

for the relationship of full communion. Such freedom is evidenced by its communion with such non-episcopal churches as the Reformed churches of A *Formula of Agreement* and most churches within the Lutheran World Federation.

14. The two churches will acknowledge immediately the full authenticity of each other's ordained ministries (bishops, priests, and deacons in The Episcopal Church and pastors in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America). The creation of a common and fully interchangeable ministry of bishops in full communion will occur with the incorporation of all active bishops in the historic episcopal succession and the continuing process of collegial consultation in matters of Christian faith and life. For both churches, the relationship of full communion begins when both churches adopt this Concordat. For the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the characteristics of the goal of full communion—defined in its 1991 policy statement, “Ecumenism: The Vision of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America”—will be realized at this time. For The Episcopal Church, full communion, although begun at the same time, will not be fully realized until both churches determine that in the context of a common life and mission there is a shared ministry of bishops in the historic episcopate. For both churches, life in full communion entails more than legislative decisions and shared ministries. The people of both churches have to receive and share this relationship as they grow together in full communion.

## **B. Actions of The Episcopal Church**

15. The Episcopal Church by this Concordat recognizes the ministers ordained in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its predecessor bodies as fully authentic. The Episcopal Church acknowledges that the pastors and bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America minister as pastors/priests within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and that the bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are pastors/priests exercising a ministry of oversight (*episkope*) within its synods. Further, The Episcopal Church agrees that all bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America who are chosen after both churches pass this Concordat and installed within the ministry of the historic episcopate will be understood by The Episcopal Church as having been ordained into this ministry (see paragraph 18 below).

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, or deacon in this Church unless they are so ordained, or have already received such ordination with the laying-on-of-hands by bishops who are themselves duly qualified to confer Holy Orders” (“Preface to the Ordination Rites,” *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 510). The purpose of this action, to declare this restriction inapplicable to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, will be to permit the full interchangeability and reciprocity of all its pastors as priests or presbyters within The Episcopal Church, without any further ordination or re-ordination or supplemental ordination

whatsoever, subject always to canonically or constitutionally approved invitation. The purpose of temporarily suspending this restriction, which has been a constant requirement in Anglican polity since the Ordinal of 1662, is precisely in order to secure the future implementation of the ordinals’ same principle in the sharing of ordained ministries. It is for this reason that The Episcopal Church can feel confident in taking this unprecedented step with regard to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

17. The Episcopal Church acknowledges and seeks to receive the gifts of the Lutheran tradition which has consistently emphasized the primacy of the Word. The Episcopal Church therefore endorses the Lutheran affirmation that the historic catholic episcopate under the Word of God must always serve the gospel, and that the ultimate authority under which bishops preach and teach is the gospel itself (see *Augsburg Confession* 28. 21-23). In testimony and implementation thereof, The Episcopal Church agrees to establish and welcome, either by itself or jointly with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, structures for collegial and periodic review of the ministry exercised by bishops with a view to evaluation, adaptation, improvement, and continual reform in the service of the gospel.

## **C. Actions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

18. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America agrees that all its bishops chosen after both churches pass this Concordat will be installed for pastoral service of the gospel with this church's intention to enter the ministry of the historic episcopate. They will be understood by The Episcopal Church as having been ordained into this ministry, even though tenure in office of the Presiding Bishop and synodical bishops may be terminated by retirement, resignation, disciplinary action, or conclusion of term. Any subsequent installation of a bishop so installed includes a prayer for the gift of the Holy Spirit without the laying-on-of-hands. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America further agrees to revise its rite for the “Installation of a Bishop” to reflect this understanding. A distinction between episcopal and pastoral ministries within the one office of Word and Sacrament is neither commanded nor forbidden by divine law (see *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* 14.1 and the *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope* 63). By thus freely accepting the historic episcopate, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America does not thereby affirm that it is necessary for the unity of the church (*Augsburg Confession* 7.3).

19. In order to receive the historic episcopate, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America pledges that, following the adoption of this Concordat and in keeping with the collegiality and continuity of ordained ministry attested as early as Canon 4 of the First Ecumenical Council (Nicaea I, A.D. 325), at least three bishops already sharing in the sign of the episcopal succession will be invited to participate in the installation of its next Presiding Bishop through prayer for the gift of the Holy Spirit