

# ***Diakonia* in The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

## **A Report to the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee – 2007**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

At the February 2006 meeting of the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee (LECC) a resolution was passed outlining a series of tasks to be accomplished and reported on by April 1, 2007. In response to this resolution, staff of the Vocation and Education (V&E) unit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Office for Ministry Development (OMD) of the Episcopal Church, as the “appropriate units,” assembled an ad hoc working group to address two of these tasks. They are:

1. review the concept of orderly exchange allowing service of deacons, diaconal ministers and deaconesses in our respective churches;
2. review new patterns of stipendiary and non-stipendiary ministry, shared theological education, formation and continuing education as they relate to deacons, diaconal ministers and deaconesses.

The working group<sup>1</sup> consisting of church-wide staff, representatives of the ELCA diaconal ministers leadership team and the ELCA Deaconess community (one each) and two TEC deacons met together in Chicago on September 25-26, 2006.<sup>2</sup> This group reviewed the work of LECC to date (based on the minutes), explored the aspects of *diakonia* that our two churches hold in common and came to a clearer understanding of the distinct and differing character of deacons, deaconesses and diaconal ministers in our two churches. Our goal was to prepare a document for presentation to LECC in April 2007 (and ultimately with the wider church) including guidelines for a fruitful and mission-focused sharing of diaconal ministries (*diakonia*) between our two churches. Our discussions have been informed by substantial work already done worldwide and here, including: and “The Diaconate as Ecumenical Opportunity” in *The Hanover Report* (1996); *An Epistle from the LWF Global Consultation on Diakonia* (2002); *Continuing Exploration of the Diaconate as Full Communion Partners* (2005) by the Rev. Susanne Watson Epting (Episcopal Church Deacon) and Ms. Madelyn K. Busse (ELCA Diaconal Minister)<sup>3</sup>; and other relevant materials from our diaconal communities and church-wide offices<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> On behalf of the Episcopal Church – the Rev. Warren Frelund, deacon; the Rev. Lynne A. Grifo, priest; the Rev. Carol Borne Stewart, deacon. On behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America – Beth A. Barkhau, diaconal minister; Sr. Janice E. Painter, deaconess; the Rev. A. Craig Settlage, pastor.

<sup>2</sup> The liturgical offices were consulted in preparation for this meeting. We agreed that it was premature to focus on liturgics until we could together reach a fuller understanding about the nature of diaconal ministries in our two churches and the concept of exchange.

<sup>3</sup> The report by S. Watson Epting and M. Busse is available from the North American Assoc. of the Diaconate (contact [NAADOffice@aol.com](mailto:NAADOffice@aol.com)).

<sup>4</sup> As early as March 2000, the ecumenical offices of our two churches began consultations with OMD, (then) the Division for Ministry (now Vocation and Education), and representatives from our diaconal communities regarding CCM. Representatives of OMD, EIR, the ELCA Division for Ministry and our diaconal communities continued to meet until 2004, in response to the resolution passed by LECC at its June 2001 meeting.

The following are the concepts or principles upon which the ad hoc committee agreed and which shape this report:

