

The Identity of Diaconal Ministry

I. The Call to Diaconal Ministry

The Power of Diaconal Ministry

At some point prior to or soon after a Diaconal Minister's consecration, the individual will be asked to explain Diaconal Ministry. This is understandable. As a new form of rostered ministry in the ELCA many Pastors, Deaconesses, Associates in Ministry, and people in the pew are unfamiliar with Diaconal Ministry. But coupled with basic questions are usually ones that are more difficult. This is especially the case when one is asked to distinguish Diaconal Ministry from being a Pastor, AIM, or Deaconess, and it also is present when a distinction is requested between being a Diaconal Minister and an "ordinary" lay person. Function and role are the likely subjects of inquiry. Sometimes a question may be phrased as "what does Diaconal Ministry (and/or consecration) enable you to do?" Similar questions include: What are you able to do that you could not do before? With whom will you vote at church assemblies—clergy or lay? Can you preside at the Eucharist? Will you wear a stole? What is your proper title? Can you preach?

As is so often the case, the questions themselves often reveal more than the answers. In many cases the underlying question present is about power: What *power* do Diaconal Ministers have? For some it is a perceived concern that power among one group or form of ministry may be usurped by Diaconal Ministry, and for others it is a desire to clarify a hierarchy that seems to exist above the "ordinary" laity. The problem is that these questions change the focus of Diaconal Ministry from the Gospel and the

mission of the church to the supposed powers of the individual assuming leadership responsibility. They also assume that there is a limited “pie” of ministry that will have to be re-cut if another piece is to be created, taking away from others in order for Diaconal Ministers to have their own distinctive piece.

Of course, concerns about power and authority are not new to the church. In his epistles to the Romans and the Corinthians, St. Paul also considered the inter-relationship of gifts for ministry as well as questions about hierarchy and power (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:3-11, 27-30). Paul’s answer was to use the image of Christ’s body to explain the blessed diversity of gifts for ministry. Tying this to Diaconal Ministry, Rick Carlson states that:

From a Pauline perspective, diaconal ministry is a functional ministry stemming from our embodied reality in Christ. By first understanding Paul’s vision of our embodied reality, we are better able to understand how the Spirit empowers folks such as diaconal ministers for particular ministerial functions. On the one hand, the Spirit is producing the same fruit in diaconal ministers that it produces in each baptized Christian. Diaconal ministers do not have the corner on the market for love or joy or kindness. On the other hand, diaconal ministers are given particular gifts by the Spirit for implementing or stewarding particular ministries in the body. By utilizing these gifts through their calls to ministry, diaconal ministers contribute to the proper functioning of the whole body.¹

One cannot speak of competition because all are one, and one cannot speak of independence or power because all are dependent upon each other. Even more, the Holy Spirit empowers all to work together towards a common goal. Paul changes the terms of the discussion from power to the embodiment of Christ and from a hierarchy of gifts to the Holy Spirit who is the single source of them all.

It makes sense to begin with the language of power and the logic of hierarchy because that is the way the world works. As a result, Diaconal Ministry may appear as

foolishness because its power is “only” the Gospel. Just as Deacon Lawrence (250 AD) proclaimed to dumbfounded Roman leaders that the treasures of the church were the sick, crippled and blind, so Diaconal Ministers claim that their only power is the crucified Christ. For many today, like the officials of the ancient Roman Empire, this will be nonsensical, and Diaconal Ministry will be judged a waste of time, effort, and resources for both candidates and the church. However, the foolish logic that is the theology of the cross teaches that true power is not to be found where it is expected—in new-found ecclesiastical authority, titles, privileges or rites. Rather, in response to Word and Sacrament, Diaconal Ministry finds power in a yoke of servitude and in an alliance with those who suffer. Nothing other than the language and logic of Christ’s Gospel will ever allow Diaconal Ministry to make sense.

Since its origin and continuing source is the Gospel, Diaconal Ministry is never about the person who is being or has been consecrated just as it is not about what the newly consecrated Diaconal Minister can or can not do. The real issues are how Diaconal Ministry changes the church and strengthens its faithfulness to the Gospel, not how Diaconal Ministry changes the person consecrated.ⁱⁱ Because of this, the best question to ask and answer is: “How will the church be different now that you are a Diaconal Minister?” To this question, all Diaconal Ministers should be prepared to account. Diaconal Ministers need not worry about perceived power or lack of it. The important issue is what gifts, skills and abilities Diaconal Ministers bring to the church’s mission and ministry. Diaconal Ministers can share with the church knowledge and experience of the world’s needs so that as the church all Christians might better minister together, sharing Christ’s love in word and deed to a world that needs it so desperately.

With others, Diaconal Ministers hope that “renewed diaconal ministry will generate a more expansive understanding of the mission of the church.”ⁱⁱⁱ The ELCA Study for Ministry recognized this possibility when it provided one of the rationales for instituting Diaconal Ministry:

At a personal and social level, suffering, confusion, helplessness, discrimination, intolerance, ignorance, alienation, self-gratification, greed and loneliness seem to be more prevalent than ever before. Injustice is not on the decline. Depersonalization is the inevitable companion of technology and bureaucracy.^{iv}

The world continues to suffer because of the fruits of sin, and all Christians are called to respond, equipped with the fruits of the spirit. The establishment of Diaconal Ministry does not seek to divide existing needs and forms of ministry in some new division of labor. Rather, the need for ministry is escalating. More workers are needed in the vineyard that is the in-breaking Kingdom of God.

The language often used to describe these changes is the move from “Christendom” to a period after or “post” Christendom. In this new time, Christians can no longer assume that most Americans share our faith or the value commitments that flow from that faith, and so our context for ministry is different from our American Lutheran forebears. The world immediately around us is increasingly strange, not necessarily hostile towards the Gospel but not necessarily friendly either. Increasing religious diversity, doubts about “organized religion,” and questions about the proper legal boundaries between church and state all contribute to the change. In this new reality, we see too that the missionary field is no longer exclusively overseas; it is among us. Our neighbors have not heard the good news of Jesus Christ; people are suspicious of

religion, preferring a personal, almost Gnostic, spirituality; and horrible social ills are present alongside vast amounts of wealth and malaise.

