

## **Resolution #1 Recall Called to Common Mission**

**WHEREAS**, since the signing and implementation of *Called to Common Mission* (CCM) the membership of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has dropped from approximately 5.2 million to approximately 4.9 million, which clearly demonstrates that CCM has not stopped the numerical decline of the ELCA, and

**WHEREAS**, since the signing and implementation of *Called to Common Mission* the ELCA has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars financing the travel of bishops to ordinations and on other related programs, funds that could be better utilized for other worthy causes. and

**WHEREAS**, since the signing and implementation of *Called to Common Mission* the agreement has not aided the unity of the ELCA but has rather caused some congregations to leave the ELCA and others to cut their “mission support,” and

**WHEREAS**, The Episcopal Church USA (ECUSA) has also seen its membership decline since the adoption of CCM, and as the ECUSA currently, due to other issues, has a questionable status within the worldwide Anglican communion, and

**WHEREAS**, CCM requires that (a) all bishops be part of the “Historic Episcopate” and (b) all pastors be ordained by bishops, and since many Lutherans believe that to make such matters of ceremony into requirements is contrary to the freedom granted in article 7 of the Augsburg Confession, which states that it is not necessary that traditions, rites, or ceremonies instituted by humans be alike everywhere; therefore, be it

**RESOLVED**, that the Southwestern Washington Synod Assembly submit the following memorial for consideration by the 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly that the 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly declare ELCA participation in *Called to Common Mission* will cease as of December 31, 2009; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that the 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly will make all attendant and necessary amendments to the ELCA Constitution, including amendments that will allow candidates freely to choose to be ordained by a pastor who is not a bishop and amendments that will allow synod bishops to be installed by pastors who are not bishops.

Submitted by Rev. R. William Johnson

## **Explanatory Notes in support of “Called to Common Mission” Resolution**

### **Why bring this up now?**

When ELCA leaders were advocating for *Called to Common Mission* (CCM), one of their important arguments was that the agreement would help the ELCA in its mission. Every effective organization engages in evaluation of its initiatives. We consider it relevant to evaluate the effectiveness and cost of CCM. Clearly, CCM has failed to stem the decline of the ELCA. Instead it has alienated many ELCA members and distracted many leaders from the key task of preaching the gospel and starting new congregations. It’s time to talk about the again and put an effective mission strategy in place.

### **What is *Called to Common Mission*?**

*Called to Common Mission* (CCM) is the full-communion agreement with the Episcopal Church USA. The ELCA voted in 1999 to enter this agreement. CCM requires all ELCA pastors be ordained by a bishop. It also requires that as new ELCA bishops are elected, they be installed into the so-called “Historic Episcopate.”

### **My synod has entered into some cooperative ministry agreements with the Episcopalians. Will repealing (suspending) CCM damage these?**

Most likely not. ELCA congregations and synods were cooperating with ECUSA congregations and dioceses for years before CCM was implemented. We assume that cooperation will continue on the local and regional level, but without the burdensome ritual requirements of CCM. The resolution allows time to preserve these arrangements.

### **My pastor is an Episcopalian. Will he/she be able to continue serving our congregation?**

We anticipate few problems in this regard. As stated above, ELCA and ECUSA congregations were cooperating before CCM and should be able to continue cooperating after CCM. The resolution allows time to preserve this possibility.

### **Will this resolution limit my ability to receive communion at an ECUSA church?**

ELCA members were communing at ECUSA churches long before CCM. The Episcopal Church is quite clear that any baptized person, irrespective of denomination, may receive communion at an Episcopal Church.

(See [http://www.episcopalchurch.org/17041\\_17059\\_ENG/HTM.htm](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/17041_17059_ENG/HTM.htm))

### **Can someone other than a bishop ordain?**

The Confessional Writings of the Lutheran Church make clear that a pastor can ordain. (See *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope*.) In this country ordinations were done by other pastors for decades before the requirement was implemented that they be done by a bishop. Currently, candidates can be ordained by someone other than a bishop only if they specifically request this AND the bishop grants permission. (Often the “exception” process is long and onerous for the candidate.)

### **How much as CCM cost the ELCA?**

In terms of money, we do not have an exact figure. As CCM requires a bishop to preside over ordinations, it is relevant to look at the bishop’s travel expenses for this. We estimate that the agreement has cost the ELCA over \$400,000 in travel and other expenses since implementation.

[Here’s how we arrived at that estimate: using figures from ELCA yearbooks, we estimate that bishops have presided over an average of 260 ordinations in every 12-month period since September 2001.  $5 \times 260 = 1,300$ . Further, we estimate bishops’ travel expenses for each ordination at an average of \$300.

Obviously, travel expenses to some ordinations are very minimal—the bishop may only have to drive across town. Travel to some ordinations costs much more—in those cases, the bishop will fly to a distant site, incurring hotel and food expenses as well as airfare.  $1,300 \times \$300 = \$390,000$ .]

In addition, the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee has met 10 times since the passage of CCM. We have no concrete figures on the cost of this but estimate them as follows: An average of six ELCA attendees at each meeting (meetings last 2-3 days); estimated cost for airfare/housing/meals for each person: \$800.  $10 \times 6 \times \$800 = \$48,000$ .  $\$390,000 + \$48,000 + \$40,000 = \$478,000$ .

If ELCA leaders think these estimates are too high or too low, we invite them to provide exact figures.