" is in v. 1, "De ordine" in v. 4.

[394]The latter placement may be due to the order in which the sacraments are named in the canons of the Council of Trent, Session 7, Canon 1 (D 844 = DS 1601); see page 1 of the volume containing Holtzclau's treatise on order.

[395]Some 20th century manuals placed the treatise on the church among the means of sanctification, after the Incarnation and before the sacraments, but the disjunction of church and ministry remained and neither parish nor diocese received explicit attention. *E.g.*, Franz Diekamp, *Theologiae dogmaticae manuale*, tr. Adolphus M. Hoffmann from the sixth German edition (Paris: Desclée, 1933-34), listed "De Ecclesia" for vol. 3, part 1, between Incarnation and Grace; Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, translated by Patrick Lynch (Cork: Mercier Press, 1963), has "The Church" between "The Doctrine of Grace" and "The Sacraments."

negative votes. Because of the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, the council adjourned prematurely on October 20, 1870.

210. *Pastor aeternus* taught that "a primacy of jurisdiction over the whole church of God was immediately and directly promised to the blessed apostle Peter and conferred on him by Christ the Lord."[396] Furthermore, "whoever succeeds to the chair of Peter obtains, by the institution of Christ himself, the primacy of Peter of the whole church."[397] It also taught the Roman pontiff is the successor of Peter, vicar of Christ, head of the whole church, and father and teacher of all Christian people. He has been given full power to rule and govern the universal Church. Consequently, "the Roman church possesses a pre-eminence of ordinary power over every other church. And that this jurisdictional power of the Roman pontiff is both episcopal and immediate."[398] The Council added that this power of the supreme pontiff does not detract from that ordinary and immediate power of episcopal jurisdiction by which individual bishops govern their particular churches. Nevertheless, because of the premature adjournment of the council, the theology of the papacy was not inserted into a larger theology of the episcopacy.

211. The Council defined papal infallibility as a divinely revealed dogma, but specified strictly limited conditions under which infallibility is given by God:

> that when the Roman pontiff speaks *ex cathedra*, that is, when in the exercise of his office as shepherd and teacher of all Christians, in virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine concerning faith or morals to be held by the whole church, he possesses, by the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter, that infallibility which the divine Redeemer willed his church to enjoy in defining doctrine concerning faith or morals. Therefore, such definitions of the Roman pontiff are of themselves, and not by the consent of the church, irreformable.[399]

The Council's definition of papal infallibility limited its scope far more than what the Ultramontanes had advocated. Infallibility is assistance given by God first and foremost to the church. Like a council, the pope teaches infallibly on the church's behalf under certain conditions. Infallibility protects the pope from error only when he speaks in his official capacity as "the shepherd and teacher of all Christians," not as an individual theologian. The content of the teaching must be directly related to revelation. The pope does not teach infallibly out of his own abilities, but by virtue of "divine assistance." His definitions are not subject to the juridical ratification of the church.

212. The treatment in the 1917 Code of Canon Law does not explicitly lay out the relationships between bishop and pastor, diocese and parish. Some slight attention to dioceses and parishes is prefaced to the treatment of clerics, *i.e.* Canon 215-16 of the 1917 Code. Canon 215 names the major territories, including dioceses, which it is the prerogative of supreme ecclesiastical authority, *i.e.*, the pope, "to erect, reconfigure, divide, merge, suppress." Canon 216 lists lesser territories, which include parishes. Thereafter the nature of those forms of church must be inferred from what the Code says about bishops and pastors, as if they were functions of their ordained ministers, not realities in their own right. What is clear is the sense that smaller realizations of church are formed by subdivision of larger ones, not larger ones by the accumulation of smaller. As a canonist's study of pastors says, parishes arose relatively late: but, in the fourth century,

> there appeared among the chapels and oratories that dotted the Gallic and Spanish countryside a more permanent pastoral institution called the "*ecclesia baptismalis*" or "*ecclesia major.*" Here for the first time there was established a

---

[396]*Pastor aeternus*, Chapter 1.
[397]*Ibid.*, Chapter 2.
[398]*Ibid.*, Chapter 3.
[399]*Ibid.*, Chapter 4.