### **Principles**

- All Christians are called to *diakonia*. (Reference the new publication from the Lutheran World Federation, *Diaconal Ministry in the Mission of the Church*, January 2006.)
- The *Hanover Report* describes diaconal ministers as "agents of the church in interpreting and meeting needs, hopes, and concerns within church and society." (Sec. 48-49). Another way of describing this is to say that diaconal ministers, either ordained or consecrated, are given a mandate to express the church's ministry of service to the world. While recognizing the substantial difference between the Episcopal threefold ministry and the ELCA unitary ordering of ordained ministry, we wish to encourage joint exploration and sharing of *diakonia* –i.e., prophetic ministries of service in and to the world--between our two churches. This sharing can occur wherever and whenever mission dictates and need not continue to be put on hold until and unless we come to share in the same theology and ordering of the diaconate.
- We envision the exchange of *diakonia* occurring congregation to congregation through engagement in servant ministry in a new and cooperative way; or, through cooperative social service provision, emergency response or other joint ministries with persons who are poor or otherwise in need, or through innovations that we cannot yet imagine. This sharing would likely engage deacons, deaconesses and diaconal ministers in our two churches. However, this report does not envision the concept of "orderly exchange" of individuals as is the case with pastors and priests in our two churches under the provisions of *Called to Common Mission*. We note the relative difference in numbers of those persons serving in diaconal ministries in the ELCA (100's) as compared to the numbers of deacons in the Episcopal Church (1000's) which in itself would make a one to one exchange challenging.
- We commend LECC for # 1 in its February 9, 2006 resolution:
  - That LECC establish a process whereby it regularly asks how our full communion partnership is contributing to prophetic and practical *diakonia* and to equip our various members to take up their call to serve, in order to expand common mission, link common resources, and build synergy for shared mission. This would include intentionally identifying areas of mutual concern (social services, disaster services, etc.) and how we might strengthen our common efforts through diaconal leadership and might include advocacy for financial support for joint ministry, providing resources for how to establish local partnerships, training sponsored on a national level in public church issues.
- We wish to affirm the statements quoted below:

*The deacon is the enfleshment of that diakonia which is properly Christ's and constitutes the very being of the church. As such the deacon is a living symbol...The deacon as a symbol is powerful or weak according to the degree to which he or she participates in the diakonia which is at the heart of the universe and thus, however imperfectly, mirrors or images Jesus Christ, the sacrificial Servant....the deacon is a symbol for a purpose and that purpose involves the enabling of sacrificial service in all of the church and, ultimately, in all of the world.*

--John E. Booty in *The Servant Church: Diaconal Ministry and the Episcopal Church*, Morehouse-Barlow Co., 1982, pg.82-82

*In sum, the servant in diaconal ministry will be best imaged in ways such as the diaconal ministry community has already chosen for itself: a diaconal minister is a prophet who is a pray-er, a servant girded with a towel rather than a stole, a bridge and representative for the sake of a catholic community of communities, a visionary of the triune God's peaceable kingdom. May our baptismal vocations increase by their increasing example.*

--"Ministry from Word and Sacrament: A Diaconal Ministry Theology" by Duane H. Larson in *From Word and Sacrament: Renewed Vision for Diaconal Ministry*, ELCA, Chicago, 1999, p. 137

*As a specific and focal form of a task to which all Christians are called, the service of one's neighbor, diaconal ministry should foster and bring to wider recognition the ministry of others, rather than making their ministries redundant or superfluous. The diaconal minister should lead and inspire the wider church in its service. Here the interpretive role of diaconal ministry plays a special role. Diaconal ministries will have their own specific tasks which are their own responsibility. As a ministry of the whole church, however, this ministry should have a multiplying effect, leading others to their own specific tasks of service.*

--*The Hanover Report*, Section 56.

- The document ***Called to Common Mission*** is our guiding resource in this effort to continue a process of consultation already underway in many places, and specifically its statement that our two churches would explore how "some functions of ordained deacons in the EC, and consecrated diaconal ministers and deaconesses in the ELCA, can be shared insofar as they are called to be agents of the church in meeting the needs, hopes and concerns within church and society." (CCM, par. 8)

## II. AN OVERVIEW OF DIACONAL MINISTRIES IN OUR TWO CHURCHES

*Diakonia* in the broadest sense may be defined as the ministry of service in which all the faithful share. Below we describe how this ministry is "enfleshed" and "imaged" in particular by persons who are ordained, or called and consecrated.

