



CCM Verax

International Newsletter

CCM Verax News

Occasional Newsletter

Reformation 2002

Tamil Lutherans (India) Against CCM Grand Deception

Bishop Dr. T. Aruldoss, President of The Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church (TELC), has offered the support of his church to US Lutherans fighting the ecumenical grand deception in *Called to Common Mission* (CCM). CCM is the full communion agreement between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the Episcopal Church in the USA. CCM came into effect on 01 January 2001.

In a letter from 27 March 2002, Bishop Aruldoss states, "On behalf of the Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church, I am pleased to convey its support to US Lutherans in their efforts to counter the ecumenical deception in CCM."

The TELC developed through various mission efforts beginning in 1706. The church was constituted in 1919, becoming autonomous in 1950. With nearly 104,000 members, the TELC has been a member of the Lutheran World Federation since 1947.

Tamilische LutheranerInnen (Indien) gegen CCM-Großbetrügerei

Bischof Dr. T. Aruldoss, Präsident der Tamilischen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche (TELK), hat den US-Lutheranern, die gegen die ökumenische Großbetrügerei in »Called to Common Mission« (CCM - »Zur gemeinsamen Mission berufen«) kämpfen, die Unterstützung seiner Kirche angeboten. CCM ist das »volle Gemeinschaft« Übereinkommen zwischen der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche in Amerika (ELKA) und der Episkopalkirche in den USA. CCM ist am 01. Januar 2001 inkraftgetreten.

In einem Schreiben vom 27. März 2002, stellt Bischof Aruldoss fest, »Im Namen der Tamilischen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche freut es mich, US-Lutheranern, die sich dem ökumenischen Betrug in CCM entgegenzuwirken bemühen, die Unterstützung [der TELK] zu vermitteln.«

Die TELK hat sich seit 1706 durch verschiedene Missionsbemühungen entwickelt. Die TELK wurde 1919 gegründet und wurde 1950 selbständig. Sie hat fast 104.000 Mitglieder und ist seit 1947 Mitglied des Lutherischen Weltbundes.

CCM Verax exists to tell the truth about *Called to Common Mission* (CCM), the ecumenical agreement between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the Episcopal Church in the USA.

"CCM is arguably the greatest act of deception ever cultivated by an ecclesial denomination in the history of North America."

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CCM-Interventionsangebot aus Ungarn

Die Lutherische Kirche in Ungarn (LKiU) hat US-Lutheranern in der Sache der ökumenischen Großbetrügerei in »Called to Common Mission« (CCM - »Zur gemeinsamen Mission berufen«) ihre Intervention angeboten. CCM ist das »volle Gemeinschaft« Übereinkommen zwischen der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche in Amerika (ELKA) und der Episkopalkirche in den USA. In einem Schreiben vom 11. Juli 2002, hat der leitende Bischof der LKiU, Dr. I. Szebik, das Angebot in drei Punkten entworfen, die in folgender Weise zusammengefasst worden sind:

1. Die problematische Natur des dreifachen Amtes in Bezug auf die Episkopalkirche solle »im Laufe des ökumenischen Dialogs eingehend erörtert und zum Ruhepunkt gebracht« werden. Es wäre wünschenswert, wenn diese Frage zwischen dem LWB und der Episkopalkirche erörtert werden könne und wenn der LWB »Richtlinie für alle Mitgliedskirchen« veröffentlichen würde.

2. Die Lutherische Kirche in Ungarn ist bereit, die Leitung von der Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in America darum zu bitten, »die vollkommene Gemeinschaft mit der Episkopalkirche solange nicht zu deklarieren, bis die Meinungsverschiedenheit nicht nachlässt...« Diese Bitte wird »an den leitenden Bischof von ELKA« gesandt.

3. Der leitende Bischof der ungarischen Kirche bittet die Gegner von »Called to Common Mission«, »sich von der Gründung einer neuen lutherischen Kirche zurückzuhalten«, um die allgemeine kirchliche Einheit zu bewahren.