> stable, juridic relationship between the faithful in a definite locality and one individual church that was presided over by a priest.[400]

Until the ninth century, cities were not divided into parishes but were served from the cathedral church.[401]

213.   In the 1947 Apostolic Constitution *Sacramentum ordinis*, Pope Pius XII revised the ritual of ordination to the diaconate, presbyterate, and episcopate, spelling out what is essential for the validity of each rite.[402] Pius XII brought the Latin rite back into conformity with Eastern tradition by insisting upon the laying on of hands and prayer, rather than the presentation of the liturgical vessels, as the essential rites of ordination. This also was the practice of the Reformers. For purposes of this dialogue, it is important to note the pope's insistence on the "unity and identity" of the sacrament of Order, "which no Catholic has ever been able to call in question," despite the fact that there are slightly different rites for ordaining deacons, presbyters and bishops,[403] and that the pope refers to the three "orders" in the plural when discussing the rites. The new prayer for the ordination of the bishop asks God to "complete in your priest the fullness of your ministry."[404]

C. The Second Vatican Council

1. The Papacy

214.   The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) confirmed the teaching of Vatican I regarding the institution, the permanence, the nature and import of the sacred primacy of the Roman Pontiff and his infallible teaching office.[405] The Roman Pontiff is the visible source and foundation of the unity of the Church both in faith and in communion.[406] The council situates this teaching, however, within a theology of the episcopacy that balances and complements the teaching on the papacy of Vatican II with an emphasis on collegiality. Thus the teaching on the episcopacy provides a context for the teaching on the papacy and yet is itself interpreted within a teaching on papal authority.

2. Episcopacy

215.   Bishops represent an historical continuation of the apostolic office and therefore are essential to the Roman Catholic understanding of the apostolicity of the church.[407] LG speaks of a succession that goes back to the beginning by which the bishops are the "transmitters of the apostolic line."[408] They thus serve the church's communion in apostolic faith. Among the principal tasks of bishops, preaching of the gospel is pre-eminent.[409]

216.   By virtue of their episcopal consecration and hierarchical communion with the bishop of Rome and other bishops, bishops constitute a college or permanent assembly whose head is the bishop of Rome.[410] A bishop represents his own church within this college, and all the bishops, together with the pope, represent the whole church.[411] The bishop is responsible for the unity and communion of his church with the other churches. The college of bishops does not constitute a

---

[400]Bernard M. Kelly, *The Functions Reserved to Pastors*, Catholic University of America Canon Law Studies 250 (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1947) 4.
[401]Kelly, *Functions* 8: "This parochial unity of the city (*civitas*) was one of the most characteristic marks of the ancient diocese. The cathedral was the only parish church in the city. Around the ninth century, however, other parishes appeared in the city, administered by collegiate chapters." *DH* 3857-3861.
[402]Pius XII, "Sacramentum ordinis," *Acta apostolicae sedis* 40 (1948) 5-7. The Constitution was dated November 30, 1947.
[403]*Sacramentum ordinis*, 2. This paragraph is not quoted in Denzinger-Schönmetzer or the more recent edition by Peter Hünermann.
[404]*Ibid.* 5. Jean Beyer, "Nature et position du sacerdoce," *Nouvelle revue théologique* 76 (1954) 358, points out that while the 1917 Code of Canon Law, canon 949, called the sub-diaconate, diaconate, and the presbyterate "sacred orders," Pius XII in this constitution applies the term to the diaconate, presbyterate, and episcopate.
[405]LG, 18.
[406]LG, 18.
[407]LG, 20.
[408]LG, 20.
[409]LG, 25, CD, 12.
[410]LG, 19, 22.
[411]LG, 22.

legislative body apart from the pope, but includes the pope as member and head of the college. The episcopal college exercises its collegiality in a preeminent way in an ecumenical council. Bishops chosen from different parts of the world may also serve in a council called the Synod of Bishops where they act on behalf of the whole episcopate in an advisory role to the bishop of Rome.[412] Episcopal conferences, "a kind of assembly in which the bishops of some nation or region discharge their pastoral office in collaboration"[413] are another form of collegial activity. Collegiality is also exercised by the solicitude of the bishops for all the churches, by contributing financial resources, training lay and religious ministers for the missions, and contributing the services of diocesan priests to regions lacking clergy.[414]

217. Although the Roman pontiff can always freely exercise full, supreme and universal power over the church, the order of bishops is also the subject of supreme and full power over the universal church, provided it remains united with the head of the college, the pope.[415]

218. Vatican II teaches that the fullness of the sacrament of Order is conferred by episcopal consecration.[416] The priesthood of the bishop is a sharing in the office of Christ, the one mediator.[417] By virtue of his ordination, a bishop's authority is proper, ordinary, and immediate.[418] This means that a bishop possesses authority by virtue of his ordination that is not juridically delegated by the bishop of Rome. The exercise of this authority, however, is ultimately controlled by the supreme authority of the Church.