### The Episcopal Diaconate

In the Episcopal Church, the vocational<sup>5</sup> diaconate is one of three orders to which people can be ordained, along with priests and bishops. The deacon's vocation lies in serving -- especially the weak, the poor, the sick, the lonely-- and in interpreting to the church the needs and hopes of the world. The sign of the office of deacon is a stole worn over the left shoulder and fastened under the right arm. In the Eucharist, when a deacon is present that person reads the gospel, typically leads the Prayers of the People, may introduce the confession, always prepares the altar, and assists with the distribution of

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<sup>5</sup> The modifier "vocational" is intended to distinguish those who will serve life-long as deacons from those persons who are ordained to the "transitional" diaconate prior to being ordained priests, as is the tradition in the Anglican Communion and the Catholic Church.

the bread and wine, performs the ablutions, and dismisses the people. (See *The Book of Common Prayer*, Ordination of a Deacon, pg. 537-547)

Due to the complexities of data gathering, the Episcopal Church has no official, verifiable, churchwide count of its clergy. The North American Association of the Diaconate estimates that there are roughly 2,300-2,500 vocational deacons in the Episcopal Church. Generally, one of the best sources for statistics related to clergy is the Church Pension Group. However, CPG reports that only approximately 120 deacons are listed as enrolled in the Pension Fund, meaning they are receiving a salary and will be eligible for pension benefits at retirement. The vocational diaconate in the Episcopal Church, according to tradition and diocesan canon and/or practice, is a non-stipendiary ministry. There are deacons who serve in stipendiary ministries, as members of a diocesan staff for example.

The calling process for deacons is prescribed in the *Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church 2006* (See Title III, Canons 5, 6 and 7). Candidates for ordination to the diaconate must demonstrate competence in five general areas: academic studies, including the Holy Scriptures, theology, and the tradition of the Church; *diakonia* and the diaconate; human awareness and understanding; spiritual development and discipline; and, practical training experience.<sup>6</sup> Local theological training is widely employed and it is left to dioceses to make the decision regarding seminary study or local formation and education for persons in the ordination process.

Forms of address vary by individual or diocese: some deacons prefer to be addressed as, for example, "Deacon Smith." Others, in written address, use "The Rev. Smith."

The web page of the North American Association of the Diaconate describes the ministry of deacons in the Anglican Communion (of which TEC is a member) this way:

The diaconate of the Anglican churches is an historic order, with roots in the ancient church, adapting to the needs of the church and the world in our own age. Like the other two orders, the episcopate and the presbyterate, it is a gift from God for the nurture of God's people and the proclamation of God's gospel. It is closely linked with the ordained diaconate of other ecumenical bodies, especially the Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and some Methodist and Lutheran churches.

Deacons function in ministries of liturgy, word, and charity. They serve directly under the bishop of a diocese and help to carry out the bishop's ministry. Bishops normally assign deacons to special responsibility for mercy and justice. Dioceses usually require that prospective deacons already serve in specialized ministries among the poor, sick, and oppressed. Once ordained, deacons exercise leadership among the faithful, encouraging, training, and organizing them for various ministries. In many ways the vision of the historic diaconate has become a reality in our time.

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<sup>6</sup> Regarding minimum education requirements prior to theological study, a baccalaureate degree or academic work beyond high school training is not specified in the church-wide canons regulating the ordination of deacons; many deacons do possess college and post-graduate degrees.

## **Diaconal Ministry in the ELCA**

*Diakonia* in the ELCA is represented in two categories of ministers, as described below:

**Deaconesses.** In the ELCA, deaconesses are one of the three categories of rostered<sup>7</sup> lay ministers and are an outgrowth of the European Deaconess movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. ELCA deaconesses are called and consecrated, and serve in congregations, agencies and institutions of the ELCA. They are members of the Deaconess Community of the ELCA, and participate in the life of that community. The proper form of address is “Sister.”