CCM Verax Antwort und Klärung

Um ein paar Mißverständnisse zu klären, hat CCM Verax das Schreiben von Dr. Szebik beantwortet. Der Text des Briefes an die LKiU, in dem man das Interventionsangebot Punkt für Punkt diskutiert, wird im ganzen wiedergegeben. Dr. Mark Menacher von CCM Verax erläutert die Situation wie folgt:

»1. Das in Betracht kommende Problem ist an sich nicht das dreifache Amt der Episkopalkirche, sondern die Gültigkeit und die Standhaftigkeit des VII. Artikels der Confessio Augustana - nicht nur innerhalb der ELKA sondern auch innerhalb des Lutherischen Weltbundes. Durch das Übereinkommen »Called to Common Mission« (CCM - »Zur gemeinsamen Mission berufen«) haben die leitenden Kräfte der ELKA CA VII lahmgelegt, und haben es mit der bewußten Mißdeutung von Apologia XIV getan. Dass die LWB-Zentrale dieses Übereinkommen befürwortet, spricht gegen eine befriedigende Lösung allein von Genf aus.

2. Es hülfe nicht, die ELKA von der Deklaration voller Gemeinschaft mit der Episkopalkirche abzuraten, bis die Meinungsverschiedenheiten erledigt werden können, weil das Übereinkommen bereits am 1. Januar 2001 in Kraft getreten ist. Seitdem bezeichnet die ELKA die Episkopalkirche als einen »volle Gemeinschaft« Partner. Die Episkopalkirche, hingegen, wird ähnliches tun, nur wenn es festgestellt worden ist, dass die ELKA ausreichend »episkopalisiert« worden ist, um volle Gemeinschaft mit der Episkopalkirche berechtigt zu werden. Wann und wie das geschehen wird, weiß jetzt niemand.

Der Einigungsprozeß in CCM läuft nicht nur CA VII sondern auch dem gelebten Wesen der Rechtfertigungslehre und der Lehre von den Zwei Reichen zuwider.

3. Wenn es um die Einheit der Kirche geht, muss man klar sein, dass von der Kirchenleitung aus die ELKA hauptsächlich als eine Verfassungskirche und nicht als eine evangelisch-lutherisch konfessionelle Kirche bezeichnet wird. Wenn man die Verfassung in den Vordergrund rückt, hat man schon die Einheit einer lutherischen Kirche beeinträchtigt, wenn nicht praktisch aufgelöst.

Wenn eine LWB-Mitgliedskirche die Merkmale einer anderen Kirche oder Konfession vor den lutherischen Konfessionen und sogar vor der einfachen Wahrheit bevorzugen will, sollte der LWB Richtlinien haben, die Mitgliedschaft solcher Kirche aufzuheben.

Mit den Mißverständnissen ausgeräumt, sind wir für Ihre Bereitschaft sehr dankbar, eine konfessionelle Lösung des Problems zu erzielen.«

Simple Guide to Called to Common Mission

Called to Common Mission (CCM) is an ecumenical agreement between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the Episcopal Church in the USA. CCM enables full communion between these two churches by changing the ELCA's constitution, ordination structure, and liturgical rites to conform to the Episcopal Church's tradition of bishops in historic succession. Episcopalians (also called Anglicans due to their origins in the Church of England) refer to this tradition as the "historic episcopate."

CCM came into effect on the 1st of January 2001. The Episcopal Church is now in full communion with the ELCA. However, the ELCA is not in full communion with the Episcopal Church. The ELCA will only be in full communion with the Episcopal Church when the ELCA has become "episcopalian" enough for full communion to be mutual. In other words, the process in CCM will be completed when the ELCA has effectively become an episcopalian church. How has this happened?

CCM is full of ecumenical jargon and historical claims which disorient most people. This also includes many pastors, bishops, and seminary professors. This brief guide seeks to explain why CCM is wrong.

