

## Foreword

This is the most important discussion paper the Commission has produced since its publication of *Ministry in a Uniting Church: from Recognition to Reconciliation* a quarter of a century ago!

Like devolution – famously described as ‘a process not an event’ – Covenanting is also a process. An essential part of that process is to achieve a common form of pastoral oversight as the key to the ongoing effectiveness of our mission endeavours in Wales today.

Our 1975 Covenant presented the issue in terms of two stages:

First, it reminded us of where we were. We had reached the stage of recognising ‘the ordained ministries of all our churches as true ministries of the word and sacraments, through which God’s love is proclaimed, his grace mediated, and his Fatherly care exercised.’

Then it went on to challenge us with where we needed to be next. That’s the stage we’re at now: of seeking ‘an agreed pattern of ordained ministry which will serve the gospel in unity, manifest its continuity throughout the ages, and be accepted as far as may be by the Church throughout the world.’

This paper is a significant contribution towards fulfilling that covenanting intention. It moves the discussion on from the ideas in *Towards the making of an Ecumenical Bishop in Wales* (1997), giving them a more substantive and coherent basis. It is our hope that, at the end of the consultation period, the recommendations made in this document – perhaps refined by our combined wisdom – may become proposals for the future.

This document is not the finished article. It’s for discussion – but discussion with a purpose. And that purpose is to find the common mind of Christ.

Hopefully, between now and the 2015 Gathering, at all levels of our church life: parish and congregation, synod and conference, those discussions will yield sufficient agreement for us to be able to see the way forward with greater clarity.

In commending this paper for discussion, I can do no better than to remind you of those inspiring words at the end of the original Covenant:

We do not yet know the form union will take. We approach our task with openness to the Spirit. We believe that God will guide his Church into ways of truth and peace, correcting, strengthening and renewing it in accordance with the mind of Christ. We therefore urge all our members to accept one another in the Holy Spirit as Jesus Christ accepts us, and to avail themselves of every opportunity to grow together through common prayer and worship in mutual understanding and love so that in every place they may be renewed together for mission.

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## 1. Terms of Reference

- 1.1 The Group was asked 'to draw up, after biblical/theological reflection, a document jointly agreed by all five member churches encapsulating their understanding of pastoral oversight and stating clearly what model would be acceptable to them all'.
- 1.2 The Group was aware of the need to address this issue:
- in the long term: is there a model of pastoral oversight that will facilitate organic union between our churches?
  - in the medium term: if the Covenanted Churches were to accept such a model, how will previously ordained ministers fit into the scheme?
  - in the short term: what model of pastoral oversight is acceptable and practicable in the case of Local Ecumenical Partnerships?

## 2. The New Testament Background

- 2.1 The Group revisited the relevant New Testament texts. Whilst it is clear that authority in the New Testament church belonged to the apostles (cf. Acts 2.42 'And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship') and that the ministries of deacons (cf. Acts 6.1-6, Philippians 1.1, 1 Timothy 3.8 and 3.12) and presbyters (cf. Acts 14.23, 15.6, 20.17) are well attested, the Group agreed that the New Testament evidence for a threefold ministry of bishops, priests, deacons is inconclusive.
- 2.2 The use of the verb *episkopeo* and the nouns *episkope* and *episkopos* are confined in the New Testament to the following verses (the English is that of the Revised Standard Version; other versions offer alternative translations), none of which claims to distinguish between the word *episkopos* and the far more extensively used *presbyteros* (an 'elder' who presided over the church, from which the English word 'priest' is derived):
- 2.2.1 *episkopeo*:  
**Hebrews 12.15:** See to it that no one fail to obtain the grace of God;  
**1 Peter 5.2:** Tend the flock of God that is your charge, [other ancient authorities add *exercising the oversight*] not by constraint but willingly.
- 2.2.2 *episkope*:  
**Luke 19.44:** and they will not leave one stone upon another in you; because you did not know the time of your *visitation*;  
**Acts 1:20:** 'Let his habitation become desolate, and let there be no one to live in it' and 'His *office* let another take';  
**1 Timothy 3:1:** If any one aspires to *the office of a bishop*, he desires a noble task;  
**1 Peter 2:12:** they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of *visitation*.

### 2.2.3 *episkopos/episkopoi*:

**Acts 20.28:** Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you **overseers**;

**Philippians 1.1:** Paul and Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the **bishops** and deacons;

**1 Timothy 3.2:** Now a **bishop** must be above reproach;

**Titus 1.7:** For a **bishop**, as God's steward, must be blameless;

**1 Peter 2.25:** For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and **Guardian** of your souls.

### 2.2.4

There is some evidence to suggest that the terms *episkopoi* and *presbyteroi* were interchangeable in the early Church. 1 Timothy 5.17 refers to 'the elders that rule well' and 1 Peter 5.1 seems to exhort the 'elders' to 'feed the flock of God taking the oversight [*episkopeo*] thereof'.

## 3. The Historical Background

The situation appears to have remained fluid in the 1<sup>st</sup> century Christian community.

- 3.1 The 1<sup>st</sup> century theologian, Ignatius, is the earliest known Christian writer to demand loyalty to a bishop, who is assisted by both presbyters and deacons.
- 3.2 On the other hand, his contemporary, Clement, in his epistle to the church in Corinth (c.96), mentions the apostolic authority of both *episkopoi* (overseers, bishops) and *presbyteroi* (elders, presbyters), who are assisted by deacons.
- 3.3 The Didache (the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles), an early Christian treatise from the late 1<sup>st</sup> or early 2<sup>nd</sup> century, gives the early Church the following advice: 'You must choose for yourselves bishops and deacons who are worthy of the Lord: men who are humble and not eager for money, but sincere and approved; for they are carrying out the ministry of the prophets and the teachers for you'. Here there seems to be no mention of presbyters.
- 3.4 The 3<sup>rd</sup> century 'Apostolic Tradition' of Hippolytus, contains instructions on the ordination of bishops, priests and deacons. Hippolytus maintains that a deacon 'is not ordained to the priesthood, but to serve the bishop', while a presbyter 'has only the power to receive and not the power to give [the Spirit]' and does not, therefore, ordain clergy.
- 3.5 This appears to have become the settled practice of the Church from about the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Bishops presided over city churches (the term *metropolitan* is still used for some bishops today) and were assisted by deacons. As the number of churches increased the bishops could not preside at communion in them all and appointed *presbyteroi* to do the work for them.
- 3.6 The doctrine of Apostolic Succession asserts that the bishops are the chosen successors of the Twelve Apostles and have inherited the spiritual, ecclesiastical and sacramental authority, power, and responsibility conferred upon the Apostles by Jesus himself. It was considered necessary for a bishop to perform valid ordinations of priests, deacons and other bishops. Churches within the historical episcopate assert that ordination to the Christian ministry is valid only through apostolic succession which maintains episcopal continuity with the early Church.

- 3.7 At the Reformation, the Anglican Church, together with some Lutheran Churches, chose to continue with the pattern of threefold ministry inherited from the Catholic Church. This pattern is also shared with the Old Catholic Church, which emerged in the last three centuries beginning with the Dutch archdiocese of Utrecht in 1725. The Anglican Book of Common Prayer, 1662, states:

It is evident unto all men diligently reading holy Scripture and ancient Authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church; Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. Which Offices were evermore had in such reverend Estimation, that no man might presume to execute any of them, except he were first called, tried, examined, and known to have such qualities as are requisite for the same; and also by publick Prayer, with Imposition of Hands, were approved and admitted thereunto by lawful Authority.

- 3.8 Anglicans, however, disagree among themselves on whether or not bishops are essential for the Church. Some follow Richard Hooker (c. 1554-1600), who argued that episcopacy was not of the *esse* (i.e. of the essence) of Christianity, but that bishops were necessary for the *bene esse* (i.e. the good estate) of the Church. Others follow the Tractarian John Keble (1792-1866), who believed that there can be no Church without bishops.
- 3.9 The doctrines of *Sola Fide* (By Faith Alone) and *Sola Scriptura* (By Scripture Alone) led other Reformation Churches to claim that apostolic succession is not taught in the New Testament and that episcopal continuity is unnecessary. For them, 'apostolic succession' meant a faithful continuity of apostolic teaching. Presbyterian and Reformed Churches maintain a twofold order of ministry of pastor and elder. The order of pastor is the only one that is considered 'clergy'; the order of elder consists of lay people who form the governing bodies of congregations and are responsible for a congregation's worship life.
- 3.10 The present situation is that in the Church in Wales, ordination must be by a bishop, signifying unity and continuity, and there is an emphasis on the priestly and sacramental aspects of ministry. In the non-episcopal churches, ordination is usually by a collective of ministers, with lay involvement in some cases, acting together, and there is an emphasis on preaching and teaching. In all cases, entry to the full-time ministry entails a course of theological and practical training leading to ordination.

## 4. The Church in Wales

4.1 The Church in Wales, as is made clear in its new Ordinal, considers the ministry of a bishop to be threefold:

4.1.1 *to teach*

With their fellow bishops they are to guard the faith that comes to us from the apostles and proclaim the gospel of God's kingdom. As chief pastors, it is their duty to maintain the unity of the Church, speaking in the name of God, and interpreting the gospel of salvation.

4.1.2 *to sanctify*

They are to lead their people in prayer and praise and to preside at the Holy Eucharist. They are to baptise and confirm, absolve and bless, nurturing God's people in the life of the Spirit, and leading them in the way of holiness.

4.1.3 *to govern*

They are to lead the Church and exercise authority within the community of faith. They are to ordain deacons and priests and build up the Body of Christ in loving obedience to the will of God.

4.1.4 In addition, bishops are called to be leaders in **mission**:

Together with their clergy and people they are to promote the church's mission and have a special care for all, and especially the poor, the outcast and the needy. Following the example of the apostles, they are to proclaim the gospel, boldly speak the truth, and work for justice and peace.

4.2 In the Book of Common Prayer, 1662, the bishop is described as the 'Ordinary' (the ordinary minister). He presides over the Word and Sacrament in his diocese. Therefore, every other minister is an *extra*-ordinary minister who receives the bishop's authority to share 'the cure of souls, which is both mine and yours'. With a few exceptions, when a bishop is present at a service in a church within his diocese, he will preside at Holy Communion and preach.

4.3 The Church in Wales believes that it is the bishop's role to oversee the life of the Church, to guard the Christian faith entrusted to his care and to promote the Church's mission. It is, therefore, a threefold role:

4.3.1 It looks back to the past in order to be able to discern and teach the faith that was received from the apostles; in this role, the bishop is responsible for ordination – for seeking and commissioning those who are called by God to the ordained ministry.

4.3.2 It oversees the present and seeks to ascertain that the Church remains faithful to Christ and his mission; in this role, the bishop is the chief celebrant of Holy Communion, the banquet at which God feeds his people.