3. Presbyterate

219. The Vatican II documents define the nature and function of the presbyterate in relation to the episcopacy. The Constitution on the Liturgy subordinates both the local parish to the diocese and a priest to the bishops: "since the bishop himself in his church cannot always or everywhere preside over the whole flock, he must of necessity set up assemblies of believers. Parishes, organized locally under a parish priest who acts in the bishop's place are the most important of these, because in some way they exhibit the visible church set up throughout the nations of the world."[419] Priests depend on bishops for the exercise of their power and are united with them by virtue of the sacrament of Order.[420] In a certain sense presbyters make the bishop present. The "unity of their consecration and mission requires their hierarchical communion with the order of bishops."[421] As the fellow-workers of bishops, priests "have as their first charge to announce the gospel of God to all."[422]

220. Through the sacrament of Order priests are "patterned to the priesthood of Christ so that they may be able to act in the person of Christ the head of the body."[423] Priests exercise their sacred function above all in the Eucharistic worship. They also exercise the office of Christ, the shepherd and head, according to their share of authority in their pastoral work.[424] In addition to their care of individuals, priests are exhorted to form real Christian community, embracing not only the local but also the universal church.[425] In their own locality priests make visible the universal church.[426] Priests are to "take pains that their work contributes to the pastoral work of the whole diocese, and indeed of the whole church."[427]

---

[412]CD, 5.
[413]CD, 38.1
[414]CD, 6.
[415]LG, 22.
[416]LG, 21, 26 ; CD, 15.
[417]See 1 Tim. 2:5; LG, 28.
[418]LG, 27.
[419]SC, 42.
[420]LG, 28.
[421]PO, 7.
[422]PO, 4.
[423]PO, 2.
[424]LG, 28, PO, 6.
[425]PO, 6.
[426]LG, 28.
[427]LG, 28.

221. Along with their bishop priests constitute one presbyterium.[428] By virtue of their common ordination and shared mission, all priests are bound together in a close fraternity. This is symbolized by their laying on of hands with the ordaining bishop in the ordination rite. No priest can adequately fulfill his charge by himself or in isolation. Thus "priestly ministry can only be fulfilled in the hierarchical communion of the whole body."[429]

222. The Second Vatican Council balanced a theology of the papacy and the universal church with a renewed emphasis on the episcopacy and the local church, with the help of resources that had been recovered from the biblical and patristic heritage. The understanding of church as communion shaped its teaching on collegiality. These Catholic developments have been driven by the desire to be faithful to its tradition, and at the same time to be open to renewing its structures of ministry.

223. Throughout Roman Catholic history, the emphasis on the unitary nature of the office of ordained ministry has remained constant. There is but one sacrament of Order conferred in discrete ordinations of bishops, presbyters, and deacons. The unitary nature of the sacrament mitigates differences between Lutherans and Roman Catholics on the distinctions between presbyter/pastor and bishop.

VII. Subsequent Lutheran Developments

A. The Reformation Heritage Continued

224. The impact of Luther and the Confessions (IV.A. above) continued over the centuries through "one order of ordained Ministers, usually called pastors, which combines features of the episcopate and the presbyterate,"[430] in local congregations and in structures for regional oversight, including episcopacy (IV.B. above). In contrast to the Middle Ages there was emphasis on preaching of the word and administration of the sacraments in concrete relationship with a congregation; church office was seen "over against" (*gegenüber*) congregation, an office grounded in the priority of the word of God which constitutes the church (*cf.* §62).[431]

225. For all the adherence to "one office of ministry," there were varieties of structural patterns among Lutherans in church organization, and different emphases in the periods of Lutheran Orthodoxy and Pietism (in its emphasis on the priesthood of all baptized believers), the Confessional Revival in the nineteenth century, and later under the influence of the ecumenical movement (*see below* §§243-47).[432] As Lutherans emigrated from Europe to other parts of the world and mission work produced new churches, especially in Africa and Asia, the Lutheran confessional tradition adapted to new needs and possibilities.[433]

226. A significant step in Germany was the introduction of the office of bishop as spiritual leader in the decade after World War I, when princes ceased to exercise the role of "bishops *pro tempore*" or *Summepiskopat* in Protestant territorial churches (*see above* §190). "[L]egislative features were entrusted to the synod, but the administrative functions more or less to single individuals," standing *vis-à-vis* or *gegenüber* the synod, just as the office of ministry stands "over against" the local congregation.[434] Luther's ideas were recovered to become part of a picture of what an Evangelical

---

[428]LG, 28.

[429]PO, 7, 15.

[430]*Eucharist and Ministry*, Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue IV (1970), "Common Observations" §21, p. 14.

[431]Thomas Kaufmann, "Amt," *RGG* 4th ed., 1 (1998) 428-29.

[432]*Cf.* J. Reumann, "Ordained Minister and Layman in Lutheranism," in Eucharist and Ministry §§38-48, reprinted in J. Reumann, *Ministries Examined: Laity, Clergy, Women, and Bishops in a Time of Change* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1987) 36-41.

[433]Gottfried Brakemeier, "Amt. 3. Außereuropäisch," *RGG* 4th ed. 1:429-30, where parallels in Roman Catholicism are noted (*e.g.*, base communities in Latin America, with their "Ortsgebundenheit," in light of Vatican II's "people of God" theology; *cf.* Faustino Teixeira, "Basisgemeinden in Lateinamerika," 1:1156-57.

