

Communion in Growth: Declaration on the Church, Eucharist, and Ministry
 – The Main Results and Their Ecumenical Potential: A Lutheran Perspective
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The Position of the Catholic-Lutheran Theological Dialogue after the JDDJ

The Official Common Statement on the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (1999)

concluded: “Based on the consensus reached, continued dialogue is required specifically on the issues mentioned especially in the Joint Declaration itself (JD 43) as requiring further clarification in order to reach full church communion, a unity in diversity, in which remaining differences would be ‘reconciled’ and no longer have a divisive force.”¹

The issues requiring continued dialogue, among other topics, were especially “the relationship between the Word of God and church doctrine, as well as ecclesiology, authority in the church, ministry, the sacraments, and the relation between justification and social ethics” (JD 43).

The international Roman Catholic-Lutheran dialogue dealt quite thoroughly with some of these questions in the document *The Apostolicity of the Church*. However, *From Conflict to Communion* also stated: “218. Although the documents *Church and Justification* and *Apostolicity of the Church* made significant contributions to a number of unresolved issues between Catholics and Lutherans, further ecumenical conversation is still needed on: the relation between the visibility and invisibility of the church, the relation between the universal and local church, the church as sacrament, the necessity of sacramental ordination in the life of the church, and the sacramental character of episcopal consecration. Future discussion must take into account the significant work already done in these and other important documents. This task is so urgent since Catholics and Lutherans have never ceased to confess together the faith in the ‘one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.’” (FCC 218).

A Joint Declaration on the Church, Eucharist, and Ministry – Analogous to the JDDJ?

The Church’s sacramental nature seemed the key issue in all these burning open questions.

Neither the Eucharist nor the ministry can be adequately understood in abstract terms outside the decisive context in which they are concretely instituted, exist, and function – the Church.

¹ <http://www.tarsus.ie/resources/ARCIC/Justification-JD-Annex-1999.pdf>

Correspondingly, it is not enough to understand one possible meaning of a word if the whole sentence in which it is used is unfamiliar and if the meaning of the whole paragraph is not understood in the same way. It is also important to know the “*Sitz im Leben*”. There is a difference between a sacramental understanding of the Church and a purely functional and institutional understanding.

The development of the discussion of ecumenical ecclesiology has increased our ability to build bridges between different ecclesiological and confessional traditions. *Koinonia*/communion ecclesiology has the potential to bridge the understanding of the Church as a local Church built around the word and sacraments, especially the Eucharist, and the sacramentally effective presence of Christ in his Church as the universal communion of communions. Accordingly, the Church of Christ is both a communion of saints (*communio sanctorum*) and a creation of the Word (*creatura verbi*) in word and sacraments in which Christ himself is present. He is present in his body as a sacrament of the salvation of the world (*sacramentum salutis mundi*). The Church is sent into the world to witness to our Lord and Saviour.

Cardinal Kasper describes communion ecclesiology’s potential as follows: “Focusing on the notion of the Church as *koinonia*/communion not only highlights the richness of the nature of the Church, but also helps in dealing with significant issues of historical conflict. Such a focus also gives rise to fruitful and promising approaches to overcoming old problems within a larger context, such as participation in the Word of God and in the sacraments (especially the Eucharist) and the exercise of a universal ministry of unity. Issues such as the relationship between the individual and the community, between church ministry and lay people, men and women, are now set within a common framework, rather than seen as exclusive positions.”²

The Faith and Order document *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (2013) adopts a very similar approach. It suggests: “The dynamic history of God’s restoration of *koinonia* found its irreversible achievement in the incarnation and paschal mystery of Jesus Christ. The Church, as the body of Christ, acts by the power of the Holy Spirit to continue his life-giving mission in prophetic and compassionate ministry and so participates in God’s work of healing a broken world. Communion, whose source is the very life of the Holy Trinity, is both the gift by which the Church

² Harvesting the Fruits, D 74.

lives and, at the same time, the gift that God calls the Church to offer to a wounded and divided humanity in hope of reconciliation and healing.”³

Moreover, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* asks whether there is a real and divisive difference between understanding “the Church as sacrament” and “as an effective sign of God’s presence and action”. Might this rather be “a question where legitimate differences of formulation are compatible and mutually acceptable”? However, it seems clear, for example, that Luther maintained that the union of the believer with Christ (*unio*) and the community of the Church (*communio*) were interconnected. In light of this the Lutheran theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer offered his famous formulation: “The Church is the presence of Christ” (*Christus als Gemeinde existierend*).

