

Holy Order

The Revd Prebendary Dr Paul Avis

Order and human flourishing

It is an apostolic imperative that, in the worship and ministry of the Church, 'all things should be done decently and in order' (1 Corinthians 14.40); or as Thiselton translates it: 'fittingly and in an ordered manner'.¹ This seems, on the face of it, to be a simple, common-sense instruction on the part of the Apostle Paul, to preserve worship from degenerating into an unseemly shambles. However, there is a vast philosophical, theological and literary background to the idea of order.²

In *The City of God* St Augustine devotes the nineteenth book to an enquiry into

the supreme good for humankind. With the civilized world crumbling around him under the barbarian onslaught, Augustine evokes a vision of tranquil stability. The good is found where peace and harmony reign in every area of life: in body and mind; between humans in the home and in the city; between nations; and between humans and God. The instinctive aim of all creatures is peace, and peace is the result of order: 'The peace of the whole universe is the tranquility of order – and order is the arrangement of things equal and unequal in a pattern which assigns to each its proper position'.³

Through the ages, the idea of holy order has appealed to this Pauline text. Order

became clericalised in medieval times and was used to refer to the clerical body as a whole or to one group within it (e.g. *ordo episcopatus*).⁴ But St Thomas Aquinas and St Bonaventure grounded the doctrine of holy order in a theology of the order and beauty of the divine nature. St Thomas builds on the axiom that the works of God in the created order (*opera ad extra*) reflect the being of God: there is an analogy of being (*analogia entis*) between the Creator and the creation. God's created works must, therefore, reflect God's own order and beauty. The Church has been brought into being by God and must, therefore, like the rest of the creation, exhibit the orderly beauty of God.

Consequently, in order that this beauty might not be lacking in the Church, God established order in it, in such a way that certain persons minister the sacraments to others, and in this way they are similar to God, as it were, working along with God.⁵

Order and degree, harmony and peace, in both Church and state, was the great longing of the Middle Ages. Evoking the beauty of order and the horrors of chaos was much more than a literary convention: it was often a question of the survival of Christian civilisation or at least of the security of the state. For example, during the fragile regime of Queen Eliza-

beth I, threatened both internally by Puritan radicals and externally by the power of Roman Catholic Spain, Shakespeare addressed this theme. Ulysses' famous speech in *Troilus and Cressida* (1602) begins:

The heavens themselves, the planets and this centre, Observe degree, priority and place...

Then come the famous lines:

Take but degree away, untune that string,
And, hark! What discord follows...

(*Troilus and Cressida*, I, iii, 85-86, 109-110)

Richard Hooker, whose life overlapped with Shakespeare's, has something comparable, too long to quote, beginning: 'Now if nature should intermit her course, and leave altogether, though it were for a while the observation of her own laws....' (EP I, iii, 4). As it is in nature, so also in the body politic and in the Church: order, degree, unity and harmony are vital. 'Without order there is no living in public society, because the want thereof is the mother of confusion, whereupon division of necessity followeth, and out of division, inevitable destruction' (EP VIII, ii, 2). If things or persons be ordered, says Hooker, this implies that they are 'distinguished by degrees', for order is a graduated disposition or arrangement

¹ Anthony Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (GIGTC), Grand Rapids: Mich.: Eerdmans and Carlisle: Paternoster, pp. 1167-8.

² A starting point for this broader context might be the composite article 'Order' in Karl Rahner, ed., *Encyclopedia of Theology: A Concise Sacramentum Mundi*, London: Burns and Oates, 1975.

³ Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972, p. 870.

⁴ David N. Power, *Ministers of Christ and his Church*, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1969, pp. 62-64.

⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, xxxiv, a, 1, Resp.; cited K. Osborne, *Priesthood*, New York: Paulist Press, 1988, pp. 212f, slightly altered.

of things. And to articulate that order is the work of polity; hence the title of Hooker's immortal work: *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. So Hooker talks of 'degrees of ecclesiastical order': bishops, presbyters and deacons (EP V, lxxviii, 12).⁶

Order and equality

For Hooker, as much as for St Thomas, order took a hierarchical form: everything in creation – invisible and visible, angels, humans, and non-human animate creatures – had its appointed place in the great chain of being which included social distinctions based on class deference and on obedience to higher authority. A good deal of this spirit still clings to the Roman Catholic Church's teaching about holy order and collateral matters: the authority of the magisterium that must not be challenged, the exclusion of women from the ordained ministry and the exclusion of lay people from church government. To modern eyes, such a rigidly hierarchical structure of holy order, with its connotations of social deference, economic disadvantage and political oppression, seems far from beautiful or admirable. It strikes us as unjust and therefore as repellent. If we are to value order, it must not undermine equality and the common life.

All Christians are called to a life of discipleship and apostleship, to represent Christ, to speak and act in his name. Cler-

gy and laity are united in a common calling, a partnership with one another and with Christ (Hebrews 3.1, 14). This common calling transcends the distinction between lay and ordained. The people of God, the laos, includes both ordained and not ordained (1 Peter 2). Both are embraced within the royal prophetic priesthood. Lay and ordained share in the common task according to the Spirit's distribution of gifts to the Church. There are differences in the calling of Christians and there are particular ways in which various lay and ordained vocations represent Christ. Diverse and complementary gifts are bestowed on the community by the Holy Spirit for the common good (1 Corinthians 12.7; cf. BEM M5). Our common calling counteracts the inveterate insidious tendency towards ecclesiastical elitism. We need to express the idea of holy order without the connotations of superior and inferior levels that are explicit in the pre-modern writers. 'Role' is a neutral term to set alongside 'order' and 'office' and may be useful. All roles in the Church must be held to be of equal value.

Perhaps the ancient Greek patristic term 'economy' can also help us here. There is, so to speak, an economy in what St Paul calls the distributions or apportionings (*diakrisis*: 1 Corinthians 12.4) of gifts and ministries. Economy (*oikonomia*) implies that there is a God-given purpose governing and regulating the life of the Church and that, in order to promote that purpose, there is a parti-

der, a pattern of ministry is appointed in the Church. This is true of all churches in their own way, though the pattern varies slightly. The Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, Old Catholic and some Lutheran Churches adhere to the threefold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons, ordained in visible historical continuity, or as we say, in historic succession. The non-episcopal Protestant Churches have their own distribution of representative ministries in which the principle of holy order is respected within a greater equality of ministries.

Hierarchy, deference and exclusiveness are not necessarily intrinsic to holy order. An egalitarian interpretation is equally possible. An interesting attempt has recently been made by Brian Horne to rehabilitate the idea of hierarchy as 'subordination without inequality', order without oppression.⁷ In this spirit I take the expression 'holy order' to mean essentially that there is a diversity of gifts and callings and a distribution of responsibilities – an 'economy' (*oikonomia*) – in ministry and that this is recognised in a 'sacramental' way. Holy order signifies that there is a distinction within the one

body between the whole apostolic community of the baptised and those within that community who are commissioned in a sacramental way to exercise a public, representative and apostolic ministry.

The ordering of the whole people of God

Needless to say, 'holy' order does not mean that the ordained are more holy in their lives than the unordained: that is patently not the case. Neither does it mean that the ordained are more important in the purposes of God and are on a higher plane than those who are not ordained. The ordering is of the whole Church. The ordering is holy because it is God's ordering and because the whole Church is ordered to the worship and service of God. And even though we Anglicans sometimes – not improperly – speak of the three orders of bishop, priest and deacon, there is in truth a single Holy Order in the Church. In that sense, the Lutheran insistence on 'the undivided ministry' is well taken.⁸

⁶ Richard Hooker, *Works*, ed. John Keble, 3 vols, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1845. EP = *Ecclesiastical Polity* by book, chapter and section. This aspect of Hooker's thought is discussed by several contributors to W. Speed Hill, ed., *Studies in Richard Hooker: Essays Preliminary to an Edition of his Works*, Cleveland, Ohio and London: Case Western Reserve University Press.

⁷ Brian Horne in Christine Hall and Robert Hannaford, eds, *Order and Ministry*, Leominster: Gracewing, 1996, pp. 1–19, esp. p. 15.

⁸ See *The Office of Bishop: Report of the Official Working Group for Dialogue between the Church of Sweden and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Stockholm* [1988], Geneva: LWF, 1993.

The fact that lay people, as well as clergy, are ordered to their particular vocation through baptism has led some to propose that there is an 'order' of laity, in the same way that deacons, presbyters and bishops each comprise an order on the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican understanding.⁹ This approach is reflected in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer of the Episcopal Church of the USA ('Concerning the Service of the Church'). However, what some have seen as the 'ordination' of the laity through baptism is actually the ordination of the laos, of the whole people of God, and does not distinguish clergy from laity in the sense of those who are not ordained. We do not need to posit an 'order of laity' if we say, as Alan Richardson does, that baptism effects 'as it were, the ordination of a new member of the royal priesthood'.¹⁰

Holy order establishes the particular ministries of bishops, presbyters and deacons and of lay people who are called to ministry. These ministries are ordered in relation to the Church as a body and in relation to each other. Holy order creates interdependent forms of ministry that are mutually constitutive. No one of them stands on its own. Each one needs every other one. In particular, without the apostolic ordering of lay people, holy order applied to the ordained would be

meaningless. It is the ordering of the whole church that makes it possible for ministry to take communal and collegial as well as personal forms, as BEM put it.¹¹ In episcopally ordered churches, such as the Church of England, however, where the personal dimension of episcopate is fully recognised, the bishop's ministry may be regarded as the linchpin of holy order, since the diocesan bishop is responsible for the selection, training, ordination, licensing and oversight of clergy and for the oversight of comparable processes for recognised lay ministers within the framework of the church's canon law.

The continuity of holy order across time is expressed through the succession of the ordinations, with the laying on of hands by the bishop, together with presbyters. It is also expressed in the tangible continuity of the bishop's ministry of word, sacrament and pastoral oversight in an historic see (the seat of the bishop within a diocese, from which the diocese often takes its name). The issue of the Church's visible continuity through history brings us to the principle of transmitted authority in particular.

At its most basic, the principle of transmitted authority, which is common to all mainstream churches in one form or another, safeguards the decency and good

order in the Church that St Paul called for. It is intended to prevent individuals seizing office for themselves or capturing a factional following. But it also ensures continuity and authenticity in the ministry of word and sacrament and therefore one of the ways in which the apostolicity of the Church its faithfulness in mission to its origin and foundation is expressed and secured. As Moberly put it, it is 'the principle that ministerial office is an outward and orderly institution, dependent for its validity upon transmission, continuous and authorized, from the Apostles, whose own commission was direct from Jesus Christ'.¹²

Continuity of ministerial authority, like ministry itself, should surely be expressed in the communal, collegial and personal modes of which BEM spoke. For episcopally ordered churches, the succession of bishops in office and in their local churches (sees) is a salient expression of continuity and of transmitted authority in the personal mode. In episcopal churches, the bishop is the pivot of transmitted authority for ministry. In reformed episcopal polities, such as that of Anglicanism, for example, the bishop's role in the transmission of authority is both supported and constrained by synodical government which sets the framework of canon law, under which the bishop operates, and also provides the resources for the ministry and mission of the Church.

Conclusion

In the context of Anglican-Lutheran conversation about the diaconate, I suppose that the main questions in connection with holy order are: (1) Is holy order one or more than one? (2) Are deacons within holy order or outside it? (3) Is ordination a sacramental act? I hope that my answers to those questions can be deduced from what I have already said, without my spelling them out in words of one syllable. Let me put it like this: the question of holy order can be seen as a series of concentric circles, like the rings that spread outwards when you throw a stone into a pond. The outer circle is the whole body of the faithful, the baptised believers, the laos, comprising both the ordained and those not ordained. This whole community is apostolic in its nature and is ordered to the *missio dei*. Within that outer circle there is an inner circle, made up of all those who are ordained to the public, representative ministry of word, sacrament and pastoral responsibility. It is this ministry that is usually referred to in a specific sense as 'holy order'. Within this circle again there are three more concentric circles: that of the episcopate, which embraces presbyteral and diaconal ministry and has oversight of them; that of the presbyterate, which embraces the diaconate but not the episcopate; and that of the diaconate. Although this is the smallest circle, in terms

⁹ John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, pp. 152-3. For recent Roman Catholic studies see Susan K. Wood, *Sacramental Orders*, Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2000; and Anthony Barratt, 'The Sacrament of Order and the Second Vatican Council: the Presbyter-Bishop Relationship Revisited', *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, 2:2 (2002), pp. 7-27. For various ecumenical perspectives on this and related issues see the themed issues of *Ecclesiology*: 1:2 (2005) ('Presbyters, Bishops and Holy Order') and 3:1 ('Ministry and Mission') (2006).

¹⁰ Alan Richardson, *An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament*, London: SCM Press, 1958, p. 301.

¹¹ *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Geneva: WCC, 1982, M26.

¹² R.C. Moberly, *Ministerial Priesthood* [1897], 2nd edn [1910], ed. with an introduction by A.T. Hanson, London: SPCK, 1969, p. 115.

of our image, it is at the heart and hub of all ordained ministry because it expresses the fundamental commissioning of the Church to minister in the name of Christ, and so underlies presbyteral and episcopal ministries. These three smaller circles are sometimes referred to (for example in the Preface to the classic Angli-

can Ordinal of 1662) as 'orders', so we Anglicans have that language in our ecclesiastical 'trust deeds'. But, fundamentally, as I hope Lutherans and Anglicans can agree, holy order is one and is expressed in three forms of ordained ministry.¹³

What Do We Mean by "Order"? A Lutheran Perspective

The Revd Dr Matti Repo

1. Theology and Terminology

What do we mean by "order"? For the Lutherans, this is not just a theological question concerning our understanding of the ordained ministry, but also a very practical one, especially when we try to discuss it in an ecumenical and international setting. Substantial questions emerge in the very opening of such a discussion. First, a historical question: do the Lutherans have a unanimous theology and understanding of the ministry of the Church at all? Second, a question of terminology: which words should we choose to translate our understanding

into other languages in another theological framework? Third, a question of self-criticism: have we clarified the matter to ourselves, before claiming to have a position in a discussion? Indeed, what *do* mean by "order"?

The word "order" is seldom used in Lutheranism. In the eyes of many, the concept of "Holy Orders" might seem too elevated. Instead, the Lutheran vocabulary has made use of more secular terms. The most important ones of them are *office* (German *Amt*, Swedish *ämbete*) and *ministry* (German *Dienst*, Swedish *tjänst*).¹ These words have their own

¹³ This paper adapts and expands on material in Paul Avis, *A Ministry Shaped by Mission*, London and New York: T. & T. Clark, 2005.

¹ I choose Swedish to exemplify the Scandinavian terminology since Swedish is an official language in Finland. The same terms are spelled a bit differently in Danish, Norwegian and Icelandic. Finnish does not belong to the family of Germanic/Scandinavian languages and it only has one word to express both office and ministry (*virka*).

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background, and their Latin counterparts in the theological writings of the Reformation era are not wholly consequent. Whereas *Amt / ämbete* has its roots in the mediaeval Latin and German *ambactus*, depicting a vassal, it is also used to translate the Latin *ministerium*, service and ministry.

As a result of the ecumenical proceedings in the 1990s, of which the Porvoo Common Statement is by all means not the least important, a process to clarify the terminology and theology of ordination was initiated in 1997 by the Nordic Ecumenical Council. The outcome of this ecumenical study project has just been released by a Danish publishing house.² The authors of the volume have made a survey in the rites of ordination and commitment in the Lutheran, Catholic, Orthodox and Free Churches of the five Nordic countries.

A close reading of the rites grants some insight for discerning what we mean by "order". The concept is very closely linked with "ordination", at least when it comes to the question concerning which ministries belong to the "ordained ministry". The Lutheran folk churches don't exactly seem to know whether their deacons are ordained, consecrated or commissioned. On the other hand, the question is not purely liturgical, but it also seems to involve hidden tensions and problems of authority. To make the issue even more complicated and blurred, several non-theological factors also have their say in it, especially in the form of different expectations towards the church as an employer. The spiritual empower-

ment granted by the liturgical ordination is not always considered vital for the professional profile of an educated and skilled employee. Attention is too easily paid to the ordering of the diaconal ministry in spite of ordaining into it.

2. Is there a "Priestly Order" in the New Testament?

The fact that we have a hard time finding the term "order" in Lutheranism should not worry us very much. As a matter of fact, it is not easy to find in the Holy Scriptures, either. In the Old Testament, it was ordered that the Aronic priests were to be set liturgically apart for sacrificial duties: "You shall consecrate him, since he offers the bread of your God; he shall be holy to you; for I the Lord, who sanctify you, am holy." (Lev 21:8). But early Christianity did not adopt a priestly office as such from Judaism. In the New Testament, no other individuals besides Christ are called priests; this word is used collectively, depicting the Christians as a priestly people. As a matter of fact, the New Testament describes Christ a high priest in another sense than the Aronic priesthood ever had been: in the letter to Hebrews we meet the word "order" to emphasize it. Christ is said to be the "high priest after the order of Melchizedek" (Hebr 6:20).

The Latin version of this phrase reads *secundum ordinem Melchisedech*, the Greek original *kata ten taxin Melchisedek*. The Latin *ordo* is equivalent to the Greek *taxis*. Both words depict a rank, a certain group or class of

people, like a military unit, but more than that, an arrangement, a due order, a fixed succession; also, a row of seats in a theatre etc. The word is only used in two other places in the New Testament and both of them speak about good order in the Church (1 Cor 14:40, Col 2:5).

When Christ is characterized as the "high priest after the order of Melchizedek", the focus is not to speak of him as having been set into a certain priestly rank and attached to a priestly order, but on the contrary, as having become an extraordinary priest in comparison to the Aronic priests. His office has only been prefigured in the priesthood of Melchizedek: Christ is a high priest who has received his office directly from God and shall remain a priest eternally.

The concept of "order" is the basis for understanding "ordination". In a certain ecclesiastical sense, ordination has come to mean attaching a person to an estate or a rank of people, into "an order". It has traditionally been used for incorporating a person into a certain group and, respectively, for setting them apart from others. Notwithstanding that, there are good reasons to interpret it as following a pattern, as acting according to a prescribed order: to ordain is to set someone apart into an office in an ordered manner.

3. Ordination in the New Testament

The New Testament gives us five examples of ordination in the early church. They include the narratives of selecting seven men to take care of the Greek-speaking widows in Jerusalem (Acts 6:1-6) and of setting apart and sending the apostles Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:3). In the Pastoral letters we read advice to

young Timothy, ascribed to St Paul, on how to exercise oversight in the church (1 Tim 4:14, 5:22, 2 Tim 1:6). None of these passages makes use of the word "order" (*taxis*). Nevertheless, in all of them, the gesture described remains the same: apostolic imposition of hands combined with prayer. The Holy Spirit's activity is also mentioned in them. The Greek phrase used for imposition of hands is *epitithemi tas kheiras*. From it is derived the concept of *kheirothesia*, which is applied in the Orthodox churches for consecration into the lower degrees of clergy, whereas the word used for ordination is *kheirotonia*. Literally, the latter does not mean imposition of hands but electing somebody by raising a hand and pointing to him (cf. Is 58:9 LXX, Plato *Laws* 659b). But the word also carries a notion of setting apart into a ministry of the church, which is evident already in the New Testament. The phrase is used for choosing and installing elders in the congregations which the Apostles Paul and Barnabas visited (Acts 14:23).

The imposition of hands, combined with a prayer to the Holy Spirit, is the key factor of ordination. In some places, it is described in a context of charismatic manifestations. The laying on of hands transmitted ministerial authority and the spiritual empowerment. This is prefigured also in the Old Testament narrative of Moses and Joshua (Numbers 27:15-23) and is apparent especially in the Pastoral letters. It seems that the ministry of the early church was charismatic: the ministry is a spiritual gift granted by God to someone for an office in the church. The ordination confers the Holy Spirit's presence. In what sense is this spiritual gift to be discerned from the spiritual gift received in baptism? This question is an ecumenical problem, but it is particularly a challenge to the Lutheran theology of ministry.

² Iversen 2006.

4. Luther on the Priesthood of All Believers and the Ordered Ministry

The Lutherans have strongly emphasised the priesthood of all believers. Sometimes it has been confused with the ordained ministry itself by maintaining that the latter would only be a matter of order – i.e., that the ministry of the church would be an arrangement of the baptized for themselves. Luther himself can partly be blamed as being guilty of this misinterpretation. In the decisive years of Reformation he wrote several treatises in which he questioned the spiritual meaning and necessity of ordination in accordance to the church's tradition. I quote his writing *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation* (1520):

"It is pure invention that pope, bishop, priests, and monks are called the spiritual estate while princes, lords, artisans, and farmers are called the temporal estate. This is indeed a piece of deceit and hypocrisy. Yet no one need be intimidated by it, and for this reason: all Christians are truly of the spiritual estate, and there is no difference among them except that of office. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12 that we are all one body, yet every member has its own work by which it serves the others. This is because we all have one baptism, one gospel, one faith, and are all Christians alike; for baptism, gospel, and faith alone make us spiritual and a Christian people. The pope or bishop anoints, shaves heads, *ybyb* ordains, consecrates, and prescribes garb different from that of the

laity, but he can never make a man into a Christian or into a spiritual man by so doing. He might well make a man into a hypocrite or a humbug and blockhead, but never a Christian or a spiritual man. As far as that goes, we are all consecrated priests through baptism, as St. Peter says in 1 Peter 2, 'You are a royal priesthood and a priestly realm.' The Apocalypse says, 'Thou hast made us to be priests and kings by thy blood'. The consecration by pope or bishop would never make a priest, and if we had no higher consecration than that which pope or bishop gives, no one could say mass or preach a sermon or give absolution."¹

As much as Luther was convinced of the equal priesthood of all believers, he nevertheless vehemently opposed any individual wishes to simply take the priestly rights by someone to himself. The reason is not only that such an attempt would be contrary to the tradition and order of the church, but it also would obscure the communal nature of the faith. Thus, Luther on the one hand seems to diminish the meaning of ordination, but on the other hand, assigns it a place in the community. He writes in *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (1520):

"Let everyone, therefore, who knows himself to be a Christian, be assured of this, that we are all equally priests, that is to say, we have the same power in respect to the Word and the sacraments. However, no one may make use of this power except by the consent of the community or by the call of a superior. (For what is the common property of all, no

individual may arrogate to himself, unless he is called.) And therefore this 'sacrament' of ordination, if it is anything at all, is nothing else than a certain rite whereby one is called to the ministry of the church."²

According to Luther, the ordination is neither for the individual himself nor for the local community to decide on; it is a calling in the name of the church as a whole. Luther's expression of the "certain rite" only points to the existing structures the organized church uses for calling and setting apart its ministers. This is also implied in the reference to the "call of a superior". Until the Diet in Augsburg in 1530, the Lutherans were open for maintaining the episcopal order in the church.