Whereas Christendom tended to conflate church and world into one (i.e., “America is a Christian nation”), their increasing distinctiveness reveals the need for a more active ministry by the church to the world’s brokenness. In *The Once and Future Church*, Loren Mead describes our new period of post-Christendom as an opportunity for ministry. Since all neighborhoods and communities are in need of ministry, all Christians must more actively claim their role as ministers, reaffirming the calling and the vocation of the baptized in everyday life.^v Even more, our evangelism may occur best in deed rather than in Word alone. As Douglas John Hall argues, the barriers to a direct proclamation of the Christian story are great in North America. By actively ministering to the world’s brokenness, Christians have the opportunity in their ministries to be faithful to the incarnate God, utilizing an evangelical strategy more effective than proclamation alone. God’s promises in Jesus Christ cannot be “empty promises” but must be filled with the material, emotional and intellectual necessities of human existence.^{vi} Diaconal Ministry was not established for a chosen few to do this ministry; Diaconal Ministers are called and consecrated to lead the baptized in the ministry of *diakonia* that we all share.

The Call to *DIAKONIA*

In baptism, all Christians are called to ministry, and so all Christians are engaged in the ministry of *diakonia*—service in Christ’s name. The actions may be simple or complex, personal or abstract, long-term or only a few hours, paid or unpaid. Regardless,

Christians are constantly serving their neighbors through many good works as parents, friends, workers, citizens and volunteers, but these works are not intended to gain the favor of God. As the Augsburg Confession states, “Faith is bound to bring forth good fruits ... and it is necessary to do the good works commanded by God.”^{vii} But the good works of *diakonia* do not seek salvation; instead, they are a response to God’s action for us in Jesus Christ. Faith in God through Christ becomes active in love, and love seeks justice. It is in loving gratitude for the forgiveness of our sins and for our justification before God that we serve.

The common mistake among many (including some modern Lutherans) is that Lutheran theology has no place for good works. On the contrary, Luther and the early Reformers spoke highly of good works and commended them often, but they emphasized that such works were a consequence of the grace of God and not the cause of that grace. Much of Luther’s own attack against good works (and as a result the ministry of *diakonia*) responded to his own experience trying to live a life based on good works as an Augustinian monk.^{viii} What Luther came to understand was that a life based on good works was impossible, and through the impossible possibility of Christ’s life, death and resurrection, he could live a life with good works not as the cause but as the fruit of the Gospel in his life.

As a response to the Gospel, the faith that becomes the ministry of *diakonia* finds its origins in Word and Sacraments. In these means, Christians hear the call of God, and in response to that call good works result. In baptism, the promises of God are communicated in the Word and the Word as water, and the sacrament of baptism functions as a new birth and a source of new being as Christians share in the life, death

and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 6:3-11). Martin Luther taught that baptism was the basis for a priesthood of all believers; it is a call and ordination to a ministry of proclamation and service in the name of our risen Lord Jesus Christ. As a result, all have a “Christian vocation,” and all are “called.” All this means that the ministry of *diakonia* is not limited to a special few. *Diaconal Ministers share with the whole people of God the ministry of diakonia as well as the constant and repeated need for the Word and Sacraments to empower that ministry.*

Through hearing the Word, daily reminders of baptism, and regular eating and drinking at the altar, Christians are prepared and strengthened to do ministry. To serve, selfishness must be drowned, knowledge must replace ignorance, and faith must be fed to overcome fear and doubt. In the *Small Catechism*, Luther counsels Christians to relive their baptism daily “so that the old Adam in us, together with all sins and evil lusts” will be destroyed. Even more, baptism is a means to discover anew who we are, and to know who we are in baptism requires us to learn about the identity of Jesus Christ because that is in whose image we are being made. Likewise, we do not eat the Eucharist in order that it will become a part of us, but we eat and drink so that we will be transformed into the Christ whose presence we consume. We recognize that the good works, service and ministry that we do as Christians are not of our own doing, but it is the Word of God working in and through us. God’s will shall be done, and we pray that we might be willing instruments in the doing.^{ix} Our prayer is always that we will become more and more like the New Adam who is Jesus Christ, recognizing that this transformation will not be by our own power but by the grace of God.

For this reason, *diakonia* is a ministry *of* Word and Sacrament because it is a ministry *from* and *by* the Word and Sacraments. The Word and Sacraments are working and doing ministry through us. Duane Larson has emphasized this point by distinguishing between the objective and subjective genitive uses of the preposition “of.”

A subjective interpretation of “of” ... would denote the all ministry that is stimulated by Word and Sacrament. Here ministry occurs out of—or from—Word and Sacrament. It is the ministry that Word and Sacrament intend for us to do and for which Word and Sacrament strengthen us.^x

Bishop William Lazareth has similarly described how a “ministry *for* the gospel, carried out by our atoning savior in God’s Kingdom” becomes a “ministry *by* the gospel, carried out by the baptized, however deployed, in and for God’s world.”^{xi}

Article V of the Augsburg Confession thus refers less to an “office” of ministry than to how God ministers to us and through us via the “means” of Word and Sacraments. Article VI on good works necessarily follows Article V, demonstrating that the fruits of Word and Sacraments are the love and service of others.

Through the power of Word and Sacraments, Christians are made into the form of Christ; Luther went so far as to say that our calling is to be Christs for our neighbors. By this transformation we are placed into relationship with Christ’s own ministry of *diakonia*.^{xii} Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus showed special compassion for outcasts and the most vulnerable in society. He befriended and ate with tax collectors, prostitutes and other marginalized sinners, and he demonstrated concern not only for the spiritual welfare of people but also for their ignorance, health, and physical well-being. Jesus was known to many because of his ministry of healing (Matthew 20:29-34, Mark 6:53-56, Mark 9:14-29). When He fed the thousands, the Gospels describe how Jesus

had compassion on the crowd and wanted to give them something to eat (Matthew 15:32). The teachings of Jesus also reveal His mission of service, and He identifies Himself so closely with the weak and vulnerable that our service to them is service to Him (Matthew 25:31-45).

We also see in the teachings of Jesus much instruction as to His own self-identity as a servant and the consequences of that on the identity of His disciples. Very early in His ministry, Jesus proclaims the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy of the servant who will "bring good news to the poor ... proclaim release to the captives and recovery of the sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18). He also scolds His disciples when they try to discern their relative greatness, stating that whoever wishes to be great must be a servant to the others (Matthew 20:20-28, Mark 9:35). Jesus criticizes the leadership of the scribes and Pharisees in the same way, cautioning His disciples not to be lords but servants. And in perhaps the most powerful expression of all, Jesus demonstrates His identity as a servant by washing the disciples' feet in John 13, and he calls on them to do likewise.