It is therefore no surprise that the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland could respond to this Faith and Order document as follows: “The Lutheran Confessions emphasise that the Church stands forever. In essence it is a spiritual people, the righteousness of the heart. In this world this spiritual reality cannot, however, be separated from the external church (CA VI & VIII; Apol. VII & VIII). The Lutheran Church is also comfortable with the New Testament’s language of the Church as a mystery (Eph. 5.32). In a spiritual sense it extends to the other side of this visible reality. Our Church therefore sees it as legitimate to speak about the Church as an instrument of God and as a sacrament. ... The invisible reality of God is present in both the Church itself and in the individual sacraments. Speaking about the Church as a sacrament should not, however, obscure the fact that the Church is at one and the same time a community of the justified and the sinful.”⁴

The Swedish-Finnish Roman Catholic-Lutheran dialogue document *Justification in the Life of the Church* (2010) had already formulated this as follows: “The church is the community in which the crucified and risen Christ is present and continues his work on earth. Justification is about growing as a member of this body. Just as the Christ is called the original sacrament, so the church may be called the fundamental sacrament. This has been expounded thus: ‘The church is not one more sacrament, but that sacramental framework, within which the other sacraments exist. Christ himself is present and active in the church. The church is therefore, both according to Roman-Catholic and

³ CTCV 1.

⁴ ELCF General Synod Official Statement on the F&O document *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, November 2015.

Lutheran-Melanchthonian tradition, in a mysterious way an effective sign, something which by grace effects what it signifies.’’⁵ Accordingly, much common ground was already found on the basis of the earlier dialogue.

In this light we felt Cardinal Kurt Koch’s initiative regarding a possible future joint declaration on the Church, Eucharist, and Ministry which would be analogous to the JDDJ offered great potential. It even seems an inevitable step on the way towards Eucharistic communion. In principle the term “communion ecclesiology” already suggests that eucharistic and ecclesial communion belong together. From the early Church perspective, which saw the bishop as the leader of a eucharistic community, it is therefore understandable that those ordained to proclaim the apostolic Gospel and preside at the Eucharist should be ordained by bishops who are themselves ordained by bishops who represent the apostolic communion of the Church. In understanding the apostolicity of the Church it is essential to see the interplay of tradition, communion, and succession. The apostolicity of the Church means that the whole Church is apostolic. There are various instances of witness which safeguard the apostolic Tradition.

In interpreting Luther’s intentions Dietrich Bonhoeffer underlined that the Triune God was not free from us, but free for us. Christ is therefore really present in word and sacraments, and through them in the faithful and in the Church. The Church is an image of God because it is the body of Christ, and the Triune God himself is present in the faithful. This means that communion and sacramentality are important and that the ordained ministry is instituted within this framework to serve the core functions of the Church as part of and with the people of God. This is already a good premise for working towards a differentiated Catholic-Lutheran agreement on the basic truths of faith in this respect.

The Nordic and Finnish Context

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland was part of the Church of Sweden during and after the Lutheran Reformation in the sixteenth century. Yet the Finnish section of the Church was always a little more conservative, and Catholic practices were maintained longer than in the motherland of the kingdom. This tendency is also partly visible today, although the influence of the twentieth-century liturgical movement came first and more extensively to Sweden.

⁵ JLC 144, quoting *Kyrkan som sakrament* (The Church as Sacrament), p. 12.