In the reformatory writings of the year 1520, Luther time and again emphasized the value of the priesthood of all believers. Together with it, he stressed the true meaning of the ecclesial ministry: it is not established for purposes other than proclaiming the Word of God. In the treatise on the *Freedom of a Christian*, written originally in Latin and sent as a letter to Pope Leo X, Luther makes use of the concept of *ordo clericorum* but claims the ultimate purpose of the order to be a ministry of the word: "The apostolic, episcopal order and the entire clerical order, has been called and instituted only for the ministry of the word."³

According to the *Freedom of a Christian*, words used for clerical order have been improperly limited to describe a

distinct "spiritual estate" and not to highlight the general priesthood. In addition, those in the orders should only be called ministers and servants:

"You will ask, 'If all who are in the church are priests, how do these whom we now call priests differ from laymen?' I answer: Injustice is done those words 'priest,' 'cleric,' 'spiritual,' 'ecclesiastic,' when they are transferred from all Christians to those few who are now by a mischievous usage called 'ecclesiastics.' Holy Scripture makes no distinction between them, although it gives the name 'ministers,' 'servants,' 'stewards' to those who are now proudly called popes, bishops, and lords and who should according to the ministry of the Word serve others and teach them the faith of Christ and the freedom of believers. Although we are all equally priests, we cannot all publicly minister and teach. We ought not do so even if we could."⁴

As a matter of fact, Luther does speak about "holy orders" in a rather broad sense. On the one hand, the orders include the ministries instituted by God for the proclamation of Gospel, and on the other hand, secular governing bodies and other basic social units can also be considered holy orders that are established by God. Since the latter are also an ordinance of God, they belong to the "holy orders". Luther counts the diaconal office into the holy orders, at least in this broad sense, since those who supervise the common chest, from which the needy were supported, are also in an order that "pleases God". In his larger *Confession*

¹ LW 44, 127.

² LW 36, 116.

³ StA 2, 268, 6-8. The German version translates into English a bit differently: "all the apostles, bishops and priests, and the entire spiritual estate", StA 2, 269, 6-7.

⁴ LW 31, 356.

concerning Christ's Supper (1528) Luther writes:

"But the holy orders and true religious institutions established by God are these three: the office of priest, the estate of marriage, the civil government. All who are engaged in the clerical office or ministry of the Word are in a holy, proper, good, and God-pleasing order and estate, such as those who preach, administer sacraments, supervise the common chest, sextons and messengers or servants who serve such persons. These are engaged in works which are altogether holy in God's sight."⁷

It seems that Luther does not derive his understanding of ordination from a theology of "holy orders", a rank of set-apart individuals, but from God's ordering. Ordination, respectively, is not to be understood as attaching somebody to an order, but as acting according to what God has ordered. When bishops, priests and deacons are ordained, certain individuals are set apart to minister in the church according to an apostolic order.

5. Ministry and Ordination in the Lutheran Confessions

The Lutherans have generally avoided speaking of a distinction between the ordained and other baptized Christians using ontological categories. Nevertheless, a substantial theological question can't be bypassed. It is clear that any comparisons hinting at a different "value" or to a "higher esteem" among the

baptized on the basis of ordination are to be resisted. But on the other hand, the difference between clergy and lay may be defined by pointing to a different charisma. In that sense, the concept of "Holy Orders" could be credited for highlighting the spiritual substance of ordination, inasmuch as the holiness is based on the gift of the Holy Spirit.

At a first look, the Lutheran Confessions simply criticise the prevailing mediaeval catholic theology of ordination. The Reformers did not regard ordination as a sacrament. It lacked a dominical institution and did not confer forgiveness of sins on the person. But at a second look, in the *Apology for the Augsburg Confession*, Philipp Melancthon admits that the imposition of hands could be called a sacrament, since it sets someone apart for the ministry of Word and Sacrament:

"If ordination is understood in this way, neither will we refuse to call the imposition of hands a sacrament. For the Church has the command to appoint ministers, which should be most pleasing to us, because we know that God approves this ministry, and is present in the ministry."⁸

This is coherent with what was written in the fifth article of the *Augsburg Confession* itself on the divine institution of the ministry of Word and Sacrament. According to it, the *ministerium ecclesiasticum* is established by God to administer the means of grace, in order for us to be able to receive the Holy Spirit and the gift of faith through them. The

understanding of the ministry in the *Augsburg Confession* is bound with the doctrine of justification. The few ecclesiological sentences of the Confession are sketched from a soteriological viewpoint:

"That we may obtain this faith, the Ministry of Teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted. For through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Ghost is given, who works faith; where and when it pleases God, in them that hear the Gospel, to wit, that God, not for our own merits, but for Christ's sake, justifies those who believe that they are received into grace for Christ's sake. [...]"⁹

"[...] The Church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered. [...]"¹⁰

Since the Confession combines the ministry with the doctrine of justification, it only treats the ministry in connection with the Word and Sacraments. This also applies to the episcopal ministry, which is responsible for the purity of the Gospel proclaimed and the due administration of the Sacraments.¹¹ Further dimensions of the ministry of oversight fall from the picture. The same also applies to the ministry of the deacon: since it is not directly connected with the proclamation, it is not sufficiently noticed in the whole corpus of the Lutheran Confessions, although the presence of deacons in the church is taken for granted.¹²

However, this is not to imply that either of those two ministries would be superfluous or arbitrary for the being of the church in comparison with the priestly ministry. On the contrary, the Confessions take them for granted: since the congregations of the Reformation wish to remain true to the catholic faith and order of the church, they also approve to the Church's ministerial structures:

"It is our greatest wish to maintain church-polity and the grades in the Church, even though they have been made by human authority. For we know that church discipline was instituted by the Fathers, in the manner laid down in the ancient canons, with a good and useful intention."¹³

Lutherans were willing to maintain the ministerial ordering on a renewed theological basis. No more should the ministry be seen in a sacrificial context but in the service of the Gospel. The congregations of the Reformation wished to hold on to the tradition, according to which there were three major degrees or "grades" in the divinely instituted *ministerium ecclesiasticum*. The grades themselves are not regarded as established by God, but on the contrary, as instituted by "human authority" by the Fathers in a "good and useful intention". It is naturally hard to discern in the history of the church what exactly has come to being out of divine guidance and what is based on a purely human decision-making. The reformers nevertheless wished to point

⁷ LW 37, 364.

⁸ *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, Art. XIII, 12.

⁹ *Augsburg Confession*, Art. V.

¹⁰ *Augsburg Confession*, Art. VII.

¹¹ *Augsburg Confession*, Art. XXVIII.

¹² According to the German text of the *Apology* in Art. XIII, 12 (cited above), the Church has a "command to appoint Prediger und Diakonos", whereas the Latin text only mentions ministris.

¹³ *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, Art. XIV, 1, 5.

to the scriptural evidence of certain elements in the Church of Christ: the proclamation of the Gospel and the Sacraments. The apostles were sent by Christ to administer these; thus, their ministry is Christ's ordinance.

As a divine institution, ministry is one of the external characteristics by which the true church can be infallibly recognized. Luther mentions it among other signs in his late writing *On the Councils and the Church* (1539):

"Fifth, the church is recognized externally by the fact that it consecrates or calls ministers, or has offices that it is to administer. There must be bishops, pastors, or preachers who publicly and privately give, administer, and use the aforementioned four things or holy possessions on behalf of and in the name of the church, or rather by reason of their institution by Christ."¹⁴

Not only the ministry itself, but also the ordination into it is mentioned as a sign from which the church can be infallibly recognized. No other community but the Church calls, blesses and sends people in the name of Christ. The *Augsburg Confession* emphasizes the duty calling to give the Priesthood of all believers a proper framework: "no one should publicly teach in the Church or administer

the Sacraments unless he be regularly called".¹⁵ The words "regularly called" read in Latin *rite vocatus*, i.e. "called according to the rite". The church uses a certain *ritus* for calling, blessing and sending its ministers.

Some Lutheran theologians have claimed that the Articles V and XIV do not speak about the ministry in the same sense. According to a so-called functionalistic interpretation, Article V only speaks about the ministry as a principle: that there is proclamation of the Word and administration of the Sacraments, is instituted by God, but the practical arranging of it remains to the church to decide, and this is taken up first in the Article XIV. The divinely instituted ministry only exists as functions, not as individual ministers. This functionalistic approach differs from an ontological approach, according to which God has not only established preaching of the Gospel but also set apart preachers for it and given them his Holy Spirit. A functionalistic approach might be found useful when a particular church wishes to bring its ministry theologically closer to the priesthood of all believers.¹⁶ However, it has been disputed whether such a reading of the Confession can be historically and theologically justified at all.¹⁷

6. Which Ministries Belong to the "Order"?

Since the Lutheran Confessions focus on the doctrine of justification, the ministry of the church is described foremost in the presbyteral setting: the ministry is for preaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments. For historical reasons, some Lutheran churches do not consider the episcopal ministry as inevitable for the being of the church as the Porvoo churches do. Nevertheless, there should be no doubt among Lutherans on the position of the episcopal ministry as being part of the ordained ministry. What the Lutherans have denied is the secular power of the bishops, not their authority as preachers of the Gospel.¹⁸ The episcopal ministry does not rest on another divine institution than the presbyteral ministry. The bishops are basically pastors, set apart for certain proprietary functions in the church. Their ministry is distinct from that of the priests, but not by divine order.¹⁹ According to the reformers, the ministry is one: the pastor and the bishop are both in the same ministry of Word and Sacrament, in *unum et idem ministerium* (Melancthon).²⁰ Thus, it has been easy for Lutherans to adopt *Porvoo Common Statement* phrases like "the basic oneness of the ordained ministry" or "unity [of the ministry] in differentiated form" (Porvoo § 32 j).

Despite the theological unity and oneness of the ministry, it has not been easy for some Lutherans to also count the ministry of the deacon into the ordained min-

istry. However, following the same logic as in the episcopal ministry, one could reason that the deacon's ministry rests on the divine institution in the ministry of Word and sacrament, but is set apart from it for some other proprietary tasks, according to human order as decided by the church.

It is possible for a Lutheran church to strengthen its diaconal ministry by integrating it more closely into the ministry of Word and sacrament. This would mean taking steps towards a three-fold understanding of the one ministry and providing an expression for its episcopal, presbyteral and diaconal dimensions. As a part of the same development, the diaconal ministry would be more clearly exercised in the framework of the liturgical and sacramental life of the church. However, there remains some doubt about the three-fold ordering, since it is usually structured hierarchically. The churches with a traditional three-fold ministry and practicing sequential, cumulative ordinations are not fully satisfied with their present, transitive diaconate.

According to recent research in the history of liturgy, the Lutherans basically follow a catholic tradition in their ordination formulas.²¹ This applies at least to the Nordic ordination / consecration rites for priests and bishops.²² But there is some doubt as to whether all Nordic churches do ordain deacons, although they do consecrate or commission them in some way. The doubt arises from the discrepancy between the wording of the

¹⁴ LW 41, 154.

¹⁵ Augsburg Confession, Art. XIV.

¹⁶ This distinction is made e.g. in the report from the Bishops' Conference of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (VELKD) on the "universal priesthood, ordination and commissioning according to protestant understanding", cf. *Allgemeines Priestertum, Ordination und Beauftragung*, p. 7, footnote 7.

¹⁷ Cf. Lieberg 1962, 271-279, 314-315, 333-334; Wenz 1998, 321-329.

¹⁸ Augsburg Confession, Art. XXVIII, 5-11, 21-22; Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Art. XXVIII, 12-14; Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, 60-61.

¹⁹ Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, 63-65.

²⁰ Lieberg 1962, 119-121.

²¹ Puglisi 1998, 4-69.

²² Knuutila 2006, 99-102.

ordination rite and its structure: the deacons are not called, blessed or sent as properly and clearly as the priests are in their ordination.²³

7. Conclusion

It remains a challenge for our churches to work towards a common understanding of the diaconal ministry. The special challenge to the Lutherans is to bring their diaconal ministries into closer unity with the other ordained ministries. This was also recommended by a global consultation on the diaconal ministry, gathered by the Lutheran World Federation in November 2005. The consultation sent

a message to all LWF member churches.²⁴ According to my opinion, the churches need to consider the three-fold ministry in their context, but be aware of not letting their diaconate develop into a transitional one. The special calling for us in Lutheran and Anglican churches is to move towards one another. That will most inevitably mean also moving towards the centre of the Church: the Eucharistic celebration, in which we become members of Christ and of each other.

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²³ Olsen 2006, 196.

²⁴ http://www.lutheranworld.org/What_We_Do/DTS/Programs/DTS_Statement_Diakonia-2005.pdf

What diaconate does the presbyterate have and exercise?

The Revd Canon Rosalind Brown

Debate about the relationship of diaconal and presbyteral ministry has a long history in the Anglican Church and it will be my argument that the answer to our question has shifted over the centuries. I will base my discussion on the understanding of diaconal and presbyteral ministry embodied in the Ordinals of the Church of England which I will use as a case study, but to put flesh on the bones I begin with a brief survey of practice.

Some points in the historical evolution of the shape of diaconal and priestly ministry in the Church of England

The Anglican Church recognises the three fold Order of Ministry: Bishop, Priest (or Presbyter) and Deacon. Until the mid nineteenth century, after university education and / or some guided reading set by the bishop, men were sometimes or-

daind priest very quickly after being ordained deacon and for them distinctively diaconal ministry was non-existent: although contrary to the Canons, the practice is attested to by, amongst others, the ordination of John Donne, poet and future dean of St Paul's, as both deacon and priest on the same day in 1615. Others spent longer in deacon's orders, particularly in parishes where the celebration of Holy Communion was rare and the Deacon could fulfil most clerical functions. Until the Act of Uniformity in 1662 forbade the practice, it was common for deacons to be instituted to benefices. For many ministers there was thus very little sense of any relationship between diaconal and priestly ministry.

For much of the twentieth century the norm was that after a year in deacon's orders the young man was ordained priest but continued to serve as curate for two or three more years before moving to his own parish. Permanent dea-

cons were a very rare breed, and for most people diaconal ministry served as the first year of practical training for parochial priestly ministry.

In the last fifty years variations have developed. Non Stipendiary Ministry (NSM) opened up the possibility of ordained ministry to men whose vocation lay both in secular work and in ordained ministry. One consequence was that the age at ordination for many people was no longer their twenties, but their forties or fifties, and ministry was not necessarily full time in the parish. In the 1990s Non Stipendiary Ministry expanded still further with the introduction of Ordained Local Ministry (OLM) now supported by about half the dioceses in England. The distinctive nature of Ordained Local Ministry is the rootedness in the local community, since the call to ordained ministry emerges within the local church which supports the person's selection and training in order to serve within that local community.

Parallel with this was the widespread reorganisation of parochial ministry in response to the changing social and economic conditions in the country and the church. One priest in one parish became less and less common as team ministries, combined benefices, Local Ecumenical Partnerships, and church plants in new housing estates emerged. There was no consistency of approach between dioceses, and embodied within this but not always articulated theologically, was greater emphasis on the ministry of all the baptised.

During this time there was some confusion about whether to abolish deacons or encourage distinctive diaconal ministry. However, in 1988 the General Synod report, 'Deacons in the Ministry of the Church', stated clearly that diaconal ministry is foundational to priestly ministry:

... (T)hose who are preparing for priesthood will need to be helped in the understanding and use of their time in the diaconate. For not only might they work subsequently with distinctive deacons, but their priestly ministry is necessarily based upon *diakonia*.¹ The last sentence in that paragraph is significant, and needs to be part of our consideration today.

The ordination of women, to the diaconate in 1987 and to the priesthood in 1994 further changed the situation. During the years between 1987 and 1994 there were large numbers of women in deacon's orders, some of whom were placed in parishes as 'deacon in charge', effectively leading the parish and taking responsibility for ministry, except sacramental ministry, within it. This leadership role concealed any sense that diaconal ministry might have its own distinctive characteristics. A further consequence of the decision to ordain women to the diaconate was the loss virtually overnight of numerous deaconesses who had been the closest thing the Church of England had to distinctive deacons. With the ordination of most women deacons to the priesthood following 1994, the diaconate has been freed to become a vocation in its own right alongside being a transitional period of ministry for both men and

¹ General Synod of the Church of England. *Deacons in the Ministry of the Church*. London: Church House Publishing 1988 p108.

women who are called to priestly ministry, and some dioceses are reviving the distinctive diaconate. That makes it much easier to address our question than would have been the case even as recently as 1993 when the situation was very confused.

The understanding of diaconal and priestly ministry as expressed in the Ordinals

This growing diversity in the practice of ordained ministry is shaped by the Ordinal, which has itself changed since the sixteenth century. The 1550 Ordinal, which was later bound into the 1662 Book of Common Prayer (BCP), is still authorised for use. The Alternative Service Book (ASB) 1980 ceased to be authorised at the end of 2005, and Common Worship (CW) 2005 was authorised for use from September 2005. The appendix lists key points in their descriptions of the ministry of both deacon and priest.

1. The Book of Common Prayer (1662)

Essentially the 1662 Ordinal sees the deacon as an assistant to the priest, whether in divine service or out and about in the parish. At this time the parish was the chief provider of what we now call social services. Not all deacons were preachers and the restriction of baptism to infants in the absence of the priest indicates that this was primarily in the case of emergency baptisms; where there was no emergency, the parish priest baptised adults or children. There is an unambiguous statement by the Bishop that the office of deacon is an 'inferior office' to that of priest and the prayer for the newly ordained deacon indicates that the ordained ministry is hierarchical with the

diaconate as a training ground for higher ministry – that of the priest who is of 'great excellency' and 'so high a dignity'.

Priestly ministry involves being messengers, watchmen and stewards of the Lord, teaching, feeding and providing for the people, seeking for those who are lost 'in the midst of this naughty world', and ensuring conformity of faith and righteous life. Only in the prayer for the reception of the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest is there reference to forgiving sin and being a faithful dispenser of the Word of God and the holy Sacraments. This downplaying of sacramental ministry reflects the Reformation emphasis on the ministry of the word (although Cranmer hoped vainly for weekly Communion) and of maintaining order in what was assumed to be a Christian society. Based on the BCP, priests have to exercise at least some diaconal ministry since the Ordering of Priests does not refer specifically to some of the responsibilities of the deacon. Either these are assumed by virtue of the candidate for ordination already being a deacon and the fact that in practice few priests would be working with a deacon so if they did not fulfil the diaconal ministry, no one would, or they are included, but not spelled out, in the more general description of priestly ministry given by the Bishop.

2. The Alternative Service Book (1980)

This Ordinal dates from and reflects a time of significant change in the practice and understanding of ordained ministry and now people of all ages (including, during the lifetime of the ASB, women) were ordained to a variety of expressions of diaconal and priestly ministry. But the

recovery of the distinctive ministry of deacons was not yet in evidence, and the underlying implication was still that the deacon was in training for future priestly ministry, rather than being ordained to serve as a deacon who would in time be able to take considerable responsibility within a ministerial team instead of always being in the role of apprentice needing close supervision. The various agencies of the state rather than the Church were the primary providers of care for the poor and needy.

In contrast to the BCP where the primary example given for the ministry of the deacon is that of Stephen, the ASB prayer for the candidates referred to the example of Christ who took the form of a servant, and the language of the readings and the prayers is very much that of servanthood. The specific responsibilities of the deacon were similar to those in the 1662 service, although it is significant that the deacon no longer just assisted the priest but worked with the members of the church, and that the deacon's responsibilities in relation to the poor and needy were not only to identify the need and pass the message onto the priest who then elicited alms from the parish, but to provide relief alongside the members of the church. This hints at the recovery of the concept of the baptismal vocation of all Christians to follow Christ's example of service. All deacons were charged with preaching in the place where they were licensed. There was still a hierarchical implication in the description of the deacon as serving 'under' the priest.

The readings in the service for the ordination of priests emphasised the ministries of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:14-19) and of forgiveness (John 29:19-23) [in contrast to the BCP's use of Ephesians 4:7ff and Matthew 9:36ff which

speak of gifts to and callings within the Church, and of the need for labourers in the harvest.] This brought in a very specific focus on ministry with which the deacon was not charged and which had not been specifically mentioned in 1662, and overall the responsibilities of a priest were spelled out in much more detail.

In relation to the ministry the priest previously exercised as a deacon, the priest was assigned responsibility for very specific acts of pastoral care – ministry to the sick, preparing the dying for their death, whereas the deacon did such pastoral work as was entrusted to him or her. The priest was not charged with the specific responsibility of the deacon to search out the careless and indifferent. Preaching for the priest was broadened to proclamation of the word of the Lord, with additional responsibility to teach and encourage by word and example. The language of responsibility in matters relating to worship was clearly that of leadership – to lead, to preside, to bless – whereas the deacon assisted in leadership of worship, especially in the administration of Holy Communion. The priest worked with the bishop and other priests and there was no direct reference (as for a deacon) to working with the members of the church for whom the priest is servant and shepherd, but one hopes that priests did work with their people!

3. Common Worship (2005)

In Common Worship, as in the ASB, the servant ministry of Christ is the model for that of deacons, and specific mention is made of Jesus washing the disciples' feet. Now, there is a clear statement by the Bishop that deacons work with the Bishop and the priests, with whom they serve as heralds of Christ's kingdom; no longer do priests work with bishops and deacons assist under priests.

This is the first mention in an English Ordinal of the historic relationship of deacon to bishop. The use of the word 'herald' to describe the ministry of the deacon is echoed in the description of the deacon as called to proclaim the gospel in word and deed and points to diaconal ministry as more than service.

Deacons work with the members of the church, rather than on their behalf or instead of them. A subtle change of wording means that deacons now share in the pastoral ministry of the church and in leading God's people in worship, rather than doing such pastoral work as is entrusted to them and assisting the priest under whom the deacon serves in leading worship. This is significant for those called to distinctive diaconal ministry since there is now greater emphasis on shared rather than delegated ministry. Essentially the deacon is no longer just an apprentice to the priest but an assistant to the priest who may be able to take some responsibility. Deacons bring the needs of the world before the church in intercession which suggests the deacon has more responsibility for knowing, interpreting and articulating the needs not just of the parish but of the world. The use of the word 'accompany' those searching for faith, and to bring them to baptism, integrates ministry in the world and ministry in the church, and suggests long term engagement with people as they cross the threshold of the church. The deacon is also given specific responsibility for distributing communion and ministering to the sick and housebound.