After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them (John 13: 12-17).

In response to this action and teaching of Jesus, the symbol of *diakonia* is the bowl and the towel. It represents Christ's own servanthood and our shared call to service—*diakonia*—in His name.

To the life-transforming experience of Jesus in Word and Sacrament, another call is added. We hear the call of God in the cries of those who are in need. The Exodus story tells of God hearing the call of Israel and then instructing Moses to answer the people. The call of the people became the call to Moses. In our own day, calls can be heard from the ignorant, the poor, the abused, the lonely, the hungry, the sick, and so many others who suffer because of the world's brokenness in sin. In these calls, we can discern the call of God as well, directing us to where our gifts and abilities most enable us to serve.^{xiii} The ministry of *diakonia* requires a trained ear to hear these cries since our culture and our own sinfulness lead us to ignore them and eventually not hear them at all. It may also require or involve more specialized training that enables us to meet the distinctive needs of those heard.

A significant aspect of Diaconal Ministry is sensitivity to the cries and calls of others. Special sensitivity is a gift that Diaconal Ministers offer and have the opportunity to share with all the baptized. This gift can be developed through the study of the humanities, arts, and the social sciences as well as various sub-cultures and cultural expressions.^{xiv} Personal experience and connections can heighten it too. Devotional study and discernment with scripture further enable us to see through the ministry of Jesus and His prophetic forebears God's great concern for justice and the oppressed. Each of these approaches (study, devotion, and experience) allows us to hear voices that we might not otherwise hear, and they train us to be better listeners to the "underside" of our society and world. All can be important parts of the preparatory and continued theological education of Diaconal Ministers.

The Call to Leadership

From the beginning, the work of *diakonia* has been a part of the church and Christians life, and from that time certain individuals have been called by the church to serve as leaders in that ministry. Although scholars of the bible continue to debate the meaning of the early sources on the diaconate, there is vast agreement that the office of deacon evolved very early in the church as a position of leadership in the ministry of *diakonia*. However, by the fourth century, the office of deacon in the Western church had begun to fade in prominence, and the office became largely a transition to the office of presbyter or priest. Texts from the early councils of the church indicate that there was some concern about the leadership of deacons, and efforts were made by these councils to reduce the deacon's prominence. James Mead has argued that the decline of the diaconate is traceable to the fourth century because this was when Constantine fused Christianity to the Roman Empire, creating Christendom and the Constantinian synthesis that may now only be breaking. Christendom moved many diaconal concerns to the realm of the state, and other diaconal elements (especially works of charity) found home in the monasteries that began to take hold in large number during this same period.^{xv}

At the time of the Reformation, Martin Luther praised the diaconal office and called for its recovery, and both ad hoc and more structured forms of the diaconate have occurred throughout Lutheran churches into the present day.^{xvi} It seems that whenever the church has become aware of the pain and suffering around it as well as the need for more leadership, there have been renewed calls for *diakonia* and those who will lead it. This was especially the case with the Inner Mission movement of Lutherans in Europe and the United States during the nineteenth century. This is the period and context in

which we see the emergence of the deaconess movement in Germany and its export to America and other lands.^{xvii} The ministry of the Deaconess has always been “exercised within the context of the church’s mission to proclaim the Gospel, to relate the Gospel to human need in every situation, and to extend ministry of the Gospel to all the world.”^{xviii} In the United States, the Deaconess movement continues to thrive based on the theological ideals of its founding. A variety of Lutheran social ministries and institutions (hospitals, schools, care homes, etc.) have also emerged since the nineteenth century under the leadership of deaconesses, pastors and lay church leaders.

While all Christians are called to the ministry of *diakonia*, some Christians have been blessed with gifts and entrusted by the church with leadership responsibilities for diaconal work. Diaconal Ministers are among those leaders. The designation of leadership within the church is not intended to create a hierarchy among the baptized even if some of those leaders are ordained, consecrated or commissioned. Rather, leaders serve best when they seek to empower and enable others in ministry. Like all Christians, they realize that they are mere beggars before the Lord, dependent upon the Word and Sacraments to sustain them in their ministry of *diakonia* and in the leadership of that work. Diaconal Ministers do not seek to be “above” anyone—ordained or lay—in the ministry of *diakonia*. As leaders, they seek only to be “the servants of the servants of God.”

Discernment of the call to leadership is a key aspect of the candidacy process and the confirmation of a call that this process entails. Since all Christians are called to the ministry of *diakonia*, a simple desire to serve or even a sense of calling to serve in a particular area cannot be the whole basis for rostered ministry within the ELCA.

Candidates, seminaries, candidacy committees, and newly consecrated Diaconal Ministers should seek to discern the leadership gifts and abilities that need to be developed for effective Diaconal Ministry with a recognition that there will be great diversity in gifts and types of leadership. The confirmation of the call to leadership also occurs in the call process in which candidates and Diaconal Ministers work with synod staff, congregations and/or other agencies to determine whether their gifts for leadership meet the specific needs of that place at that time. The call process, when done well, provides affirmation to both the person called and the organization doing the calling. The former says, “my gifts and leadership will be used well here,” and the latter says, “This person brings the gifts and leadership that we need for our ministry.”

The complexity and challenges of leadership may result in failures or disappointments. This is the normal result of ministering within and to a sinful world. It may even be necessary at times for Bishops, congregations, agencies, or Diaconal Ministers themselves to make a decision that they are no longer effective as leaders. Under no circumstance, however, do temporary failures or decisions to leave Diaconal Ministry undermine the ongoing call to the shared ministry of *diakonia* as part of the community of the baptized. Our joy and success in ministry is not of our own doing but comes exclusively from what Christ does for us. In the face of adversity, we can be confident that God’s grace is sufficient for us.