The Swedes and Finns essentially share a mutual history in the 1571 Church Order of Laurentius Petri concerning the understanding of the ordination of bishops and their traditional position in the Church. This generally referred to ecclesial tradition wherever it was theologically possible. Much of the medieval liturgy remained in place.⁶ The Church Order also stated that the office of bishop stemmed from the Holy Spirit, the giver of all good gifts. It was seen as “useful” and approved always and everywhere in Christendom.⁷ In the Swedish and Finnish tradition it is also held that the apostolic succession in the Lutheran era has also been maintained in episcopal ordinations if prayer and the laying on of hands by at least three validly ordained bishops who represent the communion of Churches is seen as essential.⁸

In Finland the development of the current ecumenical policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church began with the ecumenical impulses given by the Second Vatican Council and the theological dialogue with the Russian Orthodox Church. Professor Seppo A. Teinonen and his students, for example, Bishop Eero Huovinen and the Revd Dr Risto Cantell, and Professor, later Bishop, Kalevi Toiviainen studied contemporary Roman Catholic theology and the ecumenical significance of the Second Vatican Council and introduced them to Finnish Lutheran theologians.

As early as 1974 the dialogue with the Russian Orthodox Church stated: “From the point of view of the problem concerning the sacramental character of the ministry and in the light of the entire doctrine of the sacraments an examination should be made of the consequences to our dialogue of certain parts of the confessional books of the Lutheran Church, according to which ordination taking place through the laying on of hands can be called a sacrament.”

In the 1977 and 1980 theological dialogue the paradigmatic idea of the parallel between the Lutheran understanding of justification as both imputative and effective, through the presence of Christ in the faith in union with the faithful, and the Orthodox understanding of deification or *theosis* as a process of healing the image and likeness of God in the faithful was presented. This understanding implies a sacramental or realistic interpretation of Luther’s theology. This resulted in a sacramental understanding of the Church which was expressed, for example, in the 1992 dialogue on the apostolic faith. It was formulated in a thesis as follows: “Salvation is not only an event of the

⁶ JLC 73.

⁷ Brodd 1988, 123–127.

⁸ For a discussion of what happened in Finland when all the bishops died within a short period in the 1880s see the report *Communion in Growth*, footnote 265.

past but also present reality in the Church and in the lives of the faithful. The saving presence of Christ and the Holy Spirit is realized in proclaiming the gospel, in administering the sacraments and in worship. It is in and through them that God unites us with himself and gives us his gifts. He creates in us the true apostolic faith, in which we participate in the Triune God and the salvation that is in him. This faith is effective as love (Gal. 5:6, 1 John 4:19).”

This harvest, the idea of the effective presence of Christ in the faithful, was also present when, for example, Eero Huovinen and Simo Peura participated in the drafting and finalising of the Catholic-Lutheran *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* and before that in the discussions leading to the *Porvoo Common Statement*, which represents a sacramental communion ecclesiology.⁹ All this was in the background when the report of the Swedish-Finnish Catholic-Lutheran dialogue report *Justification in the Life of the Church* (2010) was produced. Cardinal Koch’s 2011 initiative calling for international discussion about a possible joint declaration on the Church, Eucharist, and Ministry made it natural for us to make our own contribution to the shared global project. As the annual ecumenical pilgrimage of St Henry on 19 January to Rome, which includes a private audience with the Pope, indicates, we enjoy a close relationship with the Catholic Church. We therefore thought we might make a contribution which might pave the way for further progress. It was also encouraging that American Lutherans and Catholics began to work towards the same end in their *Declaration on the Way* (2015). Naturally, the ecumenical commemoration of the Reformation at the event in Lund also had a significant impact.

The Method and Achievements of the Finnish Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue: A Differentiated Consensus

Unlike the American report *Declaration on the Way*, which largely collects consensus statements and the points of divergence in the international Roman Catholic-Lutheran dialogue but goes little further, we deliberately applied a “differentiated consensus” as our method. It had already proved a constructive catalyst in the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*. Moreover, the *Official Common Statement* urged that “...continued dialogue is required specifically on the issues mentioned ... requiring further clarification in order to reach full church communion, a unity in diversity, in which remaining differences would be ‘reconciled’ and no longer have a divisive force”.

⁹ For the apostolic succession in the Porvoo Common Statement see Eckerdal 2017.

The document describes the method as follows:

The unity in faith we seek is not uniformity; in some respects it is a diversity in which any remaining differences beyond our common agreement are not regarded as church-dividing. Accordingly, the goal is not doctrinal consensus in the form of congruence, but a differentiated consensus consisting of two distinct components:

- A clear statement on the consensus reached in the fundamental and essential content of a previously controversial doctrine.