[434]Hans Martin Mueller, "Bishop," *Encyclopedia of the Lutheran Church* 1:311; Heinrich de Wall, "Bischof, 3. Evangelisch," *RGG* 4th ed., 1 (1998) 1622-23, with specific functions that include ordination and in some Landeskirchen even veto power over synodical decisions (Bayern, Württemberg). See for details Schmidt-Clausen, cited above §66, note 107, who (110-15) treats a VELKD Declaration in 1957 on apostolic succession, of which the bishop not a guarantee, but it is "an essential dimension" of "the Church in its entirety and all its members" (115). In Schmidt-Clausen note 112, Gregory Dix is quoted on "that unhappy phrase 'the historic episcopate'" (see below, §246),

(continued...)

bishop would be, in distinction from the usually congregational *Pfarramt* (pastoral office), a distinction only by human law. During the Nazi period (1933-45) and *Kirchenkampf* (Church Struggle), "'spiritual leadership' became in an unexpected way concrete;"[435] a dubious *Führerprinzip* (leader principle) was introduced into the church, even while some bishops opposed the Nazi take-over of the Protestant churches. After 1945 the term bishop came to be used in additional *Landeskirchen*. The concept of "synodical episcopate" (*synodales Bischofsamt*) developed, with emphasis on the bishop as preacher and "pastor of the church" (speaking for the church, ecumenical contacts) as well as *pastor pastorum* (*e.g.* in ordination and visitation).[436] The United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD) developed a Conference of Bishops (from member churches), with a Presiding Bishop; the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) did not.

B. Specific Developments in North America

227. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America reflects the backgrounds of many immigrant streams from Lutheran lands in central, northern, and eastern Europe. Their coming, settling in, and amalgamation stretch from the seventeenth century (Dutch and Swedish colonies in New Amsterdam [New York] and the Delaware Valley) until the present, when immigrants are more likely from Africa or Asia. The ELCA is "the child of *many* mergers, not just the one that occurred in 1987-88."[437]

228. The pioneer pietist mission pastor Henry Melchior Muhlenberg (1711-1787) illustrates the situation in colonial America and the beginnings of the United States. His experiences are reflected by many later clergy serving Lutheran immigrants. Muhlenberg was sent by Gotthilf August Francke, of Halle, to serve three "United Congregations" (Philadelphia, New Hannover, and Providence [Trappe]), "the Lutheran people in the province of Pennsylvania."[438] He traveled there via London in order to meet with the Court Preacher to the Hannoverian king of England. Muhlenberg, in the face of self-appointed itinerants and congregations sometimes beguiled by them, demonstrated his authority in America by exhibiting his letters of call and instruction from "the Rev. Court Preacher," whom he regarded, along with the revered fathers in Halle, Germany, to whom he sent regular reports, as his ecclesiastical superiors.

229. In many ways Muhlenberg was more a unifier of congregations, to be served by trained and properly called pastors, than a planter of new congregations. His efforts led to the formation of the first Lutheran synod in North America, the Ministerium[439] of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States, in 1748. The history of "the three dozen or so church organizations and church bodies that finally were united in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America" often parallels aspects of Muhlenberg's ministry and the founding of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania. The sheer number of synods formed over the years[440] suggests how strong the desire of individual congregations was to work with other congregations for larger purposes beyond the local community of word and sacrament. The concern

---

(...continued)

as one particular theory under which so many "variant manifestations of the episcopate" have been put, when the "apostolate" is the real question (Dix, "The Ministry in the Early Church," in *The Apostolic Ministry: Essays on the History and Doctrine of Episcopacy*, ed. K. E. Kirk [London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1946] 296-98.

[435]Schmidt-Clausen (n. 107 above), p. 97.

[436]Martin Hein and Hans-Gernot Jung, "Bishop, Episcopate," *The Encyclopedia of Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans/Leiden: Brill) 1 (1999) 263-64; Gerhard Tröger, "Bischof, IV, Das synodale Bischofsamt," *TRE* 6 (1980) 694-96.

[437]Lowell G. Almen, "Law and Koinonia: An Overview of the Structures and Ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America," paper Dec. 2, 1999, quotation from p. 1. See further *The Lutherans in North America*, ed. E. Clifford Nelson (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), where in the section on the years 1650-1790 T. G. Tappert takes up clergy on 43-49, and for 1790-1840 H. George Anderson, 102-5 and 125; see also "Theological Education," 104-8, 129, 204-6, 284-92, 432-34, 520.

[438]*The Journals of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg In Three Volumes*, trans. T. G. Tappert and J. W. Doberstein (Philadelphia: the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States and Muhlenberg Press, 1942, 1945, 1958), 1:7. Harvey L. Nelson, "A Critical Study of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg's Means of Maintaining his Lutheranism," dissertation, Drew University, Madison, NJ, 1980: 373-74, observes how German settlers, "despite the voluntaristic, pluralistic, congregationally oriented religious climate of the Middle Colonies … clung to their German views of the pastor and his office."

