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A Ministry Miscellany

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Foreword

The subject of "ministry" in its non-ordained and ordained forms has preoccupied both the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for the past several years. The last two issues of *Consensus* devoted articles to the matter and it has been on the agenda of the past two national conventions of the church.

The doctrine of ministry, its ordering and its practice will remain subjects of high interest in the church for a good while. Discussion of the meaning of ordination of the diaconate and the church's understanding of episcopacy continue to reflect the historic ambiguities which have characterized Lutheran understandings of these subjects. This issue of *Consensus* contains a collection of articles which while not directly addressing the issues as discussed in recent years does reflect how in pragmatic reality ministry has been and is exercised.

Martha Stortz, in a substantive examination of how ordained ministry is exercised in the parish, addresses the matter of the ways in which power inheres in the office. She argues for a dynamic counterbalancing of "power over" and "power with" in what she describes as a "delicate choreography" of the various forms of powers belonging to the office of ministry. Her article is developed from a series of lectures given at Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saskatoon to the Annual Study Conference in May of 1990.

Donald Nevile's paper engages in a critical review of the historicity of the threefold office of ministry. He does this from the perspective of the "confessor" in the early church. This historical exercise raises important questions for the continuing study of ministry especially as the church evaluates its theology of ministry and looks for "alternate paths to ministry".

The reflection on the beginnings of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg's ministry offered by Helmut Lehmann affords some

interesting perspectives on present questions from the point of view of the situation confronting the first regular Lutheran pastor in North America. As the correspondence demonstrates the designation "deacon" had a kind of associate pastor status for Muhlenberg. In terms of contemporary discussions of the ordination of deacons this is an interesting bit of history. The article also reflects on the nature of leadership inherent in call and ordination.

The two articles by William Hordern and Roger Nostbakken rise from lectures given at the 1993 Spring Convention of the Regina Conference of the Saskatchewan Synod, ELCIC. Both articles address the subject of the mission of the church in contemporary society. Hordern focuses on the rapid social and political changes which have fostered a negative mood in society. He argues that the mission of the church involves among other things speaking clearly about the goals and values of human society. Mission will focus on persons rather than institutions or programs. Nostbakken looks at the changing realities of the church in the world noting both encouraging developments and some specific challenges. After addressing the introspectiveness and self-centredness of both church and society he calls on the church to revision its mission in the model of Christ.