4.3.3 It discerns the future and shows a readiness to act prophetically to call the Church to grow into God's governance; in this role, the bishop teaches the faith and applies the authoritative teaching of the Scripture to contemporary society.

- 4.4 The Church in Wales also accepts the definition of *episkope* given in the Faith and Order paper, *Baptism Eucharist and Ministry*, published by the World Council of Churches in 1982, as an essential ministry in the life of the Church. Modern definitions of the word note three dimensions of *episkope*:
- 4.4.1 It must be **personal**: Christians believe that God speaks to us through persons – through the Old Testament prophets and finally through the Person of Jesus Christ. Therefore, Church leadership must be exercised not by institutions but by individuals. Anglicanism gives its chief pastors, the bishops, responsibility for speaking on behalf of the local church and the duty to discern and speak the Word of God in a specific place.
- 4.4.2 It must be **collegial**: A bishop does not lead the Church alone. Every bishop is a member of a college of bishops with whom he shares his ministry. A bishop leads by setting an example for the clerics but, at the same time, accepts advice from the clerics and builds a consensus. ('Accept the cure of souls who belong to me and to you'). In Anglican polity there is also a special emphasis on the collegial role of the laity in discerning and governing.
- 4.4.3 It must be **communal**: *Episkope* does not exist on its own. It is a gift and a vocation for the benefit of God's people. Every bishop must be rooted in a real, living community and thus, in Anglican polity, a bishop is normally the bishop of a particular place – Bangor, Llandaff etc. He is called to be the chief pastor of a particular part of God's people, to lead God's mission in a particular locality, to work in a particular context and to bring together in a particular place the past, present and future of the Church.
- 4.4.4. The bishops of the Church in Wales work on this model: they are individuals called to a personal ministry; they work with a particular body of clerics in the diocese, with their own national College (the Bench) and their collegial councils (the Diocesan Conference and the Governing Body); they serve a particular community.
- 4.5 *Episkope* is shown on all levels of the Church's life. As every diocese constitutes a local church gathered around its bishop, the Church in Wales is itself a Church gathered around its archbishop, who has a particular ministry to the whole community of Wales.
- 4.6 The bishops of the Church in Wales are part of a wider family of bishops. They are empowered to represent the local church to the whole Church and the whole Church to the local church. This is why the Bench of Bishops, the Lambeth Conference and many other means of consultation, are so important. A local diocese is not on its own; it is an organic part of the whole body of Christ. *Episkope* is collegial; bishops co-operate with one another and gather around them a college of presbyters.

## 5. Covenanting Baptist Churches

- 5.1 Baptist life is based on the gathering together of a local congregation of believers. Each congregation is regarded as competent to order its life, worship and witness. Baptist understanding of ministry is such that Baptists now ordain youth specialist ministers and evangelists as well as pastors and teachers, and the recognition of church workers. Church workers may be people who work with children, families, youth or in the wider community.
- 5.2 Ministry has to be understood in the light of this understanding and practice. There is no such thing as 'The Baptist Church', only Baptist churches.
  - 5.2.1 Baptist ministers are accredited. Accreditation doesn't give authority; it affirms call, competency, character and covenant relationship with the wider family. Authority, if there is any, is given by the local church to their minister, at the local level, by being identified by their local church and recommended to a committee of the Association who will examine their sense of call and overall suitability.
  - 5.2.2 If satisfied this committee will recommend a programme of ministerial formation, usually at a Baptist college, leading to a theological degree / diploma. There is presently no non-collegiate course of study route into accredited ministry.
  - 5.2.3 Only when the candidate receives a 'call' from a local church to become their pastor does he or she become eligible for ordination and recognition on the Baptist Union's accredited list. Ministers serving as Tutors at a Baptist college, or those serving in a sector ministry or as chaplains, begin their ministry in a local church and then move to these specialist areas retaining their accreditation.
  - 5.2.4 Upon ordination a minister enters a further process of ministerial formation as a Newly Accredited Minister. At the end of this 3 or 4 year process the Union affirms their accreditation and welcomes them at the Union's Assembly. There is no change in their status or privileges at this point.
  - 5.2.5 The local church pays the minister's stipend, provides housing and meets the expenses of office. The church may apply for financial 'assistance' from the Baptist Union for an accredited minister to assist the church in its mission.
  - 5.2.6 A minister may be removed from the 'accredited list' if he or she no longer has a qualifying office. Time is given to find a new position, but accreditation is always linked to role other than in retirement.
- 5.3 It is necessary to contrast Baptist belief and practice with that of more highly organised denominations, especially those that value an historic episcopate, but also for churches such as the Methodists where ordination takes place at a central point and is for a large countrywide or nation-wide constituency.
- 5.4 Baptists refute the idea of apostolic succession or that there is evidence in scripture for a clear or fixed form of church government. Baptists, in the main, do not therefore have a 'high' concept of ordination. A minority prefer not to use the word. Ordination is normally at the home church with induction in the calling church.

- 5.4.1 The service is centred on the processes of 'guidance' that led pastor and people to come together. This will include 'a history of the call' in two parts, the first given by a senior deacon of the calling church, the second by the prospective minister him or herself. There is a very strong spiritual and emotional relationship between pastor and people.
- 5.4.2 It has now become customary for certain figures (e.g. the regional minister[s] of the Association, a representative from the staff of the minister's college, any pastor[s] responsible for his/her mentoring etc.) to take part at an ordination.
- 5.4.3 The order of service will be discussed between minister, local church officers and the regional minister. Services for the Ordaining for Ministry, Inducting into Ministry, or Commissioning for Wider Ministry now follow the pattern in the Baptist Union's *Gathering for Worship* service book (Canterbury Press, 2005). As Regional Ministers represent the wider church and the accrediting body the same promises are made by all those who are ordained. (If the local church is ordaining without accreditation then it is free to ask whatever it likes.)
- 5.4.4 Questions are usually also given to the members of the church who have called the minister, asking for their acceptance and support of him or her. More often than not the act of ordination will nowadays include the laying on of hands. None of the visiting ministers has an automatic right to do this. It will be at the behest of the local congregation. But the regional minister who has been invited to preside will be joined by other invited ministers and lay people.
- 5.4.5 Normally the participants lay-on-hands to pray, then the Regional Minister will offer the right hand of fellowship whilst declaring that the individual has been ordained and/or inducted.
- 5.4.6 Some ministers use the expression 'minister of the word and sacraments', others do not. Some would describe themselves as 'ministers of the word' only, the sacrament being understood as a communal act, not what the minister does, but only what he or she is privileged to lead. This means that the communion service may be led by a lay preacher or a respected member of the local church at that church's invitation.
- 5.4.7 The minister is not ordained as a priest. Baptists believe very strongly in the 'Priesthood of All Believers'. The whole congregation represents Christ to the community and every member is an evangelist. The congregation has called someone to be its leader and enabler.
- 5.5 The Baptist Union consists of 13 Associations. Each Association has a team of Regional Ministers, who are meant to be pastors to the pastors and to leadership teams when there is no minister. The role of Regional Ministers is much wider than that, however, and varies depending on the role to which they have been appointed.
- 5.6 Among Georgian Baptists, the office and title of bishop is in current use. (Baptist minister, the Revd Michael Cleaves, formerly in the Cardiff East Ecumenical Partnership, was recently appointed as the first Apocrisarius – Episcopal Representative of the Evangelical Church of Georgia to the Baptist Union of Great Britain and the Free Churches in Britain).

## 6. The Methodist Church

6.1 In 2000 the Methodist Conference adopted the following Guidelines as a summary of the Methodist Church's position on *episkope* and episcopacy.

6.2 **The Methodist Church recognizes that *episkope* is exercised within its life in communal, collegial and personal ways.**

6.2.1 **The Methodist Church values communal *episkope*, exercised by representative bodies throughout the Church's life.**

The Conference and the District Synod, in their representative sessions, Circuit Meetings and Church Councils are examples of the exercise of communal *episkope*.

6.2.2 **The Methodist Church values collegial *episkope*, and its tradition of expressing collegiality, not only among members of the same order of ministry, but also among lay persons and ordained persons.**

Examples of such collegiality include the Ministerial Session of the Conference, which is made up of ministers, and Local Preachers Meetings and local church Pastoral Committees, where collegial oversight is shared by ordained and lay persons.

6.3 **The Methodist Church values personal *episkope* in every part of the Church's life, but believes that such *episkope* should be exercised within a collegial or communal context.**

It is important that personal *episkope* be allowed for within connexional structures in ways consonant with its exercise in Circuits and Districts. Because the *episkope* exercised by individuals within the life of the Methodist Church is derived or representative oversight, it is important that those who exercise personal *episkope* remain accountable to the wider Church. It must be recognized that the need to be accountable and the need to maintain proper confidentiality may sometimes be in conflict.

6.4 **The Methodist Church is a connexional Church and all *episkope* should be exercised within this context. In the development of any structures, due consideration should be given to their impact upon the life of the whole Church. There is a proper balance to be maintained between, for example, Circuit and District or District and Connexion.**

While recognizing the value of a diocesan model, the Methodist Church would be uneasy about the development of any models of personal *episkope* which isolated Districts from the whole Church.

6.5 **The Methodist Church began as a missionary movement and continues to have mission at its heart. Methodists believe that a key function of *episkope* is to enable and encourage the Church's participation in God's mission.**

The missionary imperative was an important consideration in the introduction of 'separated' Chairs. The experience of some Methodist Churches, including the United Methodist Church, which have adopted episcopal systems of oversight provides encouraging precedents for expressions of *episkope* that are mission-led.

- 6.6 In the furtherance of the search for the visible unity of Christ's Church, the Methodist Church would willingly receive the sign of episcopal succession on the understanding that ecumenical partners sharing this sign with the Methodist Church (a) acknowledge that the latter has been and is part of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church and (b) accept that different interpretations of the precise significance of the sign exist.**

As to (a), this was something that the Conference asked of the Church of England in 1955 as the 'Conversations' began. Many people in our partner churches would themselves be anxious to ensure that nothing done in the uniting of ministries should imply that previous ministries were invalid or inauthentic.

As to (b), Methodism has previously insisted that there should be freedom of interpretation as to the significance of the historic episcopate. The concept that episcopacy is a 'sign but not a guarantee of the apostolicity of the Church' may be widely acceptable as a testimony to its symbolic witness to links across time, while testifying too to the obvious truth that bishops are not automatically and invariably wise or faithful.