[439]Muhlenberg envisioned especially a gathering of those ordained as pastors and serving as teachers, but even at the first meeting there was an effort to have every congregation represented by members, often elders or deacons. The name "Ministerium," found also in New York and elsewhere, was retained in eastern Pennsylvania until 1962.

[440]Between 1840 and 1875, some fifty nine, listed in *The Lutherans in North America*, p. 175.

to have pastors ordained by other Lutheran pastors, often across lines of language, ethnicity, and even views on ministry, can be seen in the histories of these groups.[441]

230.   Lutherans in North America inherited from Europe, and took part in, debates over the ministry in the nineteenth century, outcomes from which were sometimes reflected in the positions and practices of synods in America.   At one extreme was the "transference theory" (*Übertragungslehre*), that authority is transferred from the local priesthood of believers to one of its members to serve as minister.[442] This position found reflection in The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod,[443] *e.g.*, C. F. W. Walther (1811-1887): "The holy ministry is the authority conferred by God through the congregation, as holder of the priesthood and of all church power, to administer in public office the common rights of the spiritual priesthood in behalf of all."[444] But a statement for the Missouri Synod in 1981 moves away from the transference theory: "The office of public ministry … is not derived" from "the universal priesthood of believers."[445]

231.   At the opposite extreme, opposing any transference theory, were views that stressed ministerial office and its authority as divine institution, apart from or at least prior to the local congregation or universal priesthood. In a time of change in society, there was a revival of emphasis on the Lutheran Confessions. F. J. Stahl (1802-1861) saw the contemporary preaching office as identical with the New Testament office of apostle. He favored episcopacy because "it alone can guarantee authority of administration and spiritual care," authority in contrast to majority or mob rule.[446] A. F. C. Vilmar (1800-1868) emphasized that only pastors can ordain, determine doctrine, and decide who is qualified for ordained ministry.[447] J. K. Wilhelm Loehe (1808-1872), pastor in Neuendettelsau, Bavaria, emphasized presbyter-bishops closely connected with the divine order of salvation.[448] His vision of the church remained rooted in the local congregation.[449] The institutions he created in Neuendettelsau had great influence in America through support of pastors for Lutheran immigrants who became part of the Missouri Synod and, more importantly, the Iowa Synod.[450] In between what have been called "low" and "high church" extremes were a variety of views on ministry, though differences on ministry were not the chief obstacle to American Lutheran unity.

232.   Because the ministry is a matter on which Lutherans, while having certain confessional and theological commitments, possess degrees of flexibility to meet changing situations and needs in

---

[441]*Cf.* Charles P. Lutz, *Church Roots: Stories of Nine Immigrant Groups That Became the American Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985); J. Reumann, *Ministries Examined*, 71, "presbyterial succession."

[442]So Justus Henning Böhmer (1674-1749) and J. W. F. Höfling (1802-1853). *Cf.* Reumann, "Ordained Minister" §44, repr. p. 39, with encyclopedia references, and Edmund Schlink, *Theology of the Lutheran Confessions*, trans. P. F. Koehneke and H. J. A. Bouman (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1961) 244 note 13. In Böhmer's work in church law the influence of Pietism is to be seen; Detlef Döring, *RGG* 4th ed., 1 (1998) 1671; Höfling's Erlangen theology distinguished the ordering of salvation (*Heilsgeschichte*) from church orders; the ministerial office rests on the universal priesthood, which is "the only office that exists by divine right"; Hanns Kerner, *RGG* 4th ed., 3 (2000) 1830.

[443]*The Lutherans in North America*, 155-57, 168-69, 178.

[444]"On the Ministry," Thesis VII, in, among other places, D. H. Steffens, "The Doctrine of the Church and the Ministry," in *Ebenezer*, ed. W. H. T. Dau (St. Louis: Concordia, 1922) 152-53; Reumann, "Ordained Minister," §§59-60 = repr. 45-46. *Cf.* So James H. Pragman, *Traditions of Ministry: A History of the Doctrine of the Ministry in Lutheran Theology* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1983) 140-46; *cf. Ministries Examined*, p. 66-67.

[445]*The Ministry: Office, Procedures, and Nomenclature* (St. Louis: Commission on Theology and Church Relations), Thesis 1, p. 25.

[446]"Ordained Minister," §45 = repr. p. 40; Pragman 129-31, where Stahl's *Kirchenverfassung* is cited.

[447]"Ordained Minister," §45 = repr. p. 39-40; Pragman 136-37. K. Scholder, *RGG* 3rd ed, 6 (1962) 1401-1403, notes Vilmar's stance against a Kurhessen-Waldeck "Summepiskopat" that introduced the Church of the Prussian Union in some regions and his stand for separation of church and state. Such views led to the "Renitent" or resistence movement in 1873, some of whose members emigrated to America. Vilmar regarded statements in the "Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope" (69-70, 72) about congregations in emergencies electing and ordaining ministers as "superfluous remarks" for an "inconceivable" situation, the absence of all pastors called by pastors (Schlink, *Theology of the Lutheran Confessions*, [above, n. 442] 244 note 12). At Treatise 72 the Kolb and Wengert ed. has not added the phrase to which A. C. Piepkorn called attention in *Eucharist and Ministry*, 110-11, note 14, *adhibitis suis pastoribus*, "the church retains the right to choose and ordain ministers *using their own pastors*."

