

Where's The Threefold Ministry In CCM?

CCM commits The Episcopal Church and the ELCA to a single common pattern of ministry. The Episcopal Church in Convention in July 2000 stated openly and clearly that this single common pattern is the threefold pattern:

"...**having agreed** [with the ELCA] that the threefold ministry of Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons in historic succession will be the **future pattern** of the one ordained ministry **shared corporately...**" (*Resolution A041*, emphasis added)

Thus, the explicit premise upon which The Episcopal Church has adopted CCM is that the ELCA has agreed to adopt the threefold ministry.

- Q1.** Where does CCM say that both churches must have a single common pattern of ministry?
- A1.** In CCM ¶¶8, 14, 16, and 24. For example, ¶8: "[W]e agree that the one ordained ministry will be shared between the two churches in **a common pattern...**"
- Q2.** Isn't the historic episcopate just a ceremony? As Bishop Anderson said, "CCM means a new way of installing our bishops." (The Lutheran, May 1999, p.41). Isn't this ceremony all that is required?
- A2.** The ceremony is only the beginning. CCM's goal is not reached until both churches have "...a common and **fully interchangeable ministry** of bishops in full communion.... For The Episcopal Church, full communion ... will not be fully realized until both churches [have] ... a shared ministry of bishops in the historic episcopate" (¶14).
- Q3.** O.K., so CCM ¶14 says Lutherans and Episcopalians must have "fully interchangeable ... bishops in the historic episcopate." But it says nothing about priests and deacons! Where's the threefold pattern of bishop, priest, and deacon?
- A3.** For Episcopalians the office of "bishop in the historic episcopate" **includes** the offices of priest and deacon. As the Episcopal bishops clarify in their April 3, 2000, "Mind of the House" Resolution on CCM: "The order of the historic episcopate properly **includes within itself** all three of these orders" (emphasis added). The Episcopal Convention expressly endorsed their bishops' resolution as an official Convention resolution (B046) in order to instruct their members of the Joint Commission on the proper interpretation of CCM.
- Q4.** But does CCM itself say the historic episcopate includes all three orders?
- A4.** Yes it does in CCM ¶16: "To enable the full communion that is coming into being by means of this Concordat, The Episcopal Church pledges to continue the process for enacting a temporary suspension, in this case only, of the seventeenth-century restriction that 'no persons are allowed to exercise the offices of **bishop, priest, deacon** in this Church unless they are so ordained ... by bishops ... duly qualified to confer **Holy Orders**.'... The purpose of temporarily suspending this restriction ... is precisely in order to secure the **future implementation of the ordinals**' same principle in the sharing of ordained ministries."

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- Q5.** But CCM ¶16 only refers to what happens **within** The Episcopal Church, doesn't it?
- A5.** No. The Episcopal ordinals are only suspended **"temporarily"** (¶16) in order to embrace the ELCA under them, that is, to give the ELCA time to conform to them gradually and **"fully"**(¶14). At the end of the process the ordinals are reimposed **permanently** on the one ministry shared between the two churches ("in the **sharing of ordained ministries"** ¶16).
- Q6.** Doesn't CCM say that "ordained deacons" are **not** required for full communion?
- A6.** No. It merely says that ordained deacons are not required for "this Concordat" (¶19). "This Concordat" is the bridge to the destination of "full communion." The ELCA doesn't have to ordain deacons while on "the bridge," but it cannot reach the destination of "full communion" until it ordains deacons. Episcopalians uniformly **require** ordained deacons for "full communion."
- Q7.** But the ELCA amended CCM ¶13 to say it has been "correctly interpreted" by the ELCA bishops' Tucson Resolution which says that in CCM "there is **no requirement** the ELCA must **eventually** adopt the threefold order of ministry" (A1). Doesn't this mean that the bishops' Resolution has real authority because both churches adopted CCM with this claim in it?
- A7.** No. For three reasons:
1. ELCA Secretary Lowell Almen told Episcopal officials that the Episcopal Convention did not need to vote on the Tucson Resolution because the ELCA Assembly **never voted** on it. If it was **not** voted on, it **cannot be binding** even within the ELCA.
 2. CCM ¶13 allows for flexibility on **interpretations** of the historic episcopate, but there is **no flexibility in the doing** of the historic episcopate. The ELCA is required to do it, that is, gradually adopt all three orders of the "historic episcopate" in order to achieve the "fully interchangeable" (¶14) structures that are required for "full communion" (¶16).
 3. The Episcopal Church adopted CCM with this major qualification: "The Episcopal Church agrees that each church has the right to interpret the same document according to its own standards, as the ELCA has already done for itself and referenced in CCM para. 3, **so long as neither church contradicts the text or spirit of the document**" (Episcopal Convention Resolution B046). This means that those parts of the Tucson Resolution which contradict the text of CCM are not recognized by the Episcopal Church as authoritative.
- Q8.** How can you sort out who is telling you the **truth about CCM** when ELCA leaders say that the ELCA is not changing, but CCM and Episcopalians seem to say we are.
- A8.** Here's an easy test: Look at CCM ¶25, which lists the **five churches** and/or communions with whom The Episcopal Church has "full communion." They all, without exception, have the threefold hierarchy of bishop, priest, and deacon. CCM is no exception to this invariable Episcopal standard for "full communion."

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