- 6.7 The Methodist Church, in contemplating the possibility of receiving the sign of the historic episcopal succession, expects to engage in dialogue with its sister Churches to clarify as thoroughly as possible the nature and benefits of this gift.**

In considering the introduction of the historic succession to Methodism in the sort of circumstances outlined in Guideline 2, the Methodist Church recognizes the need to explore its potential for complementing and enriching the Methodist Church's present experience of *episkope* and for enhancing Methodism's sense of communion within the one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

- 6.8 The Methodist Church would be unable to receive the sign of episcopal succession in a context which would involve a repudiation of what the Methodist Church believed itself to have received from God.**

An obvious and important example of what is meant by this Guideline is the ministry of women. Since women were ordained to the presbyterate in the Methodist Church, every office for which male ministers are eligible has been open also to women. In its preliminary consideration of the scheme for an Ecumenical Bishop in Wales, the Conference was extremely concerned by the statement that the first such bishop would necessarily be male, and it gave its approval for further work to be done on the scheme on the understanding that serious efforts would be made in the ongoing discussions to ensure that such a restriction should not obtain in relation to any subsequent appointment.

- 6.9 The Methodist Church, in receiving the sign of episcopal succession, would insist that all ministries, including those of oversight, are exercised within the ministry of the whole people of God and at its service, rather than in isolation from it and in supremacy over it.**

In earlier conversations, the Methodist Church has emphasized the value which it would place on the pastoral office of bishops, and on bishops having leadership responsibilities for mission and a representative role in community affairs. The view has been expressed that they should know and be known at many levels, and that they should exercise authority with gentleness and be humble servants of Christ.

As the survey of styles of *episkope* and of episcopacy indicated, Methodists should not fear that the adoption of episcopacy would, of necessity, involve the adoption of a hierarchical model. Increasingly, in episcopally ordered churches,

emphasis has been placed on the pastoral, teaching and missionary roles of the bishop. As *Commitment to Mission and Unity* insists:

The office [of a bishop] is relational in character and must be exercised in, with and among the community which it is called to serve. The office should not be so overburdened with bureaucratic demands that bishops are prevented from being alongside their people, or that their collegiality with their fellow bishops, presbyters and deacons is diminished. It is a ministry of service which requires an appropriate lifestyle and pastoral demeanour.

## 7. The Presbyterian Church of Wales

- 7.1 The Presbyterian Church of Wales' *Book of Order and Rules* contains the following 'Declaration on the Office and Work of a Minister':

The Risen Christ dwells in the believing fellowship of His Church, which is His body and His fullness, to which He grants the privilege of working together with Him in His Saving Ministry in the world. A minister at his/her ordination is set apart by the Church to lead it in this varied ministry by entrusting him/her especially with the preaching of the Word, the administration of the Sacraments, the pastoral care of members and their instruction in the Christian Faith and with leading the Church in its work (both missionary and humanitarian) in the local community, the nation and the world.

- 7.2 The subsequent 'Rules for the Appointment of Ministers in Pastorates' state: 'All the arrangements regarding the ministry in a church/pastorate should be made with the consent of, and under the supervision of, the Presbytery'.
- 7.3 The Presbyterian Church of Wales holds that all Ministers of the Church have the same status and their oversight is governed by the Church in council at Presbytery, Association or General Assembly level.
- 7.4 Currently the office of Moderator is an elected role and of one year's duration. The Moderator is elected by the General Assembly from a list of three ministers or elders nominated by the Association. In addition to the Moderator of the General Assembly there are in any one year three Moderators of the Association (one in each of the three provinces) and fourteen Moderators of Presbytery. Ordination of ministers in the Presbyterian Church of Wales began in 1811 and has continued to take place in a meeting of the Association.
- 7.5 The nature of pastoral oversight is emphasised in the 'Induction of a Minister' with the Moderator of the relevant Presbytery presiding and requesting assent to a number of questions.
- 7.6 The office of an Elder also includes a degree of pastoral oversight. *The Book of Order and Rules* contains the following 'Declaration on the Office and Work of an Elder':

An elder in the Presbyterian Church of Wales is a man or woman called to serve the local church through a ballot held prayerfully and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Elders, together with the minister, take responsibility as a team for the life, worship and witness of the local congregation. According to their talents/gifts they are to visit the sick, to teach the young, to guide and support those who are seeking Christ, and to train and encourage believers. They are also expected to have a care for the Connexion as a whole. They shall be managing trustees of their local church and they are to work with their fellow elders and the ministers to build up the body of Christ through all the courts of the Church.

- 7.7 Elders are ordained in an open meeting of a Presbytery presided over jointly by the Moderator of that Presbytery and the Moderator of Association appropriate for the province of the Presbytery.
- 7.8 Permission is given to Presbyteries in consultation with the churches to consider nominating elders to be trained and licensed to administer the sacraments in churches within their Presbytery that have no pastor. Where there is a Minister permission will not be given for an elder to administer the Sacraments unless the Minister agrees.
- 7.9 Elders are licensed to administer the sacraments for three years, and the licence can be renewed with the consent of both the elder and the Presbytery.

## 8. The United Reformed Church

- 8.1 The Reformed Church is not against Personal *Episkope* but is cautious regarding any implementation. The Church already has bishops worldwide – the Reformed Church in Hungary is a good example.
- 8.2 The URC voted over 90% in favour of an Ecumenical Bishop in Cardiff East, even though any appointment had to be male initially. The Church feels that in future its Equal Opportunities Policy must be taken seriously.
- 8.3 Church Order in the Reformed Tradition is a matter of practical reason, what John Calvin called 'convenience', flexible, adaptable and open to change according to the leading of the Spirit and the imperatives of Mission. Pragmatism is fine.
- 8.4 There is no absolute, qualitative distinction between Clergy and Laity. Ordination confers no special rank, status or power. It is the acknowledgement and authorisation of a particular calling, a matter of order, not mystique.
- 8.5 A URC Moderator, elected by the Councils of the Church, has a timed appointment - twelve years is the limit for his or her service. Most Moderators then return to pastoral duties within the local Church (unlike an Anglican bishop who still remains a bishop when he leaves the diocese at retirement or through illness).
- 8.6 Pastoral oversight is given by Appointed Officers working through the Councils of the Church. The minister of the local Church exercises pastoral care in association with the lay ordained elders. The latter usually have individual lists of fellow members and adherents for regular home visiting. Mostly this task is taken seriously. Elders are ordained for life but need not serve for life. Synod elders, selected to represent areas or districts, offer extended care and report carefully to Synod Council. The Synod Moderator has care for the ministers in his or her Synod and gives advice and support to ministers' families.
- 8.7 Overall each church member has some responsibility for other members within the Body of Christ. Pastoral oversight is extremely important in the Reformed tradition.

- 8.8 Ordination usually takes place in the First Charge in the local Church, normally presided over by the Synod Moderator. The service includes a reading of Schedule D – a statement concerning the nature, faith and order of the URC. The Minister may make a personal statement of his or her own call to office and is then asked to affirm a series of questions. The Act of Ordination follows with an Ordination Prayer. The laying on of hands is optional. If followed, many people, ordained and lay, will participate. The minister is pronounced duly ordained and inducted by the Presiding Officer.

## 9. Observations of the Working Group

- 9.1 The Working Group took the view that historical disagreement, suspicion and prejudice must be addressed honestly by all members of the Covenanted Churches in Wales before progress can be made. It recognised that what we are seeking is a full interchangeability of ministers, and acknowledged:
- 9.1.1 That in the teaching of the Anglican Church episcopal ordination is seen as an essential requirement that Anglicans believe they have received from the earliest days of the Church. This has been acknowledged by the Commission twice before – in the 1986 document, *Ministry in a Uniting Church*, and in the attempt in 2002 to appoint an Ecumenical Bishop in South East Wales. The Working Group too was of the opinion that full interchangeability of ministers within the Covenanted Churches in Wales will be possible when the four non-episcopally ordered member Churches signal a willingness to accommodate some form of the historic episcopate within their systems. The Working Group took heart from the fact that not one of the Covenanted Churches in Wales has rejected the principle of personal *episkope*.
- 9.1.2 That if the non-episcopal denominations are to be asked to embrace episcopacy, they will require an answer to the question: why do they need a bishop? They will need to determine themselves what the contents of their episcopal ministry will be and that it does not so conflict with traditional functions that it would be difficult to recognise it as part of the historic episcopate.
- 9.1.3 That the Church in Wales describes itself as being ‘episcopally led and synodically governed’. While led by bishops, it honours and rejoices in an age long tradition of ‘conciliarism’. Bishops consult not only with their fellow bishops but also with the clergy and the laity. Deanery and diocesan conferences and the provincial Governing Body provide an opportunity for counsel and debate – bishops, clergy and laity together. Sometimes, the bishops are constrained by the clergy and/or laity. For example, although all the bishops of the Church in Wales support the ordination of women bishops, they have not consecrated a woman bishop because the Governing Body has rejected the idea.

- 9.2 A discussion on ordination identified the following similarities between all five traditions:
- 9.2.1 Ordination follows a course of theological and practical training.
  - 9.2.2 Candidates for ordination are required to affirm a number of questions concerning the basic doctrines of the Christian faith, their personal vocation and the order of the Church into which they are ordained, and to promise that they will faithfully exercise their ministry as an inspiration for others.
  - 9.2.3 In some non-episcopal traditions, ministers are ordained with the assent of the congregation by elected officers (usually a Moderator), who themselves can be lay or ordained. In the Methodist Church, on the direction of the Conference, candidates are presented to the President (or a former President) of the Conference (who is always a minister) and ordained, with the affirmation of the congregation, as ministers and deacons. There is an obvious parallel here with episcopal ordination, where candidates are presented to the bishop by diocesan representatives and ordained following congregational assent.
- 9.3 The Working Group took the view that the model of a Bishop-in-Council could provide a basis for further exploration, that is: a model in which the bishop will not act or teach apart from his college of presbyters and the elected lay representatives. In such a model, authority resides in synodical government consisting of three 'houses' of synod, bishop, clergy and laity. The *consensus fidelium* (the common mind of the faithful) is dependent on the concurrence of the laity with the clergy and the bishop. The bishop is given a presidential role but all have a say in decisions affecting the church. Thus *episkope* is exercised in the first place by the diocesan synod. The diocesan bishop is elected by the synod's clergy and laity, holds his office in association with them and acts on their behalf. The model satisfies the condition laid down in 6.3 above that 'it is important that those who exercise personal *episkope* remain accountable to the wider Church'.
- 9.4 It was noted that this arrangement gives much autonomy to the diocese. The Church in Wales, although a distinct province within the Anglican communion, is also, in a very real sense, a gathering of six separate churches based on its six dioceses, each one a sphere of communion under its bishop's pastoral oversight.
- 9.5 In an attempt to address the questions put in 9.1.2 above, it was suggested:
- 9.5.1 That non-episcopalian member churches might agree to become episcopally ordered to promote the interests of the Covenant in Wales and to deepen its communion, always bearing in mind that the Covenant's primary objective is not Christian unity but Christian mission.
  - 9.5.2 That bishops are regarded as having a particular responsibility for leading in mission, teaching the faith, proclaiming the apostolic gospel in Word and Sacrament, pastoral care and making visible the unity of the Church. In this context, reference was made to the Lund Statement (The Lutheran World Federation Statement on Episcopal Ministry, 2007; see Annex 2):

... episcopal ministers exercise their role as teachers of the church's faith and guides for the overall life of congregations. In fulfilling their functions episcopal ministers are called to be available to clergy as *pastor pastorum* (pastor of the pastors). As they set priorities in these areas episcopal ministers will provide forms of leadership that are truly shared, facilitating collaborative styles of ministry... Episcopal ministers are called to demonstrate humility and simplicity of life. The profile of their ministry is not one of domination, but of service...