One of the primary leadership responsibilities of Diaconal Ministry is “equip(ing) the baptized for ministry in the world and in the church.”^{xix} Regardless of the setting and call, Diaconal Ministers help others do the work of *diakonia*. And there is so much work to be done! Diaconal Ministers often do this through forms of education, programs and

aiding others in discerning their particular gifts for ministry. As the Study for Ministry lamented, “The church . . . has yet to acknowledge and achieve the full potential of the priesthood of all believers.”^{xx} Too many Christians do not claim the responsibility and opportunity for ministry as their own by virtue of their baptism; too many feel inadequate or unprepared to do ministry (even though they are likely to be doing it anyway); and too many long for a church and congregations that will do more to prepare and empower them for ministry in daily life. While there is always a need for more volunteers in congregations and social ministry organizations, Diaconal Ministers facilitate this and more. Leadership of *diakonia* entails making Christians aware of the consequences of their baptism and that as new beings in Christ they have the opportunity to serve in all that they do—as parents, workers, friends, citizens, church members and social services volunteers. We reduce both the ministry of *diakonia* and the leadership of Diaconal Ministry if they are limited to ecclesiastical settings.

To carry out this call to leadership, Diaconal Ministers are required to have training in a certain area of service. As a part of the candidacy process, Diaconal Ministers must demonstrate that they have a competency and/or expertise in a field, discipline or profession that will enable them to serve both within and outside congregations and official church settings. Often our gifts must be developed and refined through a process of education and discernment. But expertise is not to “lord over” others or even for the private benefit of the one serving or the one being served. It is to be used as a means to equip and empower others through various programmatic ministries as well as in creating links between the church and the world. The field, discipline or profession of the Diaconal Minister will expose him or her to the sin, hurt

and brokenness of the world, and it is here that the Diaconal Minister hears the call and cry of the those in need. Continued study in the field as well as exploring new and related areas enables the Diaconal Minister to better serve and guide others. A significant aspect of the formal continuing education and the First Call Theological Education of Diaconal Ministers should be exploring the intersection of one's specialization and one's call as a Diaconal Minister.

By being leaders of the baptized and also possessing a recognized competency in a "secular" field or discipline, Diaconal Ministers themselves "bridge the gap" between the church and the world. They stand in both simultaneously (as all Christians do), but as leaders they symbolize and exemplify a life of Christ-like service. This does not make their service better than that of anyone else, nor is it meant to create hierarchy or awe. As examples and symbols, Diaconal Ministers motivate the service of others. Just as Christ washed the disciples feet in order that they would do likewise, so Diaconal Ministers serve publicly with expertise and leadership so that others might also serve in Christ's name. Leaders are both actors themselves and examples to follow. The latter may or may not involve preparation, but it is something that all leaders must understand and accept for the their on-going leadership to remain effective.

Of course, in our pragmatic time symbols often have little place, and many will want to focus exclusively on the practical and necessary tasks accomplished (i.e., "What exactly do Diaconal Ministers do?").^{xxi} To legalistic accusations that call for justification of one's ministry and leadership, a simple evangelical answer is: "it depends." What the Diaconal Minister does is not the point as much as how the Diaconal Minister represents the church when it is done. The freedom of the Gospel means that the ministry of

diakonia may take Diaconal Ministers into strange places (business corporations, synod offices, and funeral homes) as well as to places where *diakonia* is more familiar (classrooms, hospitals, and homeless shelters). Wherever a Diaconal Minister is called or serves, all involved should know that the Diaconal Minister, as a rostered leader of the church, represents the church in that setting. Even more, the presence of the Diaconal Minister claims that setting as a place of public ministry by the church. For the Diaconal Minister, this entails great responsibilities—especially for those who serve in avowedly secular settings.

The call to leadership in the church's ministry can be precarious because it can be all consuming. Too many leaders become burned out (or are burnt up) after only a limited time. A common problem is that new leaders fail to develop a sense of balance between their personal and ministerial identity. Another way to describe this is that professional ministers in the church often allow their calling to leadership in the church to overshadow or overwhelm their responsibilities and calling to other areas of ministry in their life. Diaconal Ministers are not only leaders in the church, but they are also wives or husbands, parents, friends and neighbors, citizens, and volunteers in multiple settings. The seriousness of the world's needs may lead a Diaconal Minister to ignore the cries of those most immediately around them, including their family. However, these other areas of calling and ministry should not be neglected and may even have to be protected from encroachment.

The need for "boundaries" is common advice for candidates and even long-term practitioners of public ministry. It can be described as the need for health, wholeness and integrity in life. It can also prevent inappropriate conduct and protect those being served.

A Diaconal Minister is a mere mortal full of sin and with human needs, and he or she is never just a Diaconal Minister. One's different roles and responsibilities need attention, and one's family especially needs devotion as a primary calling. Attention to one's health and recreation is also essential as a means to re-create and to gain the blessings of Sabbath. Developing good personal habits of rest and exercise as well as devoting time to family and other areas through planned days-off and vacations are important disciplines for new consecrated Diaconal Ministers. The perception among some serving and some being served is that concern for self, family, and other responsibilities is a mask for selfishness or lack of dedication to public ministry. But God does not call superheroes to leadership in ministry. God call us—ordinary, sinful people with human needs, frailties, and responsibilities.

Diaconal Ministers also know that they are not alone in the leadership and work of ministry. Not only does God call all Christians to ministry in their baptism, God has also called many others to positions of leadership. Diaconal Ministers serve with other Diaconal Ministers, Pastors, Bishops, Deaconesses, Associates in Ministry, and many more lay leaders who are not rostered. Diaconal Ministers share the responsibility for leadership with these fellow servants, and full recognition of this can provide a sense of peace. One leader need not do everything, and leaders need not be the only doers. As leaders in ministry, Diaconal Ministers both do the work of *diakonia* and equip others for it; allowing one's leadership role to be eclipsed by a zealous dedication to the work itself can be problematic to the leader and may not fully utilize one's gifts for leadership, teaching and equipping.

The Call to Public Ministry of the Word

The leadership role and responsibilities of Diaconal Ministry flow from its identity as a public ministry of the Word of God. Because Diaconal Ministers stand on the boundaries between church and world, the ministry of the Word exercised by them includes proclaiming God's Law and Gospel to both realms of human activity. It is through the proclamation of the Word that the church is called into being and mission, and it is by the Word that the world comes to know that it stands condemned but also loved and potentially redeemed.^{xxii} As ministers of the Word, Diaconal Ministers are also public spokespersons of the church; they speak to the church, and they speak on behalf of the church, proclaiming the love of the Gospel and our total alienation from God without Jesus Christ. Diaconal Ministers exercise the public ministry of the Word with Pastors and Bishops, and with these leaders they serve under call in accordance with Article 14 of the Augsburg Confession. Yet the ministry of the Word by Diaconal Ministers is distinctive because of its union with service. It is often an "indirect" Word—a form of evangelical proclamation that uses deeds of mercy to communicate God's love and judgement to a world that demands commitment and not only speech.^{xxiii} And so it shares a special affinity to a quotation attributed to St. Francis of Assisi: "Proclaim the Word always, use words if necessary."