**Diaconal Ministers.** In the ELCA, Diaconal Ministers are one of the three categories of rostered lay ministers, established in 1993. ELCA Diaconal Ministers are called and consecrated, and serve in congregations, agencies and institutions of the ELCA. Diaconal Ministers are consecrated for service in ministries at the intersection of church and world. They work to seek wholeness in the world and to help the people of God to live out the Gospel. They are committed to alerting the church to the needs of the world. Their focus for ministry is the extension of the church’s ministry of witness and care into the world.<sup>8</sup>

The educational requirements for deaconesses and diaconal ministers are parallel. Candidates for these two categories of ministry must complete a theological degree at the master’s level. This study is normally done at one of the eight ELCA seminaries, though the degree may be completed at a non-ELCA seminary. Candidates not attending ELCA seminaries must affiliate with one of four ELCA seminaries: Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Wartburg Seminary, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, or Luther Seminary. Candidates for these two ministries are also required to participate in a Formation Event, normally prior to seminary studies.

### **In the Liturgy**

Deaconesses and diaconal ministers are understood to be lay rostered (they are called and consecrated, not ordained). When deaconesses or diaconal ministers are asked to serve in the Liturgy of Holy Communion in the ELCA they would do so in the role of assisting minister in the same manner as would a non-rostered lay member of a congregation.

### **Continuing Dialogue with the Other Rostered Leaders**

In February, 2007 the Vocation and Education unit of the ELCA sponsored a consultation on “Vocation and Service” involving representatives of the four rosters. This consultation focused on the theology and experience of vocation and service in the life of the ELCA. At the conclusion of the consultation the participants affirmed this following:

“In response to God’s call for the sake of the world and to empower the church, this consultation group desires to speak to the church with one voice. It recommends that a conversation be furthered among the four rostered ministries that assures participation by

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<sup>7</sup> “Rostered Ministers” are those persons who serve under call as ordained, commissioned or consecrated ministers and who serve under the standards, policies, and procedures determined in the bylaws and continuing resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

<sup>8</sup> For a full and complete description of Diaconal Ministry see “Community and Consecration: A handbook for diaconal candidates who are approved and awaiting call,” on the web at <http://www.elca.org/diaconalministry>

all and moves at a careful and deliberate pace. This conversation would attempt to develop a consensus understanding of and proposal regarding the public ministry of Word and service.”

## **ELCA PERSONNEL STATISTICS**

As of April, 2007, supplied by the ELCA Office of the Secretary

### **Deaconesses**

**TOTAL** **62**

#### **Gender**

Deaconesses who are women **62**

#### **Active and Retired by Category**

Deaconesses serving under call from Congregations **10**

Deaconesses serving under call from Church Council  
or Synod Councils **18**

Deaconesses on leave from call **3**

Deaconesses on continuing disability **4**

Deaconesses who are retired **27**

### **Diaconal Ministers**

**TOTAL** **116**

#### **Gender**

Diaconal ministers who are women **98**

Diaconal ministers who are men **18**

#### **By category of Call**

Diaconal ministers serving under call from Congregations **41** (including 4 part-time)

Diaconal ministers serving under call from Synod  
Assembly/Council **55** (including 2 part-time)

Diaconal ministers serving under call from  
Churchwide Assembly/Church Council **9** (including 1 part-time)

Diaconal ministers on leave from call **10**

Diaconal ministers who are retired **1**

## **III. ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES OF EXCHANGE OF *DIAKONIA***

### **Introduction**

The full communion relationship established between our churches and described in the agreement, *Called to Common Mission*, has enabled stronger and more coordinated, joint programs than were possible prior to CCM being adopted in 1999. Most of the examples of common mission involve joint mission starts, combined congregations or exchange of pastors and priests. *Called to Common Mission* anticipated the exchange of pastors and priests in its recognition of the full authenticity of ordained pastors and priests in both churches. The document “The Orderly Exchange of Pastors and Priests under Called to Common Mission” was developed by the two churches and became

effective on January 1, 2001. The purpose of that document was to provide clear, useful principles/guidelines for judicatories and congregations. Because of the distinctive nature of diaconal ministry in each church, the idea of exchange per se (as noted under the “Principles” above) becomes more complex and perhaps less helpful.