The Working Group would like to commend the Lund Statement for particular study and reflection to the non-episcopalian member churches, since the communion in which it originates shares with them, both theologically and culturally, some of the historical hesitation over the Historic Episcopate. The statement may thus be particularly valuable in the context of any exploration by such churches to 'take Episcopacy into their system' without compromising their Reformation heritage.

- 9.5.3 If member churches were to elect a bishop, the bishop would ordain all ministers and thus become the source of an episcopally ordained ministry in those churches. Full interchangeability of ministers would follow.

## 10. Long-term Recommendations

### 10.1 The Working Group **recommends**:

- 10.1.1 That the Commission invites the five Covenanted Churches to think of themselves as the Church Uniting in Wales.
- 10.1.2 That this Church will be congregational, presbyteral and episcopal in tradition and mode of pastoral oversight.
- 10.1.3 That the Church will have nine jurisdictions – the six existing Anglican dioceses plus a Methodist jurisdiction, a Presbyterian jurisdiction and a URC/Covenanting Baptist jurisdiction, each of which will be invited to elect its own bishop.
- 10.1.4 That a description of the bishop's role be drawn up and agreed by all five Covenanted Churches (see Annex 1).
- 10.1.5 That, when and if the Methodist jurisdiction, the Presbyterian jurisdiction and the URC/Covenanting Baptist jurisdiction each elect a bishop, the bishop will ordain all those who are to become ministers within that jurisdiction.
- 10.1.6 That this bishop will be a bishop in the Church Uniting in Wales and will share collegiality and full interchangeability with all the other bishops of that Church.
- 10.1.7 That the bishops of all nine jurisdictions in the Church Uniting in Wales consult with each other at least twice a year.

## 10.2 Some immediate difficulties were identified:

- 10.2.1 The Methodist Church of Great Britain is a connexional church, and all British Methodist ministers are at present ordained by the President or a Past President of the British Methodist Conference. The Methodist Synods in Wales do not have the authority to agree to such a scheme or to institute a Welsh Methodist bishop.
  - 10.2.2. As a 'cluster' within the South Wales Baptist Association, the Covenanting Baptists would need to reflect among themselves, and within their own tradition, how best they might wish to respond to the idea of electing their own bishop.
  - 10.2.3 The proposed Methodist, Presbyterian and URC/Covenanting Baptist jurisdictions might wish to elect a woman bishop. This would impair communion with the six Anglican dioceses, where at present this is not possible.
  - 10.2.4 In response to 10.2.1, the Working Group was aware that the UK situation might change following the deliberations of the Anglican-Methodist Covenant's Joint Implementation Commission. If not, and if the Welsh Methodists both wished to and were granted leave by Conference to proceed, authority to ordain in the Wales Synod/Synod Cymru could be by the authority of the President of Conference delegated to the Wales Synod/Synod Cymru bishop.
  - 10.2.5 In response to 10.2.2, the Working Group suggested that the Covenanting Baptists might be invited to share a bishop with the URC. The ultimate decision, however, will be a matter for the Covenanting Baptists themselves.
  - 10.2.6 In response to 10.2.3 the Working Group took the view that the Church in Wales' present position on women bishops is unlikely to be tenable in the long term. In the meantime the proposed Methodist, Presbyterian, URC/ Covenanting Baptist jurisdictions would be free to choose a woman bishop if they so desired, but on the understanding that clerics ordained by her would not be recognised by the six Anglican dioceses until the Church in Wales too had allowed the ordination of women bishops.
- 10.3 The Working Group noted that any bishop elected by the proposed Methodist, Presbyterian and URC/Covenanting Baptist jurisdictions would need to be consecrated into the historic episcopate, i.e. ordained by the laying on of hands by at least three bishops who are themselves part of the historic episcopate.
- 10.3.1 It was noted that, whereas it would be desirable for the Welsh Anglican bishops to take part in such a consecration, in order to show that the consecration was for service in the context of Wales, the proposed new jurisdictions might prefer that such a consecration be presided over by a bishop from their own tradition, in order to emphasise that the new bishop was not being consecrated into the Anglican Church.
  - 10.3.2 In this case, great care would have to be taken to ensure that the presiding bishop was himself part of the historic episcopate. For example, it would be very appropriate for a bishop from the United Church of North India to consecrate a bishop from the Presbyterian Church of Wales because of the historic ties between the two Churches.

## 11. Medium-term Recommendations

- 11.1 Whereas the scheme outlined above would provide a source of episcopally ordained ministers for the future, it would leave in limbo those ministers who have not at present been episcopally ordained. There is a need for some mechanism to allow the full interchangeability of these ministers too.
- 11.2 The model for this would be the Church of South India where episcopal and non-episcopal churches came together on an episcopal basis. Clergy who had not been episcopally ordained were not reordained by bishops; but all future ordinands were to be episcopally ordained, so that the Church of South India would eventually be an episcopal church. In *The Historic Episcopate* (1954), Hugh Montefiore and Kenneth M. Carey used the term *plene esse* ('the full being') of the Church to argue that the episcopate is of the fullness, not of the essence, of the Church and that, therefore, the Church of England could enter into full communion with the Church of South India, while maintaining that the Historic Episcopate would, of necessity, belong to the future of the Church.
- 11.3 The Working Group took the view that all ministers within the Covenanted Churches might think of covenanted ministry as a wider ministry. To take part in this would require an act of reconciliation.
- 11.4 It would mean that all ministers agree to the laying on of hands by at least one Anglican bishop and at least one other bishop representing the other traditions within the Church Uniting in Wales. This would be regarded not as an episcopal ordination but as a step forward to full covenanted ministry.
- 11.5 The Working Group noted that Anglican ordination is in two steps: (i) ordination to the diaconate and (ii) ordination to the presbyterate. There is a third ordination to the episcopate. Each ordination is not a rejection of the former ordination but a step to a wider ministry.

## 12. Short-term Recommendations

- 12.1 The Working Group noted as good practice the appointment in the Church of England of cathedral canons from other denominations and **recommends** that the bishops of the Church in Wales to do the same.
- 12.2 The Working Group noted the work that is now going on within the Porvoo Communion of Churches on the role of the diaconate, and **recommends** that the Commission of Covenanted Churches explores whether its five members can reach a common mind on this issue.
- 12.3 The Working Group **recommends** that Local Ecumenical Partnerships adopt the following principles on pastoral oversight:
- 12.3.1 that ministers be encouraged but not required to attend a denominational court other than that of the denomination to which they belong; and
  - 12.3.2 that churches within a Local Ecumenical Partnership entrust the administration of the Partnership to a Sponsoring Body selected from members of the Commission of Covenanted Churches or Cytûn.

## ANNEX 1

### The Role of a Bishop in the Church Uniting in Wales

An agreement on the role of a bishop in the Church Uniting in Wales might include the following:

The bishop should:

- possess the gifts of discernment, teaching, wisdom, and pastoral care;
- be a good listener, skilful at conflict resolution;
- be a theologian and student of Scripture, whose life is deeply rooted in prayer;
- be able to articulate the core doctrines of the Christian faith;
- demonstrate this faith in living out the Great Commandment and the Great Commission;
- be conversant with the practices of all traditions within the Church Uniting in Wales.

1. The bishop will be elected by a process prescribed by each jurisdiction and agreed by all the member churches of the Church Uniting in Wales.
2. The bishop will be entrusted with the care of the jurisdiction and its unity.
3. The bishop will be bound by the Constitution of the Church Uniting in Wales.
4. Together with those who minister within the jurisdiction and in accordance with the practices of the tradition involved, the bishop will oversee:
  - the preaching and teaching of the gospel
  - the administration of the sacraments
  - the day to day management of the jurisdiction.
5. The bishop will serve as the spiritual leader of the jurisdiction.
6. The bishop will have special care for those who minister within the jurisdiction, will pray for them and do what is possible to ensure their wellbeing.
7. The bishop will hold regular consultations (i) with a Council made up of the clergy of the jurisdiction and (ii) with fellow bishops both in Wales and beyond.
8. The bishop will serve as President, but not necessarily as Chair, of the main conference of the jurisdiction.
9. The bishop will ordain presbyters and deacons and authorise lay ministers.
10. The bishop will administer confirmation but, in accordance with the practices of the tradition involved, may delegate this responsibility.

**ANNEX 2****Episcopal Ministry within the Apostolicity of the Church****The Lund Statement by the Lutheran World Federation  
A Communion of Churches, Lund, Sweden  
26 March 2007****I. Introduction**

1. For forty years, the Lutheran World Federation has been a partner in international ecumenical dialogues. In these dialogues, the Lutheran participants have sought to witness to the teaching of the gospel as maintained in the Lutheran tradition, and at the same time to learn from representatives of other traditions where the gospel has been taught in different contexts and forms. In several of these dialogues the episcopal ministry has been a topic as the churches involved have explored possibilities of furthering the visible unity of the church. The role of the episcopal ministry in relation to the apostolicity of the church has been a particular issue of investigation. Important agreements have been reached, some of which have led to binding forms of communion.<sup>i</sup>
2. Although the ecumenical agreements reached have been processed and received in differing ways among the member churches of the LWF, the thorough processes of the different theological dialogues represent a resource also for the common life of the LWF as a Communion of Churches. Among the Lutheran churches there is a common confessional basis, and at the same time a diversity of traditions regarding the episcopal ministry. This situation has called for a process of clarification for the sake of the Lutheran Communion itself.<sup>ii</sup> The present statement, reached through careful study and deliberation, is formulated as an expression of the commonalities that exist among the Lutheran churches in teaching and practices in the area of episkopé.
3. The statement is developed in the context of the ecumenical movement, in which the LWF has been and remains a committed participant. It draws significantly on bilateral and multilateral dialogue reports, to the point of using much of the language they provide. It is the outcome of a study process in the LWF initiated in 2000. Five regional meetings were held. In 2002 the Lutheran members of international dialogue presented the document “The Episcopal Ministry within the Apostolicity of the Church”, which was sent in 2003 to all the LWF member churches for study and response. The present new statement, formulated upon the request of the LWF Council in Bethlehem, 2005, builds on the 2002 Statement, but takes into consideration all the comments and proposals received from the member churches. It was substantially discussed, edited and then affirmed by the Council in Lund, Sweden, in March 2007 – a meeting which also involved an LWF Church Leaders’ Consultation and in which the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the LWF was celebrated. For more detailed information about the process leading up to this statement see the attached Appendix.