The ministry of the priest is similarly nuanced from past models. With the Bishop and fellow priests, the priest sustains the community of the faithful, and with the Bishop and fellow ministers (including Deacons and presumably Readers) proclaims the word of the Lord and

watches for the signs of God's new creation. The whole feel of priestly ministry is much more collaborative, not just with the Bishop and other priests but, in many areas of ministry, with all ministers and all God's people. Thus, in a new line of thought, with all God's people priests are to tell the story of God's love, and there is a prayer that they will 'work faithfully with those committed to their charge.' Similarly, their role in presiding at the Eucharist includes offering with the people a spiritual sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Even the priestly ministry of reconciliation now has collaborative elements and the bishop prays that priests may, 'in union with their fellow-servants in Christ, reconcile what is divided, heal what is wounded and restore what is lost.' Newly articulated areas of responsibility as a priest rather than deacon are to teach and admonish, as well as feed and provide for, God's family, and to resist evil. This last theme is picked up in the later prayer for the newly ordained priests to proclaim Christ's victory over the powers of darkness.

Diaconal and Priestly ministry

Against this background of developments in the understanding and responsibilities of diaconal and priestly ministry, we can turn to the question of 'what diaconal ministry is exercised by the presbyterate?'

The underlying rationale of all ordained ministry in the Anglican Church is that one cannot exercise presbyteral ministry without exercising diaconal ministry. This is embodied in the practice of sequential rather than direct ordination, and was articulated in the 1988 report where it referred to priestly ministry necessarily being based upon *diakonia*. However, in practice, diaconal ordination has too

often been seen as a stepping stone to presbyteral ordination rather than the permanent foundation of presbyteral ministry. The error of this view is brought into sharp relief if we ask the question, 'Can one exercise presbyteral ministry without exercising diaconal ministry?', to which the only possible answer is 'no' since essentially all one is left with is a priest who presides at Holy Eucharist, hears confessions, and gives the blessing at the end of services. That is a view of priesthood that the Reformers were determined to oppose, and has no part in Anglican ecclesiology or ministry. But the description in the BCP of the deacon as having an 'inferior office' to the priest, and his qualification for the latter depending upon behaving himself well, is an encouragement to see diaconal ministry as a phase through which one passes. Sadly this unfortunate wording obscures the richer possibility of being formed as a deacon in a way that issues in permanent diaconal behaviour. Past descriptions of the deacon as an assistant to the priest worked against any understanding that the priest remains a deacon.

The Ordinal now derives its model for diaconal ministry not from Stephen but from Christ. Thus there is no longer any excuse to argue that diaconal ministry has a different foundation to priestly ministry, with the implication that it can be laid aside on ordination as a priest. None of us ever outgrow the example of Christ who came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. All ministry derives from that of Christ, and thus, as one report notes, the diaconate

'focuses God's engagement with us, his sharing our nature in Christ's incarnation, coming among us in the form of a servant and being rooted in the particularity of place and time.'²

Although there was never much conscious modelling of diaconal ministry within the church, the priest has always exercised diaconal ministry within the exercise of responsibilities as a priest. In addition there were specific responsibilities for the priest that could not be fulfilled faithfully unless there was a diaconal heart. We can see an example of this blending of diaconal and presbyteral ministry in George Herbert's classic seventeenth century work, 'The Country Parson' which indicates how he as parson, with the cure of souls, exercised a very diaconal ministry amongst his people, even though it was at times paternalistic.

The language of CW is much more collaborative than either predecessor Ordinal. The emergence of Non Stipendiary Ministry, Ordained Local Ministry and Minister in Secular Employment (MSE) as recognised expressions of both diaconal and priestly ministry, as well as the increasing numbers of distinctive deacons, negates any idea that only priests lead and deacons assist. Now it is common to have teams of clergy and laity working together, and both priests and deacons sharing in the ordained ministry, some taking some responsibility, others – particularly the more recently ordained – assisting. Distinctive deacons who have considerable experience may take responsibility for particular areas of

² Diocese of Salisbury *The Distinctive Diaconate* Salisbury: Sarum College Press 2003 p12-13

work like pastoral care, baptism or marriage preparation, or children's ministry, and may be training new priests in these areas. That is a situation that 1662 did not envisage. Conversely, Ordained Local Ministry priests may, as part of their priestly ministry, exercise a very strong diaconal ministry, responsible for knowing the local area in depth and searching out or being aware of local people in need, much as the 1662 deacon did. Priests who serve as hospital chaplains may similarly be engaged most of the time in pastoral care that has a deeply diaconal feel to it, as may many Ministers in Secular Employment whose ministry in the work place leads them to be recognised by work colleagues as reliable and wise counsellors in times of trouble.

Bringing this together, we can now address the question of what diaconate does the presbyterate have an exercise? I will use headings to provide some shape to the discussion.

1. There is an essential diaconal foundation to presbyteral ministry
- Christ is the model for diaconal ministry, and we never outgrow his example. It is notable that in the early Church the bishop was seen to represent God the Father and the deacon, not the priest, to represent Christ. It was only with the emphasis in the Middle Ages on the specific role of the priest in the Mass

³ See Diocese of Salisbury, 2003 p13

⁴ David Stancliffe, *God's Pattern* London SPCK 2003

that the priest, not the deacon, came to be seen as representing Christ.

- It is impossible to exercise the responsibilities of presbyteral ministry without exercising diaconal ministry since to do otherwise effectively reduces presbyteral ministry to being a Mass priest.

- In addition to the priest fulfilling diaconal tasks, the attitude of the priest must be diaconal if priestly ministry is to be connected to the life of the people served. The ministry of the deacon is essentially incarnational – in the world, alongside the people – and in this it is representative of the Incarnation, of God coming among us to share our life. Priestly ministry, with its responsibilities for the guiding and shaping of the life of those entrusted to the priest's care, is about transformation. The Rt Revd David Stancliffe repeatedly says that there can be no priestly ministry of transformation without incarnational diaconal engagement. He draws parallels between the thirty hidden years of preparation in our Lord's life, and the three of active ministry, and argues that damage will be done if priests try to engage in transformation before there is incarnation.³ Put succinctly, 'First God enters your life, then he changes it.'⁴

2. The interrelatedness of diaconal and presbyteral ministry

We are given a picture of the priest having responsibility, shared with the bishop, for leadership and nurture in the church, and the deacon sharing in the outworking of that responsibility. Thus the priest is given responsibility for shaping and ordering the life of the parish and for sharing in the governance of the Church whilst the deacon (who does not have such responsibility within the church) has the freedom to engage more fully beyond the threshold of the church, deeply engaged in the life of the wider world as well as in the church where he or she has particular responsibility for integrating the life and needs of the world into the life and worship of the church. The priest cannot fulfil his or her role without the foundation of diaconal practice, but in the exercise of priestly responsibility and ministry the priest needs to build creatively upon it.

Pastoral Ministry

- Priests are 'servants and shepherds among the people to whom they are sent' and they 'search for his children in the wilderness of this world's temptations and [] guide them through its confusions, that they may be saved through Christ for ever.' This is built upon a foundation of diaconal ministry in which deacons 'work with their fellow members in searching out the poor and weak ... reaching into the forgotten corners of the world, that the love of God may be made visible.' They 'share in the pastoral ministry of the Church.' The pastoral responsibilities of the priest are wider than those of the deacon since they in-

clude being shepherd to the people to whom he or she is sent. The analogy of shepherd and sheep dog comes to mind.

The priest cannot be an effective shepherd unless he or she knows the territory and knows the people. That knowledge, both practical and theoretical, is at the heart of diaconal ministry and no priest can fulfil his or her pastoral responsibilities without exercising diaconal pastoral ministry. Where there is an experienced deacon, the priest may entrust most of the day to day work to that deacon who is unencumbered by other responsibilities and thus able to give more time to it. But ultimately it is the priest who is called to be servant and shepherd, and to guide the people through the confusions of the world so that they may be saved by Christ.

- Priests baptise new disciples and 'walk with them in the way of Christ, nurturing them in the faith', whereas deacons 'accompany those searching for faith and bring them to baptism.' Baptism highlights the interleaving, yet distinctive, ministries of deacon and priest. The deacon, through ministry in the world, helps to bring people to faith and prepares them for baptism, then stands alongside them, presenting the candidates to the priest who, in the role of president, examines them; the deacon signs them with the cross and dips them in the water which the president has blessed. Thus the deacon effectively leads them into the church, for which the president is the representative person in the presence of the gathered congregation. Where there is a distinctive deacon the incarnational and transformational responsibilities are visi-

bly demarcated, where there is only a priest present he or she must fulfil both responsibilities – otherwise no-one will ever be baptised.

Liturgical Ministry

- Priests 'lead God's people in the offering of praise and the proclamation of the Gospel'; with the Bishop and their fellow presbyters, they 'sustain the community of the faithful by the ministry of word and sacrament...' Deacons 'proclaim the gospel in word and deed', 'share ... in leading God's people in worship', and preach the word. They bring the needs of the world before the Church in intercession.
- Priests 'preside at the Lord's table, and lead the people in worship, offering with them a spiritual sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving'. Deacons assist in administering the sacraments, they distribute communion and minister to the sick and housebound, again embodying the link between the church and the world. Since there can be no celebration of Holy Eucharist without the distribution of the bread and wine, there can be no priestly ministry without diaconal ministry.

Catechetical Ministry

- In the BCP Ordinal, deacons are charged with teaching the young the Catechism, but not necessarily with preaching. In Common Worship this specifically catechetical ministry is not mentioned, but deacons share in the ministry of preaching. With the emergence of distinctive deacons it is being recognised that their preaching may be particularly relat-

ed to their pastoral ministry or may express prophetically their awareness of the needs of the world. Priests are specifically charged with teaching and admonishing, and with unfolding the scripture, preaching the word both in season and out of season. Apart from the specific mention of a teaching ministry, preaching by a priest depends for its effectiveness upon the diaconal foundation of preaching that is pastorally sensitive and attuned to the situation in which the hearers are placed. Otherwise the priestly responsibility to preach the word out of season, and thus to challenge the hearers with what they may not wish to hear, or to call their hearers to repentance, or to teach or admonish will be ignored as people manage not to relate it to themselves.

Other aspects of presbyteral ministry

The priest has some responsibilities that are not overtly expressed in the responsibilities given to the deacon, or are expressed slightly differently. Examples include 'with all God's people, to tell the story of God's love', 'to bless the people in God's name', 'to resist evil, support the weak, defend the poor, and intercede for all in need', 'to discern and foster the gifts of all God's people that the whole Church may be built up in unity and faith'. However, these too have their roots in diaconal ministry even though their expression is focussed in priestly ministry. For example, the priestly responsibility to bless the people should be rooted in the diaconal ministry of serving the community as agents of God's love, thus embodying the possibility of God's blessing, whilst resisting evil is

connected to reaching into the forgotten corners of God's world that the love of God may be made visible, and interceding for those in need must surely be linked to bringing the needs of the world before the Church in intercession. The priest is to tell the story of God's love and to do this with all God's people, building on the diaconal proclamation of the gospel in word and deed, as agents of God's purposes of love.

What diaconate does the presbyterate have and exercise?

There is much more dynamism in today's understanding of the ministry of the deacon and the priest. The quite specific and circumscribed responsibilities of a deacon in 1662 appear very static compared to the responsibilities of a deacon in 2006, even though the substance is similar. Although the basic responsibilities lie in the same areas, the deacon is now given much more scope to fulfil this ministry in creative rather than prescribed ways. This is the essential foundation of priestly ministry, which builds on rather than supersedes or replaces diaconal ministry. Many of the priestly responsibilities are not just task oriented, but depend upon wisdom that can only be born of experience, experience very often gained as a deacon in the more limited areas of responsibility. What diaconate does the presbyterate have and exercise? I would argue that it is a very full diaconate, albeit it is a diaconate that is embedded in priestly ministry rather than distinct from it, a diaconate that sits alongside other responsibilities that belong specifically to the priest but which are not totally divorced from diaconal ministry. If the priest is not exercising diaconal ministry as an integral part of priestly ministry, there is no real priestly ministry.

To go back to David Stancliffe's aphorism which he applies to the practice of ordained ministry, 'First God enters your life, then he changes it.' Diaconal ministry embodies and expresses the way that God shares our life – fundamentally in the Incarnation but continually in our daily lives – and presbyteral ministry embodies and expresses the way that God changes it, redeeming us and transforming us more and more into his likeness. Just as, in God's economy, there can be no redemption without incarnation, so there can be no priestly ministry without diaconal ministry since there can be no effective transformational and redemptive change without diaconal rootedness. Incarnation underpins transformation at every stage, keeping it rooted in reality. Diaconal ministry underpins and is expressed in priestly ministry, providing the rootedness that is the seed bed for redemption and transformation. The world, in its gore and its glory, is diaconal territory, the location of incarnational ministry. The church, in its muddle and its majesty, is the place of transformation and it is the particular responsibility of the priest to help to order and lead the people of God in the way of Christ so that his salvation can be made known. There is, therefore, always an essential outward, worldly and diaconal perspective to the ministry of the priest but he or she is also charged to look inward to the life of the church not for its own sake but in order that the gospel may be proclaimed in all the world.

Afterword: Direct or sequential ordination?

Although I was not asked to address it, the question of direct or sequential ordination emerges from time to time within the Anglican communion. If we can re-

cover a proper understanding of the diaconal foundation of all priestly ministry, the consequence might be not to abolish the diaconate but to extend the period of distinctively diaconal ministry so that it has time to enter the bloodstream of the deacon and become so much part of them that there is an unshakeable awareness of the diaconal foundation of priestly ministry.

Appendix:

The ministry of deacons and priests as described in the Ordinals:

The ministry of the deacon

Book of Common Prayer: 1550/1662

- to assist the Priest in Divine Service, especially when ministering the holy Communion and to help him in the distribution thereof,
- to read holy Scripture and Homilies in the Church (nb: 'the Homilies' refers to a specific book of Homilies, not to the preaching of his own sermon),
- to instruct youth in the Catechism,
- in the absence of the Priest, to baptise infants,
- to preach if he be admitted to do so by the Bishop.

In addition, where provision is so made, the Deacon is

- to search for the sick, poor, and impotent people of the Parish,
- to intimate their estates, names, and places where they dwell to the Curate (the Priest with the Cure of Souls) that by his exhortation they may be relieved with the alms of Parishioners or others.

ASB (1980)

- to serve the Church of God, and to work with its members in caring for the poor, the needy, the sick, and all who are in trouble,
- to strengthen the faithful,
- to search out the careless and the indifferent,
- to preach the word of God in the place to which he or she is licensed,
- to assist the priest under whom he serves in leading the worship of the people, especially in the administration of the Holy Communion,
- to baptise when required to do so;
- to do such pastoral work as is entrusted to him or her.

Common Worship (2005)

- to better equip the people of God to make Christ known,
- to live a life of visible self-giving,
- to wash the feet of others,
- to work with the Bishop and the priests with whom they serve as heralds of Christ's kingdom,
- to proclaim the gospel in word and deed, as agents of God's purposes of love,
- to serve the community in which they are set, bringing to the Church the needs and hopes of all the people,
- to work with their fellow members in searching out the poor and weak, the sick and lonely and those who are oppressed and powerless, reaching into the forgotten corners of the world, that the love of God may be made visible,
- to share in the pastoral ministry of the Church and in leading God's people in worship,
- to preach the word,

- to bring the needs of the world before the Church in intercession,
- to accompany those searching for faith and bring them to baptism,
- to assist in administering the sacraments; they distribute communion and minister to the sick and house-bound.

The ministry of the Priest

Book of Common Prayer: 1550/1662

- to be messengers, watchmen and stewards of the Lord;
- to teach and premonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family;
- to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for his children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever;
- to bring all committed to their charge to 'agreement in the faith and knowledge of God, and to that ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ, that there is no place left among you, either for error in religion, or for viciousness in life.'

ASB (1980)

- to work with the bishop and other priests, as servant and shepherd among the people to whom he or she is sent,
- to proclaim the word of the Lord,
- to call those hearing to repentance, and in Christ's name to absolve and declare the forgiveness of sins,
- to baptise and to prepare the baptised for confirmation,
- to preside at the celebration of the Holy Communion
- to lead the people in prayer and worship,
- to intercede for the people,

- to bless them in the name of the Lord,
- to teach and encourage by word and example,
- to minister to the sick,
- to prepare the dying for their death,
- to set the Good Shepherd before him or her as the pattern of the calling,
- to care for the people committed to his or her charge,
- to join with the people in common witness to the world.

Common Worship (2005)

- to lead God's people in the offering of praise and the proclamation of the Gospel,
- to share with the Bishop in the oversight of the Church, delighting in its beauty and rejoicing in its well-being,
- to set the example of the Good Shepherd always before them as the pattern of their calling,
- with the Bishop and their fellow presbyters, to sustain the community of the faithful by the ministry of word and sacrament, that we all may grow into the fullness of Christ and be a living sacrifice acceptable to God,
- to be servants and shepherds among the people to whom they are sent, with their bishop and fellow-ministers, to proclaim the word of the Lord, and to watch for the signs of God's new creation,
- to be messengers, watchmen and stewards of the Lord,
- to teach and to admonish,
- to feed and provide for his family,
- to search for his children in the wilderness of this world's temptations, and to guide them through its con-

- fusions, that they may be saved through Christ for ever,
- formed by the Word, they are to call their hearers to repentance and to declare in Christ's name the absolution and forgiveness of their sins, with all God's people, to tell the story of God's love,
- to baptize new disciples in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and to walk with them in the way of Christ, nurturing them in the faith,
- to unfold the scriptures, to preach the word in season and out of season, and to declare the mighty acts of God,

- to preside at the Lord's table and lead his people in worship, offering with them a spiritual sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving,
- to bless the people in God's name
- to resist evil, support the weak, defend the poor, and intercede for all in need,
- to minister to the sick and prepare the dying for their death,
- guided by the Spirit, they are to discern and foster the gifts of all God's people, that the whole Church may be built up in unity and faith.

The relationship between the caritative and liturgical functions of the Deacon: The go-between ministry

The Revd Tiit Pädam

The relationship between the caritative and liturgical functions of the deacon expresses a distinction that is often made when speaking about the diaconate. It is certainly understandable that we speak about these functions, but the list is not a closed one. Historically, the diaconate included also some other tasks, for example catechetical ones, which are still very important in the Estonian Church. When we are doing a distinction between these two functions, we presuppose at the same time that something ultimately connects these two separate realities. It is neither self-evident nor clear what it might be.

I am convinced that the ministry of the deacon is fundamental for the Lutheran church and it has an identity of its own. The claim that "diaconate could be a fundamental ministry within the Lutheran church" could raise serious obstacles and might lead to serious misunderstand-

ings. This is partly because in the Lutheran churches the diaconate has for a long time been neither understood theologically nor established accordingly. We have to admit that in part even today the theological understanding of the ministry of the deacon is in several aspects unclear and in need of further development. This is sometimes expressed in our terminology. When priests / pastors are concerned, we naturally speak of their "ordination". But with a deacon we often use another wording: "entering into service" or "commissioning" etc. At the same time, our rites introducing lay people to church duties often take the character of an ordination.

Several churches belonging to the Porvoo communion have seriously engaged in developing an ordained diaconate and have tried to establish a solid theological ground for this particular kind of ministry. The motivation for doing it might

vary. The *Porvoo Agreement* challenges us "to commit ourselves to work towards a common understanding of diaconal ministry".¹ In some churches, there is a shortage of priests and the diaconate seems to be the easiest way to overcome it. At the same time, it could be the most convenient way to meet the challenges of the society. And last but not least, a common understanding of the ministry of deacon could lead the churches to a closer communion with each other and help them to follow the call of Christ.

The reformers inherited several features of ministry from the Catholic Church. But according to M. Luther, there is only one ministry (*Amt / officium*) in the church.

Luther uses the notion *Amt* in three different meanings:

1) Ministry as *ministerium* (Dienst) – a certain activity or function that somebody does in the church: proclamation of the Word, Baptism, and administration of the Holy Communion. All the ordained ministers are defined by their connection to the Word and Sacraments (CA V).²

2) Ministry as a task (Dienstauftrag) given by the Lord, not only to the ordained ministry but to all Christians as well.³ Still, one has to admit that it is rather complicated to conclude from this claim something about the unity of the institutional-

ly ordained ministry. E. Sommerlathe makes it clear that according to Luther the catechetical and diaconal ministry are horizontally organised, while the ministry bishops and superintendents represents the vertical direction.⁴

3) Ministry as a public, institutionalised ministry, mostly in a form of a local parish ministry. Today we use in this meaning the term *ordained ministry*. Augsburg Confession XIV uses here notion *ordo*.⁵

Although all these three meanings are connected to each other, the *ministerium* as central, given by the Lord Jesus for us in public, it indicates the difficulties in drawing any conclusions for the current development of diaconal ministry within the Lutheran tradition.

Concerning deacons, the Reformers accepted the pattern derived from Catholic Church. Still, M. Luther expressed in his *De captivitate* (1520)⁶ some reservation towards the deacons' role in assisting the priest during the mass:

"The priesthood is properly nothing, but the ministry of the Word – the Word, I say; not the law but the gospel. And the diaconate is the ministry, not of reading the Gospel or Epistle, as is the present practice, but of distributing the church's aid to the poor, so that the priests may be relieved of the burden of temporal matters and may give themselves more

freely to prayer and the Word. For this was the purpose of the institution of the diaconate, as we read in Acts 5 [6:1-6]. Whoever, therefore, does not know or preach the gospel is not only no priest or bishop, but he is a kind of pest to the church, who under the false title of priest or bishop, or dressed in sheep's clothing, actually does violence to the gospel and plays the wolf [Matt. 7:15] in the church."⁷

Luther makes a clear distinction between the functions of a priest and a deacon. According to his understanding the deacon is not ordained to the liturgical ministry but for charitable tasks. Still, it is evident that Luther is especially critical to some functions of priests in this context, but he gives neither precise vision for reforming priesthood nor for organising the diaconal ministry.