[448]"Ordained Minister" §58 = repr. 44-45, stressing Loehe's distrust of democracy and support for episcopacy as found in Scripture, *i.e.*, identical with the presbytery; Pragman 132-36. See Loehe's *Three Books About the Church* (1845; trans. 1908; Philadelphia: Fortess, 1969); *Aphorismen über die neutestamentichen Ämter: Zur Verfassungsfrage der Kirche* (1849), rev. ed. *Kirche und Amt: Neue Aphorismen* (1851); S. Hebert, *Wilhelm Löhes Lehre von der Kirche, ihrem Amt und Regiment: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Theologie im 19. Jahrhundert* (Neuendettelsau; Friemund-Verlag, 1939); J. L. Schaaf, "Loehe's Relation to the American Church," diss. Heidelberg 1962.

[449]Gerhard Schoenauer, *RGG* 4th ed., 5 (2002) 502, "eine apostolisch-episkopale Brüderskirche … innerhalb deren an der Bedeutung der Ortsgemeinde als primäre Gestalt der Kirche festgehalten wird."

[450]*The Lutherans in North America*, 158-59, 180-83, quotation from 181; 228, Missouri alleged "hierarchical tendencies" on church and ministry in the Iowa Synod.

church, society, and culture, there have periodically been studies and action on the topic by Lutheran bodies. In the course of the 1970s, the predecessor bodies of the ELCA all adopted the term "bishop," which was carried over into the ELCA.[451]

233. The ELCA mandated in 1988-1994 "an intensive study of the nature of ministry" with "special attention" 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, relations to synods, and discipline." The study presented recommendations in four areas, of which two are of particular relevance to this dialogue.[452]

234. First, the reaffirmation of the universal priesthood and of all baptized Christians in their various callings in the world and in the church was received with probably the greatest enthusiasm of all proposals.[453]

235. Second, the final report found that "threefold ministry" (or other "folds") "is not the way in which most of the people of this church approach the issues either of unity or mission."[454] Recommendations followed the heritage of, as an LWF study put it (*see below* §237), "basically one ministry, centered in the proclamation of the Word of God and the administration of the Holy Sacraments," by pastors "within and for a local congregation" and by bishops "with and for a communion of local churches."[455]

236. Specifically, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly voted:

> 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.[456]

And with regard to 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; and

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

---

[451]*Ministries Examined*, 200-219; Edgar R. Trexler, *Anatomy of a Merger: People, Dynamics, and Decisions That Shaped the ELCA* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1991), 63-66, 85-86, 97-100, 112, 116-21, 141-43, 182-83, and passim. Points of debate over ministry lay elsewhere, especially involving parochial school teachers and a wide variety of "deacons" and rostered ministers. There had been a long history of discussion in The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod on the ministerial status of teachers; *cf.* "Ordained Minister" §§65-66 = repr. 47-48 plus 67-68; Pragman 171-76. A particular problem here were women day-school teachers; if considered "ordained," the LCMS would immediately have had the largest number of women clergy of any U.S. church.

[452]*Together for Ministry* §§152-63, 23-24. The other two recommendations of the task force related thirdly to the ELCA's officially recognized lay ministries, which include deaconesses, deacons, certified lay professionals, and commissioned teachers, from predecessor bodies; ELCA Associates in Ministry; and the creation of a new category of Diaconal Ministers. Fourth was a recommendation on "Flexibility for Mission" allowing, among other items, for non-stipendiary ("tent-making") ministers and licensed ministers.

[453]*Together for Ministry* §108, p. 16. Pragman 154-56 observed that the universal priesthood "was not a significant issue for 20th-century Lutheran theologians." Similarly J. Reumann, "The Priesthood of Baptized Believers and the Office of Ministry in Eastern Lutheranism, from Muhlenberg's Day to Ours," Lutheran Historical Conference 1999 (forthcoming).

[454]*Together for Ministry* §§77, 79, p. 11.

[455]*The Lutheran Understanding of Ministry: Statement on the Basis of an LWF Study Project*, LWF Studies, Reports and Texts from the Department of Studies (Geneva: LWF, 1983), cited in *Together for Ministry* §123. Recommendations on bishops were purposely limited because of agreement that major discussion should come on proposals from the Lutheran-Episcopal dialogue III (1983-91) in the *Concordat of Agreement* (1991, see §245-46 below).