4. Terminological remarks: The terms episcopacy and episkopé build on the Greek verb episkopein, which means to look upon, discern and exercise oversight. In Lutheran churches, episkopé (oversight) in the broad sense is exercised by ordained persons, synods and specially designated collegial institutions. These latter instruments generally include both ordained and non-ordained members. As part of this episkopé, Lutheran churches assign specific tasks of oversight to a regional ministry by bishops and similar officials with other titles (church president, ephorus, synodal pastor, etc.), who exercise personally, collegially and communally, a supra-congregational form of ordained ministry for the sake of spiritual discernment and leadership. In the present text the terms “episcopal ministry” and “ministry of episkopé” are used to designate this ordained ministry of pastoral oversight. However, as referred to above, the service of episkopé in the broad sense is also carried out by cooperative, synodical forms of oversight, involving both lay and ordained persons, according to established rules and regulations.

## II. Biblical and Historical Foundations

### The New Testament<sup>iii</sup>

5. The canonical writings of the New Testament reflect a phase in the history of the church when different ecclesial patterns developed, coexisted and interacted with each other. Some New Testament writings reveal little concern with ecclesial structures and leadership, and those that are concerned show variations. An ecumenically shared insight today is that the New Testament does not describe a single pattern of ministry, which can serve as a blueprint for later structures in the church. Rather, there is in the New Testament a variety of forms reflecting developments at different places and times.
6. There are, however, many indications in the New Testament that ecclesial offices and titles were being formed, even if they were not yet precisely defined or commonly accepted. The early Christian communities were never without persons holding leadership responsibilities. The plurality of ministerial patterns indicated by the New Testament can provide legitimation for a variety of structures in the office of ministry. The challenge to consider structures of ministry in continual engagement with Scripture remains before the church at all times.
7. In biblical Greek, *episkopé* is used to refer to God’s visitation (cf. Luke 19.4; 1 Peter 2.25). In the rare cases where the subject is not divine but human, it may also refer to an ecclesial task. In Acts 1.16-20, the election of a new apostle to replace Judas is said to be a fulfillment of Psalm 109.8 (LXX): “May another take his position” (*ten episkopen autou*). In 1 Timothy 3.1, *episkopé* refers to a distinct office which one may seek. The term *episkopos* occurs in the New Testament five times. 1 Peter 2.25 describes Christ as shepherd and bishop of our souls; Philippians 1.1 mentions several *episkopoi* in Philippi—the letter’s addressees include both *episkopoi* and *diakonoi* (but not *presbyteroi*); Acts 20.28 and Titus 1.5-9 use *presbyteros* and *episkopos* synonymously.

8. More than other writings in the New Testament the Pastoral Letters connect a faithful transmission of teaching with an orderly conferment of ecclesial offices. However, the picture is far from clear or complete. The letters raise different questions today concerning the particular features of the ecclesial structure they advocate and partly reflect. But they do attest to the fact that the charismatic activity in the church was in the process of being disciplined into an ordered exercise of ministry wearing the prophetic mantle.
9. Timothy and Titus, written in the name of Paul and demonstrating the authority of the apostle, represent a reapplication of what they perceive as Paul's teaching for the next generation. They are concerned about the protection of the apostolic (Pauline) heritage in a situation in which it is perceived as threatened and attacked by distorting speculations and subversive behavior. They voice a growing concern for the forms of transmission of the faith, and for the faithful life and teaching of office holders, since continuity with the teaching of the apostles (especially Paul's) is regarded as a measure of faithfulness.
10. The Pastoral Letters attest to a rite of ordination through a laying on of hands. In 2 Timothy 1.6 Paul is the one who lays on hands, while the reference in 1 Timothy 4.14 assumes that a council of elders all lay on hands. According to 1 Timothy 4.14, three elements are involved: a gift (charisma), a prophecy and the act of a laying on of hands. How these elements connect within the framework of one ritual event is not clear. But there is no doubt that the laying on of hands functions as an initiation to a position of leadership marked by the Spirit. In the Pastoral Letters the notion of charism occurs only in connection with ordination. The enabling gift of the Spirit is the charism of ministry. The mention of the rite occurs in an exhortative context where Timothy is being reminded of his obligations. Thus it seems that the actual and effective authority of the minister remains based and dependent on the truth of the doctrine they are requested to defend.
11. Also in Acts a connection was assumed between a laying on of hands and the gift of the Spirit. It is, however, an act associated with or following baptism, and when the Seven are selected for a ministry of service and installed in Acts 6 one of the requirements is that they already are "full of Spirit". The laying on of hands that follows their selection does not confer a specific charism but is an act affirming their selection and authorizing them for a specific assignment. Nevertheless, the function of the rite of laying on of hands in Acts 6.6 and 13.3 already come close to what it seems to have in the Pastoral Letters as a prayerful sign of selection and installment to a special task or office.

### *The Early Church*

12. In the history of the Early Church three principal images or models of the office of a bishop in the pre-Nicene period are exemplified in Ignatius, Irenaeus and Cyprian. For Ignatius of Antioch (c.35 – c.107), the bishop is primarily the one who presides at the eucharist. The church, in his view, is essentially eucharistic by its nature: there is an organic relation between the Body of Christ understood as community, and the Body of Christ understood as sacrament. The theme of unity and the interdependent relationship between one bishop, the one eucharistic body, and the one church is common in his writings. It should be kept in mind here that Ignatius wrote at a time when there usually was one bishop and one eucharistic assembly in a city.

13. Irenaeus of Lyon (c.130 – c.200), echoed the eucharistic teaching of Ignatius, but placed more emphasis than Ignatius on the bishop's role as teacher of the faith. The context is the conflict with gnosticism. For Irenaeus, the bishop is above all the one who preserves the continuity of apostolic teaching in succession from the apostles. It is through the bishop's faithful proclamation of the gospel in each local church that unity and continuity in the apostolic tradition is preserved in the church.
14. For Cyprian of Carthage (d.258), there is a clear emphasis on the bishop's ministry as the bond of unity among the local churches within the universal church. Here the collegial aspect of the bishop's role comes to the fore. The bishops are seen as belonging to a worldwide network. They meet in councils and reach a common mind under the Spirit's guidance and are in this way responsible together for maintaining the teaching and the unity of the churches.
15. These three perspectives from the Early Church, whereby the bishops were seen as representing a) bonds of unity between the local churches through the maintenance of eucharistic communion, b) continuity in apostolic teaching, and c) cooperative supervision of the churches, remained important through the Middle Ages in the midst of historical complexities and were also important for the Reformers.
16. From the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, the episkopos came to oversee, not just one eucharistic congregation, but a group of congregations headed by presbyters (although the regions of oversight were often small by modern standards). The "local church" then came to be identified with the wider community of congregations headed by the episkopos and not with the single eucharistic congregation.
17. The history of the Early Church shows the need for personal continuity in the exercise of responsibility regarding the church's proclamation, sacraments and discipline. In this way, the bishops served the unity of the church. At the same time, their ministry did not, and does not, provide a guarantee for the church's continuity in unity and truth.

### *The Reformation*

18. During the Reformation, evangelical Christians confessed in the Augsburg Confession that, to awaken and sustain faith, God instituted the office of ministry through which the word of God is proclaimed and sacraments are celebrated (CA 5). No one ought to exercise this office without a regular call extended by the church (CA 14 and 28). The authority to minister depends finally on God who instituted the office, so that the whole church may receive Christ's word.
19. Martin Luther spoke of all Christian believers as sharing a common, spiritual priesthood in Christ, the High Priest. Based upon 1 Peter and Revelation 1, all Christians are priests (*hieroi*) through faith alone by the spiritual rebirth given in baptism and lived out in witness, intercession and service. God's grace and salvation make all Christians equal before God and prevent their separation into distinct estates or classes. The office of public ministry, because of its origins and authority in God's word, serves all of God's people.

20. Through ordination, a pastor is called to preach, baptize and administer the eucharist in accord with Christ's mandate and promise regarding them. In the central part of the ordination liturgy the gift of the Holy Spirit is prayed for, expressing the dependence of the pastor on God's sustained assistance in all ministerial tasks. Appealing to Christ's ordinance and trusting in his promise a pastor speaks and performs action in the name of Christ. The divine gifts are valid regardless of the unworthiness of ministers (cf. CA 8). As stated in the Apology to the Confessio Augustana: "When [the ministers] offer the Word of Christ or the sacraments, they offer them in the stead and place of Christ. The words of Christ teach us this so that we are not offended by the unworthiness of ministers." <sup>iv</sup>
21. According to Reformation practice, ordination takes place with prayer and the laying on of hands as constitutive elements. God the Holy Spirit ordains and claims the entire person in service to the ministry of word and sacrament. Trusting that these prayers are heard, the commissioning is normally carried out with the words of 1 Peter 5.1b-4. The Reformation theology of ministry is well summarized as follows by a Wittenberg ordination formula: "The ministry of the church is most important and necessary for all churches, and is given and preserved by God alone." <sup>v</sup>
22. In the view of the reformers, the ministry of proclaiming the gospel in word and sacrament is one office. Luther relates the one office fundamentally to the local congregation which assembles at one place for divine worship. With this understanding, Luther's position is very close to that of the Church Fathers for whom the eucharistic community was the primary focus of reflection on the church. In congregational worship, according to both the Church Fathers and the Lutheran reformers, the universal church is present. While word and sacraments are always given locally, they are at the same time marks of the one universal church: "Likewise, they teach that one holy church will remain forever. The church is the assembly of saints in which the gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly" (CA 7).
23. The reformers recognized the value of an episcopal ministry whose task is to ordain and supervise, and made a strong effort to retain the traditional episcopal polity, provided that the officeholders permitted the gospel to be preached (CA 28, Apol. 14) <sup>vi</sup>. In the sixteenth century, however, diocesan bishops in the Holy Roman Empire were generally unwilling to ordain those who followed the Reformation. In those cases, the reformers taught that pastors were legitimate presiders at ordination. For some reformers it was thinkable that in emergency situations, where bishops or pastors were not available for years at a time, congregations themselves could ordain pastors by prayer and laying on of hands.
24. Other historical factors also played a role in the Lutheran Reformation regarding the episcopal ministry. The bishops of the Holy Roman Empire were at the same time secular princes and as such they held prominent positions in public and political institutions. They often used both their secular power in ecclesial matters and their ecclesial power in secular matters in questionable ways, and the duty of proper spiritual leadership was easily neglected. The Reformers severely criticized this state of affairs and emphasized that the primary duty of bishops was to see that the people learn about the gospel and love of Christ (CA 28).