- An explanation of the remaining doctrinal differences, which are also to be clearly named, and a declaration that they can be considered admissible and thus do not call into question the consensus on the fundamentals and essentials.”¹⁰

The differentiated consensus method, which found its mature form in the Lutheran-Catholic dialogue leading to the JD (1999), therefore entails a twofold process:

1. A consensus in basic truths is elaborated and stated. The aim is to formulate the common understanding of Church, Eucharist, and Ministry together. In this case the classical method of convergence and consensus is applied. A common statement in uniformly accepted language is made. Further descriptions of the special confessional emphasis are added as explication. The focus of the joint formulations is on the fundamental aspects of the doctrines and the dimensions which have traditionally been areas of disagreement. The aim is not to say everything, but to formulate the basic truths extensively and sufficiently thoroughly.

2. Now the doctrinal statements traditionally seen as in conflict are examined to establish if they still exclude each other or if they are simply different expressions of the same basic truth. Here a uniform or common language is not sought; it still remains necessary to translate from one confessional language to the other. If it is stated that doctrinal statements traditionally held to be in conflict no longer entail any church-dividing effects, these statements can be understood and interpreted as different explications of the agreed common understanding. It follows that the differing confessional positions are freed from the constraint of reaching a

¹⁰ cf. The Church and Ecclesial Communion (CEC). Report of the International Roman Catholic-Old Catholic Dialogue Commission 6.1.

consensus in form and language on every imaginable doctrinal question. The Joint Declaration presses towards such an authentic consensus on the basic truths of faith regarding the issues in focus. The remaining differing positions as formed by origin and tradition are neither denied nor forgotten, but in the light of the consensus achieved they are not seen as church-dividing.”¹¹

Sacramental Communion Ecclesiology

In practice the report first explicates a common understanding of the Church using communion ecclesiology as the joint framework in paragraphs 25-49. The essential points from these paragraphs are summarised in paragraphs 307-310. In the light of current ecumenical dialogue it is stated that there is no dichotomy between the Church as a creation of the Word and as a sacrament of the world. The Church is the community of the faithful and the communion of saints for both Lutherans and Catholics. Both can understand the Church broadly as a sacrament. Both agree that as instruments of God’s salvific grace the “principal visible elements of the Church are the Holy Scriptures, the teaching of the apostles, the sacraments and the divinely instituted ministry” (para. 309).

The fundamental expressions of the Church in the world are witness, worship, and service. Their focus is on the proclamation of the Gospel and in the celebration of the Eucharist. “In each local Church the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of the creed through participation in the life and salvation opened by the Triune God is present, as is the unity and communion with the other local Churches which this implies. This unity and communion is manifested in an ultimately universal communion of communions of local Churches (*communio communionum ecclesiarum*)” (para. 310).

The concluding remarks state: “356. Consensus on the basic truths of faith has been established here concerning the understanding of the Church as a sacramental sign and instrument of the *missio Dei* in the world (cf. 25-49).”

Sacraments in General

Before considering the topic of the Eucharist the dialogue partners agreed that there should be a more general discussion of the concept of sacrament. A differentiated consensus was also formulated regarding this in paragraphs 63-69 and summarised in paragraphs 311-312. It was agreed: “On the basis of our differentiated understanding of the sacraments in general (cf. 63-69),

¹¹ cf. Thönissen 2008.

and in the light of the distinction between the *sacramenta maiora* (Baptism, Eucharist) and the *sacramenta minora* as divinely instituted sacred services and effective sacramental instruments in the work of the kingdom of God, we can conclude that the condemnations of the sixteenth century regarding the number of the sacraments no longer apply. We share the same sacramental intention to undertake the Church's mission, and *we agree* that Baptism and Eucharist are the principal sacraments and the others are related to them" (para. 311).