Given that we are commanded in scripture to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with our God, it is critical that as full communion partners our two churches engage in a lively discussion at all levels of how we might together do more to serve the world in Christ’s name. Our ad hoc committee would like to encourage congregations, dioceses and synods in our two churches to actively begin exploring now how ministries of service might be more fruitfully shared. We want to strongly encourage shared educational and training events for our ministers of service. In addition, we believe that regional conversations among those TEC and ELCA bishops who understand the role of deacons, diaconal ministers and deaconesses and who are particularly supportive of them would be valuable in living out the CCM provision which calls for on-going exploration of these ministries<sup>9</sup>.

### **Stories of *Diakonia***

While we are aware of a few specific examples of either interaction or exchange focused around *diakonia* (see below), we know that there are doubtless more examples of which we are not aware. LECC, OMD and V&E would be pleased to receive stories of shared *diakonia* from around our two churches. Sharing such stories will help us more fully live into CCM.

### **A Joint Social Ministry in Mississippi**

In 2001, the Rev. Bob Hartenfeld, director of Lutheran Social Services of Mississippi, asked the Episcopal bishop in that diocese if he would appoint Episcopalians to work with Lutheran Social Ministries of Mississippi in joint ministry throughout the state. At the time LSSM represented both the ELCA and the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. Because Lutheran church membership in the state is relatively small (approximately 35 congregations), by joining with the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi (80+ parishes and missions), the assumption was that efforts could be strengthened and multiplied.

A deacon for Servant Ministry and Outreach joined the Mississippi diocesan staff in 2001, the Rev. Carol Stewart. One of her responsibilities included working with Pastor Hartenfeld to create a task force to shape these early cooperative efforts. Existing programs -- ENRICH, Disaster Response and Storybook--already had a strong foundation as started by LSSM. Cooperation between the denominations added energy and numbers. The results were amazing and exciting according to Deacon Stewart. The task force spent three years studying how to best formalize the relationship to assure the greatest access to resources for future ministries.

***“...for when two or three are gathered together...”***

(Matthew 18:20)

In January, 2005 a new 501(C) 3 was established, the first of its kind: Lutheran Episcopal Services in Mississippi (LESM). This is the first time an Episcopal diocese

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<sup>9</sup> CCM states that “Both churches acknowledge that the diaconate, including its place within the threefold ministerial office and its relationship with all other ministries, is in need of continuing exploration, renewal, and reform, which they pledge themselves to undertake in consultation with one another.” (CCM, par. 9)

has paired up with a recognized Lutheran Social Ministry Organization to form a joint organization. Deacon Stewart became the organization's first director.

Hurricane Katrina in late August 2005 ushered in an intense period of testing for this fledgling ecumenical organization. Staff grew from two to 40 in a few months and donations flowed in. Institutional controls for the organization had to be created and implemented in a hurry. In the process of rapid growth and in the face of intense demands placed on everyone in the wake of the Katrina disaster, relations between the denominational partners were put under considerable strain. LESM played and continues to play a key role in securing and distributing assistance to hundreds of persons, including children, impacted by the hurricanes of 2005. However, this strain led to the re-direction of some LDR funds and other organizational changes.<sup>10</sup>

A misunderstanding of the differences in the roles and responsibilities of Episcopal bishops and deacons and Lutheran synod bishops and diaconal ministers and other leaders may have played a part in the tensions and the growth pangs of LESM. While the Episcopal Church and the ELCA are in full communion, there is no similar relationship with the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod and so there is a more limited history of cooperative efforts. Creating an effective ecumenical partnership for social services ministry would have been a large challenge without the impact of Hurricane Katrina. Katrina brought demands and pressures no one could have foreseen.