Church and diakonia

The Church is the community of Christians who follow Jesus' words and deeds. At the same time the church is the expression of the presence of the God's redeeming grace that reveals itself in the Word and the Eucharist. The Church bears witness in the word (*martyria*), in prayer and sacramental life (*leitourgia*), as well as in service for the sake of human beings (*diakonia*).⁸ *Martyria*,

leitourgia and *diakonia* are therefore the three basic characteristics of the Church. Without each one of them there is no Christian Church. Without *diakonia* there cannot be a Church, because Christ himself is one who serves (Lk 22:27). During the Last Supper, the night before his suffering and death, Jesus laid the foundation of the diaconal ministry. By washing the feet of his disciples he gave us an example to do as he did to his followers. In these words (John 13:15) one can see the foundation of the diaconate. In the diaconate, the church has a ministry which provides the substance to the close link between *martyria*, *leitourgia* and *diakonia*. The diaconate cannot conduct the whole *diakonia* of the church, but with its service it reminds us that the *diakonia* is a characteristic of the church as a whole and of all of its ministries. It reminds us that the faith and preaching, as well as the Eucharist and liturgy must be oriented towards *diakonia*. God reveals himself in people, especially in those in need. If we take this diaconal dimension seriously, then there cannot be any purely private needs, but for the church there only exist a need common to all. In addition to the social needs of the people, reflected in parish life, there is also a specific need in the churches themselves. This need has to concern the structures of the church and its parishes.

¹ The *Porvoo Agreement*, § 58 vii.

² Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche, 58, 1 ff. Göttingen 1986.

³ WA 8, 423, 27f (Luther, Martin, Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe Weimar 1883).

⁴ Das Amt und die Ämter, in: Viva vox evangelii. FS Hans Meiser, Hg.v. Lutherischen Kirchenamt in Hannover, München 1951, 292-307.

⁵ Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche, 69, 2. Göttingen 1986.

⁶ WA 6, 566, 26-28.

⁷ Luthers Works, Vol. 36 "Word and Sacrament 2" Ed. by Abdel Ross Wentz Philadelphia 1959, 116; Martin Luther, Studienausgabe 1-6. Hrsg. v. Hans-Ulrich Delius. Berlin 1979-1999, 2, 252, 14-20.

⁸ Sven-Erik Brodd, Diakonater från ekklesiologi till pastoral praxis. Tro&Tanke 1992:10, 254.

Double character of diakonia and diaconate

One of the foundational characteristics of all Christian service is, that while it is practised under the constraint of the love of Christ, it is also a service, which is commanded by Him as a task to his followers. Jesus commands a service of love and gives at the same time love, which empowers to that service. The intrinsic relation between authority and charity is characteristic to the diakonia in the church. This relationship is expressed in the task that Christ has laid on the Christian church and in the special office to which some Christians are called by Him.

Although it does not express the whole understanding of ministry in the Lutheran tradition, it could be helpful to use the distinction made by Thomas F. Torrance in his description of ministry. He points to two different aspects in ministry of service.⁹ The first he calls *the service of the Word*. By that he means the ministry of Word and Sacrament in which Christ is pleased to be present, offering himself as Saviour and implementing His salvation by the power of the Spirit. But it is a service in which the ministers only serve the proclamation of Christ and cannot make it effective by imparting to it their own strength. The second is *the service of response to the Word*. It is the ministry of the divine mercy to the people in which Christ himself is pleased to be present, acting as their Representa-

tive in lifting them up to the Face of the Father in thanksgiving and worship. He makes them His fellow labourers in the pouring out of the divine mercy to all mankind. But it is a service in which deacons only prompt the people in their responses of prayer and do not act on their behalf. They remind people that Christ has promised to meet them in all their deeds of mercy to the hungry and thirsty.

These two features are complementary since each requires the other for its proper fulfilment and one is obstructed by the lack of the other. Through this double-ministry Christ meets humanity with all its needs and misery, and together with the Gospel brings about redemption.

These two aspects are ultimately united in the ministry of the deacon. The liturgical and caritative functions are bonded together. If they are kept apart or divided between different kinds of ministries, the ministry of Gospel loses its relevance to humanity in the everyday life.

Eucharist and Diaconia

The church becomes visible in its gathering as a eucharistic assembly.¹⁰ It reveals there its true nature. The eucharistic liturgy provides the context for understanding the Church's diaconal ministry and forms the patterns of diakonia out of the sacrifice of Christ being present in the eucharist. The solidarity of the cross and the redeeming power of

Christ's sacrifice prevent diakonia from being mere humanitarian or social work.¹¹ At the same time, spiritual attitude and concrete actions merge together in this consciousness. It is the deacon to whom the different needs are addressed. Any person may turn to him and be sure that trust will be present. Through his role in the liturgy, through the preaching and diakonia he makes people aware of the link between faith and life. In his service at the altar he sets the needs of people on the table of the Eucharist and includes them also in his preaching. In this way the deacon makes the parishes sensitive to all situations where need exists and motivates people to work with each other and for each other. The aim of diaconal action is not only to help, but also to open up of new perspectives and possibilities in life, so that those who are stricken may indeed stand on their own again. In particular situations the deacon must become an advocate of the weak and of all those who would otherwise have no voice.

Spirituality of the diaconate

There is one essential aspect more, concerning the functions of the diaconate that I find challenging in the Lutheran churches. It is the spiritual disposition of the deacon. The question has been raised in several presentations during last years.¹²

The transformation of the diaconate into the ordained ministry of the church has changed its role in the church and society, although the readiness to serve and bring healing still remains the basic value. The theological nature of the diaconate has mostly remained the same it is not a development of the lay apostolate but a special form of the ordained office within the one, threefold ministry of the Church. The deacon is neither "mini-priest" nor substitute for missing priests.

The primary vocation and gift of the deacon relates to healing, which offers deliverance and enables people to create trust, allowing them to serve and love.

But the spirituality of the deacon is often characterised as being based on the private faith of the deacon, or formulated in comparison with the priests. It seems to be the case in several of our churches. Although the deacon's personal relationship to Jesus Christ is consciously grounded in the church, his spiritual growth is personal, not private and separated from the church. The healing and the new life are given through the Spirit, therefore the renewal and development of spirituality in the diaconate is to a great extent a spiritual task.

⁹ Thomas F. Torrance, *Service in Jesus Christ*. In: *Theological Foundations for Ministry*. Edited by Ray S. Anderson. T&T Clark, 1979, p. 728.

¹⁰ The Diaconate as Ecumenical Opportunity. The Hanover Report of the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission. Anglican Communion Publications, London 1996.

¹¹ Sven-Erik Brodd, *Diakonater från ekklesiologi till pastoral praxis*. Tro&Tanke 1992:10.
¹² For example: Matti Repo, *The Ministry of Deacon in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland*. Presentation held during the Nordic Ecumenical Council's conference in Høør, Sweden on Feb. 2, 2003; Ninni Smedberg, *The Quest for a Spirituality for the Deacon*. In: *The Ministry of Deacon, 2. Ecclesiological Explorations*. Ed. by G.Borgegård, O.Fanuelson and C.Hall. Nordic Ecumenical Council, Uppsala 2000.

Some specific challenges

It is a serious and difficult task Christ has given to his church. Since there are difficulties, there are some temptations for the Church to avoid this task. We can recognise that in our Lutheran churches. The first is the attempt to rely on worldly structures in order to secure the success of the task of service, although there are some structural injustices inside every politically organised system. Churches are called to prophetically unmask these inherent contradictions, despite the eventual confrontation with the political system. The second temptation is that the churches leave the caritative responsibility to the state and restrict itself only to the proclamation of the Gospel. In both cases, the church has retreated from its task given by Christ. But the active ministry of service can partly secure that these temptations do not overtake the responsibilities of the churches.

We have also seen futile attempts in which the terms *diakonia* and *ministerium* have denoted separate functions inside the church, namely the diaconate as loving assistance by the church towards those in need and priests for the preaching office. The task given to the churches cannot be narrowed in this way. The ministry of the Church consists of both the *diakonia* and the *ministerium verbi divini*.

The ministry of ordained Deacons in the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church. The constitution of the EELC, which the

general synod adopted in 2004, names serving in the office of the ordained as "ecclesiastical office" and the bearers of it "ecclesiastics / clergy". The three orders in the one ordained office of service or ecclesiastical office are bishop, priest (also called teacher¹³) and deacon. In this laconic document the role of the clergy is defined first of all through the term "ecclesiastical leadership" and "shepherding". Those being ordained into ecclesiastical office give an oath of office. Even though the text of the oath is standard, its modification and details depend upon which office, deacon or priest, one is ordained into.¹⁴ Those being ordained to the diaconate in the EELC, promise and swear to "proclaim and propagate in this office the teaching of the church only". Listed are the basis of the teaching of the EELC. Many promises follow that profile and clarify the ethos of the ecclesiastical office. The criteria and basis are – the ecclesiastical office is the office of the proclamation of the teaching of the church.

The formula for ordination states that the ordinand receives "the office of God's Word and holy Sacraments".

The constitution of the EELC expresses the understanding of the origins of the office of the ordained indirectly. The preface begins with the words "The Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church is based on the Good News of Jesus Christ, who is Lord of the one, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church". The church (faith) is of divine origin; it exists without ceasing as *creatura verbi* (as gift). It is de-

rived from the good news, which is for all people a *verbum externum* and necessary for everyone, containing at the same time the divinely derived commission for every church member to give witness of this Good News through one's life by making it audible.

The constitution states that "the task of the EELC" is to proclaim God's Word and to distribute the Sacraments. This task is mentioned in the constitution in relation to the church. The deacon promises to fulfil this obligation in the oath of office. From the laconic text of the constitution, it can be understood that the office of the ordained serves to call to life the task entrusted to the EELC and it therefore is instituted by God.

Although the oath of office given by the deacon does not explicitly articulate the understanding of the origins of ordained service, the rite of ordination is very clear. At the beginning of the rite, in the description of the office, ordained service is described as a "precious and high standing" office of proclaiming the reconciliation "which our Lord Jesus Christ has himself established and forever confirmed for his Church". At the end of the rite, in the formula for ordination, the ordinand as the bearer of "the holy office of God's Word and Sacraments" is characterized as "the Lord's servant". From this the understanding is derived that the ordained office consists of a specific service to Jesus Christ, who died for us on the cross, rose again and is now alive.¹⁵

The execution of the ordained office is conventionally a separate aspect of the understanding of the ordained office; however, not quite a separate theme. According to the constitution of the EELC, one can "hold" ecclesiastical office "only if one is ordained by a bishop". Therefore it is only possible to become a member of the clergy through an ordination carried out by a bishop (the emphasis is on the office of the bishop as an order of ecclesiastical office). Ordination is the task of a bishop. The duty of the archbishop in our church is to declare that the candidates to holy orders are worthy of ordination. This is an important way in which the bishop serves and represents the EELC in the unity of the church and in the succession of apostolic life and witness. When we speak of "Ecclesiastical office in the EELC", ordination is to a service which is always tied to the entire EELC and not to individual congregations or a specific branch of church service.

In terms of becoming ordained clergy in the EELC the constitution of the EELC foresees one office for three orders in terms of ordaining a deacon, priest and bishop. The office of a deacon is the first order of service in the EELC. There are many deacons in the EELC. The constitution characterizes them laconically as "assistants to the priest of congregation". At the moment most of them work as assistants in congregations where there are no resident priests. As assistants in a specific congregation, deacons are under a leading priest of the deanery. Un-

¹³ This refers to the catechetical tradition of the EELC.

¹⁴ The new text for the oath of office for the deacon was ratified by the General Synod in 1995.

¹⁵ I summarize: spiritual guidance and being a shepherd in the church in the light of the Word that God speaks; the task to proclaim and spread what God teaches; serving God's Word in the proclamation and sacraments. Therefore, the content of ordained ministry is a *ministerium Verbi Divini* (as a *ministerium Christi*).

like for the ordination for bishop, which assumes that one is ordained to the priesthood, in the EELC ordination to the diaconate is not a prerequisite for becoming a priest. The diaconate is not a step to the priesthood, but has its own profile as an ecclesiastical order. Neither is the diaconate characterized as a lower ecclesiastical office.

I conclude with some general remarks. The traditional form of our church ministries and services did not match the demands of today, because it could no longer adequately guarantee the continuity of the diaconia of Christ. During last decades, the diaconate as a ministry in the EELC has developed due to the pastoral needs of today and due to a new theological consciousness of the Lutheran churches. This in turn formed a new self-understanding for the church. By understanding these factors, the EELC can continue successfully in the process of developing further the office of the diaconate within the Lutheran and ecumenical family.

I have introduced the constitution of the EELC, the oath of office, rite of ordination and have brought out some criteria

on how ordained ministry is understood and organized in the EELC. The presentation was fragmentary and did not touch upon many questions which would have been of exegetical, dogmatical, canonical and practical interest. Still, this fragmentary approach was intentional. It mirrors the actual situation – that in the understanding of the office of the ordination and its practise in the EELC, there occurred and is occurring a remarkable, if not fundamental shift. In a nutshell, a process could be defined as a transition from a “non-differential understanding of office to a threefold understanding of office”. We need to pray the Lord of the Church to grant us wisdom that the changes we make in the EELC may improve the service through which we proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ and would not do the opposite. Spiritually motivated, well-trained and sensibly assigned deacons are important to the church, and particularly so today. They are neither replacement priests, nor social workers. They are representatives of Jesus Christ, the Deacon.

What is the relationship between the ministry of the Anglican Reader (and Catechist?) and those of Deacon and Priest?

The Revd Dr Anne Tomlinson

The late Wesley Frensdorff, former Anglican Bishop of the Diocese of Nevada, once published a provocative theological reflection upon ministerial relationships entitled *Ministry and Orders: A Tangled Skein*¹. Over the past few weeks as I have wrestled with the topic given to me, that of *the relationship between the ministry of the Anglican Reader (and Catechist) and those of Deacon and Priest*, I have felt myself becoming progressively more ensnared in such a skein. At times I began to despair of ever being able to disentangle the various strands from each other and having any-

thing coherent to offer you, so muddled did the web appear. Alas, this discussion has formed itself into a particularly tight knot of late; arguments on the basis of *similarity in function and deployment* have led to a form of ministerial territorialism which is both unhappy and unhelpful. For instance, one has only to read the numerous pronouncements that have emerged following the presentation at the Church of England's General Synod in 2001 of the Working Party Report on the renewal of the diaconate, *For Such a Time as This*², to catch a flavour of the tangle. Let me quote a few responses:

¹ *Education for Mission and Ministry*, Episcopal Church Centre New York (1985)

² *For Such a Time as This. A Renewed Diaconate in the Church of England* Church House Publishing GS 1407 (2001)

"An increasing number of us involved in Reader ministry at a national level have become concerned at the **contracting role left for Readers** as more and more categories of ministry, lay and ordained, are introduced.....

The General Synod has given much attention to the very small distinctive diaconate, about 100, **which is so close to reader ministry in function**, but the 10,000 readers have been all but ignored.¹ The reality is that NSM, OLM and other categories recently devised unilaterally by individual bishops are **impinging on Reader ministry**".²

By focussing in this way upon similarity in function, the (specious) conclusion is that the vocations are identical and thus that "Deacons, Readers and pastoral assistants (be brought) into one common office within the church of God".³

While ostensibly such a proposal appears to offer greater clarity, in fact it simply serves to confuse the debate, leading to an even greater degree of knotting.

In order to try and effect some untangling of the web I want to tackle my brief in a slightly unorthodox way and describe not what *is* the current relationship 'on the ground' but what *might be*; a picture, in other words, of a hoped-for rather than a present reality. I take courage in so doing from the fact that this ideal has *already* come to birth in some parts of

the Anglican Communion, notably in the States and New Zealand, and is beginning to emerge in my own Province, the Scottish Episcopal Church. And he I ought to place my cards on the table, I am not a specialist in this field, being neither a biblical nor a doctrinal scholar but simply a practitioner, a (Vocational) Deacon, one of fourteen in Scotland working in the field of collaborative ministry. My remit – and it is, I believe, truly diaconal one – is to excite, encourage, equip and enable members of congregations across Scotland to discern and realise their calling as baptised Christians and their responsibility to participate in God's ongoing work of mission. My picture, then, is not simply of a future ideal but of an emerging reality. I trust you will forgive me for approaching the topic in this way. It is my hope that this method will enable a more creative and fruitful discussion of the relationship between these lay and ordained ministries than if I were simply to try and detail 'life as we know it' in all its confusion and confrontation.

Frensdorff concludes his paper on the tangled skein with these words:

"We must recall that the primary reason for the reform and remodelling of the ministries and ordained offices of the church is to continue the renewal of her life and the strengthening of her mission".⁴

Indeed I would argue that the two are synonymous, that her life and mission are inseparable. Be that as it may, his point is well made and is one that must be underlined at the outset. Some have criticised the effort that is currently being expended in the Church of England on the re-evaluation of the vocation of Deacons, Readers and other authorised lay ministries, deeming it an academic exercise far removed from the hopes and needs of God's world. Indeed someone said to me when I mentioned this gathering, 'surely not more endless talk about the diaconate?' In the face of such cynicism I need to remind *myself* as much as my interlocutor that the *raison d'être* for all our work on the clarification of these vocations, indeed for our sharing as Anglican and Lutheran churches, is to be more faithful to the task of mission, the God-given purpose of the church, and more effective in the primary tasks of the church that comprise that mission. Not for nothing was the publication of essays about the Porvoo Common Statement entitled *Together in Mission and Ministry*.⁵

In the past decade the Scottish Episcopal Church has woken up to the fact that the age-old ways of being the church are not the most effective; that they are no longer enabling her mission. Attempts to become a more world-facing body in the 1980's by ordaining self-supporting (NSM) Deacons and Priests, whose primary focus would be *beyond* the congregation-gathered-for-worship, sadly failed to bring about the hoped-for bolder re-orientation in outlook; as one commen-

tator put it, "as congregational life became more demanding, there was a natural focussing on church rather than workplace ministry".⁶ Congregations simply moved from having a Rector or Priest-in-charge in their midst to having multiples of the same; such clerical cloning led not merely to more crowded sanctuaries on Sundays but also, and more damagingly, to a decrease in responsible participation in mission on the part of the laity. Clearly tweaking the system in this way was not sufficient; we needed something far more comprehensive and radical.

The catalyst for the shake-up was the publication of our Rural Commission Report in the mid-90's, a document, akin to *Faith in the Countryside*, which pointed out very starkly that current patterns of ministry deployment were unsustainable, indeed that they had reached breaking point in the most rural dioceses of Moray, Ross and Caithness and Argyll and the Isles. The Report declares:

"It is self-evident, in the light of the Gospel, that the church has a duty to be involved in society and not withdraw from it. There is also an assumption that the Episcopal Church wants to remain in rural and remote areas, rather than retreat to a privatised, suburban sect where those who can pay for the ministry of a priest are the only ones allowed to receive it. The Christian Gospel is addressed to all and the role of the Church is to make it accessible to all. The key question which the church must face is how to order itself so that this work can

¹ Nigel Holmes *Private Member's Motion – Readers; a background note* February 2006 pps 4-5

² Correspondance with Nigel Holmes 19.11.05

³ Bishop of Manchester *GS 1407* (2001) 596

⁴ op cit 1, 20

⁵ *The Porvoo Common Statement with Essays on Church and Ministry in Northern Europe* Church House Publishing (1993)

⁶ Timothy Morris (as yet unpublished paper) "Local Ministry Development in Scotland" from a forthcoming book on Local Ministry around the Anglican Communion ed Greenwood, Robin SPCK (2006)

be carried forward in the most effective and efficient way in accordance with the Christian message".⁹

In so writing the members of the Commission were adverting to the realisation that the Church must not withdraw into being a cosy sect, preoccupied with her own frame of reference and fixated upon internal organizational concerns, at least not if she is to remain true to her calling, but rather is called to be fully present 'in all the world'. It was a statement akin to the challenge which Dan Hardy laid down a few years ago in his book *Finding the Church*, in which he urged those tasked with mediating the Gospel to find ways of getting "close to those to whom they address themselves, thinking their thoughts in order to find the intensity of the gospel in their forms of life and expressing the gospel in a manner that touches the deepest aspects of their lives".¹⁰

'We are required', Hardy argues, 'to place the intensity of the gospel in the closest affinity to those lives and societies to which it is addressed'¹¹; making connections – albeit at times challenging, prophetic and critical connections – 'between the Christian message and the quests and questions that mark our culture';¹² breaking out of our bounded existence into a more visible and accessible living of the Gospel.

The Rural Commission's Report was, for us in Scotland, a timely reminder of the apostolic nature of the Church, that

calling to be an instrument of the movement of God towards the world. A reminder that that the Church is sent 'in all the world' to engage with people through the ministry of word, sacrament and pastoral care and oversight and bring them fullness of life. Since the Rural Commission's challenging restatement of that mission imperative, the Scottish Episcopal Church has been working hard and in a focussed way to see how we can become more effective in drawing near to those 'deepest needs of the world', a world which, for us north of the Border, is undergoing a massive tectonic shift as the entire industrial base on which our nation was built slides into an economy based on leisure and service industries, and the social fabric struggles to catch up with the consequence. We have, as I say, been experimenting with how we can become more engaged pastorally with the world around us by means of three programmes, variously entitled 'Mission 21', 'Local Collaborative Ministry' and 'Continuing Congregational Development'. All three programmes, which impinge upon the lives of over 75% of our congregations, are part of a Province-wide Mission Strategy called *Journey of the Baptised*, a title which placards the principle upon which all these programmes are predicated, namely that it is the whole church that is apostolic.

Mission, as we well know, 'is the vocation and responsibility of all baptized believers'¹³; the mission of the church

is a collaborative effort carried out by all members of the body of Christ. In each of us, the Spirit is seen to be at work for some useful purpose; each of us, as St Paul puts it (1 Cor. 12, 14-26) is indispensable to the whole, having a vital role to play in the church's apostolic task.

"Each fulfils the mission imperative in his or her own special way within the economy of salvation, the sharing and distribution of gifts and callings within the Body of Christ".¹⁴

The thrust of all of the programmes mentioned above is to alert congregational members, hitherto somewhat passive spectators in the task of mission, to their responsibilities as baptised members of the body, and to help them into their particular 'defined role' as agents of that mission, both within – but more generally without – the walls of the church building. One of my most frequent, and indeed most enjoyable, tasks is that of spending a weekend with an entire congregation working through a Gifts' Discernment programme. In this exercise, every member is helped by the congregation as a whole to discern and name their particular 'defined role' within which to exercise their God-given gifts in the service of the Kingdom. Following training *in situ*, these roles, these 'ministries-for-mission' as we tend to dub them, are later publicly recognised and affirmed in some liturgical act at which the whole body is gathered, where possible in the presence of the diocesan Bishop.