25. As has been documented by historical research, “apostolic succession” understood as a succession of episcopal consecrations as essential to episcopal ministry was not a concept put forward in the Middle Ages and was not an element in the Reformation debates until the 1540s. Nevertheless, Luther spoke openly about the need for succession of ministers in the church: “Now if the apostles, evangelists, and prophets are no longer living, others must have replaced them and will replace them until the end of the world, for the church shall last until the end of the world, and so apostles, evangelists, and prophets must therefore remain, no matter what their name, to promote God’s word and work.”<sup>vii</sup>
26. The one gospel preached in the congregations is a living voice (*viva vox evangelii*). However, the correct preaching of the gospel everywhere cannot be taken for granted, because erroneous teaching is always possible and indeed a reality. Therefore visitations for the purpose of supervision were quickly established in the areas that accepted the Reformation. The reformers clearly recognized and affirmed the need for the ministry of episkopé (superintendents). The Augsburg Confession calls for obedience to bishops by divine right, *de iure divino* (CA 28)<sup>viii</sup>, but also gives the congregations a mandate to refuse obedience to bishops who do not teach according to the gospel. This presupposes the ability of congregations, living in the word of God, to identify the voice of the Good Shepherd (John 10.27) and distinguish true from false teaching.<sup>ix</sup>

### III. Mission and Apostolicity of the Church

27. As the church participates in Christ and receives the blessings of his righteousness, it also participates in the mission of Christ, who is sent by the Father in the Holy Spirit. Christ sends his disciples as he is sent (John 20.21): “So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians. 5.20). The church is called to the service of proclaiming reconciliation with God and practicing the healing love of God in a world wounded by persecution, oppression and injustice, making manifest the mystery of God’s love, God’s presence and God’s Kingdom. The ministry of episkopé, with its special responsibility to care for the unity and growth of the church, should be set in the context of the mission of the church as the whole people of God.
28. Jesus sent Mary Magdalene to “go tell” that she had seen the risen Lord (Matthew 28.10, Luke 24.10, John 20.17b).<sup>x</sup> After Mary Magdalene and the other women told the good news, and after Jesus had appeared to the disciples, they were sent “to make disciples of all nations.” The Risen Christ promises to be with them in this mission “to the end of the age” (Matthew 28.20). The mission to which the apostles were called remains the mission of the whole church throughout history. As this mission shapes the church, so the church is rightly called apostolic.

29. The handing on (*traditio*) of this mission, in which the Holy Spirit makes Christ present as the Word of God, is the primary meaning of apostolic tradition. Apostolic tradition in the church means continuity in the permanent characteristics of the church of the apostles: witness to the apostolic faith, proclamation of the Gospel and faithful interpretation of the Scriptures, celebration of baptism and the eucharist, the exercise and transmission of ministerial responsibilities, communion in prayer, love, joy and suffering, service to the sick and needy, unity among the local churches and sharing the gifts which the Lord has given to each. Continuity in this tradition is apostolic succession.
30. In baptism, every Christian is called and empowered for participation in this mission. God the Holy Spirit pours out his gifts upon the whole church (Ephesians. 4: 11-13; 1 Corinthians. 12.4-11), and raises up men and women to contribute to the nurture of the community. Thus the whole church, and every member, participates in the communication of the gospel through word and life and so participates in the apostolic succession of the church.
31. For Lutherans, apostolic teaching is expressed fundamentally in the Scriptures as the “norming norm” (*norma normans*) of faith, and in the historic ecumenical creeds and the Lutheran confessional writings as “normed norm” (*norma normata*). It unfolds continuously in the traditions of liturgical worship, in art and architecture, music and spiritual literature. The Holy Spirit can use a variety of means to call and maintain the church in the apostolic tradition that constitutes its identity. In this sense the church is as a whole a community of living tradition, taking shape and being expressed in many different ways. As God's gift in Christ through the Holy Spirit, apostolicity is a many-faceted reality expressed in the church's teaching, mission and ministry. God's calling of the church to faithfulness is grounded in God's own faithfulness seeking to preserve the church in the divine truth and love despite the church's brokenness, ambiguity, and unfaithfulness.
32. As churches of Jesus Christ, the Lutheran churches claim this apostolic identity. The Lutheran Reformers saw the apostolic character of the western church's theology and pastoral practice threatened. The Reformation aimed at the renewal of the church catholic in its true continuity with the evangelical mission of the apostles.
33. The church's succession with the apostles has sometimes been identified with only certain isolated forms of continuity. “Apostolic succession” was thus sometimes reduced to specific forms of continuity in episcopal ministry, such as an unbroken chain of the laying on of hands. At the time of the Reformation, the Lutheran churches emphasized different forms of continuity, such as the continuity of the people of God in the faith of the Gospel, continuity of the ordained ministry, and the continuity of place. All Lutheran churches understood themselves to have preserved the one apostolic ministry instituted by God.
34. Recent ecumenical discussions have moved beyond limited views of apostolic succession to a richer and more comprehensive understanding of the apostolic character of the whole church as it continues in the Spirit to pursue the apostolic mission. This deepened understanding has enriched the theology and practice of various churches and has opened new ecumenical possibilities as churches are more able to recognize each other's apostolic character. For this enrichment, Lutherans can only give thanks and seek to be more faithful themselves to the fullness of the apostolic tradition.

#### IV. Ordained Ministry in Service to the Apostolic Mission of the Church

##### *The Apostolicity of the Church and Ordained Ministry*

35. Within the apostolic continuity of the whole church there is a continuity or succession in the ordained ministry. This succession serves the church's continuity in its life in Christ and its faithfulness to the gospel transmitted by the apostles. The ordained ministry, the office of word and sacrament, has a particular responsibility for witnessing to the apostolic tradition and for proclaiming it afresh with authority in every generation.
36. Through baptism persons are initiated into the priesthood of Christ and thus into the mission of the whole church. All the baptized are called to participate in, and share responsibility for, worship (*leitourgia*), witness (*martyria*) and service (*diakonia*). Baptism by itself, however, does not confer an office of ordained ministry in the church. "What is the common property of all, no individual may arrogate to himself, unless he is called."<sup>xi</sup> Ordained servants of the church carry out a specific task within the mission and ministry of the whole people of God.
37. The ordained public ministry of word and sacrament belongs to God's gifts to the church, essential for the church to fulfill its mission. Ordination confers the mandate and authorization to proclaim the word of God publicly and to administer the holy sacraments. This special ministry, conferred by ordination, is, as a service of word and sacrament, necessary for the church to be what God calls it to be. Since this ministry is God's gift, it is not the personal possession of any individual minister. Lutheran churches, along with other churches, ordain ministers for life. But the actual exercise of the ordained ministry is subject to the discipline, rules and regulations of the church.
38. The ordained ministry is a permanent part of the church. For the sake of the church's accountability in the world it must always be clearly identifiable and its service must be exercised according to the missionary requirements of the time and circumstances. As a supplement to the service of the ordained ministry, churches sometimes bless and commission lay Christians to carry out specific tasks which may also belong to the ministerial office. Service in such capacities represents particular aspects of the ministry of the whole church.
39. The ordination of deacons is an open matter in the Lutheran communion globally. Likewise, there is diversity in the understanding of how the ministries of deacons, pastors and ministers of episkopé may relate to each other with reference to the one ordained ministry of the church. Some Lutheran churches have moved far in recognizing one three-fold ministry, whereas others do not see this model as appropriate for them. Generally the Lutheran tradition does not view the diaconal ministry as merely a stage on the way toward pastoral ordination but as a distinct and often lifelong service. It can be a lay ministry or, as is the case in some Lutheran churches, an integral part of the ordained ministry.

*Ordained Ministry of Women and Men*

40. Unfortunately, in the history of the church, the role of women has been obscured to a great extent, for example Junia, whom Paul calls an apostle (Romans. 16). In some cases even their names have been forgotten, such as the woman at the well (John 4) and the prophesying daughters of Philip (Acts 21). For centuries Lutheran churches, like other churches, restricted ordination to men. Today the great majority of Lutherans belong to churches that ordain both women and men. This practice reflects a renewed understanding of the biblical witness. Ordination of women expresses the conviction that the mission of the church requires the gifts of both men and women in the public ministry of word and sacraments, and that limiting the ordained ministry to men obscures the nature of the church as a sign of our reconciliation and unity in Christ through baptism across the divides of ethnicity, social status and gender (cf. Galatians. 3.27-28).
41. The Lutheran World Federation is committed to the ordination of women. The LWF Eighth Assembly stated: “We thank God for the great and enriching gift to the church discovered by many of our member churches in the ordination of women to the pastoral office, and we pray that all members of the LWF, as well as others throughout the ecumenical family, will come to recognize and embrace God’s gift of women in the ordained ministry and in other leadership responsibilities in Christ’s church.”
42. In many member churches of the LWF today, and in the majority of the larger Lutheran churches, women are not only ordained as pastors but are also elected to the episcopal ministry. This is consistent with the Lutheran emphasis on the one office of ordained ministry.

*Episkopé as Exercised in Episcopal Ministry*

43. The communion of local churches requires supervision for the sake of the faithfulness of the church. It is a regional ministry that oversees several parishes or congregations. It serves the purpose of caring for the life of a whole church. Its faithful exercise in the light of the gospel is of fundamental importance to the church’s life. Lutheran churches generally have a regional ministry of episkopé within the one office of word and sacrament, even though this ministry is structured in different ways and is exercised by persons with different titles.
44. The presence and exercise of a special ministry of oversight is consistent with the confessional character of Lutheran churches. The Confessio Augustana affirms the office of bishops in the church (cf. CA 28). Its assumption is that, despite the abuses of worldly power by the bishops in the late Middle Ages, for which the Reformers sought radical change, the proclamation of the gospel is promoted, and not hindered, by the office of supervision in the church, rightly exercised.