The identity of Diaconal Ministers as ministers of the Word was established in the Study of Ministry and has been further defined as the roster has developed and evolved. As articulated in the "Six Marks of Diaconal Ministry" of the *ELCA Candidacy Manual*, "Diaconal Ministers are ministers of the Word of God, committed to Christ and called to be spokespersons for the Gospel, the apostolic faith, and the theological emphasis of this

church to God's world." In the rite of consecration, Diaconal Ministers pledge to bear "witness in word and deed." And in *The Report to 1995 Churchwide Assembly Regarding Rostered Lay Ministers*, Diaconal Ministers are identified as "ministers of the Word who seek to listen more effectively to the world and link the community of faith with service in the world."

Our understanding of Diaconal Ministers as ministers of the Word has been aided by recent scholarship on the roots of the Greek *diakonos*. While the translation and interpretations of the past have stressed service and servanthood almost exclusively, scholars have increasingly emphasized the use of the word and the role of the deacon as an emissary.

The term emissary is gaining recognition as a complementary interpretation for the traditional "servant" designation for *diakonos* and related terms. Paul's use of *diakonos* to refer to himself (1 Cor. 3:5; 2 Cor. 3:6, 6:4, 11:23) is one of the more obvious pieces of evidence for a more nuanced understanding of the term. In these passages, Paul emphasizes his authority as God's emissary or *diakonos*. This meaning does not negate the translation of *diakonos* as servant, but it helps to give a more complete understanding of the terms as they are used in the bible.^{xxiv}

The identity of deacons in the early church as emissaries speaks both to their responsibility for proclaiming God's in-breaking reign and for representing to the church the needs and reality of the world. Deacons would often represent their bishops in public, and they would present before their bishops specific concerns of the people and the Christian community. Following in this tradition, Diaconal Ministers can thus be understood to speak, carry and represent God's Word between and in both church and world. The ministry is eschatological in the sense that it exists in both this world and the Kingdom of God; in word and deed Diaconal Ministers anticipate and announce the "already, not yet" of Christ's lordship.^{xxv}

As with the service identity, the emissarial identity finds its ultimate source in Jesus Christ. Christians know who we should be by understanding who Christ is. In Philippians, St. Paul makes this connection explicit in his “Christ hymn” that describes the emissarial role of Christ Himself. To this church in Greece, Paul writes:

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:5-11).

In His incarnation as both God and man, Christ fuses the dichotomy between the world as it is and the world as it will be. When we stand with Christ we see ourselves on a boundary between two worlds, but through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, God swallows up any distinction and makes this world and this flesh part of God’s own identity. Christ defines his emissarial relationship with the world through His identification with the world. In contrast to the logic of this world, in His humility He is glorified.

As emissaries between church and world and between the Kingdom of God and this sinful world, Diaconal Ministers exercise the ministry of the Word through the proclamation of Law and Gospel to each. “Diaconal Ministers carry public responsibility to speak for the needs of God’s world to the church as well as taking God’s saving Gospel to the needs of the world.”^{xxvi} To the church, the Diaconal Minister introduces and explains the suffering of the world and the church’s complicity in that suffering; as Law this is a word of judgement against all who hear the exhortation. The Diaconal

Minister may tell stories, lead studies, program events or even reveal the suffering that is going on within a congregation's midst. This requires careful listening to the world and discernment of root causes as well as symptoms. It means having empathy for those in need so that one can become an advocate on their behalf, or one may help to empower others to speak for themselves. This task may also involve social and cultural analysis.

As Gospel, the Diaconal Minister proclaims to the church how God is working in the world through individual Christians, the collective church and others; it is a word of hope and an invitation to join in the transforming work that is being done in Christ. This is sometimes called in Lutheran theology the "second use of the Gospel." Just as there are two uses of the Law (the theological that condemns sin and the civil that supports government and earthly righteousness), so one can describe two uses of the Gospel. The first use is for the forgiveness of sins, but the second use refers to the Gospel's power to transform lives and to promote service of others. It is how the Word is working right now to create the Kingdom of God.^{xxvii} Confessionally, it relates to Article VI of the Augsburg Confession that is tied to Article IV by Article V with its focus on Word and Sacraments as the means. In word and deed, by example and exhortation, Diaconal Ministers proclaim the power of the Gospel in their own lives and in the lives of others, equipping and leading the church in mission.

In a similar fashion, Diaconal Ministers proclaim Law and Gospel to the world. Pronouncements against injustice in the spirit of the ancient prophets as well as advocacy on behalf of the poor, suffering and powerless, involve telling the world about God's expectation and demands—the Law. God's judgement is near even when it seems that our society and world would just as soon forget or ignore the cries of those in need.

Diaconal Ministers are also attentive to the civil use of the Law, supporting efforts for temporal peace, mercy and justice, knowing that they are incomplete and not in full conformity to God's demands. Diaconal Ministers support and call for good government and other institutions that will meet human needs, serving in and with government and institutions when able and necessary. But the Law alone is not enough for the world to hear. In the Gospel, the Diaconal Minister also communicates in word and deed the hope that comes in Jesus Christ. God did not leave the world alone to suffer but came and suffered with us and for us so that sin, death and suffering might be destroyed forever. The world will be redeemed, and the individuals of the world have the opportunity to live now in that kingdom that is already but not yet fully here. The Diaconal Minister symbolizes the reality of God's kingdom here and now, and as leaders they call others to join in its embodiment.