The joint ministries of LESM --Lutheran-Episcopal disaster response, restorative justice programs and ENRICH (educational enhancement for at-risk children) -- have significant growth potential. Education about the purpose and value of three-way denominational cooperation must continually be carried out at the local level because individual donors and congregations may not immediately recognize the benefits of an ecumenical partnership. Under an interim director, the agency continues to serve its clients on behalf of the churches. See the LESM web site for a full description of its work: [www.lesm.org](http://www.lesm.org).

LESM can serve as an informative case study for other, future TEC and ELCA servant ministry joint efforts. LESM demonstrates that ecumenical cooperation can be valuable and effective in multiplying the impact of a service ministry. It also clearly shows the importance of on-going, intentional efforts to deepen our understanding of each denomination's polity, especially how the diaconate is lived out.

### **ELCA Deaconesses Serving in TEC**

Sister Carol Burk serves at St. Phillips Episcopal Church, Charleston, SC as Publicist (PR and writing). Sister Annette Janka serves at St. George's Episcopal Church, Cordova, Alaska as a Parish Deaconess and her work includes ministry with children.

### **Ministers Interacting - Snapshots**

The following is a report received from Terry Moore, an ELCA Diaconal Minister since 1999, about his experience and ideas for cooperation with the TEC. Mr. Moore is Executive Director of the ELCA Metro St. Louis Coalition.

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<sup>10</sup> Deacon Stewart returned to the Diocese of Mississippi in November 2006 as Assistant to the Bishop for Outreach and Community Development.

Over the past several years I've been involved in exploring the possibility of my being called to serve an Episcopal urban ministry partnership, served on an urban ministry committee, participated in several diaconal ordinations, sought and received an Episcopal grant for ministry and helped develop LEAD (Lutheran Episcopal Association of Deacons) in St. Louis, a joint TEC, ELCA effort to provide regular meetings of Diaconal Ministers and Deacons for prayer, conversation and mutual support. I reluctantly had to discontinue the meetings because it was too difficult to maintain in light of other priorities.

We've had some success but it's been difficult. It seems to me that one thing that might work is to serve in "simultaneous calls." I think as many Diaconal Ministers and Deacons as possible should have calls to ELCA and Episcopal ministries at the same time even if one is more symbolic than practical. I think it's going to take some commitment and maybe sacrifice if we are going to approach fulfilling our ecumenical call and responsibilities. We can only get to really know one another when we minister together. We could help one another interpret our ministries to the others' denomination. I think conversations about how to best share our gifts with one another could prove very exciting and fruitful. An important question is, who will or can or should initiate such conversations and how might this happen?

I've also observed and experienced to a certain extent, a much more structured and formal approach to the diaconate and direct involvement of the Episcopal bishop than what I've experienced in the ELCA, at least in my synod. We're still trying to figure out what diaconal ministry is and they have a pretty specific understanding and very specific expectations. That cultural difference has been a bit of a challenge as well. I find the possibilities exciting and hope the conversations not only continue but speed up. I'm not getting any younger.

The following is a report from Warren Frelund, a deacon serving on the bishop's staff in the Diocese of Iowa:

My extended experience with Lutherans has been serving as deacon with a Lutheran pastor as our interim at St. John's in Mason City. One of the first things we did was to study and discuss the prayer book and to help him become comfortable with the liturgy. His greatest learning was attending and involvement with liturgy planning on the worship and music commission. I would meet with him after services during the week to review how the liturgy unfolds. The language was not the issue but rather the movements at the altar and especially with a deacon. There were times early on when I would have to ask him to please step to the side in order for me to do my deacon thing. He learned to love our liturgy in the two years he was with us. The congregation for the most part accepted him as presider even though he did not hold things just right. His greatest challenge was Rite I and 8:00 a.m. services. All in all it was a good experience.

### **III. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Shared *Diakonia***

As an ad hoc committee tasked with reviewing the patterns of diaconal ministries in our two denominations and the applicability of the concept of "orderly exchange," in our

relatively short time together we learned much that we did not know about these ministries as lived out in our different contexts. We are confident that many members of our two Churches have as much to learn as we did (do).