1. CCM denigrates the Lordship of Jesus Christ

CCM requires the ELCA to adopt an "historic episcopate" for full communion with the Episcopal Church. The Episcopal Church's "historic episcopate" refers to a tradition in which clergy are supposedly made true bishops only when they are ordained as bishops through a rite of laying-on-of-hands by other bishops. This tradition is also called "episcopal succession." Furthermore, only those clergy properly ordained by such bishops are considered to have the power to make a proper Holy Communion.

Lutherans believe that ordination and especially "historic episcopacy" are human traditions. Lutherans teach that Christ makes himself present in his pro-

claimed Word and in his Sacraments regardless of any particular kind of human ordination. By requiring the ELCA to adopt an "historic episcopate" for full communion, CCM means that Christ is not enough for unity between the ELCA and the Episcopal Church. Thus, CCM means that a human tradition becomes more definitive than Christ for unity in Christ's church. CCM is wrong firstly because it denigrates the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

2. An "historic episcopate" is not biblical

The Bible has very little to say about bishops (overseers), and it has nothing to say about an "historic episcopate" of any description. On the contrary, I Peter 2:25 says that Jesus is the "shepherd and bishop" of our souls. CCM violates the Lutheran teaching of Scripture alone.

3. CCM denigrates the Word and Sacraments

CCM understands an "historic episcopate" to be a "sign" of unity. Lutherans teach that the fellowship of believers (the church) has only three "signs." These signs are the Word, Holy Baptism, and the Lord's Supper. All these signs come from Christ, and all Christians share them. When an "historic episcopate" becomes a required "sign" of the church or its unity, this implies that God's Word, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper are not quite enough to be the signs of true church unity. CCM denigrates the living expressions of Word of God.

4. The Lutheran Reformers rejected the succession of bishops

CCM paragraph 11 states that the Lutheran Confessions written in 1530-1531 refer to "historic succession" in the office of bishop. This is impossible not only *because the concept of "episcopal succession" did not exist when the relevant Confessions were written* but also because the Reformers rejected "episcopal succession" when the notion was "rediscovered" between 1538-1540.

Philip Melancthon, the author of the confessional writing cited in CCM paragraph 11, stated in 1539 that those lacking the spirit of God "*imagine*

the church to be a state of bishops and bind it to the orderly succession of bishops, as the empires consist of the orderly succession of princes. But the church maintains itself differently. Actually, it is a union not bound to the orderly succession but to the Word of God" (MW 1: 330, 16-23). Also, in 1541 Martin Luther wrote, "*In the church, the succession of bishops does not make a bishop, but the Lord alone is our bishop*" (WA 53: 74).

CCM falsifies the intentions of the Lutheran Reformers. Furthermore, at least one ELCA CCM drafter knew, when CCM was drafted, that CCM belies the Lutheran Reformers' clear rejection of "historic episcopacy."

5. CCM is contrary to the Lutheran Confessional Writings

Article VII of the Lutheran *Augsburg Confession* states, "Our churches also teach that one holy church is to continue forever. The church is the assembly of saints in which the Gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly. *For the true unity of the church it is enough (satis est) to agree concerning the teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments.* It is not necessary that human traditions or rites and ceremonies, instituted by men, should be alike everywhere. It is as Paul says, "One faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all," etc (Eph. 4: 5,6).

The required adoption of an "historic episcopate" in CCM means that the Gospel in Word and Sacrament is not enough for unity between the ELCA and the Episcopal Church. CCM violates the letter and spirit of Article VII of the *Augsburg Confession*.

6. An "historic episcopate" is a "Christian fiction" which hinders mission

The distinguished New Testament scholar, Ernst Käsemann, once described the idea of bishops in succession as "*one of many Christians fictions*" (Der Ruf der Freiheit, 1972, p. 182). Even some Anglicans think strict adherence to an "historic episcopate" is "superstition." Putting an "historic episcopate" at the center of the ELCA's ordained ministry is

like putting Santa Claus in the manger or the Easter Bunny on the cross. Fiction and superstition compromise the credibility of the Christian faith. CCM with its fictions does not advance mission in the 21st century.