Little by little, as the effects of these programmes kick in, we are seeing congregations change from the triangular model of old to becoming 'roundtable churches', 'ministering communities' in which mission is shared by means of the gifts of all being affirmed, and each member of the body being helped into a publicly accountable recognised ministry. The process is neither cheap nor speedy; given our geography, the provision of congregation-wide theological education and formation *in situ* is much more costly than even the dispersed model of training 'the few for the many' which followed the closure of our seminary. But it is effecting a healthy culture change in our church. This change was summarized nicely by our Primus recently in a reflection upon one of the projects, that taking place in the Shetland Isles, half way between the north coast of Scotland and Norway. Bishop Bruce writes:

"In the harbour at Lerwick lie two boats. One is the ferry that sails to Aberdeen, the other the trawler which will brave the North Sea to gather in the harvest of the sea. The ferry is by far the more comfortable way to travel, since the majority of people on board are passengers who have little to do but be served by the crew. The trawler is very different. There are no passengers, only crew, each with their own responsibility, each one important and significant to the task. The challenge to local churches, in isolated or any other kind of community, is to become 'trawler' churches, competent and effective for that mission and witness which is their calling".¹⁵

⁹ Scottish Episcopal Church Rural Commission Report (1995) 15

¹⁰ Dan Hardy *Finding the Church. The Dynamic Truth of Anglicanism* SCM (2001), 148

¹¹ *ibid.*, 148

¹² Paul Avis *A Church Drawing Near. Spirituality and Mission in a Post-Christian Culture* T and T Clark (2003) 17.

¹³ Paul Avis *A Ministry Shaped for Mission* T and T Clark (2005), 10

¹⁴ *op cit* 2, 23

¹⁵ Bruce Cameron 'Isolated Communities' 44-62 in *Changing Rural Life: a Christian response to key rural issues* edited Martineau, J., Francis, L. and Francis, P. Canterbury (2004), 61

That image is helpful for our discussion today because it points to the *diversification* in role which is one of the features of this new way of being a congregation. Just as members of the trawler crew have very particular roles – one being responsible for steering, another for maintaining the engine, yet another for the nets – so too are members of congregations being helped to discern equally particularized roles in mission, in welcome, hospitality, bereavement care, teaching children, mentoring, advocacy, publicity, bringing justice and peace issues to the forefront of congregational life, design, worship leading, prayer, evangelism, catechesis, chaplaincy and so on.

Listing these tasks in that way may seem tedious, but it is significant. All too often in the past when speaking of ministries within a congregation we have tended to name the ordained and other authorized ministries, those of Priest, Deacon and Reader, and almost as an afterthought allude to 'the other valuable ministries of the laity'. Lumped together in this undifferentiated way at the bottom of the list, the laity have *not* felt valued and affirmed in the exercise of their part of the church's mission. As a result – and I know this all too well having been a DDO for five years – those who want to be affirmed in their exercise of God's mission offer themselves for ordination or Reader training because, and I quote, 'that is the only way I'll get recognised by the church'.

¹⁶ Robin Briggs quoted in *Transforming Church, Liberating Structures* Robin Greenwood SPCK (2002).

Collaborative congregations give a different message; they signal that *all* on the list deserve to be named because *all* are called and *all* are necessary. "The eye cannot say to the hand 'I do not need you' or the head to the feet 'I do not need you'" (1 Cor. 12, 21). All parts are vital to the healthy functioning of the body; all parts deserve equal attention to enable the living out of their vocation. By means of skills' workshops and other training sessions conducted *in situ* with the help of external facilitators, members of the body are helped to gain further confidence and expertise in their particular ministerial niche. Congregations become, in the words of Bishop Rob Briggs, "school(s) for ministry"¹⁶, spaces in which people can hone their skills as agents of God's mission.

The scenario briefly sketched out in the foregoing, then, is one of congregations reconfiguring themselves, limbering their bodies to be more fitted to, and for, the task of mission, more effectively heralds of the Kingdom. What we are finding in the midst of this reshaping is that the *old* shapes of ministerial clothing – Deacons who exist for barely twelve months in some sort of proto-priestly limbo, and Readers whose ministry is being squeezed by a proliferation in other ministries and the demise of service of the Word – that these *old* shapes of ministerial clothing no longer fit this newly-toned body. What then might – or some cases *do* – these roles look like in a collaborative church shaped for mission and how might they interrelate?

At the base of the collaborative church movement is an understanding that all forms of ministry need to be reconstrued in terms of mission; as the title of the recent Church of England report put it¹⁷, we need to be a *mission-shaped* Church. That in itself is surely an argument for the renewal of the diaconate given that, as an order, it "stands for the commissioned, mandated character of the whole Church as 'sign, instrument and foretaste' of the Kingdom of God. Diaconal ministry embodies the fundamental commission of the Church in the service of the Lord. In this sense, it is representative of the commissioned, apostolic character of the whole body of the baptized"¹⁸.

The call to *diakonia*, to commissioned, responsible agency and divine commission in the service of the Kingdom, is central to the church's vocation, and the deacon is the embodiment and sign of that call. Or as the *Proposal for the Restoration of the Diaconate in the Diocese of Rupert's Land* put it, "the Deacon is a *living ikon*, representing to the church its vocation (to service) and encouraging the church in the exercise of this vocation"¹⁹. But that ikon needs to be a *truthful* one. As a speaker at a recent Conference of the International Anglican Liturgical Commission declared,

"The church has long known that we need symbols as a means to bring to expression our experience, and by so doing to enter into deeper discovery of the truth of our lives in God's light. We need to see and experience human lives that both express and are increasingly shaped by their ordination to ministries of (*diakonia*), so that we may all discover anew our own calling to the *diakonia*"²⁰.

As with all sign-acts, there must be congruence between the inner and the outer, congruence between what deacons perform in liturgy and what they do in the rest of their lives, and this can only be achieved by enabling people to live into their vocation for a number of years rather than the transitional arrangement that is currently the norm. A restored diaconate is a *sine qua non* within a church shaped for mission.

One of the criticisms that was levelled against the restoration of such a permanent diaconate in the debate following the publication of *For Such a Time as This* was that it would work against the burgeoning of lay ministries that the Total Ministry/Collaborative Church movement was encouraging. As one speaker put it, "we risk disempowering the laity by siphoning off more and more forms of ordained ministry"²¹. In fact, experience in our own Province and elsewhere

¹⁷ *Mission-Shaped Church: church planting and fresh expressions of church in a changing context* Church House Publishing (2004)

¹⁸ *op cit* 13, 112-113

¹⁹ Louise Cornell *A Proposal for the Restoration of the Diaconate in the Diocese of Rupert's Land submitted to the 2004 Diocesan Synod Diaconate Working Party Diocese of Rupert's Land*, 10

²⁰ Kevin Flynn "Once a Deacon..." 41-45 in *Anglican Orders and Ordination: Essays and Reports from the Interim Conference at Jarvenpää, Finland, of the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation* ed. David Holeten (1997), 45

²¹ *GS 1407* (200) 585

has shown that the contrary occurs. One of the fruits of the shift in interpretation of *diakonia* (through Collins's scholarly examination of the *diakon* group of words in the classical context and in the New Testament) is that it has allowed for renewed thought to be given to 'the specificity of a deacon's role'²², and to the recasting of that for a mission-shaped church responding to twenty-first century needs in God's world. Rather than continuing to speak loosely about a ministry of humble service, we are able to recast the deacon's role primarily as a missionary and evangelistic one, one of making connections (through an assisting, non-presidential ministry of word, sacrament and pastoral care) between the worshipping heart of the church and the needs and longings of the world outside.

But being a focal image of the church's calling to be a herald of the Gospel in all the world does not mean that deacons simply arrogate to themselves the entire responsibility for mission, thus disempowering the laity, as that speaker suggested. Their office, like that of all the ordained, is to 'promote, release and

clarify'²³ the nature of the Church. Deacons do this in relationship to the *diakonia* of the Church as they 'model, encourage and co-ordinate'²⁴ the diaconal ministry of the people of God.

So how should they model the diakonia of the people of God? All the major documents produced on the diaconate within these shores in recent years – *For Such a Time as This*, the Diocese of Salisbury's Report,²⁵ the SCIFU report on the spirituality of the diaconate²⁶ and The Windsor Statement²⁷ – play upon the themes of the deacon as go-between standing at the interface of church and society (wherever that might be thought to be), facing 'Janus-like'²⁸ in two directions, linking the church's life and the world in which she is set. For instance, one such puts it like this:

"The special role of the deacon is to make connections and build bridges between the distinctive life, the koinonia of the Body of Christ and the needs of the world".²⁹

Much of the subsequent discussion then focuses upon the incarnational basis of that bridge-building role – upon Christ the Deacon's coming among us in the form of a servant and the contingent nature of His ministry of compassionate service – and thus slips back almost imperceptibly into a consideration of unreconstructed, 'pre-Collins', servanthood. The eschatological nature of the deacon's task of focussing the church's *diakonia*, that sense of the anticipation and foretaste of the new age to come, with all the challenge and the demand that that entails, is often dangerously downplayed in such discussions and leads to an unhelpful blurring in role.

Deacons are called to be the eyes and ears of the church, placed not so much upon the frontiers (as that implies a static role and a degree of comfortable safety), but rather dotting from the thick of the action to the heart of the worshipping community and out again, as reconnaissance persons, 'God's spies', to use Lear's wonderful phrase, recognising and co-operating with the divine work of transformation that is *already* happening in the midst of our own contingent history. Deacons should make the Kingdom their core metaphor, inspiring in themselves and others 'a new social imagination'³⁰, so that the Church's pastoral care 'takes on the vision of the reign of God ... and becomes more than reactive care'³¹, not just a matter of social welfare but of serving the apostolic Gos-

pel. Deacons should be people who cultivate a ministry of attention to, and discernment of, the signs of the times (Matthew 16, 3) and hone the skills necessary to work with these – rootedness in the situation (which is why so many OLMs should be permanent deacons not priests, but that is another story), observation of that environment, 'double listening',³² prophetic social analysis and reflective practice – employing these skills to feed back insights, news, discoveries into the whole church, thus informing her life in all its aspects from a Kingdom perspective; people who are steeped in those areas where God's transformative powers are daily at work – in the fields of mental health and affordable public housing, in the peace, justice and environmental movements, amidst social and political curia and so on; people who both raise the awareness of congregational members to these fields and also offer those same members' existing involvement to God as an oblation in liturgy.

As I say this, I think simply of the areas of concern that our Scottish Deacons past and present have brought to the attention of the church's prayer and thinking, both at individual charge and diocesan level – the provision of respite care for those infected by HIV/AIDS, the viewpoint and the concerns of the hearing-impaired community, the issues around rural deprivation, the plight of

²² Paula Gooder *Diakonia in the New Testament: A Dialogue with John N Collins* (2006) 32

²³ *Eucharistic Presidency: A Theological Statement by the House of Bishops of the General Synod GS 1248* (1997), 3.26 Church House Publishing

²⁴ *The Diaconate as Ecumenical Opportunity. The Hanover Report of the Anglican Lutheran International Commission* ACC Publications (1996) 70

²⁵ *The Distinctive Diaconate. A Report to the Board of Ministry. The Diocese of Salisbury* Sarum College Press (2003)

²⁶ Scottish Churches Initiative for Union Report of Working Party on Diaconal Spirituality General Synod Office (2003)

²⁷ *The Windsor Statement on the Diaconate* <http://societies.anglican.org/dace/pub/windsor.htm> (1997)

²⁸ *op cit* 26, 13

²⁹ *op cit* 2, 52

³⁰ Walter Brueggemann *Hope Within History* John Knox Press (1987), 22

³¹ Rosalind Brown *Being a Deacon Today: Exploring a Distinctive Ministry in the Church and in the World* Canterbury (2005), 62

³² *op cit* 17, 104

rough sleepers, the lifestyle recommendations of the eco-friendly movement, justice issues in the Israel-Palestine debate, drug abuse and local government - spreading the Gospel both by their informed involvement with these issues and the heralding of them to a wider constituency. In all these cases, their ministry has not been about doing it all on others' behalf but, as participant observers, placarding and affirming what is already happening and focussing the church's attention onto, and involvement in, it in new and intentional ways. This has resulted in the renewed diaconate becoming an invaluable resource both for the church and for the secular institutions with which it is associated, 'a role than neither clone(s) nor ignore(s) the ministry of the laity'.³³

Which brings me onto that second verb, that of **enabling** the ministries of others. Deacons are temperamentally well-suited to this enabling role because, in their very way of being, they symbolize the truth that all ministry is relational. One of the marks of the spirituality of a deacon is that sense of never going it alone, of always serving alongside others in 'mutual collaboration, support and encouragement'.³⁴ I became aware of how true that statement was whilst a member of a Working Party on the diaconate as part of the recent multilateral conversations in Scotland, the SCIFU talks. Over the year that diaconal representatives from the four churches met - Church of Scotland, URC, Methodist Church in

Scotland and my own tradition - all us, from our very different polities and training pathways, were united in our attitude to the exercise of diaconal ministry; not one person ever evinced any desire to 'go it alone' nor indeed any evidence of having done so. Rather, the emphasis was upon enabling others to exercise and share their own gifts, of mutually doing oneself out of a job and of facilitating the development of another in such a way that 'He must grow greater; I must become less' (John 30).

This sense of co-responsibility is poised up beautifully in the Eucharistic Liturgy where Deacons work 'in complement'³⁵ with others in a graceful dance modelling the interdependence of all ministries within the Body of Christ. Everything the Deacon does therein is in the nature of a conversation, a dialogue with others, inviting them to participate in the service of the Kingdom either right then and there, or in the week to come. This came home to me very forcibly recently while watching a video of the Eucharist at St Gregory Nyssa in California, a Liturgy modelled as closely as possible to that used in the early Church. Throughout that beautiful act of worship, with its colour and movement, the Deacon focussed, in the words of their parish priest, 'on supporting others' work, finding ways to make it easier for them at every moment, prompting, helping reminding, whispering 'Louder!'³⁶ And Fabian goes on:

"Let me note that the deacon's job is essentially assisting and marshalling others, training and expanding their ministry.... Supporting people in doing more than they might otherwise pull off".³⁷

'Supporting people in doing more than they might otherwise pull off' is, I believe, a wonderful description of the role of the Deacon in a mission-shaped church. There is a crying need for representative Christian ministers who can offer a recognised ministry of word, sacrament and pastoral care to be deployed as widely as possible across the land, meeting people wherever they are - in their work or leisure networks, their home or educational environments. Countless recent works on evangelism in a post-modern world stress the need for the church to be 'without walls', as the Church of Scotland put it³⁸, to be 'on the move'³⁹, to be 'a dispersed church for a diverse culture'⁴⁰. And the primary resource the church has for the fulfilment of that mission strategy is the latent potential of its laity, members of congregations, already equipped with a myriad skills and talents, who simply need to have their gifts discerned, affirmed and trained, and their resultant ministries publically recognised. Writing in a recently published book *Breaking the Mould of Christendom*, Methodist Deacon David Clark comments:

"It is our conviction that the liberation of the laity will only be achieved if, from within the leadership of the church, someone is given the explicit responsibility of enabling lay people to fulfil their servant ministry in the world. We believe that the group of people ideally placed to undertake this task is the diaconate. A renewed diaconate would make its prime task that of catalysing and enabling the laity to recognise and reclaim their vocation as the church dispersed to serve the kingdom community in the world".⁴¹

Such a vision of the diaconate being the order of ministry charged with enabling the people of God to exercise their vocation as participants in God's mission chimes beautifully with the vocation of the diaconate that the *Hanover Report* outlined:

"The diaconal ministry of the laity receives encouragement and, where appropriate, leadership from the deacons of the church... 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. This ministry should have a multiplying effect leading others to their own specific tasks of service".⁴²

³³ David Clark *Breaking the Mould of Christendom. Kingdom Community, Diaconal Church and the Liberation of the Laity* Epworth (2005), 291

³⁴ *op cit* 31, 7

³⁵ Michael Perham *Lively Sacrifice* SPCK (1992), 36-38

³⁶ "Deacons at St Gregory's in Holy Week and Beyond" www.saintgregorys.org/Liturgy/HWConference02/Deacons02.html

³⁷ "On reviving the diaconate in the Episcopal Church" www.saintgregorys.org/Liturgy/HWConference02/RevivingDiaconate02.htm

³⁸ *Church Without Walls Report to the General Assembly 2001* Church of Scotland (2001)

³⁹ Peter Neilson *Church on the Move: New Church. New Generation. New Scotland* Covenanters Press (2005)

⁴⁰ *ibid*, v27

⁴¹ *op cit* 33, 275

⁴² *op cit* 24, 26 and 56

In short, 'the touchstone of a renewed diaconate is whether it builds up the diverse gifts and callings of the members of the Body of Christ'⁴³, equipping the church to be what it is called to be.

And so to the third task, that of *co-ordination*. In collaborative churches or clusters of churches, Deacons are those tasked with co-ordinating the work of such people as Lay Pastoral Assistants, organising their training and continuing ministerial formation, and through their diaconal liturgical role, expressing those ministries in worship. I know of Deacons, for instance, who are involved with training volunteers in bereavement visiting and faith accompaniment. Indeed the latter should be viewed as a growth industry; as increasing numbers of the people of God come alive to a sense of 'calling', the natural corollary to the collaborative church movement, so do they desire and need midwives/soul friends to accompany them on their journeys of discernment and ongoing formation. Similarly Richard Giles suggests that "the life of a parish would be greatly enhanced if the deacon were to train and co-ordinate a team of liturgical assistants"⁴⁴. This task of co-ordination, however, need not be restricted to a single charge, but may range over a cluster of charges or wider still. For many years I was employed by the Diocese of Edinburgh to work in the field of theological education and similar diocese-, deanery- or archdeaconry-

wide briefs are, I believe, becoming prevalent, as recommended many years ago by Barry Rogerson⁴⁵ and more recently by the Working Party on the diaconate. But however these are organised, we should expect the role of co-ordination to expand in the years to come; as lay ministries in a 'collaborative church' shaped for mission proliferate in response to the demands of a needy world, so this role of co-ordination will become ever more necessary.

In recommending that Deacons get involved in the task of co-ordinating the ever-increasing numbers of lay ministries for mission, *For Such a Time as This* urges that "in relation to lay ministry, renewed diaconate should on no account absorb expressions of ministry that are entrusted to lay people. In parishes where lay ministry already flourishes, deacons will help to support, guide and co-ordinate this. It is not for them to seek to control it or to try and take it over".⁴⁶

It is our experience in Scotland that having distinctive deacons helps to break down the sense of hierarchical degree of ministry that pervade a church in which the diaconate is seen as simply being transitional. In honouring the vocation of those who remain true to their calling to serve in diaconal orders, the collaborative church finds it easier to honour the callings of the rest of the *laos* in their particular and varied roles. Such calling begin to be seen as of equal value and

validity within the divine economy, part of a tapestry of distinctive ministries in which all the threads contribute equally but variously to the weave. In subtle and unseen ways there is a growing sense of the church, in the words of Eucharistic Presidency, 'not as a homogenous unity, but as differentiated oneness of distinctive persons-in-relation who discover their particularity in active relationships of giving and receiving'.⁴⁸ In collaborative churches in which the callings of all are highlighted and affirmed, it has been our experience that people see each ministry as having a distinct commission; feeling secure in their own calling, they respect and honour the different callings of others within the "community of difference and mutual deference"⁴⁹ they inhabit. The (inevitable) overlap of tasks no longer becomes the bone of contention it once was – no set of tasks assigned to any particular order can ever be completely exclusive 'because the work entrusted to the church is an integrated whole, not a random assortment of discrete functions'⁵⁰ – for each is assured of his or her own place within a diversified ministry and knows the particular commission assigned to that order. Like the persons of the Trinity, their own contribution is both created by and sustained within relationships of mutual-

ity. There is, in short, an emerging vocational subtlety and a finessing of roles which is both exciting and healthy – and which would, I imagine, gladden St Paul's heart.

The emergence of such a 'constellation of distinctive ministries'⁵¹ and the renewal of the diaconate in a mission shaped church is making Readers, the 'principal canonically recognized lay ministry'⁵² in the Church of England, feel that their vocation is under threat. The number of those offering for selection in that Church has dropped by a fifth in the past five years, while across the Scottish Episcopal Church there are only three candidates in training and none in the discernment pipeline. Part of the reason for that decline is, I suggest, that we have allowed that vocation to become like a capacious carpet-bag which holds just about everything; indeed Wesley Carr, somewhat more graphically, once likened it to 'a sump into which all unresolved questions must be poured'.⁵³ Readers themselves are exacerbating this problem; for instance, the Chair of the Central Readers' Council, in an address to that body's AGM in 2004, highlighted the fact that "the training of Readers gives potential for diversification of Reader ministry,"⁵⁴

⁴³ *op cit* 2, 46

⁴⁴ Richard Giles *Creating Uncommon Worship: Transforming the Liturgy of the Eucharist* (2004), 118

⁴⁵ Barry Rogerson "The diaconate; taking the ecumenical opportunity?" in *Community, Unity, Communion. Essays in Honour of Mary Tanner* Church House Publishing (1998) 213

⁴⁶ *op cit* 2, 57

⁴⁷ *ibid*

⁴⁸ *op cit* 48, 2 25

⁴⁹ Robin Greenwood *Practising Community. The Task of the Local Church* SPCK (1996), 66

⁵⁰ Gordon Kuhrt and Paul Avis "The diaconate" 229-233 in *Ministry Issues. Mapping the Trends for the Church of England* Church House Publishing (2001), 232

⁵¹ *op cit* 13, 98

⁵² Caroline Headley *Readers and Worship in the Church of England* Grove Worship Series W115 Grove Books, Cambs. (2000), 7

⁵³ Wesley Carr *The Priestlike Task* (1985)

⁵⁴ Rt Revd Graham Dow "The developing ministries of Christ in the Church – and the place of Reader ministry today" CRC Annual General Meeting (2004), 3

citing a huge range of possible arenas for activity including, dangerously, 'authority over congregations', (albeit working under a priest-in-charge), while another Reader lists activities as diverse as 'taking funerals' and 'outreach projects'.⁵⁵

But is this promiscuous level of involvement really a virtue? Might it not in itself be contributing to the malaise? The more the role widens, the more frequently⁵⁶ are Readers going to find themselves disheartened by finding that someone who hasn't been through the same rigorous three-year training is carrying out an identical task, or frustrated at not being able to get on the rota to do it in the first place.