While opportunities may vary depending upon a Diaconal Minister's place of call and role in a congregation, liturgical involvement holds great potential for expressing a Diaconal Minister's identity as a public minister of the Word. Since the ministry of *diakonia* carried out by all Christians finds its roots and continued strength in the baptismal and eucharistic liturgies, liturgical leadership by Diaconal Ministers has a symbolic potential that should be considered carefully by Diaconal Ministers, congregations and other expressions of the church. This was recently emphasized in the "The Diaconate as Ecumenical Opportunity," also known as Hanover Report of the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission (1996). It states:

There are some offices in the church which enact and bring into focus central aspects of the mission of the entire church and also form the identity of the person involved ... The ministry of deacons was traditionally, and in some places is at present, expressed within the

liturgical celebration of the gathered eucharistic assembly by assigning elements of the rite to the deacon: reading the gospel, leading the intercessions of the people, receiving the gifts of the people and “setting the table” for the meal, serving the eucharistic meal, sending people from the eucharistic assembly in to the world, administering the ceremonial. In the early church the social service carried on by deacons seems to have been rooted in the liturgical celebration.^{xxviii}

Diaconal Ministers may also carry the eucharist to the sick and infirm who are unable to attend worship, or they may train and lead a team of eucharistic ministers. Many other opportunities are possible that place Diaconal Ministers in Word-centered, liturgical positions that lead the people into the world to do the ministry of *diakonia*.

As public ministers of the Word, Diaconal Ministers are required to meet high standards of preparation and education for this ministry. By earning at least a master’s level degree in religion, theology or divinity (normally requiring the equivalent of two years of full-time study), Diaconal Ministers are equipped with knowledge that will serve the ministry of the Word. In the required Field Experience and in their first call, Diaconal Ministers should reflect carefully and in dialogue with others about what it means to be a minister of the Word in their specific settings. This will be one of the most important aspects of a growing identity as a Diaconal Minister, and the task of integrating Word and world is always challenging. In their continuing education, including First Call Theological Education, Diaconal Ministers should be attentive to their responsibilities as ministers of the Word and the corresponding need for additional formal study of scripture, theology, ethics, areas of practical theology, and church history. The completion of a seminary degree reveals, despite the title, not “mastery” of the theological disciplines but the continuing complexity and mystery of the biblical and

theological witnesses. Regular devotions and private study of scripture are also a foundation for the ministry of the Word, and Diaconal Ministers seek not just to read scripture but for scripture to read them, challenging and changing the individual's identity. Likewise Diaconal Ministers seek to be people who do not merely speak the Word but who also live scripture and the apostolic tradition in daily life and in ministry to, with and for others.

II. The Opportunities and Challenges of Diaconal Ministry

The Role of Community

Diaconal Ministers are enmeshed in a blessed variety of communities, and life in community is an integral part of identity for Diaconal Ministry. Participation in and reflection about communities can be an important component of First Call Theological Education. Communities have the power to form and shape who we are—our character and our emerging ministerial identity—for good or for ill. Attention to our communities and how they are shaping us (and how we might want to be shaped) are critical for effective and long-term service in Diaconal Ministry.

The central community of the Diaconal Minister's ministry is a congregation. For some Diaconal Ministers this may be the setting in which they primarily serve, but for all this is the place and people who gather together around Word and Sacrament as the people of God. It may be in a congregation that a Diaconal Minister's gifts for ministry were first identified, and it is in the congregation that continued and mutual support for ministry will be found. For those whose primary service is within a congregation, there may be unique tensions that make the congregation less supportive than it should be. For Diaconal Ministers (as with all professional leaders in congregations) it is important to have formal support mechanisms such as a Mutual Ministry Committee that will assist, guide and help equip the leader for continued ministry in that congregation. For Diaconal Ministers who serve primarily outside congregations, intentional efforts are needed to ensure that one's ministry outside the congregation is always connected to the congregation itself. The congregational project of the candidate's Field Experience

provides a model for this type of activity and reflection that can continue to guide Diaconal Ministers in their work.

In addition to the congregation, Diaconal Ministers may find community in their place of call, in peer or colleague groups, and in the community of Diaconal Ministry that continues to emerge. Each of these communities may provide mutual support in ministry as well as partnerships and collaborative opportunities. The community of Diaconal Ministers is especially important as articulated in the “Biloxi Report:”

Though we live in diaspora, as a community we are accountable to one another by mission and covenant. As such, we strive together to be consistent in our outward expressions and nurturance of Diaconal Ministry (e.g. common language, symbols of ministry, continuing education, provision of external reports) as well as ongoing ministerial formation (spiritual formation, discernment).

For Diaconal Ministers who do not serve in any expression of the church, there will be a special need for engagement with the church and other church leaders through formal and informal events. But regardless of one’s setting, Diaconal Ministry is not a “lone ranger” activity. It is done cooperatively and in relationship with other leaders and with the whole people of God who are called to the ministry of *diakonia*.

Box inserts for the section above:

In 1938, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote *Life Together*. It was a reflection on his experience as the leader of a small seminary community in Nazi Germany. It remains a powerful witness to Christian community that takes distinctive identity seriously but always as a means to serve the world. The book is resource for personal devotion but it can best be used in dialogue with others—perhaps in a peer or colleague group.

Bishops and synodical leaders have a special responsibility to those Diaconal Ministers (and other church leaders) who serve outside of congregations under synodical call. Communication between the synod and Diaconal Minister is crucial and should go beyond the typical year-end report. Since some places of call may not provide funds for

synodical events (conventions, retreats, etc.), synod leaders and Diaconal Ministers should work to ensure that this does not preclude attendance.

Participants in peer or colleague groups often describe them as one of the most important supports for their ministry. Likewise, a mentoring relationship with a senior colleague can also be meaningful. The limited number and widespread location of Diaconal Ministers may make a peer group or mentoring relationship with other Diaconal Ministers impossible, but a relationship with church leaders in other roles may also be valuable.

The Heritage of the Diaconate

Diaconal Ministers are part of a long diaconal tradition, and study of this tradition as part of First Call Theological Education can aid in identity formation. As a new form of rostered ministry in the ELCA, Diaconal Ministers also have the opportunity to interpret and tell the story of the diaconate to the church as a whole and to individual congregations.

The first area of the tradition deserving attention is the formational period of the diaconate in the early church. Most scholars admit that the biblical descriptions for diaconal ministry are rather weak, but they still provide an outline and context for the diaconate as a form of ministry. Writings of the early church fathers, however, are full of references to the diaconate. While the primary sources are often unavailable, contemporary authors have provided several secondary sources on this history.