7. CCM is deceptive and thus dishonest

CCM states that ELCA pastors "installed" to the office of bishop "will be understood by The Episcopal Church as having been ordained" (CCM paragraph 15). *Either the Episcopal Church or the ELCA is being deceived about the future nature of ELCA bishops.* Since the ELCA's new "installation" rite for bishops takes the form of an ordination rite, one is left to conclude that the ELCA is primarily deceiving its own members. CCM is wrong because dishonesty destroys the soul.

8. The Episcopalian structure of bishops in CCM is anchored in 17th century English law

According to CCM paragraph 16, the ELCA will oblige itself to implement the principles of the Preface to the Ordination Rites of the Episcopal Church. These principles were established by the English Parliament in the 1662 Act of Uniformity. Through this Act the English government tried to eradicate all non-episcopalian forms of Christian expression in England and Wales. *Many thousands were persecuted, jailed, and fined, and many hundreds died simply because they did not want to be episcopalian.* Now, CCM requires the ELCA to share and to administer against its own future clergy these same principles of 17th century, English religious intolerance. Clearly, CCM is not what Jesus meant when he prayed "that they might be one" (John 17:11,22).

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Hungarians Offer to Intervene in CCM

The Lutheran Church of Hungary (LCH) has offered US-Lutherans its intervention in the matter of the ecumenical grand deception in *Called to Common Mission* (CCM). CCM is the full communion agreement between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the Episcopal Church in the USA. In a letter dated 11 July 2002, the Presiding Bishop of the LCH, Dr. I. Szebik, outlined the offer in three points which are summarized in the following way:

1. The problematic nature of the three fold ministry in relation to the Episcopal Church should be discussed ecumenically and brought to a conclusion. It would be desirable for the question to be discussed between the LWF and the Episcopal Church and for the LWF to issue guidelines on the matter.

2. The LCH is prepared to ask the ELCA to withhold declaration of full communion with the ECUSA as long as differences of opinion exist. This request will be sent to the Presiding Bishop of the ELCA.

3. The Bishop asks opponents of CCM to refrain from starting a new Lutheran church to preserve overall church unity

CCM Verax Reply and Clarification

In order to clarify a few points of misunderstanding, CCM Verax responded to the letter from Dr. Szebik. The text of the letter to the LCH, which point by point comments upon the offer of intervention, is reproduced here. Dr. Mark Menacher of CCM Verax depicts the situation as follows:

"1. The problem at hand is not the three-fold office of ministry in the Episcopal Church per se but rather the validity and the steadfast nature of Article VII of the *Augsburg Confession* (AC) - not only within the ELCA but also within the Lutheran World

Federation. Through the agreement *Called to Common Mission* (CCM) the leadership of the ELCA has debilitated AC VII, and it has done so with the conscious misinterpretation of *Apology* XIV. That the LWF central office supports this agreement contraindicates a satisfactory resolution alone from Geneva.

2. It would not help to dissuade the ELCA from declaring full communion with the Episcopal Church until the differences of opinion can be resolved because the agreement already came into effect on 01 Januar 2001. Since that time the ELCA has considered the Episcopal Church to be a "full communion" partner. The Episcopal Church, on the other hand, will only do likewise when it has been determined that the ELCA has become sufficiently "episcopalized" in order to be entitled to full communion with the Episcopal Church.

The process of unity in CCM runs contrary not only to AC VII but also to the lived expression of the Doctrine of Justification and to the Two-Kingdoms-Doctrine.

3. When dealing with the unity of the church, one must be clear that the ELCA church leadership considers the ELCA to be mainly a constitutional church and not a Lutheran confessional church. When one places priority on the constitution, one has already impaired, if not practically dissolved, the unity of a Lutheran church.