Just as the needs of the world have energised us into imagining 'a new form of diaconate'⁵⁷ for a mission-shaped church, one with an overriding missionary focus, so too might those same needs be the catalyst for the reconfiguration (and hopefully renaming) of the office of Reader, so that it likewise finds its proper niche alongside the range of lay ministries and the ordained. Far from collapsing the ministries of Deacon, Reader and Lay Pastoral Assistant into one common office, we need rather to switch our lens across from wide-angle to close-up and be much clearer about the particular focus that this ministry embodies.

Readers are theologically trained lay people who are commissioned to minister the word on behalf of Christ and the Church, assisting in the ministry of the sacraments and in pastoral responsibility. They represent Christ in His body to others, but with a narrower sphere of representation than that of the Deacon and, in turn, of the priest. Much emphasis is placed upon their training which is generally both lengthy and rigorous. In the late 1990s the national programme in the Church of England was abandoned and training devolved to the dioceses; I followed suit two years ago. The present Moderation scheme, supervised by the Ministry Division Reader Education Panel and a national Moderator, was designed to ensure that these diocesan schemes met national criteria. As might be expected, 'the current scene is marked by considerable variety';⁵⁸ in some dioceses, Readers undertake their training separately; in others, alongside OLM ordinands; and in others still, in conjunction with yet other categories of potential ordained and authorised lay ministers.

All the recent documents on Readership – and there have been five in the past eight years⁵⁹ – highlight the fact that while many roles have accrued to the office over the years under Canon E460, nevertheless the core calling remains homiletical and liturgical; according to these documents, a Reader's vocation is primarily to ministry as a lay theologian, communicating, expounding and interpreting the gospel to others – and it is crucial to stress that focus. In his background note to his Private Member's Motion Holmes asks:

"Could the House of Bishops' definition of the work of a Reader as 'a preaching and teaching ministry in a pastoral context' be too tightly drawn? And is there a sufficient opening for a preaching and teaching ministry at a time when public worship is dominated by eucharistic services?"⁶⁰

The answer to that second question is a resounding 'yes'; there is indeed a desperate need for such ministry, which of itself – with no accretions – is profoundly missionary. The Anglican Primates' Working Party on Theological Education (TEAC) recently pointed to

- A general lack of theological literacy – a challenge to spiritual life and mission in increasingly secular societies and a serious hindrance to Christians in telling the Gospel story and making connections between faith and life
- Inadequate engagement with contemporary thinking, culture and society – a challenge of selecting and preparing a new generation to share in Christ in a world of apparently competing faiths, secularism and post-modernism.⁶¹

Readers, as solidly trained lay theologians, are ideally suited and skilled to play a vital role in this hermeneutical and apologetic task of the church through their church-based preaching and teaching. Just as Deacons equip people for their lives of *engagement* and *outreach*, so do Readers have a particular role in encouraging the development of members' faith. The report *Reader Ministry and Training* says as much:

"Readers have a special role in discerning and encouraging the ministerial gifts and skills of the congregation. The community of faith is thus enabled not only

⁵⁵ Pat Nappin "Reader Ministry" pps 131-133 in Kuhrt *op cit* 50, 131

⁵⁶ Judging by the comments made to Nigel Holmes in advance of his Private Member's Motion at the forthcoming Synod *op cit* 4

⁵⁷ *op cit* 5, 596

⁵⁸ Reader Task Group "A vision for good practice in Reader/Preacher training". Unpublished paper kindly sent by the Revd Alec George, National Moderator of Reader Training, C of E, (2005) 16

⁵⁹ *Selection for Reader Ministry* ABM Policy Paper 7 (1998); *Reader Ministry and Training: 2000 and Beyond* Ministry Division of the Archbishops' Council (2000); *Bishops' Regulations for Reader Ministry* Ministry Division of the Archbishops' Council (2000); Gordon Kuhrt and Pat Nappin *Bridging the Gap: Reader Ministry Today* Church House Publishing (2002); Wendy Thorpe *Equipping the Saints: The Moderation of Reader Training 1999-2003* Ministry Division of the Archbishops' Council (2003).

⁶⁰ Caroline Headley remarks that "the breadth of permitted use is one reason why efforts to identify Readers by what they do rather than by what they are in unhelpful" *op cit* 52, 7

⁶¹ *op cit* 3, 3

⁶² "Theological Education for the Anglican Communion Rationale Document" www.anglicancommunion.org/teac/rationale05feb.cfm

to share in the mission of the church but also to make sense of the world at large and engage with it as part of their Christian discipleship. By the end of their initial training, trainees should be able to demonstrate their ability to facilitate the learning and growth in faith of those to whom and with whom they minister".⁶³

Through preaching from their particular lay standpoint of engagement with the world of secular employment⁶⁴, and through teaching and catechesis, they can enable church members to engage likewise in serious theological reflection, forming a critical conversation between word and world, that practice which is such a necessary antidote to the uncritical certitude of so much Christian thinking today. Because their ministry is recognised not only locally but by the wider church⁶⁵, they can carry out this training role on a broader canvas than simply parish by parish; in this regard I think of one Reader in the Diocese of Edinburgh who is currently engaged in training theological facilitators in the arts of Contextual Bible Study and theological reflection, so that they in turn might cascade the skills amongst congregations across the diocese who are moving into collaborative ways of being – and she is only one among many Readers across the Province who have found this to be a fulfilling and valuable niche.

The soon-to-be-published learning outcomes, drawn up by the Reader Training Group in response to the Regional Training Partnership idea advocated by the Hind Report, support such a vision of the way Readers' ministry might develop in future. They place the emphasis very firmly upon liturgical leadership, preaching and the enabling of others deepening discipleship. There is, admittedly, a pastoral component to these, but the skills listed therein – 'managing confidentiality, listening without being judgemental, encouraging others in discipleship, ministry and faith sharing'⁶⁶ – are those required by the underlying communicative nature of the role and do not thus impinge upon the role of Lay Pastoral Assistants.

Back in the time of the *Tiller Report*, the Central Readers' Conference asked itself, daringly, 'what pattern of ministry the church need(ed) to develop and whether there was a place for the Reader with it?'⁶⁷ If the church is indeed being 'prompt(ed) by the Holy Spirit'⁶⁸ to reconfigure herself in a more collaborative mode so as better to meet the needs of the world, then there is most certainly a role for Readers within this pattern. Readers 'make visible the fact that God gives different gifts to different people and that ordination is not the passport

to ministry'⁶⁹; their lay status is crucial,⁷⁰ and should remain in place. If the narrowing of vocation outlined above impels some Readers to test a vocation to ordained ministry, well and good, but that is not an argument for ordaining all Readers. The liturgical role of a trained, licensed lay person speaks of the value of all the laity and "placards the ministry of lay people as part of the ministry of the church. Readers and Deacons can never displace each other since the ecclesial base of their ministry lies in two complementary facets of the theology of the church's ministry".⁷¹

That statement comes from the Diocese of Salisbury's recent Report on the diaconate and thus it is fitting that I should close with a communication from a Reader in that very diocese, indicating how deeply embedded the perichoretic 'rainbow' theology of ministry outlined therein has become in that part of the Church of England; it is a sentiment

which likewise underlines our own attempts in the Province of the Scottish Episcopal Church to reform ourselves into a church shaped for mission. The writer was responding to the assertion that 'being a Reader makes one substantially less useful in a parish'; she comments:

"Better to have one or two fully used people set apart to minister (sacramentally) than to make every person called to unpaid ministry into an OLM. However there is a need for others to carry out much other ministry and far from 'not needing Readers', I believe parishes do need in addition to OLMs, various properly trained and authorised lay ministries – Readers, Pastoral Assistants, children's leaders, youth workers, musicians amongst others. Our real need in the church is to honour one another, so that each one feels fully valued in their role and calling".⁷²

⁶³ *Reader Ministry and Training 2000 and beyond* Ministry Division of the Archbishop's Council (2000), 5.23

⁶⁴ Andrew Britton "Readers at work" pps 19-26 in *Bridging the Gap Reader Ministry Today* Kuhrt, G. and Nappin, P Church House Publishing (2002)

⁶⁵ Licensed Readers may serve across all parishes in a diocese; they are also transferable across dioceses in the Anglican Communion

⁶⁶ *op cit* 57, 71

⁶⁷ *Strategy for Ministry* Central Readers' Conference (1982) quoted in Holmes *op cit* 3.3

⁶⁸ Revd Anthony Barnett (Ecumenical Representative, Roman Catholic Church) speaking at the *For Such a Time as This* debate GS 1407 (2001), 579

⁶⁹ *op cit* 25, 28

⁷⁰ *op cit* 49, 69

⁷¹ *op cit* 25, 28-29

⁷² Gillian Newton "Gleanings. Readers and OLMs" *Reader Journal* vol 102, no 2 Summer 2005, 28

The Diaconal Ministry in the Church of Norway – Ecclesiological and Ecumenical Reflections on Recent Developments

Prof. Turid Karlsen Seim

In ecumenical conversations about the diaconate one should be aware of the fact that one may talk at cross-purposes given terminological differences. These differences are not accidental; they rather express distinct ecclesial positions and practices. The transitional diaconal ministry in the Anglican Church has primarily been liturgically defined and understood to represent a lower degree of ordination and a preliminary stage towards a priestly ministry. The caritative mission of the church has been taken care of elsewhere and has not been called "diaconal". In the Church of Norway as in many Lutheran and Reformed churches, diakonia as a caritative ministry was shaped by the 19th century's diaconal revival in Germany and Scandinavia. This rendered a profile to the diaconate in these churches that was

different from that commonly assigned to it in a threefold pattern of ministry. It also meant that it came to represent permanent dedication of women as well as men. They were trained diaconal, that is caritative, institutions by which they also were formally commissioned to serve and to which they remained affiliated. Only later, deacons were introduced into the regular life of local congregations, and an introductory act of consecration was included/prescribed in the church's ordinals. The ordinal now requires that the local bishop should consecrate deacons. The re-establishment of a diaconate in Lutheran churches has thus been closely connected to a rediscovery of the church's mission of love in the form of a distinct and permanent caritative activity.

In the wake of ecumenical agreements we have come to recognise that we will have to move beyond terminological clarifications - even if they are needed as we enter upon conversations to prevent us from talking at cross-purposes. The present challenge is to make the different traditions meet in ways that are mutually respectful and that eventually may lead to a change of well-established patterns on both sides. This process may indeed be furthered by the fact that our churches face similar problems with regard to their ministerial practices. I sometimes wonder whether we in the Church of Norway would have sought to resolve our problems by way of a threefold ministry had it not been for the Porvoo agreement to which we have committed ourselves. The fact that we are in the process of introducing a threefold ministry bears witness to the reception of Porvoo agreement by the Church of Norway. However, we would not be able to do this without engaging in theological deliberations based on our specific Lutheran tradition and identity.

In accordance with its constitutional Lutheran confession, ecclesial legislation (canon law) in Norway has focused on the central position of one ordained ministry (the clerical office), that is the office or ministry (cf. the distinction in German between 'Amt' and 'Dienst') of the priest. The *Augsburg Confession* (CA) states that to obtain the faith a ministry was instituted (by God) to teach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments, that is to administer what we call "the means of grace" (CA par. V and VII). By receiving and taking part in these divine gifts the church comes into being so that without them having been received there is no church. A secured administration of the means of grace is constitutive to the church and

this happens most prominently in the weekly and public service on Sunday morning (High Mass). In order that the administration of Word and Sacrament may take place in an orderly manner, a ministry has also been divinely instituted to which some persons are particularly called and ordained. The ordained, priestly ministry thus has the principle responsibility for the public administration of Word and Sacraments. The priest also has a special responsibility for doctrinal teaching in the local congregation. When the priestly ministry attends to these duties according to the conditions laid down by the church, it is a unifying ministry in the local congregation (parish). To be rightly called (*rite vocatus/vocata*) priests should be ordained to their ministry by the bishop in the presence of the congregated people. The requirement that person in this manner be "*rite vocatus/vocata*" through ordination corresponds to or is based on the necessity of the administration of the means of grace in a public and orderly manner.

This has been the traditional Lutheran position, and it has been the firm practice in the Church of Norway - with some exceptions among certain low-church mission organisations that remained within the church rather than forming "free churches". It is still the teaching of the church with regard to the so-called *proprium* of the ordained ministry - even if the emphasis of the *proprium* has shifted to presiding at the Eucharist from preaching, which also lay people may be invited to do.

However, several practices have blurred the focus on the one ordained, priestly ministry. For the last thirty years or so the so-called "ministry debate" in the Church of Norway has to a large degree

been concerned with adapting and ordering "new" ministries (or forms of ecclesial employment) such as those of deacon, catechist, cantor, churchwarden [*kirkeverge*] adding to the historically established priestly ministry with its traditionally comprehensive charge. Because the priestly ministry was experienced as no longer able to handle on its own the growing congregational responsibilities and activities, the need of supplementary and specialised ministries became more and more accepted. This was a main concern of the so-called Reform Commission of 1965 that did not resolve the questions involved but rather caused a subsequent discussion about a "differentiation of ministry". In the context of a Lutheran tradition with its emphasis of the one ministry in the form of the office of the priest, it has been difficult to recognise other functions and ministries beyond being the priest's helpers and supporters, the entourage of the office-bearer.

This has resulted in a situation, which has been deemed to create tension and conflict ecclesologically and not least practically and collegially at a local level. Such tensions are not easily resolved as many priests feel that their authority and responsibilities are curtailed, while those serving in other capacities want to develop their own ministerial identity based on their specific competence. Within public management this is characterised as "professionalism", that is the development of distinct professional identities, each to be valued in its own right. Professional guild-like associations support this identity and in the present situation such associations play a significant role in the church. Ecclesologically one may ask how the *proprium* (that which uniquely belongs to) of each "ministry" should be defined,

both separately and configured in relation to the others.

It is hardly surprising and certainly not new that in this situation one has found the language of 1 Cor 12 helpful in an attempt to counteract competitiveness and hierarchical ambitions. Recent recommendations by the General Synod of the Church of Norway prove how persistent an undifferentiated and soothing language of "ministry" is. It becomes a primary marker of egalitarian values and seems to be "the magic touch" to which one resorts when structure might appear to be hierarchical or involve hierarchical ambitions. It is, however, in my view also predictable that to introduce the rhetoric of multiple ministries (even member ministry), all of which become equally valuable although interdependent, does not resolve the real issues at stake. That every ministry has its own spiritual legitimacy and its distinct area of responsibility and duty, and that they should depend on each other in a good mutual relationship, is clearly not wrong. But it has again and again been used to sweeten the pill of inferiority and keep the little toe or finger quiet and hopeful content. As is well known already from the common use of the body-metaphor in antiquity - it blurs not so much the differences as the qualifications and practical implications of such differences. Instead of dealing with the implications, everyone is encouraged to be content in their present position. It supports a highly ambiguous situation and lends itself either to the maintenance of existing power structures or to the development of informal ones. This does not necessarily mean that Paul's teaching should be dismissed, but one has to be very careful about its proper (and improper) use as Paul speaks to the greater ones within structures that are aimed not at equality but at oneness.

Calling and consecration belong together. In the act of consecration the external vocation of the Church meets with the personal vocation of the person to be consecrated. This is where and when the nature of the Church's calling and its implications are made clear to candidate. However, in their present form the ordinals of the Church of Norway do not help clarify the matters and they are open to various interpretations. The similarities between them are as striking as the differences: The same structure applies to the service of consecration - be it for ministers, catechists, and deacons, for consecration to "permanent ecclesiastical service," or (as of June 1, 1999) for the consecration of cantors. Furthermore, they are all designated as "vigsling" (often translated by "consecration" for the lack of a more adequate term) to various ministries (*tjenester*). Whether those "consecrated" are seen to be part of a lay or a clerical roster (to use a term from the ELCA in the US) is in most cases undercommunicated. In fact the ordinals may seem to undermine such a distinction, especially in the case of deacons and catechists.

The openness of the ordinals to various interpretations was at the time an intentional choice and represented a compromise. The theological agreement was very fragile when the ordinals were revised in the 1980's. The result was an attempt to keep together quite diverse positions: A strong low-church tradition bent towards anti-clerical attitudes; an emerging professional, distinct awareness of the "new" ministries supported by specific educational requirements; and the CA-based affirmation of an ordained ministry divinely instituted for the administration of the means of grace. Thus some adhered to a "flat" model where functions were evenly distributed

between various ministries, contesting the traditional Lutheran understanding that the *ministerium ecclesiasticum* - the distinct ministry of Word and Sacrament - is conferred solely or at least primarily to the priest at ordination. Others, perhaps the majority, supported the view voiced by a report *Office and Council [Embete og råd]* from 1988 which stated: "...even though the liturgy greatly resembles the consecration rite for priests, it is clear that the deacon and the catechist are not consecrated to the office of the Word and Sacrament." (p. 97). These ministries are also in this report explicitly said to be "lay ministries". However, the ordinals may still be heard to support both views, and local variations especially with regard to the deacons have developed. Thus, until 2001, some bishops did practise a giving of the stole to deacons at their consecration, others not. In 2001 the General Synod recommended that no stole be conferred at the consecrations of deacons until the church had reached a common mind on the ecclesial status of the diaconate. This recommendation is still valid.

There is a host of pending questions, but fundamental to many of them is whether the traditional Lutheran understanding of the ordained ministry (*ministerium ecclesiasticum*) the oneness of which is expressed in the ministry of the priest, can be opened up to a broader diversification. Are in fact certain aspects of the "old" priestly office, such as teaching and social care, already parcelled out to other ministries so that together they may be said to constitute the *ministerium ecclesiasticum*? Or should we simply reaffirm that the *ministerium ecclesiasticum* is identical with, or limited to, the priestly ministry to which our church ordains. The latter

position would imply that that the remaining ministries, consecrated though they may be, are seen as particular expressions of the priesthood of all the baptised but not of the special office instituted by God for the administration of the means of grace. It is, however, an historical fact that the *ministerium ecclesiasticum* in former times did include aspects such as the educational and caritative tasks that today have been separated out and have become distinct professions/ministries as catechists and especially deacons have been introduced.

In the Church of Norway there has for some time been a widespread agreement that the situation is in need of clarification - both for the sake of the church and for those called to serve in various capacities. At the same time there has been a certain uneasiness and hesitance about re-opening a troublesome case. Rather than addressing the underpinning ecclesiological issues, one has tended to do damage-repair by revising the professional briefs that regulate the various ministries. However, in 2001 a Working Party (Committee) appointed by the Church Council submitted a report on the understanding of ministry in the Church of Norway. After a round of hearings the report was tabled at General Synod in November that same year. In its brief, the Working Party, of which I was a member, was explicitly requested to consider the implications of ecumenical conversations in which the Church of Norway had participated. The committee took this to mean the agreements with other churches to which the Church of Norway had committed itself, primarily the *Porvoo Common Statement* but also the *Leuenberg Agreement*.

The *Porvoo Common Statement* says: "This basic oneness of the ordained

ministry is expressed in the service of word and sacrament. In the life of the Church, this unity has taken a differentiated form." (par. 32j) Here the unity of the ministry is maintained, while at the same time room is made for varied expressions of this one ministry, such as a threefold pattern. This is presented in historical-descriptive rather than in normative terms thereby recognising that ministerial forms are in a process of change. In the *Declaration* itself (par. 58-61), the parties commit themselves explicitly "to work towards a common understanding of diaconal ministry" (par. 58.b.vii). This shows that there is no such common understanding, not then and not now. It probably also reflects the fact that the diaconal ministry is in a process of change in many churches, and that old and established differences are open to be re-addressed.

When approving the *Porvoo Statement*, the General Synod of the Church of Norway pointed out that "the presentation of the threefold ministry (par. 41) does not express a final clarification of the relationship between office and various ministries in the Church of Norway." The wording is open in that it does not rule out a continued dialogue towards a final clarification. This might imply changes for the Church of Norway but it need not do so. I am aware that others interpret this differently, insisting in either direction. Some, among them prominent representatives of the deacons' association, did prematurely plead Porvoo to support their claim for being included in the ministerial office, and thus the right to wear a stole and to have extended liturgical functions. Others have minimised the implications of the agreement insisting that its significance lies in the fact that the Church of Norway has been fully recognised "as we

presently are" without any particular impetus towards further implementation and change, at least not urgently. It would be fair to say that the majority find themselves in positions between these extremes.

The *Leuenberg Agreement* does not explicitly address the understanding of ministry, but implicitly the whole understanding of ecclesial fellowship and unity is inextricably connected to the administration of the word and sacraments. Thus ecclesial fellowship is tied directly to the question of mutual recognition of the ministry (par 33). In the later and highly significant statement on ecclesiology "The Church of Jesus Christ" from 1994, the so-called "Tampere theses" were included. There the Leuenberg signatory churches concur that the "ordained ministry" belongs to the being of the church while acknowledging that there is diversity in the ways in which this ministry is perceived and shaped. This diversity is shaped by historical experiences and determined by the different interpretations.

In conclusion, none of the agreements strictly speaking, places the Church of Norway under any obligation to introduce a form of threefold ministry. Nor do they outline a definitive theological understanding of a threefold ministry - even though the *Porvoo Statement* mentions that this was the general pattern in the church of the first centuries, and that it might further unity and enrich our reflection on ministry if it were to be (re) introduced. It still remains an area where each church is given freedom to decide for itself, but also where no one church initially says that it has a final answer. All need to learn from each other in a process of joint deliberations. The search for a common understanding of the diaconate

should take place through a broad and representative consultative process, and I regret to say that this has not happened in any effective manner involving decision-making bodies - until this present initiative which is all the more to be welcomed.