We encourage The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to be creative and pro-active in seeking opportunities for exchange of *diakonia*, servant ministry. Such exchanges would appropriately involve persons who are symbolic of that ministry, but resolution of all issues surrounding an exchange of rostered leaders and ordained leaders need not be a prerequisite for this to occur.

### **Examples of Opportunities for Shared Learning and Possibilities for Further Exploration**

We wish to encourage active exploration, on the part of LECC and the other entities in the list below, of opportunities to provide learning experiences that would be open to deacons, deaconesses and diaconal ministers. Key examples are:

- The Episcopal Diocese of California – School for Deacons see [www.sfd.edu](http://www.sfd.edu)
- Annual Conference of the North American Association of the Diaconate (TEC) and other NAAD-sponsored gatherings, e.g., archdeacons'/diocesan directors' conferences and regional continuing education events.
- Events sponsored by the Diaconal Ministry Community (ELCA)
- Diaconal Formation J-Term (January term) at Southern Seminary, Columbia, South Carolina (sponsored by the ELCA Deaconess Community).
- Education programs offered by the many Episcopal diocesan schools for deacons.

### **Conclusion**

The differences that exist between deacons, deaconesses and diaconal ministers create opportunities for learning about the nature of *diakonia* and the variety of ways it may be lived out. Local mission priorities in dioceses and synods generate needs that might be more creatively and energetically responded to through joint diaconal ministry. While our differences may make cooperation more complicated and challenging than the exchange of pastors and priests has been, we trust that the understanding we share about the critical importance of servant ministry can help bridge the gap. We wish to encourage our two churches<sup>11</sup> at the local, regional and church-wide levels to be imaginative and seek out opportunities not only for conversation but also for joint ministry.

Questions for on-going discussion include: How can deaconesses, diaconal ministers and deacons be present within our respective traditions to imaginatively enhance the work of *diakonia*? What might we learn from joint continuing education opportunities about how to effectively prepare persons for servant ministry? How are lay persons in our congregations being strengthened to be about *diakonia* in the church and in daily life? Can our continued conversations lead to as yet unexplored joint ministries with the

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<sup>11</sup> We note that conversations are also underway between TEC and the United Methodist Church and separately between the ELCA and the UMC. In 2000, for example, a joint Methodist-Episcopal steering committee established the goals, timetable, personnel, and budget for dialogue. Discussions focused on *diakonia* have also taken place among diaconal ministers of the three denominations under the auspices of the North American Association of the Diaconate. These conversations can be sources of learning for the wider church.

marginalized and the poor in our society? Can we speak with one prophetic voice about these issues in our churches and in society?

We believe the report responds to the request of the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee to review the concept of the orderly exchange of deacons, diaconal ministers and deaconesses, and to begin the process of reviewing patterns of stipendiary and non-stipendiary ministry, shared theological education, formation, and continuing education.<sup>12</sup>

We trust that this resource will inform a continued exploration of how *diakonia* can be carried out within each church body and shared between the two churches whenever possible. We are grateful for the opportunity to make a contribution to this important discussion and want to express our deepest thanks to the members of the ad hoc committee and to all those who participated in the earlier series of related meetings sponsored by the churchwide offices of The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The Rev. Lynne A. Grifo, The Episcopal Church

The Rev. A. Craig Settlage, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

June 25, 2007

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<sup>12</sup> This final version of the report has been revised based on comments received from LECC at the Committee's meeting held in Los Angeles in April, 2007.