When an LWF member church prefers the distinguishing marks of another church or confession to the Lutheran Confessions, and even to the simple truth, then the LWF should have guidelines for rescinding the membership of such a church.

With these misunderstandings removed, we are very thankful for your readiness to achieve a confessional resolution of the problem."

[The full texts of all letters mentioned in this publication are available on the CCM Verax web site at <http://www.ccmverax.org>]

Disbelief as ELCA "shifts away" from Reformation Day

Shock and betrayal characterize reactions of many members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to the news that the denomination is urging its nearly 11,000 parishes to drop Reformation Day and to replace it with a nondescript ecumenical observance.

In the Sept-Oct 2002 edition of *Seeds for the Parish*, ELCA officials write, "In light of our church's commitment to ecumenical relations, it may be a good idea to shift away from a focus on the 16th century Lutheran Reformation and its Scripture readings, (such as, 'the truth will set you free') and move toward an ecumenical celebration of reconciliation."

In recent years, many ELCA members have expressed concern that the denomination's ecumenical policies and agreements are undermining the church's faith and integrity. This is particularly the case with *Called to Common Mission* (CCM), the full communion agreement between the ELCA and the Episcopal Church in the USA. CCM requires the ELCA to adopt hierarchical "episcopalian style" bishops in order to become acceptable to the Episcopal Church for full communion.

To allay ELCA members' concerns, denominational officials have repeatedly assured members that the ELCA's ecumenical actions make no noticeable changes to the ELCA.

Despite these previous assurances, the denomination's new advisory to drop Reformation Day will confirm within and without the denomination that ELCA leaders are in fact sacrificing the church's Protestant truths on the altar of an illusionary ecumenical god of hierarchical "visible unity."

Pastor Kris Baudler of St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Bay Shore, New York comments, "They keep telling us that all this ecumenism changes nothing. Yet, the Episcopalians obliged us take episcopalian style bishops in *Called to Common Mission*. The Roman Catholics managed to get Lutherans to agree to their interpretation of 'justification by faith' in the *Statement on the Joint Declara-*

tion on Justification. What did Lutherans get in return? Full communion? A rescinding of the excommunication of Martin Luther? Hardly."

Rev. Dr. Roy Harrisville, III, General Manager of Augsburg Fortress Press (the ELCA's publishing house), states, "This publication [*Seeds for the Parish*] is not authorized to make unilateral and irresponsible suggestions that the ELCA take the 'L' [for Lutheran] out of its name."

Mr. Larry Larsen of Calvary Lutheran Church in Morro Bay, California, assessed the situation this way, "They [ELCA officials] keep chipping away at the Lutheran concept - chipping away, chipping away, and then it will fall apart."

The ELCA's move away from Lutheranism is not limited to the ELCA. In a recent lecture at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark, Professor James M. Kittelson from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, likened today's ecumenically zealous churches to "corporations" where "the ecumenical dream is to create from them all one multinational conglomerate or a confederation of corporations." Professor Kittelson described the ecumenical goal of "visible unity" as "building a new ecclesiastical Tower of Babel" that will come "crashing down [as soon as] the workers discover that they are not even speaking the same language."

For centuries, Lutherans have celebrated "Reformation Day" to remind themselves of Luther's bold steadfastness in speaking the truth and setting the faithful back on the right path. Now, after 500 years of Lutheranism, the ELCA's head office is seeking to put an end to Reformation Day.

In response to the ELCA's official departure from its own heritage, Lutheran congregations and groups from around the USA are encouraging ELCA parishes to disregard the ELCA's advisory and to celebrate Reformation Day with renewed vigor.

"In light of our church's commitment to ecumenical relations, it may be a good idea to shift away from a focus on the 16th century Lutheran Reformation and its Scripture readings, (such as, 'the truth will set you free') and move toward an ecumenical celebration of reconciliation."