In its 2001 report the Church of Norway Working Party did consider whether an introduction of a (NB: not the) threefold ministry might represent a way forward in resolving some of the issues left floating by earlier attempts and surfacing both in the ordinals and in the professional briefs. In previous discussions, questions with regard to the status of the diaconate had often been overshadowed by differences over the episcopate - that is how we understand the role and status of the bishops we have had since the time of the Reformation. Some still see the introduction of a diaconate and a threefold pattern primarily as an issue concerning the episcopate. They fear that "an introduction of a threefold ministry would expose the episcopal office of our church to a set of dynamics that will infuse elements that are foreign to a Lutheran way of thinking and will lead it in a Catholic direction". Others emphasise that we have reached a reasonable clarification concerning the episcopal office in recent years through the ecumenical dialogues in which we have taken part, BEM and especially Porvoo.

The episcopal office is a priestly ministry with extended authority *in human* in certain areas. Therefore only priests can become bishops and they are made bishops through an act of consecration (*vigsling*) not to be regarded as a second ordination. The Lutheran confession conveys an intention to carry on the episcopal ministry (see CA 28) in the

Church. The ecumenical dialogues concerning the episcopal office have made this intention of continuity more explicit. The episcopal ministry is permanently anchored in our church order, as it attends to oversight, ordinations, and consecrations on behalf of the church. It serves thereby also a unifying ministry. Oversight (*episkope*) is necessary in the Church, and bishops have carried out this responsibility through the long post-reformation tradition of our church. The ecclesial function of oversight should, as BEM suggests, be exercised in a "personal, collegial, and communal" manner. When the episcopal office functions in this way, it may appear as the sign of fellowship and the bond of unity that is theologically desirable. However, in the process no serious suggestion has emerged that in a possible threefold ministry of bishop, priest, and deacon in the Church of Norway, only the bishop, being also deacon and priest, should be seen to hold the fullness of the ministry. This would also be difficult when the diaconate is not transitional but distinctive.

Rather than revisiting the episcopate, we should address theologically and practically the emergence of "new" specified ministries including the diaconate and an escalating practice of consecration of person being assigned to various tasks independently of whether this a lifelong commitment or not. Some see this as an achievement in that the hierarchical distinction between clergy and lay people is being blurred. It may, however, equally well be maintained that not only does this practice question the traditional view of the one priestly ministry, it also widens the gap to the ordinary lay people in the pews. Thus there are two sides to the matter: on the one side the possible effects on the

understanding and shape of the *ministerium ecclesiasticum* and on the other the implications for the status of lay people. Are we facing a process whereby modern professionalism is converted to ecclesial use by being sanctified/clericalised through consecration? As a lay theologian, I see good reasons to resist this development. New forms of clericalism should be discouraged rather than encouraged, and congregational life should not be dominated by professional ministries taking over what lay people perfectly well may do on a voluntary basis. We should rather raise people's awareness about how they can contribute in various ways employing their particular gifts without any particular consecration being necessary. We should also stop short of an almost endless differentiation where the priestly ministry is parcelled out in varying forms of special assignments requiring particular skills, draining the ordained priestly ministry.

A model of a differentiated ministry, where a number of special competencies are to be gathered in a "collective diaconate" may seem to introduce some order while in fact it moves the problem into the diaconate, which becomes the mixed bag. The idea of a "collective diaconate" into which a multitude of ministries might come together has not gained ground in the Church of Norway. In 2001 the General Synod recommended that even though the caritative task represents an indispensable emphasis in any understanding of the diaconate, the option of a "collective diaconate" should also be explored. However, in a later report this idea was not supported and in later reflection on the diaconate the caritative dimension has been predominant. This is why the ministries of the catechist or the cantor

are barely mentioned in this paper. For a cantor consecration is not compulsory, and with regard to the catechetical ministry we will have to seek other solutions. Personally, I hold that the teaching ministry in the local congregation is a priestly obligation even if this does not do away with the right and authority, which every believer has to interpret Scripture on his/her own behalf. This means that every believer has the right but the ordained minister is under an exclusive obligation to do so - as the pledge at the ordination makes clear. Between the two, the ordained ministers and the congregations/church at large there should always be a dialogue and a mutual deliberative contestation.

In its deliberations on the diaconate, the Church of Norway tends to affirm its particular tradition of diakonia as a caritative task. There are several dimensions to the diaconal ministry, as we know it: the personal exercise of love of one's neighbour in everyday life, institutionalised diaconal ministry, and various types of international diaconal ministry. The focus has, however, been on parish diakonia as the core function of the deacon with a threefold ministry. In a parish context a diaconal ministry has the essential task of inspiring, guiding, and leading a diaconate in the local congregation. The educational requirements for deacons are high with an emphasis on social issues and care. Thus the profile of the educational programmes for deacons differ significantly from those for priests, and means that deacons are not qualified for priesthood and vice versa. This represents a major difference to Anglican practices and is another reason why a transitional diaconate would be difficult.

Today the Charge of the deacons, which regulates the service of the parish

deacons in the Church of Norway lays down that, if need be and by special arrangement, the deacon may officiate at funerals. The deacon may also take the Lord's Supper home to those who cannot come to church and especially those sick or dying (*sognebud*) but she may not consecrate the Eucharistic elements in the church service. The present formulation is - intentionally - left open and it is not uncommon that the deacon at such emergency house visits does celebrate the Eucharist, since we have no practice of keeping consecrated elements for extended use. Further regulations of this practice will be one of the critical issues in the report now being prepared for General Synod 2007.

Since 2001, the question before us has been whether it is possible to place a caritative diaconate as we know it, into a long-standing structure of a threefold ministry and thus make place for a permanent rather than a transitional diaconate within this structure. To do so on Lutheran grounds we further have to ask whether such a permanent caritative ministry truly can be said to administer the means of grace that evoke faith.

Many, especially among the clergy in the Church of Norway and supported by their association holding on to their *proprium*, tend to think that the diaconate should remain outside the *ministerium ecclesiasticum*. Deacons may still be consecrated (*vigslet*) but they remain "lay" and should not wear a stole. This, of course, is to clarify the case in line with what used to be the case in the earlier phase. Theologically, those who hold this position take the diaconal ministry not to be constitutive but consecutive and responsive, a consequence of the gospel. They regard diaconal ministry as a realisation of the

commandment to love one's neighbour, deeply motivated by Christ's self-emptying ministry for humankind and an organic fruit of justifying faith (CA 4). As such it represents the new obedience (CA 6). If one were to include the diaconal ministry in the *ministerium ecclesiasticum* (the ministry administering the means of grace for the purpose of creating faith), this might involve the danger of making the diaconal ministry necessary for faith and thereby confuse law and gospel.

The same negative conclusion, but by way of a different argumentation already mentioned above, is represented by those who fear that local congregational life might be subject to clericalisation and hierarchical patterns. This view has its base in traditionally low-church, evangelical groups, and more recently also in an ecclesial employer's association. Its powerbase is the local level and it has as its members parish councils, foundations and organisations that employ persons with paid work in the local churches. This association gained strength by ecclesial legislation and reorganisation introduced not too long ago, that reinforced the authority of local government in administrative and financial matters.

Is it then possible to remain faithful to what we treasure in our own tradition and yet be open to the ecumenical challenge? Could we possibly envision a caritative diaconate as part of the divinely instituted ministry that administers the means of grace that evoke faith and from which the Church draws its life?

In 2001 a minority of two in the Working Party, including myself, emphasised that the diaconal ministry must not merely be understood as caring for people in need, but more profoundly as a witness to the

life that gives itself for others, as God's voice of love in the world. The kingdom of God is brought near in word as well as in deed, in the same manner that Jesus, the incarnate Word, brought it near. Faith is created through this dual communication, when God's compassion is expressed in outreach towards spirit, soul, and body.

The Lutheran tradition has been verbally oriented, with the sermon as its communicative locus. Today we constantly learn that communication and language are not so exclusively verbal but include also non-cognitive expressions. In the same way that this has contributed to a liturgical renewal with greater emphasis on the importance of the sacraments and other rituals, it has also redefined the importance of acts of love in the preaching of the gospel. When seen from this perspective, diakonia should not necessarily be perceived as responding to the proclamation of the Gospel or being only the fruit of faith. Therefore, an introduction of the diaconate as a function of the ecclesiastical office needs not imply that law and gospel are confused. Nor is the distinction between law and gospel identical with the difference between action and word. In this perspective deacons may be *ordained within* the ecclesiastical office and the stole conferred upon them. The liturgical duties of the deacon will not be unimportant, but they will be secondary. The distinct caritative character of the diaconate and the specific educational competence this requires, entails that the diaconal ministry is distinctive, a permanent and life-long commitment.

Surprisingly, the minority of the 2001 Working Party gained broad support in the round of hearing and by the majority when the General Synod passed its

recommendations in November 2001. The case rested for quite a while until it was placed on Stephanie Dietrich's desk. She should be warmly commended for her efforts and excellent work, which resulted in a report, brought to General Synod in November 2004. In this second report the minority position in the previous report is pursued further and the introduction of the diaconate into what then will become a threefold ministry, is based in the self-understanding of the Church of Norway as a "serving church". It explores how the church, following the example of Jesus, should proclaim the gospel both in deed and word, and insists that it takes both to render credibility to the Christian message in today's world. It adds a sacramental dimension by showing how the diaconal service helps bridge the Eucharistic offering of wine and bread as the blood and body of Christ given for us with the bread shared with the poor and needy. The diaconate bridges the sacred space of worship with human life in the world. The report further explores a trinitarian perspective, and shows how the caritative service in a unique manner is related to all three articles of faith. It further maintains that the Lutheran understanding of ministry may have a certain ecclesiological understanding of its reason and purpose but still is marked by a pragmatic freedom when it comes to the concrete shape and organisation of ministry.

The report met with unanimous recommendation by the Bishops' Conference. The bishops recapitulated the traditional Lutheran understanding of the ordained ministry, its necessity and tasks - but added that the pattern of this ministry may change over time in order to fulfill its purpose. Only through a constantly on-going reformation (*ecclesia*

semper reformanda) can the church remain equipped for the transmission and communication of the gospel in each place and time. In today's world there is an urgent need for a holistic and credible witness adding deed to word and there should also be openness to ecumenical needs. Theologically the diaconate should be maintained as a distinctive caritative ministry but as such be regarded as part of the ordained ministry in the Church of Norway. I find it, however, less helpful and indeed a return to previous obscurities when they speak of a "multidimensional ministry".

The General Synod followed the recommendation but not without critical voices being raised and heard. This means that in principle a decision has been reached that the diaconate as a distinctive caritative service is regarded as part of the ordained ministry in the Church of Norway, and that this one ministry is to be understood as threefold. It did not become effective because the General Synod listed several areas where it called for legal and administrative consequences to be carefully considered so that concrete recommendations are brought to General Synod for a final decision in 2007. The 2004 decision should not be reversed but some groups may continue to fight it and make the further process an occasion for reopening issues previously resolved. This should, however, not overshadow the fact that the process so far has brought the Church of Norway further than seemed to be possible only five years ago. It is all the more important that constructive ecumenical deliberations on the diaconate now are initiated within the Porvoo communion.

One ministry – three commissions

The Rt Revd Dr Ragnar Persenius

The subject is "One ministry or two?" The focus lies on ordination and the question if it is necessary to ordain a person a second time when he or she is changing office within the one ordained ministry. In order to come to an answer we have to examine the relation between the ordained ministry as one ministry and a specific calling and task within that ministry. The theme I have chosen for my introduction, which is "One ministry – three commissions", says something fundamental about this relation. In 1990, the Church of Sweden Bishops' Conference published a letter concerning the ministry of the Church with the title "Bishop, priest and deacon in the Church of Sweden". It gives an interpretation of the Ordinal, approved in 1987. Theologically, the letter from the bishops gave a foundation for the regulation of the ordained ministry in the 1999 Church Order for the disestablished Church of Sweden.

In the bishops' letter the ordained ministry is described from the perspective of the calling of the whole people of God. The Church lives in the relation between

God and world. The Church is a serving Church in which all the baptized have received the commission to serve and witness. The use of the word "commission" is important. The Church and every commissioned person within the Church are not just doing something functional. Being commissioned means first of all that the task is given by someone – there is an authorization. Secondly, this is given in order that something will be done. The persons commissioned in the Church stand and perform their authorized task within the relation between God and world. Therefore it is important to clarify that there is a close connection between the calling of the whole Church and the ordained ministry. I quote from the Bishops' letter:

"The intention is to refer to two conditions which apply to the ordained servants of the Church. First, as with all other members of the Church, they share the common call to service through baptism. Second, they have a special divine commission which requires a special induction; they are ordained into a service

in the Church which is essential for the basic mission of God's people in the world – to administer the gospel."

Later during the 1990's, the relation between the calling of the whole people of God and the ordained ministry has been elaborated with the use of the concept of "sign". What the ordained minister does is a sign of the calling of the whole Church and of each parish. The ministry of the deacon is described as "a sign of mercy" to the parish and to society.

In ecumenical dialogue the oneness of the ministry of the Church and of the ordained ministry has been strongly emphasized. But there are different elements in this ministry. It is a ministry of preaching and administering the sacraments, of oversight and unity, and of diaconal responsibility. There are different functions within the ministry, and the Church can choose to keep them together or divide them within the ministry. In the Lutheran tradition there has been a strong emphasis on the identity of the ministry as a proclamation of the gospel. This proclamation has been identified with sermons and teaching. It has to do with spoken words. Due not least to the challenges of the modern world the acts of the Church as witnessing to the gospel have become more and more important due not least to the increasing difficulties for society in caring for people in need. And in addition, we meet new forms of need in modern society. We are reminded that the gospel must be proclaimed both in word and deed. In doing so, we are developing our view on ministry in continuity with the Lutheran understanding of ministry.

In the Lutheran Reformation the preaching ministry covered the whole ministry of the Church, with the task of proclaiming and elucidating the gospel in word

and sacraments. Martin Luther did not accept that the deacon mainly served by reading the texts in the mass instead of serving the poor. The reformers, against this background and the social order of their time, found it expedient to integrate the diaconal task within the responsibility of the ministry of the priest.

After the 18th Century during which the liturgical diaconate disappeared, the Church of Sweden had a twofold ordained ministry of priest and bishop. In Sweden the diaconal dimension of the ordained ministry was included into the office of the priest. One of the vows of the ordination of priests had a caritative content until 1987 when it was inserted into the order for ordination of deacons.

The principal point is that there are different elements which must be performed within the one ministry. This is not optional. But whether the ministry is to be divided into one, two or three tasks is mainly a functional question, although from an ecumenical point of view the threefold ministry has an advantage with its historical roots.

When the Church of Sweden has developed its thinking concerning the ordained ministry the following points have been especially important:

1. It is a threefold, not a tripartite ministry. The ministry is one and the different functions are related to and partly cover one another.
2. The functions within the ministry are regarded as commissions, a terminology underlining that they are permanent, necessary and performed on the basis of an authorization by the laying on of hands under prayer of the Holy Spirit.

3. There is no theological hierarchy between the three commissions. Of course, there is a hierarchy of authority due to the fact that the bishop has the responsibility to exercise overall oversight. The Church of Sweden has resisted attempts to regard the bishop as the minister covering all commissions, or a more protestant approach saying that the priest is the minister while other commissions are to be regarded as functional aspects of the ministry of the priest. The ordained ministry and its commissions are instead interpreted from the perspective of oneness and wholeness within the ordained ministry and in relation to the ministry of all the baptized.
4. In the 1987 Ordinal there are three exactly parallel rites for ordination of deacons, priests and bishops. Some of the liturgical texts are the same, while those explaining the specific character of a commission are exchanged. The terminology is ordination, because we have only one word in Swedish. When we speak English we talk about the consecration of a bishop. But we have definitively avoided talking as the Germans do about installing a bishop (*Einführung*). There are three parallel functions of the one ordained ministry.
5. The commissions must be defined from their task within the Church and not from a qualitative perspective of what a bishop can do which nobody else can do, and of what a priest can do which nobody else can do. Then the deacon and the ordinary baptized church member will have problems with their identity. Fifteen years ago a committee suggested that the deacons should have the right to perform funeral services.

Then they too would have a task of their own! The commissions must be defined from a holistic perspective both of each commission and of the one mission.

From this principal viewpoint the Church Order of 1999 has regulated the one ordained ministry and the three commissions within this ministry. The diaconate has got a clear caritative identity, the General Synod did not accept what was called "half-priests" and therefore refused to define specific liturgical functions for the deacons. On the other hand all candidates for the diaconate are called, examined and ordained in the dioceses by the bishops in a system parallel to candidates for priesthood. And they are ordained dressed in albs and receive stoles. After ordination they distribute the sacramental gifts in the continuing service in the Cathedral. And in ordinary church life most deacons are serving liturgically together with priests and lay people in different services in the parishes.

It really was difficult to find solutions to questions of how to regulate ordinations in cases when someone leaves one commission within the ordained ministry and enters into another commission, and also what should happen when a minister loses the right to serve as bishop, priest or deacon. Will they lose not only their right to serve in a specific commission but also within the ordained ministry as a whole?

First of all, I note that we only ordain once to a specific commission within the ordained ministry. If someone has lost his or her ministerial rights and after a period of time is accepted to return to ministerial commission and office they are obliged to renew their ordination vows before the bishop. Secondly, we

must put stronger emphasis on the content of the vows since they express the interpretation of the Church of the identity of the commission entered into by ordination. The vows must differ dependent on whether the ordained ministry is one-, two- or threefold. The conclusion from my point of view is that you are ordained to a commission within the ministry defined by the vows.

I will conclude by giving you some examples of how ordinations are interpreted in the Church of Sweden. A baptized Christian member of the Church of Sweden can be elected bishop. If this happens he or she has to be ordained priest because the church regards the ministerial acts of a priest to be fundamental for the ministry of a bishop. If a bishop violates the ordination vows and it is decided that he or she has to relinquish their commission as bishop, they will lose all rights connected with the ordained ministry. The bishop cannot remain as a priest in the Church. On the other hand, if he or she after a period of time were accepted again it is possible in theory to enter into either or both of the commissions of priest and bishop. The ordination vows are decisive in that case. They have to be renewed.

The doctrinal committee of the General Synod - consisting of all the bishops and eight theological experts and members

of the Synod - has also recently made it clear that a priest cannot serve as a deacon without ordination to that commission. The same applies for a former bishop wanting to serve as a deacon. When a deacon is accepted as candidate to the priesthood, he or she has to be ordained. So the Church of Sweden has tried to make it evident that there is a threefold ministry, ordered in a non-hierarchical way with parallel commissions, which are overlapping one another in the sense that there are elements significant for one of the commissions being relevant also for the other commissions and for the whole Church and the ministry of all baptized. The commissions are expressions of three main perspectives within the one ministry.

In conclusion, a person is ordained to a commission within the one ordained ministry. The identity of the person being ordained is determined by the ordination vows in combination with the laying on of hands and prayer for the assistance of the Holy Spirit in the specific commission. The ordained priest, deacon and bishop share the calling of the one mission.

I also want to add that life-long sending and responsibility together with the vows and the ordination determines the identity of the ecclesiastical order.

One ministry or two – If ordination to one order is ordination to *the* ministry, is a second ordination to the priesthood a second ordination?

The Rt Revd Dr Michael Jackson

I begin with a true story – honestly! A rather distinguished archbishop was visited in hospital by the hospital chaplain, an experienced priest with a proper self-assurance. The archbishop opened the conversation: 'Do you know what day this is? It is the twenty-fifth anniversary of my consecration.' The response came from the chaplain: 'What matters even more, your Grace, is the anniversary of your ordination to the diaconate.' And, surely, in the total life of the Church of God, the chaplain was more pertinent than impertinent. And I also understand that the archbishop took the comment well and they both continued their conversation as friends.

Two words: **distinction** and **continuity** seem to me to be important in relation to ordination and to the question before us. There is the **distinction** of responsibili-

ty and equipping by the Holy Spirit across three orders of ministry – deacon, priest, bishop – and also the **continuity** of calling, sending and service which runs through all three. I also want to suggest that questions about ordination belong within the understanding and application of ecclesiology. The theology of ordination and ministry can quickly become specialized with a life of its own. I want us to remember that it is the calling of every baptized Christian to be and to live the four marks of the church: one, holy, catholic, apostolic. Theology of ordination and ministry needs to seek and find itself in this service of Christ and our neighbour within the church and emanating from the church, the Body of Christ, to the world. In this way we can all move towards the wider calling of the whole church to be ecumenical. This can

come about by our actively participating in the ministry of Christ expressed by the people, including the clergy, of traditions other than our own, respecting in the process both our common purpose and our differences.

The most recent exploration of the diaconate in the Porvoo Churches on the Anglican side is the Church of England Report: *For such a time as this: a renewed diaconate in the Church of England* (2001). It takes account of contemporary ecumenical insights and the pressing demands of the mission of the church in configuring the diaconate. Fully aware of the evolving developments in lay ministry, it presses home that the diaconate is an order of ministry versatile to support the mission of the church. Broadly stated, it presupposes that the transitional diaconate, the *de facto* norm, will continue as the main expression of diaconal ministry. But it also asks if diaconal ministry can be rediscovered as a distinctive permanent ministry and re-established as the fundamental understanding of the commissioning for service of all the baptized. It goes so far as to speak of 'Jesus the Deacon of God whose ministries represent Jesus the Deacon to the world.' Embedded in this statement is the essential idea of representation of Christ in the varied forms in human ministry which in the ecclesiastical tradition have been identified in terms of 'order' and 'hierarchy.'

For such a time as this presupposes a substantial ecumenical development over almost forty years. WCC Faith and Order Montreal (1963) and the subsequent Consultation on the Diaconate (1964) place firmly on the ecclesiological map the royal priesthood of the whole people of God and the combined witness of worship and service with Jesus Christ as the Deacon and the church as the di-

aconal body. This comes through in the emphasis of *Fsatat* on the liturgical, social and pastoral expressed together in the diaconate and in the *Fsatat* definition of the ordained diaconate as 'a non-presidential representative ministry of word, sacrament and pastoral care.' Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (1982) strengthened the understanding of the link between ordained ministry and its responsibility in the mission of the church. The Anglican-Lutheran Dialogue brought to the fore the apostolicity of the church, thereby opening up the possibility of mature ecclesiological discussion of the ecclesiology of 'sent-ness.' The *Hanover Report* (1996) puts on the table the witness, worship, service (*diakonia, leitourgia, martyria*) of lay people as vital in any modern ecclesiology.