A second area for study is how the diaconate has developed and thrived in various expressions of the Lutheran tradition since the Reformation. Central to this history is the Inner Mission movement of the nineteenth century and the emergence of the deaconess movement and mother houses. The history and theological underpinnings of the Deaconess movement has much to teach the church and Diaconal Ministers. Diaconal

Ministers share with Deaconesses the same rite of consecration and many of the same responsibilities for ministry. We also see other forms of the diaconate within our own Lutheran tradition. In the Scandinavian countries, three-fold form of ministry has remained since the Reformation while in other settings, indigenous forms of the diaconate have emerged and met local and regional needs.

Box inserts for the section above:

James Monroe Barnett's *The Diaconate: A Full and Equal Order*. Rev. Ed. (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1995) and Jeannine E. Olson's *One Ministry Many Roles: Deacons and Deaconesses Through the Centuries* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992) provide excellent histories of the diaconate. Olson's is especially strong with respect to the diaconate in various Protestant traditions, including Lutheranism.

Many web sites provide information on the history of the diaconate among certain denominational groups and in certain settings. You may want to try these as part of your study.

Benjamin Hartley, a United Methodist Deacon, has prepared this annotated bibliography of sources on the diaconate:
<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Atlantis/6989/bib.html>

Neuendettelsau in Germany was an important center for the emergence of the diaconate and the deaconesses movement in the 19th Century
<http://www.diakonieneuendettelsau.de/english/index.html>

Although somewhat dated, Frederick S. Weisner's *Love's Response* (Philadelphia: Board of Publications, ULCA, 1962) provides a detailed history of the Lutheran deaconesses movement in the United States until the mid-twentieth century. An excerpt of the book with an updated conclusion is Frederick S. Weisner, "The Origins of the Lutheran Deaconess Movement in America," *Lutheran Quarterly* 12 (Winter 1999): 423-34. In addition, the Deaconess Community of the ELCA maintains a web site at <http://www.deaconess-elca.org> and the Lutheran Deaconess Association has a web site at <http://valpo.edu/lda/index.html>.

The Ecumenical Diaconate

Across Christian denominations, the diaconate has experienced a dramatic rebirth in the last forty years. While deaconesses movements that originated in the nineteenth century continue to thrive, new expressions of the diaconate are emerging in a variety of contexts. The re-establishment of a permanent diaconate within the Roman Catholic Church began with conversations among German Catholics during and after World War II; these conversations came to fruition during Vatican II when the council called for the re-establishment of a permanent diaconate for men as part of their church orders. Anglicans have likewise re-instituted a permanent diaconate, and United Methodists in the U.S., having first established a consecrated office of diaconal ministry, have now established the ordained office of deacon. Many other churches in the US and abroad have proposed similar forms of ministry, including the ELCA with its establishment of Diaconal Ministry in 1993.

For many years, diaconal associations and communities have joined together in a world-wide ecumenical organization called DIAKONIA. The organization holds biennial conferences and publishes a regular newsletter. It is also organized regionally, allowing for other gatherings and forms of cooperation. The works of mercy that define the ministry of *diakonia* have been a source of unity across a wide spectrum of doctrinal differences and divisions.

Our current partnerships with other churches also provide excellent opportunities for ecumenical dialogue. Our agreement with the Episcopal Church in the U.S. specifically calls for conversations between our churches about the meaning of the diaconate, and our differences have the potential for mutual support and correction

(CCM, paragraph 9). Our Reformed partners have a very different understanding of the diaconate from our own and from the Episcopalians, but we have much to learn from their strong diaconal heritage since the re-establishment of the diaconate by John Calvin in the Swiss reformation.

Learning more about the ecumenical diaconate as well as building ecumenical partnerships among other diaconal leaders will serve both the church catholic and the development of new Diaconal Ministers in the ELCA. As Lutherans, we are confessionally an ecumenical church, and the theological divisions that may divide us, as important as they may be, need not stand in our way of working with others to alleviate human suffering and meet human needs.

Box inserts for the section above:

DIAKONIA: The World Federation of Diaconal Associations and Diaconal Communities maintains a web site at www.valpo.edu/lda/diakonen.htm, and DIAKONIA of the Americas and Caribbean (DOTAC) also has a web site at <http://www.valpo.edu/lda/dotac.htm>. A subscription to DIAKONIA News is available by contacting the editor, Rev. Dr. Sister Theresa, CSA, St. Andrews House, 2 Tavistock Road, London, W11 1BA, U.K.

A variety of denominational diaconates maintain web sites, and they can provide a glimpse of how these different traditions understand the ministry of *diakonia*.

Episcopalian (U.S. and Canada)
<http://www.diakonoi.org/>

Roman Catholic (U.S.)
<http://members.aol.com/frjohnr/html/diacon1.html>
<http://www.deacons.net/index.htm>

United Methodist
<http://www.gbhem.org/ordmin.html>

United Church of Canada

<http://www.uccan.org/mpe/Diaconal.htm>

Spiritual Practices and Self-Care

Like all Christians, Diaconal Ministers are dependent upon Word and Sacrament to empower their ministry in everything they do. In the consecration liturgy, Diaconal Ministers pledge to “be diligent in (our) study of the Holy Scriptures and faithful in (our) use of the means of grace and in prayer.” This means that regular attendance and participation in public worship is a foundational spiritual practice for Diaconal Ministry. The Word is also encountered and experienced through regular practices of devotion, study and prayer. These practices may occur individually, but great strength can also be found through a community of shared study and prayer. Individual Diaconal Ministers, peer groups, synods and seminaries all share the responsibility for developing healthy habits of devotion and the opportunities for them.

Since we are a people of the incarnation, we know that the spiritual can never be separated from the physical. For this reason, healthy practices of self-care are also important to develop during the first years of ministry. These can include a variety of things such as time with family and friends, exercise, vacations or retreats, and a fuller appreciation for the meaning of Sabbath (and not just Sabbatarianism). In our relationships with others and in our appraisal of our own physical condition we can often make a diagnosis about our spiritual state, and likewise, our spiritual “health” may reveal much about our physical well-being and relationships. Unfortunately, these types of practices are not taught in seminaries, but they can be critical to the vitality of our ministries in the long-term.

The greatest barrier to regular devotional practices and practices of self-care is simply making time. The phone may start ringing, children may be screaming, or an important project or meeting just cannot wait. Rather than bumping devotions and self-care down the list of things to do, it needs to have a regular place in our days and weeks that is honored and preserved. We also need to explain to our colleagues at work and our families at home the importance of these practices to our health and ministry so that they can support us when possible.