[456]*1993 Reports and Records: Vol. 2, Minutes* (Chicago: ELCA, 1995) p. 691. Lowell G. Almen, "Review of Governing Documents of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on the Role and Responsibility of Bishops as an Indication of the Underlying Theology of that Office," paper, December 1, 2000, p. 6.

give leadership in strengthening the unity of the Church; and shall provide administrative oversight.[457]

C. Aspects of Ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in Light of World Lutheranism and Ecumenism

237. American Lutheran churches, in dealing with ministry issues in the second half of the twentieth century, did not do so in isolation but often cooperatively and with international Lutheran and ecumenical resources. The Lutheran Council in the U.S.A. (1966-1987), involving The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod and the bodies that merged into the ELCA, produced studies on the Ministry and on Episcopacy.[458] Its study on women's ordination will be noted in §242 below, note 455. The Lutheran World Federation provided studies on the ministry, episcopacy, the ordination of women, and laity.[459] LWF leadership at times was active in advocating bishops in episcopal succession. There was also Lutheran involvement in producing and responding to the Faith and Order Commission report, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*.[460] In such ways the ELCA received and participated in worldwide treatments and understandings on ministry and structure, while being able to act appropriately for its own particular situation.

238. Ordaining women to the ministry of word and sacrament occurred in German, Scandinavian, and other European Lutheran churches prior to the decision to do so in the United States. The significant debate in Sweden and its decision to ordain women as priests in 1958 was a turning point for many.[461] A Lutheran Council study, carried out in 1968-69, centered especially on scriptural questions. The LCA and ALC voted at conventions in 1970 to ordain women.[462] The practice, found also in the AELC, was readily carried into the ELCA. Since Lutherans have one office of ministry, no theological obstacle existed to female pastors becoming bishops.[463]

239. The ELCA, in addition to sharing in the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* with the Roman Catholic Church, has entered into full communion[464] with Reformed, Episcopal, and

---

[457]Lowell G. Almen, "Review of Governing Documents," 6-7, *Minutes* 692; the term of office of bishops was changed from four to six years, with reelection possible; "constitutional provision †S8.12. was revised 'to reflect more clearly the pastoral and oversight functions of the bishop' in synods,'" Almen p. 7, *Minutes* p. 692 for the resolution, 424-27 for the amended text of the provision. Almen 7-9 added a statement adopted by the ELCA Conference of Bishops in 1999 for their collegial guidance, "Relational Agreement Among Synodical Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America."

[458]*The Ministry of the Church: A Lutheran Understanding*, Studies series, Division of Theological Studies (New York: Lutheran Council in the USA, 1974), where ordination and installation were seen as *kairoi* in "the continuum of ordained ministry"; *The Historic Episcopate* (1984), including definition of *ius divinium* as "divine law" according to God's word, by Christ's institution, with American Lutherans "free to create under the guidance of the Spirit forms of leadership that embody *episcopé* and hold ecumenical promise"; see *Ministries Examined*, 75 and 163.

[459]See note 455, above, for the 1983 report on Ministry. *Episcopacy in the Lutheran Church?* (1970) has been cited above in note 79. *Lutheran Understanding of the Episcopal Office*, Reports and Texts series (Geneva: LWF Department of Studies, 1983). *Women in the Ministries of the Church* appeared under the same auspices, also in 1983. *The Ministry of All Baptized Believers: Resource Materials for the Churches' Study in the Area of Ministry* (Geneva: LWF, Department of Studies, 1980) reprints the 1974 LCUSA study (above, note 458) and other Lutheran and ecumenical documents.

[460]The best-selling *BEM* document appeared as Faith and Order Paper No. 111 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982). Michael Seils, *Lutheran Convergence? An Analysis of Lutheran Responses to the Convergence Document "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" of the World Council of Churches Faith and Order Commission* (Geneva: LWF, 1988) found less agreement on ministry than on other areas. *Cf.* also Daniel Martensen, "Ministry," and J. Reumann, "Eucharist and Ministry," in *Lutherans in Ecumenical Dialogues: A Reappraisal*, ed. Joseph A. Burgess (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1990), 123-35, 136-47.

[461]In the extensive literature on the topic, see Krister Stendahl, *The Bible and the Role of Women: A Case Study in Hermeneutics*, trans. Emilie T. Sander, Facet Books Biblical Series 15 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966); Brita Stendahl, *The Force of Tradition: A Case Study of Women Priests in Sweden* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985).

[462]See *Ministries Examined* 78-100 for the section "What in Scripture Speaks to the Ordination of Women?" originally published in *Concordia Theological Monthly* 44 (1973) 5-30; 120-25 for "The Lutheran Experience," and 131-39 for subsequent discussions, including among Roman Catholics. The LCMS in 1969 acted to allow women to vote in congregational or synodical assemblies and to serve on boards or agencies, provided there is no violation of the orders of creation or women exercising authority over men (1 Tim. 2:11). *Cf.* Pragman, 158-77.