Within this renewed ecclesiology lies what I might call an 'applied Christology.' To speak of ministry in the Anglican tradition as representational is not to invent or re-invent some idea of an ecclesiastical caste system but rather to grapple with the Augustinian expression of the church as *totus Christus*, head and body together, as expounded frequently in *Enarrationes in psalmos*. The *totus Christus* argument imposes on this representative definition a relational definition. The members of the Body express in what we call ministry the continuing purpose of the Head. But, by the same token, ordination cannot abstract anyone from the laity. Hence Augustine's early medieval sound-bite: *For you I am a bishop, with you I am a sinner*.

Ecumenically such ecclesiology not only derives from Christology. It also points to an eschatology whereby the church, with all its imperfections, is a foretaste of the fulfilment of God's good purposes for creation. Inversely, therefore, all ministry, lay and ordained, embodies the

continuing work of the Risen Christ in the world and repeatedly challenges the church as Christ's body to servant leadership in developing and fulfilling its baptismal responsibility. If Christ is in a real sense the Kingdom of God in his own person, the church, he is both the embodiment of the Kingdom and the archetypal baptized one as well as being the archetypal minister of the Kingdom, whether bishop, priest or deacon.

Fsatat makes the point forcefully that there is a *diakonia* proper to the order of deacons and also a *diakonia* proper to other orders of ministry. While fully accepting the spirit in which this distinction is offered, I nonetheless find myself almost going full circle with this argument. As *Fsatat* itself says (page 46): 'The touchstone of a renewed diaconate is whether it builds up the diverse gifts and callings of the members of the Body of Christ.' But my problem remains: Is this definition not already applicable to all three orders of ministry? The argument for a more permanent diaconate, therefore, seems to be a proper stubborn determination to prevent the church from losing the diaconal substratum to all its overt ministerial response to Christ. This is well voiced in a report entitled *The Liturgical Ministry of Deacons. A Discussion Document* (1987): 'The order of deacons exists to focus the church's diaconal vocation, which is to embody Christ's serving ministry in word and deed.' This has become all the more urgent as the apprenticeship model has in effect 'ultra-clericalized' *diakonia* thereby weakening the aspect of the diaconate which puts mission and ministry together out in the world. The deacon may indeed be of an order of ministry different from that of the priest, but in the ministry exercised is the assistant both of the whole assembly and of the president of the Eucharist. The plea is well made.

From the beginning of its usage, the term: priest has been controversial in the Anglican tradition. Much of the background to the antagonism lies in excessive clericalization of the ordained ministry together with what to the Reformers seemed erroneous ideas of Eucharistic sacrifice in Medieval times. However, Anglican formularies from the beginning use the term: priest. The argument continues, with much being made of the absence of the term: priest from the New Testament to describe any Christian ministry. In contemporary Anglican understanding, priesthood – like diaconate – is Christological and ecclesiological as well as being ministerial. As mediator, Christ in his own person enables us to draw near to God in and through himself by our making a definitive response to him. The priesthood of the whole church is founded on Christ's priesthood. Through baptism, members are incorporated into the total Christ and the Body shares the life of the head. The priesthood of the church affirms the presence of the Lord by whom the *laos*, the whole people of God, has access to God the Father. A text such as Romans 12.1 clearly enunciates the relationship, through union with Christ, of members of the Body to the Father and their being enabled by grace to make an offering which is their own through Christ's self-offering.

In such a context, the proper calling and work of the priest within the variety of ministries of the priestly people of God is not to offer a bigger or better version of priesthood but, as The Priesthood of the Ordained Ministry BMU (pages 98 and 99) puts it: 'an appointed means through which Christ makes his priesthood present and effective to his people.' From this follows what we might call the ministerial functions of the ordained priest, including the bishop. The

term priest, therefore, takes its deepest meaning from the call of God to help the whole people to realize their priestly character in making present through ecclesially authorized, divinely entrusted, ministry the fruits of Christ's priesthood and once-for all sacrifice. The double work of Eucharist and reconciliation to the sacrifice of Christ, along with the challenges and fulfilments which are part of that, is priestly work because through it the total *laos* is regularly connected afresh with the saving work of Christ.

Again I find myself facing the question: Why use the word: priest? The answer lies in something which we Anglicans are asked regularly to do: to set aside our prejudices and to listen to the tradition in reaching our decisions. The priesthood of the ordained ministry belongs to the realm of what is passing away. In terms of *Revelation*, where there is no temple, there is no priesthood. Within Christian understanding, that is because Christ then for the redeemed will be uninterruptedly accessible as himself being the All-in-all. In going back into the language of priesthood to explain and expand a particular work of the earthly church, the Fathers took something which modern Christianity (Biblically now so heavily dependent on the New Testament alone, and increasingly within the New Testament on the Epistles) is prone to lose, namely the language of the Old Covenant as foreshadowing the sacrifice and priesthood of Christ while the benefits of Christ's sacrifice and priesthood were made tangible in the life of the church through Eucharist. And the sacrifice (see Cyprian Letters 63.14) is the Lord's Passion.

In 314 A.D. the Council of Arles prohibited deacons from Eucharistic presidency on the basis that orthodox communities held that presidency was for those commissioned for the task and ordained

to the presbyterate. Behind this lies the understanding that Christ entrusted to the church what might be called sacramental powers. The continuing of Christ's commission is expressed through successors to the apostles, but like the priesthood itself, the commission is Christ's commission.

The conclusion of *The Priesthood of the Ordained Ministry* is useful: accepting that language of ministerial priesthood is not in itself found in the New Testament, it concludes that the application of this language to the activity outlined in this particular ministry is not invalidated by a misuse. It is used to articulate and safeguard the tradition which the church has received from the church of the apostles.

Finally: what actually 'happens' when someone is ordained either to the diaconate or the presbyterate by God? The Church of Ireland revised its liturgy in 2004 and a number of appropriately traditional features are expressed as normative. See accompanying excerpted from the Ordination of Deacons and the Ordination of Priests.

The maintenance of 'the historic threefold ministry of bishops, priests (also called presbyters), and deacons,' twice with the significant addition 'which this church has received.'

The caritative and the Christological come through clearly in the exposition of the ordained diaconate as also the responsibility for the ministerial diaconate of all the *laos*. (page 556)

The emphasis on the theology of diaconate and priesthood within the context of the universal ministry of the church is also clear to see:

(page 558) For deacons: there is a clear emphasis on servanthood: 'He came to serve and not to be served; and taught us that he who would be great among us must be the servant of all.' humility: 'He humbled himself for our sake, and in obedience accepted death, even death on a cross.'

Within both there is abasement and exaltation of the Son who was sent.

All of this is set within the following context: 'to share this ministry entrusted to your Church;'

As well as what has already been expressed, Christology comes through in the phrase: 'that they may continue strong and steadfast in Christ.'

(page 568 foll.) For priests:

Page 569 'Give to these your servants grace and power to fulfil the ministry to which they are called, to proclaim the gospel of your salvation; to minister the sacraments of the new covenant; to watch over and care for your people; to pronounce absolution; and to bless them in your name.'

Page 570 'Set them among your people to proclaim boldly the word of salvation, and to share in Christ's work of reconciliation. Together with them may they offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable in your sight, and celebrate the sacraments of the new covenant.'

There is a strong continuity with the tradition and also with the developing exploration of definitive expression to the mind of Christ.

Conclusion

My opening suggestion was that we keep alive two guiding principles: **distinction** and **continuity**. I have used this to stress the essential relationship between ordained and non-ordained ministry within the total *diakonia* of the church as the Body of Christ. However, pragmatically, within my own Church of Ireland at least, the priority of a ministry of incumbency over any other expression of ordained ministry is the norm. This will continue to erode any appetite for a sustained diaconate which (as for too long in relation to the Anglican diaconate) is defined by what it cannot do or be – in this case be an incumbent.

There is an implicit progression built into the three orders whether we like it or not. The prospect of the ordination of women in the Church of Ireland created in the 1990's a short-lived discussion of permanent diaconate. The overwhelming vote of General Synod for women's ordination to all three orders of ministry removed, in effect, the desire to continue the discussion. The progressive route has been built into the transcending of gender distinction, influenced significantly by BEM, but it also left us in an interesting and exciting position vis-à-vis entering the Porvoo Agreement.

Personally, my hope is that we might make something significant of the curacy period which is in effect an apprenticeship for the holding of wider ministerial responsibility in the church for the future. In order to underwrite the diaconal character of ordained ministry in all three orders for the lifetime of the person ordained and in order to recognize the priesthood of all believers within the *laos*, I should like to see everyone who is ordained remembering actively the continuity between who they are 'within

the *laos*' and who they are 'in their holy orders.' My further suggestion is for a highly structured apprenticeship in two parts. In the first diaconal year, the diaconal basis of all ministry is explored and expressed; a further year of priestly ministry growing from that. In the second phase there would be a conventional curacy bringing to the fore the facilitatory aspect of the ordained ministry by the priest, within the collaborative ministry of the church for the world. This would accentuate mission as the life-blood of ministry. The first would not in any sense rule out a longer diaconal period if such were appropriate.

My own hope would be that diaconal ministry might be seen as the point of connection in all ministry: laity-to-clergy; church-to-world; mission-to-liturgy; deacon-to-priest-to-bishop. My further hope would be that it express ecclesio-logically the service of Jesus Christ in his Body, the church to the world of God's creation – wherever that might lead us.

What theological questions underlie the interchangeability of diaconal ministry?

The Revd Dr Stephanie Dietrich

During this consultation, we have been discussing our understanding of diaconal ministry (DM) in several areas. Firstly, we have examined the position of DM within our churches' ministerial structures, and whether and why the DM should be understood as a part of the ordained ministry. Secondly, we have had a close look at the content of DM, the understanding of it as a "go-between-ministry", and its caritative and liturgical functions. Thirdly, we have been discussing the different formation and education for DM within our churches, which mirrors the broad multiplicity in the understanding of DM within our churches. With other words, we have been discussing both the ordination, occupation and education of diaconal ministers within our churches and traditions. On this background, recognizing both the convergences and differences in our understanding of DM, I was asked to comment on what theological questions underlie the interchangeability of diaconal ministry.

Development within the Lutheran tradition- coming closer to the possibility of interchangeability?

The Diaconate and diaconal ministry have taken highly diverse forms in the Lutheran and Anglican Communions, both between the two traditions, and partly also within each tradition. The question is how we can tackle these huge differences, and whether there is a path leading forward towards a common understanding of the diaconate. Such a common understanding would be the condition for full interchangeability of ministry.

The other question to be posed is, whether it should be a goal to have such a common and unified understanding of the diaconate.

In examining the history of DM, we can see that the openness of DM to adapt to the concrete needs in church and society has been one of its characteristics.

The understanding of DM has been changing throughout history, and due to my opinion, there is not only "one and right understanding" of DM, but a broad variety which mirrors the needs and challenges found in the Church and churches during history.¹ The ministry of the deacons has conformed to the needs of the time, and has therefore not been clearly defined, neither in relation to tasks or their place within the church's structures. Deacons were first and foremost helpers and intermediaries. Maybe it is precisely this fact, the openness of diaconal ministry, which can contribute to finding a right and important place for it in the church's structure today.

The global development in the understanding of diaconal ministry is of great interest, showing that the results from BEM, bilateral dialogues on global, regional and national levels and close relations to other church families through agreements like the *Porvoo Agreement* to a large extent contribute and influence the process. In this context, the Anglican tradition has held up the model of an ordained diaconate for all churches shaped by the Reformation era.

In a Lutheran context, the underlining of the oneness of the ordained ministry, the one *ministerium ecclesiasticum*, is one of the core aspects. Any theological arguments which lead to a hierarchical understanding, especially a hierarchy between deacons and pastors, is not seen as acceptable. The ecumenical exchange

with churches like the Porvoo churches within the Anglican communion, help us to see that integrating diaconal ministry within the one ordained ministry might be the right way to go, both historically and theologically. Still, this does not imply the acceptance of the diaconate as a *transitional ministry*.

In the Lutheran tradition, diaconal ministry is usually understood as a permanent, distinct ministry, with a focus on social work. These two aspects, diaconal ministry as a *non-transitional ministry*, which has a clear focus on social work (caritative work), taking care of those who struggle in their lives in many ways, the poor and oppressed, and acting as the church's prophetic voice against injustice in the world, are duly unmovable.

This understanding of DM is not primarily a question of the understanding of ministry and ordination, but the main focus is on the ecclesiological reflection of diaconal work as a necessary part of the church's ministry to the world, communicating the Gospel in different ways.

In a Norwegian context, our close relations within the Porvoo communion and the theological dialogue on the understanding of ministry have helped us on our way to develop our own understanding of diaconal ministry. Still, we have not made a final decision whether it is not only theologically right, but also useful to integrate the diaconal ministry in our ordained ministerial structures.

¹ Due to my opinion, linguistic studies of the understanding of "diakonos" in Early Church history are an important contribution to the understanding and development of DM throughout history, but they do not give us a final answer how DM necessarily should be defined in our churches today.

In Lutheran churches all over the world, deacons are either commissioned, consecrated or ordained, sometimes episcopally, sometimes not. It might be right to say that more and more churches, following the proposals from BEM and other ecumenical dialogues on the understanding of DM, move towards an integration of DM into the structures of ordained ministry, still emphasising that DM in our tradition has a special caritative identity which should be upheld.

In November 2005, the LWF arranged a global consultation on the diaconate. One of the conclusions of that consultation was, that diaconal ministry should be a part of the ordained ministry in our churches.

"We believe that ordaining diaconal ministers would reflect that the diaconal ministry is an integral part of the one ecclesial ministry. Through the act of ordination the church recognizes the ministry of the deacon and prays to God for the gift of the Holy Spirit."²

Another conclusion of that consultation was also that diaconal ministers should become more integrated into the liturgical life of our churches, in order to make visible the interrelatedness of the sharing of bread and wine at the Lord's table and the Sharing of Bread and Wine with all those in need. This development within the Lutheran churches brings us truly closer to the interchangeability of DM with Anglican churches.

Interchangeability- a useless term concerning the diaconate?

Realistic view on the interchangeability of diaconal ministry between Porvoo churches In the relation between the Anglican and the Lutheran tradition, and in the ecumenical studyprocesses through several decades, there has been a huge emphasis on questions of ecclesiology, especially on the understanding of ordained ministry. In the *Porvoo Declaration*, the acknowledgement of one another's ordained ministries is one of the main points, placed right after the acknowledgement that all our churches share in the confession of the apostolic faith.

"(iv) we acknowledge that one another's ordained ministries are given by God as instruments of his grace and as possessing not only the inward call of the Spirit, but also Christ's commission through his body, the Church;"

This acknowledgement is a general acknowledgement at that stage. It does not differentiate between diaconal ministry, pastoral ministry and episcopal ministry.

Further, the *Porvoo Declaration* says:

"We commit ourselves:

(v): to welcome persons episcopally ordained in any of our churches to the office of bishop, priest or deacon to serve, by invitation and in accordance with any regulations which may from time to time be in force, in that ministry in the receiving church without re-ordination;

(vii): to work towards a common understanding of diaconal ministry;"

The acknowledgement expressed in the *Porvoo Declaration* does therefore not necessarily imply interchangeability of diaconal ministry. The commitment itself, signed by all the Porvoo signatory churches, lays a huge emphasis on the mutual recognition of episcopally ordained ministers and on the possibility to serve in that ministry in one of the other signatory churches.

Still, since the understanding of diaconal ministry differs so much in our churches, until now it has not been a possible to facilitate a real exchange of diaconal ministers between our churches. Both the understanding of diaconal ministry, of their consecration or ordination, and the field of work, differ so much that it is not clear on which basis such an exchange as an interchange of ordained ministers could be meaningful at all. Until we have reached a more common understanding of DM, full interchangeability of diaconal ministers is both impossible and the attempt to have a real interchange of ministers in the sense of working as diaconal ministers in each others churches as such would only blur our eyes for the big divergences in our understanding of DM. Due to my opinion, it would also be theologically unclear to ordain Lutheran theologians to

an Anglican transitional diaconate before their ordination to the priesthood as long as our understanding of DM differs so much.

Nevertheless, our churches need to do much more work on the understanding of DM together, and we need an exchange of diaconal ministers in order to come closer to interchangeability of diaconal ministers in its full sense. Visiting each other, working together and reflecting together on the diaconal identity of our churches might bring us closer to full interchangeability of DM in the future. Meanwhile, we should not try to neglect the huge differences which still exist, but at the same time learn from each other through our common life within the Porvoo Communion, "Together in Mission and Ministry".

Reflection on interchangeability and its importance for communion

The goal for our common work is coming closer to full communion. Churches having full communion also have the possibility of interchangeability of ministry in all its dimensions. From a Lutheran side, it would be important to emphasize that the interchangeability of ministry in itself is not a goal for our communion, but it is a sign and a logical consequence of it.

The foundation for our churches' communion is the acknowledgement of one another's churches as churches belonging to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ. Based on the Lutheran Confessions, CA VII, the second acknowledgement of the Porvoo Declaration is the core of our communion. All the other acknowledgements and commitments have to be derived from the (ii), saying: "We acknowledge

² Final Report from LWF Global Consultation on Diaconate, Sao Leopoldo, Brasil, Nov. 2005. Cf. <http://www.lutheranworld.org/News/LWI/EN/1794.EN.html>

that in all our churches the Word of God is authentically preached, and the sacraments of baptism and the eucharist are duly administered."

This foundation of the Church, the core of its existence and of the communion between us, is closely connected to the recognition of each other's ministries, taking care of the Proclamation of the Gospel and the Administration of the Sacraments. With other words: Interchangeability of ministry in itself is not a step towards communion, but an important sign of the communion we have reached.

At this point, the *Porvoo Agreement* shows that though we are a communion of churches, being in communion according to the core points of the Lutheran confessions, there are still several areas left that we have to work on. The lack of full interchangeability is in this way a sign that there are still many areas to work on.

The lack of interchangeability does not only affect diaconal ministers, but it occurs to several areas, such as the lack of interchangeability concerning pastors ordained by woman bishops in our churches.

The communion we already have achieved, the steps we have taken through the *Porvoo Agreement*, especially on the recognition of Episcopal ministry in our churches, oblige us to continue in our work to come even closer and to achieve interchangeability in all areas of ordained ministry. Interchangeability of ministry in itself is not constitutive, but it is a sign of our communion. Lack of full interchangeability on the other hand is a sign that our communion still is not a full communion.

Offering mutual hospitality and learning from each other

Maybe the most important perspective concerning the possibility of full interchangeability of ministry does not lie in a mutual canonical recognition, but in the obligation to work for closer communion through a deeper knowledge of one another, through mutual support and encouragement, and through sharing of common life and experiences.

The various forms of diaconal ministry are certainly a challenge concerning the possibility for full interchangeability of ministry. At the same time, this variety also belongs to the nature of the diaconate, reflecting the flexibility and spontaneity which is characteristic for diaconal ministry throughout church history. It challenges our churches to reflect critically on our own understanding of the diaconate, and to develop new forms of diaconal ministry, as needs and the moment require. The flexible nature of the diaconate in itself, its ability to change its identity in response to specific needs in our societies and churches, contribute to this openness of diaconal ministry. At the same time, as churches living together in a communion, we are obliged to challenge each other concerning our understanding of the diaconate and to work for a common understanding of the diaconate. In this way, our common work on the understanding of the diaconate, and the renewal of diaconal ministry within our churches, gives us a further opportunity for common mission.

Several ecumenical reports and agreements during the last years have focused on this aspect of the diaconate. The *Hannover Report* of the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission is named *The Diaconate as Ecumenical Opportunity*. This report is clear on the prob-

lems which lie on the different understanding of the diaconate in our traditions, especially the question of an ordained diaconate. At the same time it describes the "renewal of the diaconate as an opportunity for unity and joint mission".

The Agreement between the ELCA and the Episcopal Churches is called *Called to common mission*. Also in this report, there are pointed out clear differences between the traditions concerning the understanding of the diaconate. At the same time, the report points out that there are essential common concerns concerning DM in both traditions. "Some functions of ordained deacons in The Episcopal Church and consecrated diaconal ministers and deaconesses in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America can be shared insofar as they are called to be agents of the church in meeting needs, hopes, and concerns within church and society."

Let me conclude that the first and most important step on the way towards a common understanding must be to offer mutual hospitality to each other, to visit each other, to participate in the life of the other tradition and to learn from each other.

Therefore, one of the main steps towards a common understanding of the diaconate which, in the end, could make full interchangeability possible, is, in addition to all the theological work which has to be done, to visit each other in a spirit of openmindedness, and to offer mutual hospitality in the life of our churches, congregational life, and the work of our deacons.

Tässä numerossa

Euroopan kirkkojen konferenssi on käynnistänyt neuvottelujen sarjan, jossa EKK:n ortodoksiset jäsenkirkot ja Porvoon julistuksen luterilaiset ja anglikaaniset kirkot keskustelevat. Porvoon kirkkojen kannalta kyseessä on yhteistyö, jossa keskinäisessä kommuuniossa olevat eri tunnustuskuntien kirkot esiintyvät teologisesti yhtenä neuvottelukumppanina. Ensimmäinen neuvottelu käytiin Järvenpäässä joulukuussa 2005.

Porvoon kirkkojen tulee kuitenkin selvittää myös eräitä keskinäisiä avoimia kysymyksiä. Allekirjoittamassaan julistuksessa ne ovat sitoutuneet työskentelemään kohti yhteistä näkemystä diakonian virasta. Lontoossa järjestettiin tammikuussa 2006 neuvottelu, jossa kartoitettiin yhteisiä selvitystä vaativia kysymyksiä ennen kuin diakonian virkojen vaihdettavuus on käytännössä mahdollista Porvoon yhteisössä. Sekä luterilaisia että anglikaaneja kohtaa haaste kehittää diakonaattia lähtötyksen ja palvelun välineenä.

RESEPTIO julkaisee näiden kahden neuvottelun asiakirjat englanninkielisinä.

In this volume

The Conference of European Churches has initiated a series of consultations between the Orthodox churches and the Lutheran and Anglican signatory churches to the Porvoo Declaration. On the Porvoo side, churches of different confession have entered the dialogue as theologically one partner on the basis of the communion they share.

The Porvoo Churches nevertheless need to clarify certain open questions among themselves, too. The Declaration they have signed commits them to work towards a common understanding of diaconal ministry. A consultation was arranged in London in January 2006 to identify the areas for joint study before the actual interchange of diaconal ministries will become possible in the Porvoo Communion. The Lutherans as well as the Anglicans are challenged by the common need to develop the diaconate as a means for mission and ministry.

The reports from the two consultations are published in this special English language issue of RESEPTIO, the journal of the Department for International Relations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland.