


THE
CRISIS
HAPPENING
IN THE
LUTHERAN

CHURCH

ISSUE 1

THE PASSAGE OF
CALLED
TO
COMMON MISSION

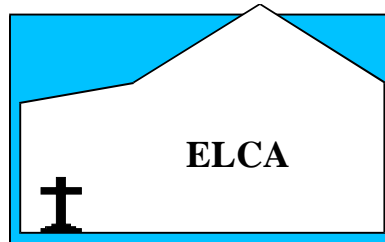
Find out more by visiting the
Epiphany District website at
www.epiphanydistrict.com
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or

Lutheran Congregations in Mission
for Christ
website at www.wsullivan@ameritech.net
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What is Called to Common Mission ?



It is an agreement resulting from decades of talks between the Episcopal Church and the churches that formed the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The ELCA passed it in August of 1999 at its General Assembly.

**CALLED TO COMMON MISSION
AND
THE ACTIONS OF OUR LEADERSHIP
HAVE PLACED IN JEOPARDY
THE
AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE
AND OUR
LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS**



Isn't it time we again look to Christ for our salvation as found in God's Word Alone ?

Find out more by visiting the WordAlone website at www.wordalone.org

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Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ

website at www.lcmc.net

Direct mail to the following address:

**2299 Palmer Drive, Suite 220,
New Brighton, MN 55112-2464
or call toll free: (888) 551-7254**

**AND WHAT HAPPENS TO THE
PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS
LUTHERANS
HOLD SO IMPORTANT ?**



IT ENDS !!
No longer will there be:

1. A priesthood of believers where clergy and laity are equal partners in ministry and God's grace.
2. An understanding that clergy and laity all receive gifts of the Spirit to further God's plan of salvation.
3. One indivisible office of Word and Sacrament ministry.
4. Lay people assisting with and even conducting the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

**IS THIS WHAT WE WANT OUR
LUTHERAN CHURCH
TO PRACTICE AND BELIEVE ?**

**When the Episcopal Church USA
passed the same agreement at their
General Assembly in 2000, our
church decided to implement the
conditions required of us according to
Called to Common Mission
starting January 1, 2001.**

So, as of now,
The ELCA has
"Full communion"
With the
Episcopal Church

However,
The Episcopal Church

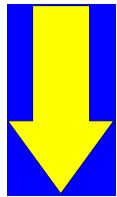
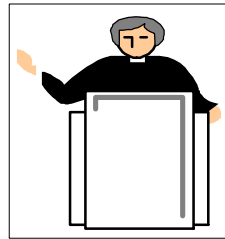
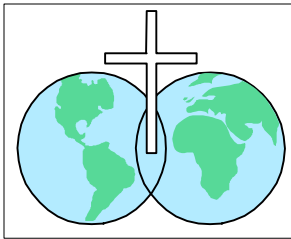
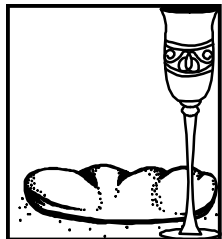
Doesn't

Have full communion with us
until We change our
understanding of ministry
And the sacraments
To match theirs!

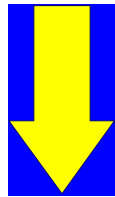
What is " Full Communion " ?

It is the ECUSA and ELCA recognizing each other as both believing in the basics of the Christian Faith

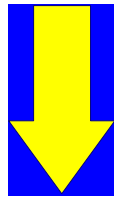
This means we will be able to:



Share celebrating Holy Communion

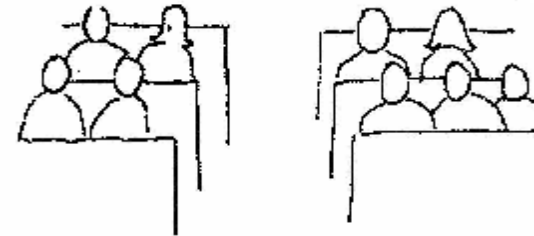


Share in the mission and the witness of the churches



Make easier the inter-change of clergy between the churches

**THIRD,
EPISCOPALIANS BELIEVE IN A
THREE-FOLD OFFICE OF MINISTRY
WHICH WE AS LUTHERANS MUST ADOPT
BECAUSE IT IS A PART OF THE
HISTORIC EPISCOPATE.**



1. There is a three-fold office of ministry that includes bishops, priests, and deacons.
2. Clergy receive gifts of the Spirit that make them more important than those received by the laity.
3. Only clergy may conduct the Sacraments because of the "special grace" they possess.
4. Lutherans must have this before there is full communion with the Episcopal Church.



The Bible tells us that Jesus is in the bread and wine because He said He would be, not because a priest says He is present.

Jesus said,
“This is my body ...
This is my blood ...”

This means that we Lutherans **HAVE NEVER** shared in the body and blood of Christ our Lord and Savior because our clergy aren't authentic, at least in the eyes of the Episcopal Church.

THIS UNDERSTANDING HAS FAR WORSE DANGERS

This shifts the focus of our faith from Christ's promise to be present with us
(Word alone!)

to the question of who is authorized to lead at the Sacrament.