45. Episcopal ministry is understood by Lutherans to be a distinct form of the one pastoral office, the *ministerium ecclesiasticum*, and not a separate office. Bishops (and ministers of *episkopé* with other titles) are themselves pastoral ministers of word and sacrament. It is in this perspective that CA 28 states that “according to the gospel, the power of the keys or the power of bishops is the power of God’s mandate to preach the gospel, to forgive and retain sins, and to administer the sacraments. For Christ sent out the apostles with this command [John 20.21-23]: ‘As the Father has sent me, so I send you ... Receive the Holy Spirit.’” Episcopal ministry is pastoral ministry mandated to be exercised at a regional, supra-congregational level.
46. However, as episcopal ministry carries responsibility for larger geographic areas of the church than do pastors of individual parishes or congregations, episcopal ministry is given certain *propria* (specific tasks) which are not shared by pastors at the local level. Episcopal ministers provide leadership to the church in its mission, and an accountable voice of the church in the public sphere.<sup>xii</sup> They are called to give guidance for the common life of the congregations in the region under their care, especially through visitation, and to support their life together. They are given the authority and responsibility to ordain. They supervise teaching and spiritual practices in the church, particularly as exercised by those who are ordained. In all of these *propria*, their particular responsibility is to care for the apostolic faithfulness and the unity of the church at large.
47. As a service of the ordained ministry, mandated and exercised at the regional level of the church, episcopal ministry is exercised personally, collegially and communally. As a ministry of word and sacrament the ministry of *episkopé* is never a merely administrative or institutional matter, but is always carried out personally, on the basis of a personal authorization, commitment and accountability. It stands simultaneously within and over against the community in service to continuity in the apostolic faith.
48. The personal character of the ordained ministry cannot be separated from its collegial aspect. Episcopal ministry must be exercised collegially, together with the ordained ministers of congregations, and together with the other ministers of oversight in the church. Episcopal ministers are called also to maintain substantial collegial relations with colleagues in the *episkopé* of other churches, particularly in the same region of the world, and thereby help to advance the unity of the church of Christ.
49. Episcopal ministry is also exercised communally, in an integral relationship with the different constituencies of the church and their bodies of authority at all levels, promoting communal participation in the discernment of the gospel and common dedication to Christian life in obedience to God’s will. Episcopal ministers are called to exercise their special role of pastoral supervision in interaction and cooperation with the wider Christian community, which thereby impacts constructively on the way in which episcopal ministry itself is carried out.

*Episcopal ministry and synodical structures in church governance*

50. Bishops are called to a special role of oversight in the church, but the wider community also is called to participate in oversight and to judge the way in which episcopal ministry is being carried out. The development of various committees, synods, and institutions sharing tasks of governance with the bishop, is consistent with Lutheran understandings of the church. In Lutheran churches today, church governance is carried out comprehensively through synodical and collegial structures, which include the participation of both lay and ordained persons, and in which the episcopal ministry has a clearly defined role.
51. In the church there is no absolute distinction between the directed and the directing, between the teaching and the taught, between those who decide and those who are the objects of decision. All members of the church, lay and ordained, exercising different ministries, stand under the word of God; all are fallible sinners, but all are baptized and anointed by the Spirit. Mutual accountability binds together ordained ministers and other baptized believers. Episcopal ministry is exercised within the communion of charisms and within the total interplay of ministries in the church.
52. According to Lutheran understanding, the church exercises responsibility for its doctrine and practices through open, critical deliberation and transparent ecclesial processes. These processes, which can often be tension-filled, involve persons and church bodies with different responsibilities, aiming at the building of consensus and consensual action. Together with teachers of theology, pastors in congregations, persons called to a ministry of education and committed lay persons, episcopal ministers are especially called to judge doctrine in the life of the church, and to reject teaching that is contradictory to the gospel. The responsibility of governing bodies in the church (parish councils and church synods) is also to take formal decisions to ensure that the institutional, practical life of the church is in good keeping with the message of the gospel and witnesses to it.

**V. Episcopal Ministry and the Unity of the Church***Unity as an essential attribute of the church*

53. The unity of the faithful consists in their participation by faith in the communion of love between the Father and the Son in the unity of the Spirit. This is a gift which the baptized are given in Christ and which must therefore be received in faith. At the core of the faith is, according to the Lutheran tradition, the conviction that Christ is really present in the Christian community by word and sacrament. Since Christ cannot be divided, unity with God in Christ, made possible through the means of grace, is the fundamental impetus to Christian unity. This unity of the faithful with God is an intimate unity, which consists in their participation in the inner communion of love between the Father and the Son (John 17.20-23), shared in the Holy Spirit. Christian unity should not only be regarded as a goal of human effort. It is first of all a divine gift, to be received joyfully with faith and commitment.

54. For Lutherans, the church is one in the common proclamation of the gospel and celebration of the sacraments (CA 7). Every worshiping congregation around word and sacrament is church in its theological and sacramental meaning. All such congregations are indissolubly connected with each other, transcending human boundaries of nationality, ethnicity, gender and culture, however much they contradict this connection in their daily lives. The communion that we seek ecumenically is made visible in shared forms of proclamation, which includes participation in the one baptism and the one eucharist, and which is upheld by a mutually reconciled ministry. This communion in the means of grace witnesses to the healing and uniting power of the Triune God amidst the divisions of humankind, and represents the global communion of the universal church.
55. All ordained ministers are commissioned to serve the unity and catholicity of the church. Parish pastors exercise this ministry of unity within and among local congregations. Episcopal ministers are called especially to serve the church's unity and its living tradition in ways that are clearly recognizable and accountable. Their ministry shall promote and manifest the spiritual unity of worshipping congregations with each other and with the universal church. For this purpose, episcopal ministers preside at the ordinations of those who are called to exercise an office of ministry. Other ordained and lay persons normally assist in the act of ordination. Theologically speaking, ordination is into the public ministry of the one church, not simply into the ordained ministry of a particular national church or denomination. The presiding minister at an ordination acts on behalf of the whole people of God, thereby serving and representing the unity of the church's ordained ministry.

*Episcopal Ministry, Succession and the constitutive elements of the Church*

56. The continuity of the episcopal ministry is important for the apostolic mission of the church. To serve the continuity of the church's apostolic mission is the primary purpose and meaning of "episcopal succession." This succession is witnessed to in the handing on of the faithful oversight of the apostolic mission, manifesting the church's trust that God will maintain the church in faithfulness. The laying on of hands is a prayer for the exercise of the office which is conferred, and the church is confident that God has answered that prayer over the centuries and will continue to do so. Continuity in episcopal ministry shall bear witness to the church's faithfulness to its apostolic mission, but is no guarantee thereof. Even when episcopal ministry proves unfaithful, which it can do and has done, God's faithfulness holds the church in the truth.
57. Continuity with Christ and the apostles in the church's mission through time and space (diachronically and synchronically) is the fundamental concern in what is generally referred to as "apostolic succession" of the church. This notion also commonly designates the continuity in the ordained ministry through the successive participation in installations (consecrations) of ministers of episkopé by other such ministers. The expression of continuity cannot be historically proved to be an unbroken chain back to Christ and the apostles. The reality of apostolic succession in the church of Christ is not limited to a succession of episcopal ministry. Nevertheless, the fact that installations (consecrations) of episcopal ministers take place with the participation of other such ministers from the same region and from other regions of the world is a way in which churches express their commitment in faith to the unity, catholicity and apostolicity of the church of Christ in history.

58. Absence of this episcopal succession does not necessarily mean that there has been a loss of continuity in apostolic faith. The possibility of recognizing that churches may be apostolic even if they have not preserved the sign of episcopal succession is of great ecumenical significance, since the mutual recognition of ministers exercising episkopé at the supra-congregational level is vital in ecumenical rapprochement among churches. At the same time, a church which has not preserved the sign of historic succession is free to enter a relationship of mutual participation in episcopal installations (consecrations) with a church which has retained it, and thereby to adopt it for itself, without thereby denying its past apostolic continuity. The readiness of Lutheran churches to recognize the value of the sign of apostolicity in the historic succession of episcopal ministers and to adopt this sign, without requiring its necessity, is a contribution to the ecumenical movement.
59. Installation (consecration) of episcopal ministers in the Lutheran tradition includes laying on of hands with prayer for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Normally at least three other episcopal ministers participate in this action. In several Lutheran churches pastors and also lay persons may in addition participate in the laying on of hands. The participation of episcopal ministers from non-Lutheran churches is a sign of the shared unity and apostolicity of the universal church. In installation (consecration) of episcopal ministers the sign of apostolic succession is expressed by the participation of episcopal ministers (Lutheran or others) who have themselves received this sign.

## VI. Looking Toward the Future

60. Ecumenically, the reconciliation of ministries of word and sacrament is a central concern for the churches of the world as they increase in mutual theological understanding and in shared life and service. Mutual recognition of ministers of episkopé, with their different titles, is of special significance in the search for the visible unity of the church as it strives toward that fullness which remains God's gift and desire for God's people (Ephesians. 1.17-23).
61. As the Lutheran churches continue to develop their theology of ministry in the face of the many challenges posed within their respective contexts, substantial communication is required, both among themselves and ecumenically, on issues pertaining to the ordained ministry and its role in the church. The understanding and the shape of episcopal ministry is an important topic in this regard. Among issues worthy of common consideration are the liturgical orders for installation (consecration) of episcopal ministers and how they specify and convey this ministry, e.g. in relation to the ministerium ecclesiasticum. There is also a need for the Lutheran churches to develop a broader common understanding of how episcopal ministry points to the diaconal dimensions of the apostolic tradition and also of how the personal, collegial and communal dimensions of episkopé take shape in practice. Ecumenical awareness should always be present as the churches devote their attention to these issues.

62. Various questions related to the exercise of episcopal ministry are being raised in various churches. In visitation of congregations, episcopal ministers exercise their role as teachers of the church's faith and guides for the overall life of congregations. In fulfilling their functions episcopal ministers are called to be available to clergy as *pastor pastorum* (pastor of the pastors). As they set priorities in these areas episcopal ministers will provide forms of leadership that are truly shared, facilitating collaborative styles of ministry. The interrelation of the spiritual oversight of the church and the worldly tasks of governance and administration remains a challenge for all churches. The Lutheran tradition of the two "regiments" of God is a resource for theological reflection on this problem. Another important issue is whether the administrative responsibilities related to the church systems has become so time consuming that little opportunity remains for theological discernment with regard to preaching and witness.
63. Attention is also drawn ecumenically to the personal life and faith of those called to exercise episcopal ministry. Episcopal ministers are called to demonstrate humility and simplicity of life. The profile of their ministry is not one of domination, but of service, showing clear awareness of those on the margins of society. Episcopal ministers are expected to show firm rootedness in the liturgical life of the church by regularly leading services of word and sacraments themselves, and by providing support for processes of renewal of the church's life of worship. Episcopal ministers must set aside the necessary time and space for their own prayer, study and recreation, thereby also setting a much needed example for all the ordained and lay persons as well.