## APPENDIX

### I. BACKGROUND/EXPLANATORY REFERENCES [excerpts only]

#### Consecration of Diaconal Ministers and Deaconesses

12. *When a deaconess is consecrated the head of the Deaconess Community of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America gives a cross to the deaconess. The presiding minister says: Receive and wear this cross as a sign of your calling to serve Christ and his people. Confess your faith in the risen Christ, and bear in your heart the love of Christ who died on the cross for you.*

14. *An assisting minister presents the newly consecrated diaconal minister/deaconess with a basin and a large plain white towel. [and says] Receive this basin and towel as a sign that you are to serve as Christ served, humbling himself and taking the form of a servant. (John 13:12b-17)*

#### ***The Use of the Means of Grace: A Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament***

**Adopted for guidance and practice by the Fifth Biennial Church-wide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, August 19, 1997.**

**Principle 8** All the baptized share responsibility for the proclamation of the Word and the formation of the Christian assembly.

#### **Application 8A**

One of the ways lay people exercise the public proclamation of the Word is as assisting ministers. Among these assisting ministers will be readers of Scripture and also cantors and leaders of prayer.

**Principle 9** The preaching of the Gospel of the crucified and risen Christ is rooted in the readings of the Scriptures in the assemblies for worship. Called and ordained ministers bear responsibility for the preached Word in the Church gathered for public worship.

#### **Application 9B**

While other persons may sometimes preach, the called pastor of a congregation has responsibility for this preaching, ordinarily preparing and delivering the sermon and overseeing all public ministry of the Word in the congregation. In congregations without a called pastor, the synodical bishop assumes this responsibility, often by providing an interim pastor. All Christians, however, bear responsibility to speak and teach the Gospel in daily life.

**Principle 22** An ordained minister presides at Holy Baptism.

**Principle 40** In witness that this sacrament is a celebration of the Church, serving its unity, an ordained minister presides in the service of Holy Communion and proclaims the Great Thanksgiving. Where it is not possible for an extended period of time to provide ordained pastoral leadership, a synodical bishop may authorize a properly trained lay person to preside for a specified period of time and in a given location only.

**Principle 41** Designated and trained lay persons serve in a variety of leadership roles in the Eucharist. Among these assisting ministers will be readers, interpreters, cantors,

musicians and choir members, servers of communion, acolytes, leaders of prayer, those who prepare for the meal, and those who offer hospitality.

### **Background 41A**

“The liturgy is the celebration of all who gather. Together with the pastor who presides, the entire congregation is involved. It is important, therefore, that lay persons fulfill appropriate ministries within the service.”

### **Book of Common Prayer** [key excerpts related to our discussion]

The Ordination of a Deacon – The Examination [excerpt related to the role in worship]

As a deacon...you are to assist the bishop and priests in public worship and in the ministration of God’s Word and Sacraments... (BCP p. 543)

At the Ordination of a Deacon [rubrics]

The stole worn over the left shoulder, or other insignia of the office of deacon, is placed upon the new deacon after the entire Prayer of Consecration is completed, and immediately before the Bible is given. (BCP p. 554)

## **II. Other Information Related to Diaconal Ministry**

### **In the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:**

**ELCA diaconal ministers have an advisory Leadership Team.** See

<http://www.elca.org/diaconalministry/resources/teams.html> and

<http://www.elca.org/diaconalministry/contact/>.

**For further information about The Deaconess Community of the ELCA,** see

<http://www.elca.org/deaconess>

**Lutheran Deaconess Association** (formerly related to the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod) is now independent and members serve in both the ELCA and the LC-MS.

Several members of the Association are rostered in the ELCA as pastors or associates in ministry and not directly as deaconesses. See <http://valpo.edu/lda>

### **In The Episcopal Church:**

**Canonical residence** (definition) – clergy serving under the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical authority of a diocese (typically the diocesan bishop) are canonically resident in that diocese. Clergy may move from jurisdiction to jurisdiction by presenting Letters Dimissory, a testimonial by the ecclesiastical authority of the former diocese that the clergyperson has not “been justly liable to evil report, for error in religion or for viciousness of life, for the last three years.” The transfer of canonical residence is dated from the acceptance of Letters Dimissory by the ecclesiastical authority.

Diaconal ministers and deaconesses are part of the *national* ELCA roster and so the concept of “canonical residence” per se does not exist in the ELCA.