Box inserts for the section above:

Many Lutherans are increasingly using the Daily Texts of the Moravian tradition—another ecumenical partner of the ELCA. For each week and day of the year, two scripture verses are assigned. This engagement with the Word has been a Moravian spiritual practice since 1731, and it provides a means to be in community even while alone. One version of the texts is available through Mount Carmel Ministries, 800 Mount Carmel Drive NE, P.O. Box 579, Alexandria, MN 56308. 320-846-2744.

Prayer and devotional practices can vary greatly and are highly personal. Finding practices that “fit” your spiritual and physical identity can be a long-term process and can change over time. Writing to his barber on the subject of prayer, Martin Luther described how he used the catechism as a guide for prayer, meditating first on the Lord’s Prayer, second on the ten commandments, and finally on the creed. But he also stated: “May our dear Lord grant to you and to everybody to do it better than I! Amen.” You may find it helpful to read Luther’s “A Simple Way to Pray” in Luther’s Works, vol. 43, or for a modern approach, see Donald W. Johnson’s *Praying the Catechism* (Winnipeg: Wallingford Press, 1995).

Discernment of Contexts and Development of Skills

Diaconal Ministry is based in the intersection and interrelationship of the Word and the world. But the specific calls of Diaconal Ministers are not to the whole world but to specific contexts within it. These contexts may be congregations, educational institutions, hospitals and care facilities, social service agencies, advocacy groups and

more. Immersion in those environments affords an opportunity to listen and understand that specific place and the needs that are present and met there. To do this effectively, a Diaconal Minister may need to understand interpersonal relationships, cultural or ethnic identities, socioeconomic issues, history, and other global or local issues.^{xxix} It is in this listening and effort to understand that a Diaconal Minister will place the Word of God in dialogue with present realities. This can be hard, time-consuming work, but it is at the heart of a Diaconal Minister's identity.

The discernment of contexts and the engagement of the Word of God with them requires special skills that the Diaconal Minister may already have and/or may need to develop further. Since the context may vary greatly, so too may the types of skills needed. For some it may include an academic course in sociology or family studies, and for others it may be a continuing education workshop on preaching or the training of bible study leaders. First Call Theological Education for Diaconal Ministers needs to be flexible enough to allow for all these possibilities. On first glance, a proposed plan for continuing education may not seem very "theological," but because of the nature of Diaconal Ministry this type of study involves important skills necessary for the integration of Word and world. Hopefully, financial support for First Call Theological Education will also take account of these needs; all FCTE needs for Diaconal Ministers will not be available through synodical or regional retreats.

Box inserts for the section above:

In developing a personal plan for First Call Theological Education, newly consecrated Diaconal Ministers should reflect carefully not only on their needs for theological education but also their need for skills and education in the discernment of contexts. Seminary programs for Diaconal Ministry, for degrees and continuing education, will

hopefully devote attention to these needs through courses in sociology, family studies, educational theory, social ethics, and other similar courses.

The 28 colleges of the ELCA can be resources for Diaconal Ministers seeking skills and the discernment of contexts. Since their curriculums are usually broader than seminaries, they may offer courses or other continuing education experiences that may be helpful.

Notes

-
- ⁱ Richard Carlson, "Biblical Theology for Diaconal Ministry," in *From Word and Sacrament*, 31-32.
- ⁱⁱ *Ibid.*, 41.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Larson, 133.
- ^{iv} *Together for Ministry* (Chicago: ELCA, 1993), 20.
- ^v Loren B. Mead, *The Once and Future Church* (Washington: Alban Institute, 1991), 26-28.
- ^{vi} Douglas John Hall, *Confessing the Faith* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 155-58.
- ^{vii} Article IV, *Augsburg Confession*
- ^{viii} William H. Lazareth, *Two Forms of Ordained Ministry* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1991), 66-67.
- ^{ix} Martin Luther, *Small Catechism*
- ^x Duane H. Larson, "Ministry from Word and Sacrament: A Diaconal Ministry Theology" in *From Word and Sacrament: Renewed Vision for Diaconal Ministry*, ed. Duane H. Larson (Chicago: ELCA, 1999), 131.
- ^{xi} Lazareth, 65.
- ^{xii} Martin Luther, "The Freedom of a Christian," *LW* 31: 367.
- ^{xiii} Ronald Thiemann, *Constructing a Public Theology* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 100-1.
- ^{xiv} Carl F. W. Ficken, "Where Culture and Call Mix" in *From Word and Sacrament*, 152-55.
- ^{xv} Susan W. McArver, "A History of the Diaconate" in *From Word and Sacrament*, 70.
- ^{xvi} *Ibid.*, 70-71.
- ^{xvii} See Jeannine E. Olson, *One Ministry Many Roles* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992) and Frederick S. Weisner, *Love's Response* (Philadelphia: ULCA Board of publications, 1962).
- ^{xviii} *Report to the 1995 Churchwide Assembly Regarding Rostered Lay Ministers*
- ^{xix} *ELCA Candidacy Manual*
- ^{xx} *Together for Ministry*, 20.
- ^{xxi} Ormonde Plater, *Many Servants: An Introduction to Deacons* (Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 1991), 3.
- ^{xxii} Eric W. Gritsch and Robert W. Jenson, *Lutheranism: The Theological Movement and Its Confessional Writings* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 119.
- ^{xxiii} Hall, *ibid.*
- ^{xxiv} Benjamin L. Hartley, "Deacons as Emissary-Servants: A Liturgical Theology," *Quarterly Review* 19 (Winter 1999).
- ^{xxv} *Ibid.*
- ^{xxvi} "Six Marks of Diaconal Ministry," *ELCA Candidacy Manual*
- ^{xxvii} William H. Lazareth, "Foundation for Christian Ethics: The Question of the 'Third Use of the Law,'" *The Cresset Occasional Paper*, ed. David Truemper (Valparaiso, IN: Valparaiso University press, 1978).
- ^{xxviii} "The Diaconate as Ecumenical Opportunity," The Hanover Report of the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission (London: Anglican Communion Publications, 1996), 13.
- ^{xxix} *Faithful Leaders for a Changing World: Theological Education for Mission in the ELCA*, 34.