## VII. Conclusion

64. The Reformation was fundamentally concerned with the apostolicity of the church in faithfulness to the gospel of God's grace in Jesus Christ, upheld by the proclamation of the word and by the sacraments, received in faith. In relation to the ministry of *episkopé* the churches of the Lutheran Communion around the world maintain and develop forms and practices to serve their divine mission. This statement articulates perspectives for deepened understanding of episcopal ministry and its role of service to the whole church. As in all matters, our final trust is not, however, in the strength of our convictions, the clarity of our analysis, or the wisdom of our advice, but in the Lord whom all ministry is called to serve, Jesus Christ, who, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, is worthy of eternal praise.

## APPENDIX TO THE LUND STATEMENT:

### Stages in the development of this statement

The present statement has been developed through the following stages:

1999

In 1999 the LWF Council approved a study programme for the Office for Ecumenical Affairs, to be carried out in cooperation with the Institute for Ecumenical Research, Strasbourg, and the Department for Theology and Studies, on “Lutheran Identity in Ecumenical Relationships.” The programme plan referred to the need for the LWF to clarify its profile as a communion in certain areas and the first issue to be considered was “Lutheran identity pertaining to the historic episcopate.”

2000

In August 2000 a consultation was organized in Geneva on “The Ecumenical Profile of Lutheran Churches Relating Simultaneously to Churches of Episcopal and Non-Episcopal Traditions.” The papers presented were collected in a compendium.

2001-2002

In 2001 and 2002 regional meetings were organized on the topic of the episcopal ministry with representatives of LWF member churches in 1) Columbia, South Carolina (USA), 2) Oslo (Norway), 3) São Leopoldo (Brazil), and 4) Budapest (Hungary). For these meetings the LWF study document “Ministry – Women – Bishops” (1993), which contains substantial sections on the episcopal ministry, was provided and discussed. The OEA also participated in a pastors’ conference on the episcopal ministry in Meiganga (Cameroon), arranged by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cameroon. Unfortunately it was not possible to arrange for an Asian regional consultation. At the Council meetings of 2001 and 2002 the project was discussed in the Standing Committee for Ecumenical Affairs.

2002

In November 2002 a consultation was organized in Malta of Lutheran members of the different international dialogue commissions where the LWF is a partner. Prior to the meeting a substantial draft was developed for a statement on the Lutheran understanding of the episcopal ministry based on ecumenical documents and on relevant LWF studies.<sup>xiii</sup> Several papers were presented, which developed topics related to the overall theme. The draft text was thoroughly reworked and a statement was agreed upon called “The Episcopal Ministry within the Apostolicity of the Church. A Lutheran Statement 2002”, referred to as the Malta Statement.

2003

In the spring of 2003 a booklet with the Malta Statement in four languages was sent to the LWF member churches for their study and response. The project was also mentioned in the Six-Year Report to the LWF Tenth Assembly under the heading, “How do Lutherans understand the ministry of bishops in the church?” and the quadrilingual booklet was distributed for information to all the participants at the Assembly.

## 2004

In 2004 the Council formally received the responses to the Statement from LWF member churches and requested that a small group present a report in 2005 on possible amendments of the text.

## 2005

The 2005 Council meeting was presented with a report with a comprehensive overview of the responses from the member churches. The Council voted to receive this report and to ask that a new text be developed on the basis of the 2002 Statement, taking into consideration the responses received. For this purpose it appointed a Working Group consisting of Prof. Dr Joachim Track (LWF Executive Committee), Prof. Dr Theodor Dieter (the Institute for Ecumenical Research, Strasbourg), Rev. Dr Randall Lee (Director for Ecumenical Affairs ELCA), and Rev. Sven Oppegaard (LWF Office for Ecumenical Affairs). As part of its procedure the working group sent the report on the responses to all member churches, inviting them to see whether their concerns had been properly registered. No church sent in further comments as a result of this. In addition, the Malta Statement was sent to the main dialogue partners for their comment. A substantial response was received from the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission for Ecumenical Relations (IASCER).

## 2006

In light of the comments and proposals received a new text was developed by the Working Group, building on the Malta Statement. The new text was also considerably expanded, by a biblical section, drawing on contributions from Prof. Dr Turid Karlsen Seim, and a section on the Early Church, building on observations made in the response from IASCER (cf. above). The new text was presented to the LWF Executive Committee, which acted to recommend it to the 2007 Council meeting in Lund.

## 2007

In 2007 the Working Group carried out further editorial work in consultation with the Department for Theology and Studies and presented a revised text to the Programme Committee for Ecumenical Affairs at the 2007 Council meeting in Lund. In conjunction with this Council meeting an LWF Church Leader's Conference was held and the 60th anniversary of the LWF was celebrated. The Programme Committee considered the revised text in detail and added its own amendments to it, in light of proposals received from regional meetings and a Consultation of Lutheran Women Bishops, Presidents and Leaders in the Ministry of Oversight.

Upon the recommendation of the Programme Committee for Ecumenical Affairs the Council voted:

- to thank the member churches for their cooperation in the process leading to the text "Episcopal Ministry within the Apostolicity of the Church – The Lund Statement by the Lutheran World Federation – A Communion of Churches – March 2007";
- to express appreciation to the drafting group for its substantial involvement in the development of the text;
- to affirm the text as an appropriate current expression of the Lutheran understanding of the ministry of oversight;
- to receive the text as a statement by the LWF, and
- to ask the General Secretary to submit the text to the member churches for study and appropriation in their different contexts.

## i ECUMENICAL DOCUMENTS:

The present statement is to a great extent developed using formulations from agreed texts that have been achieved multilaterally as well as between Lutherans and ecumenical partners in bilateral dialogues:

- A. Several perspectives regarding the episcopal ministry in relation to the apostolic tradition of the church, which have subsequently found a place in ecumenical documents, were presented in the WCC/Faith and Order study document “Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry,” in 1982.
- B. Among reports from bilateral dialogues involving Lutherans at the international level, the following have considered the topic of the present statement most directly:
- “The Ministry in the Church”  
Report of the Lutheran/Roman Catholic Joint Commission, 1982.
  - The Niagara Report.  
Report of the Anglican-Lutheran Consultation on Episcopate, 1987.
  - “Church and Justification”  
Report of the Lutheran/Roman Catholic Joint Commission, 1994.
  - “Called to Communion and Common Witness”  
Report of the Lutheran-Reformed Joint Working Group, 2002.
  - “Growth in Communion”  
Report of the Anglican-Lutheran International Working Group, 2002.
- C. Among reports from dialogues involving Lutherans at the regional level the following have considered the topic of this statement most directly:
- The Meissen Common Statement  
By the Church of England, the Evangelical Church in Germany and the Federation of the Evangelical Churches in the GDR, 1988.
  - The Porvoo Common Statement  
By the British and Irish Anglican Churches and Nordic and Baltic Lutheran Churches, 1993.
  - The Reuilly Common Statement  
By the British and Irish Anglican Churches and the French Lutheran and Reformed Churches, 1997.
  - “Called to Common Mission”  
An Agreement of Full Communion between the Episcopal Church in the USA and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 1999.
  - “Called to Full Communion”  
The Waterloo Declaration by the Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, 1999.
  - “Communio Sanctorum. Die Kirche als Gemeinschaft der Heiligen”  
By the Bilateral Working Group of the German Roman Catholic Bishops’ Conference and the Kirchenleitung of the United Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Germany.

## ii EARLIER LUTHERAN STUDY DOCUMENTS ON THE ORDAINED MINISTRY:

LWF studies with direct relevance to the topic of the present statement have been conducted earlier. The reports from these studies also provide a significant part of the basis for the present statement. The documents are published in the study book “Ministry: Women, Bishops”, LWF Geneva 1993.

The individual documents in this publication are:

- “The Lutheran Understanding of Ministry”, 1983.
- “Lutheran Understanding of the Episcopal Office”, 1983.
- “Women in the Ministries of the Church”, 1983.
- Report from “Consultation on the Ordained Ministry of Women and Men”, 1992.

iii Cf. The Apostolicity of the Church: Study Document of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity (Minneapolis, 2007). part 1.

iv Apology 28, In R. Kolb and T. J. Wengert (eds.): The Book of Concord 2000, page 178.

v “Res maxima et necessaria est omnibus ecclesiis ministerium ecclesiae et a deo solo datum et conservatum.” WA 38, 423, 21-25; LW 53, 124.

vi Cf. also Melanchthon’s remarks on the Regensburger Buch in Corpus Reformatorum 4, 367f.

vii On the Councils and the Church, LW 41, 155.

viii. Although the use of the expression *de iure divino* is used in the Augsburg Confession only with regard to the power of bishops, this does not imply that the office of bishop is distinct from the one ordained ministry by divine right. The manner in which CA 28 specifies the areas in which the bishops have authority by divine right, or “according to the gospel”, are just those areas for which the ordained ministry as such is instituted, i.e. “to preach the gospel, to forgive or retain sins...”etc.

ix Martin Luther, “That a Christian Assembly or Congregation Has the Right and Power to Judge All Teaching and to Call, Appoint, and Dismiss Teachers, Established and Proven by Scripture” LW 39, 305-314.

x An ancient church tradition understands Mary Magdalene as an “apostle to the apostles” (Hippolytus ... )

xi The Babylonian Captivity of the Church. LW 36, 116; WA 6, 566.

- xii Cf. *The Diaconal Ministry in the Mission of the Church*, LWF Studies 01/2006. This book contains the statement and the main presentations from an international consultation on the diaconal ministry. Churches are challenged to reexamine how they understand and order the diaconal ministry as a core component of the church's mission in the world.
- xiii Lutheran bishops/ministers of episkopé have frequently exercised a function of this kind in the public sphere. So far, that function has not received sufficient theological or church-legal elaboration. This points to a remaining challenge within Lutheranism.

## ANNEX 3

**MEMBERS OF THE WORKING GROUP ON PASTORAL OVERSIGHT**

The Reverend Gwynn ap Gwilym .....	The Church in Wales
The Reverend Dr Bernard Sixtus .....	The Church in Wales
The Reverend John Henson .....	The Covenanting Baptist Churches
The Reverend Cathy Gale .....	The Methodist Church in Wales
The Reverend Gordon Sollis .....	The Methodist Church in Wales
The Reverend Marcus Robinson .....	The Presbyterian Church of Wales
The Reverend Adrian Williams .....	The Presbyterian Church of Wales
The Reverend Stuart Jackson .....	The United Reformed Church
Ms Rhian Linecar .....	Cytûn Faith, Order & Witness Officer

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The Reverend Dr Sarah Rogers	
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The Reverend Dr Bernard Sixtus	
<i>(Church in Wales observer on the Joint Implementation Commission for the Covenant between the Methodist Church of Great Britain and the Church of England.....)</i>	Observers
The Reverend Dr Siôn Aled Owen.....	Simultaneous Translator

\* also a Methodist representative on the Joint Implementation Commission for the Covenant between the Methodist Church of Great Britain and the Church of England.