[463]As of September 15, 2002, the ELCA counted 2,738 pastors who were women, out of a total of 17,725 ordained ministers. In 2003 there have been seven bishops in the ELCA who are women.

[464]*Ecumenism: The Vision of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* (adopted 1991), p. 14. "Preliminary recognition" can involve eucharistic sharing but "without exchangeability of ministers." Under "full communion" there is not only mutual recognition of ordained ministers but also their "availability … to the service of all members of churches in full communion, subject only but always to the disciplinary regulations of the other churches."

Moravian churches in the United States.[465] Although Reformed polity and ordering of elders and deacons differ from Lutheran practices, the ministry did not emerge as an issue in *A Formula of Agreement*.[466] The ELCA entered into full communion with two Moravian provinces in North America in 1999; ministry was treated in the section "Mutual Complementarities."[467] Thus the ELCA has entered into full communion with churches holding varying views of ministry.

240.   Anglican emphasis on episcopacy made Lutheran-Episcopal dialogue toward full communion a more complicated matter. After narrowly failing to achieve the necessary two-thirds majority at the 1997 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA, a proposal for full communion between the ELCA and The Episcopal Church, entitled "Called to Common Mission,"[468] was approved by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in 1999[469] and subsequently affirmed in 2000 by The Episcopal Church. In this agreement, the two churches commit themselves "to share an episcopal succession that is both evangelical and historic" (*see* §12). Lutherans and Episcopalians promised "to include regularly one or more bishops of the other church to participate in the laying-on-of-hands at the ordinations/installations of their own bishops, as a sign, though not a guarantee, of the unity and apostolic continuity of the whole church"; *episcopé* is valued as "one of the ways, in the context of ordained ministries and of the whole people of God, in which the apostolic succession of the church is visibly expressed and personally symbolized in fidelity to the gospel through the ages" (*see* §12). Each church "remains free to explore its particular interpretations of the ministry of bishops in episcopal and historic succession," whenever possible in consultation with one another (*see* §13).

241.   "Called to Common Mission" was able to refer to the 1993 full communion agreement between British and Irish Anglican Churches, on the one hand, and Nordic and Baltic Lutheran Churches on the other, the *Porvoo Common Statement*.[470] The Meissen Agreement between the Church of England and the Evangelical Church in Germany[471] represents the stage of "interim eucharistic hospitality," not full communion. The Waterloo Declaration[472] between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and the Anglican Church of Canada, adopted in 2001, provides for full communion. "Called to Common Mission" and these other Lutheran/Anglican agreements represent variations on a common vision of apostolicity and episcopacy in the church.

242.   The ELCA and other Lutheran churches, in varied relations of communion with other churches, have reflected their Lutheran commitments, demonstrated ecumenical openness, and honored the heritages of their partners in dialogue. These agreements, with their differences, all reflect a firm belief in the Church as koinonia of salvation.

---

[465]The Lutheran-Episcopal *Concordat of Agreement*, Lutheran-Reformed *Formula of Agreement*, and *Joint Declaration* (as then framed) were presented together as *Ecumenical Proposals, Documents for Action by the 1997 Churchwide Assembly* of the ELCA.

[466]The issues of the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper and God's will to save (predestination) were treated in terms of "complementarity." Affirmed together were "a ministry of word and sacrament as instituted by God," to which one is ordained once, "usually by presbyters," with recognition of *episcopé* carried out by one ordained person or collegially (presbyteries and synods).

[467]*Following Our Shepherd to Full Communion: Report of the Lutheran-Moravian Dialogue with Recommendations for Full Communion in Worship, Fellowship and Mission* (© ELCA 1997), 38-42, with quotation above from p. 41. The Moravian Church has "a threefold ordained ministry: deacons, presbyters (elders) and bishops," with one ordination (to deacon, "subsequent consecrations to other offices"), and "historic episcopacy." The "historic episcopacy" was retained from the Ancient Moravian Church but with bishops as non-diocesan, so as to avoid competition in Germany with "the established church and their offices" (p. 13), a feature continued in North America; *cf.* Piepkorn, *Profiles in Belief* 2:344-48.

[468]"Called to Common Mission: A Lutheran Proposal for a Revision of the *Concordat of Agreement*" (Chicago: ELCA, November 1998).

[469]*1999 Reports and Records: Assembly Minutes* (Chicago 2000) 378, revised text as voted 378-87.

[470]Porvoo (above, n. 352).

[471]*The Meissen Agreement: Texts* (Council for Christian Unity Occasional paper No. 2, 1992) London.

[472]*Called to Full Communion (The Waterloo Declaration)*, available at the website *www.elcic.ca*, ELCIC Documents. It was preceded by Canadian Lutheran Anglican Dialogue 1983-86 (CLAD I, with Report and Recommendations) and CLAD II, 1989, Interim Sharing of the Eucharist, with agreement in 1995 to take steps toward full communion by 2001.