Worse, it seems to make the priest with the “special grace” more important for our salvation than Christ Himself.

What's wrong with this picture ?

So what's the problem ?
It Sounds Good !



Why can't our two churches cooperate ?

Called to Common Mission
makes it possible for Lutherans
and
Episcopalians to get along.

This would be true but for one point.

We don't have
“ FULL COMMUNION ”
with the
Episcopal Church
until we live by
Episcopal
Beliefs !

The implementation of Called to Common Mission creates major problems:



It is one-sided

- Because the Episcopal Church gives only “*temporary suspension*” to their rules so that ELCA ministers can be recognized for now.
- Because the ELCA will have to adopt the Episcopal form of ministry.
- Because “*full communion*” will not actually occur for 20-40 years when all our bishops are ordained into the historic episcopacy.

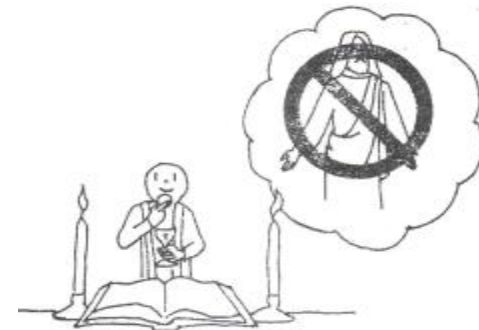
Is it fair for one side to be forced to give up its understanding of ministry to another if both really respect each other ?



Episcopalians, like Roman Catholics, believe there is an “**ONTOLOGICAL**” CHANGE THAT TAKES PLACE .

The bishop or priest undergoes a metaphysical or actual change that alters them for life.

THIS CHANGE IS NECESSARY BECAUSE IT IS WHAT MAKES JESUS CHRIST PRESENT IN HOLY COMMUNION.



Episcopalians believe that Jesus **IS NOT PRESENT** in the bread and wine **UNLESS** clergy of the historic episcopate say that **He is!**

**SECOND,
WE WOULD HAVE TO BELIEVE THAT
BISHOPS RECEIVE A “SPECIAL GRACE”
THROUGH THE LAYING ON OF HANDS
OF BISHOPS ALREADY IN THE
HISTORIC EPISCOPATE
WHICH THEY PASS ON TO OTHER
BISHOPS AND PRIESTS.**



**The belief that bishops and priests have a unique power
or “Special Grace”
that makes them different or better than the laity.**

**Episcopalians have adopted a binding agreement with
Roman Catholics in which they both affirm that
ordination into their historic episcopate give clergy
Special Grace that laity lack.**

**They both agree that their clergy got it, but
they do not recognize each others historic episcopacy
or
each others clergy as being authentic or real
pastors and priests of the church.**

It is a barrier between churches

- **Because it diminishes dialog & cooperation with other Christian churches.**
- **Because it hinders & closes dialog with other Lutheran churches who will not recognize any form of historic episcopate.**
- **Because even the other churches the ELCA has entered into “full communion” agreements with are not recognized by the Episcopal Church as equal partners.**

It is just plain BAD Theology

- **Because, as Lutherans, our salvation is based upon the Word and Sacraments. Now we will require bishops and priests with special power.**
- **Because we surrender the Priesthood of all Believers to a two tier class of priesthood, clergy and lay.**
- **Because now bishops are necessary for the unity of the church where before Christ was enough.**

Most of our problems and disagreements
center on one key factor

The Historic Episcopate

Okay, so what is the
Historic Episcopate ?



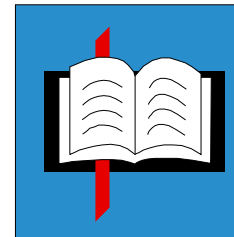
**Episcopalians believe
the following:**

1. There is a succession or line of ordained bishops going back to St. Peter as intended by Jesus.
2. It is necessary or essential to have and use it in order to be a true Christian church.
3. Bishops are the teaching authority of the church and are necessary to witness to and safeguard its unity.
4. There is a “divinely instituted” three-fold office of ministry (Bishops, Priests and Deacons) within an authentic Christian church.
5. The Sacraments are effective and authentic **ONLY** if administered by a person ordained with the Historic Episcopate.
6. Ordination gives special gifts to those who receive it and actually creates a “change” within them.
7. Only bishops within the historic episcopate can preside at ordinations and pass on the gifts by the laying on of hands.

**FIRST
THIS WOULD ELEVATE THE CLERGY,
ESPECIALLY BISHOPS, OVER LAY PEOPLE**



**The belief that “Bishops are necessary to the
existence of the church” is in direct conflict
with the Word of God in Scripture and our
Lutheran Confessions.**



The Bible says, “Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the Word, that the church might be presented before Him in splendor, ... that it might be holy,...” Eph 5:25-27

**The Augsburg Confession in Article 7 says clearly:
“For the true unity of the church it is enough to agree
concerning the teaching of the Gospel [of Jesus Christ]
and the administration of the sacraments.”**