The Consensus on the Eucharist and the Sixteenth-Century Condemnations

If eucharistic communion between Catholics and Lutherans is to be achieved, an essential step will be to reconcile the still-existing doctrinal condemnations of the sixteenth century regarding the Eucharist. Concerning the common affirmations in paragraphs 2.2-2.8, *The Eucharist as a Sacrifice Grounded in the Presence of the Unique and Sufficient Sacrifice of Christ* (2.2.2) is especially important. The key point is in paragraph 107: "In the light of this consensus on the basic truths of the Eucharist as sacrifice, grounded in the formulation of the living presence of the unique sacrifice of Christ in the Mass, we can say that the condemnations in the Lutheran confessional writings (Epit. 7.22; SD 7.107), as well as those in Trent (DS 1751–1759), are not applicable. This explicates further the differentiated consensus expressed in the JD and the implication of justification in the context of the Eucharist. In the wider sense the Mass as a whole can be seen as a sacrifice, in which Christ first gives himself and his forgiveness to us and we respond by giving ourselves in thanksgiving to him."

When the dialogue started, we Lutherans thought that after many years of doctrinal discussion and common affirmations "transubstantiation" would be a somewhat easy issue to discuss. However, this was not the case. We discussed this theme in depth. Paragraphs 112 and 113 state, with additions to the agreement in the document *From Conflict to Communion* and with the support of the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*: "We agree on the true, real, and substantial presence of Jesus Christ in the Lord's Supper. ... The different forms of expression that Catholics and Lutherans use with regard to the Eucharist spring from the same conviction of faith. These are not, therefore, issues that divide the Church. Both traditions wish to stress that the body and blood of Christ in a true, real, and substantial (*vere, realiter et substantialiter*) way is present in, with, and under the outward signs of bread and wine. The criticism of the Reformation era (DS 1651-1652; Epit. 7.22; SD 7.107) is thus not applicable today. ... [W]e agree that the bread and wine change (*mutatio, conversio*) into the body and blood of Christ through the consecration at the Eucharist. Therefore, at the consecration in the Eucharist it is said: 'This is my body'; 'This is my blood'."

Furthermore, although the Lutheran side wishes to avoid philosophical terminology in theological explanations of the Eucharist, they "...wish to emphasise the true and substantial character of the eucharistic presence" (para. 114).

Having formulated this differentiated consensus, the condemnations of the Lutheran confessional writings and the Council of Trent are discussed in Chapter 2.3. The conclusion argues that in the light of the substantial elements required for the recognition of the fullness of the eucharistic mystery, "...there seems good reason to hope that a differentiated consensus on the basis of the scope of our agreements in the basic truths of faith regarding the Eucharist may be reached" (para. 166). However, this also presupposes the recognition of the validity and sacramental character of the ministry.

A Differentiated Consensus on Sacramental Ordination and "*Defectus Ordinis*"?

To assist us and the readers of the report to understand the biblical and historical discussion of the theology of ordained ministry, its structural development, and historical controversies in their context, an analytical overview of the biblical and historical background of the ministry is given. An essential point is the understanding of the connection between communion, tradition, and succession, which was already a reality during the patristic time. This provides the background both for the Reformation and the contemporary understandings of the communion ecclesiological framework in ecumenical theology.

Where the relationship between the common priesthood and the ordained ministry was concerned, it was relatively easy to formulate a common affirmation on the basis of the faithful's participation in Christ: "*We agree* that though they differ from one another in essence and not only in degree, the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood are nonetheless interrelated: each of them in its own special way is a participation in the one priesthood of Christ. The ordained ministry should be exercised personally, collegially, and communally" (para. 197). Because the interrelation between common priesthood and the ordained ministry didn't seem to be a problem for us we didn't discuss it extensively in the report. However, we referred with appreciation to the conclusion of Pope Francis: "The world in which we live, and which we are called to love and serve, even with its contradictions, demands that the Church strengthen cooperation in all areas of her mission. It is precisely this path of *synodality* which God expects of the Church of the third millennium" (para 268).

In the context of the Church's sacramentality based on the presence of Christ in the Church through word and sacraments, we agree that the "...ordained ministry is instituted by God in service to the word and sacraments as a lifelong vocation. Ordination cannot be repeated" (para. 200). "*We agree* that ordination to the sacred ministry is sacramental. It is an instrumental act in which the gift of the Holy Spirit is prayed for and transmitted through the promises in God's word and the laying on of hands" (para. 201). "*We agree* that the ordained ministry is constitutive and necessary for the Church" (para. 204).

Moreover: "*We agree* that the word 'ordination' in our Churches is reserved for the sacramental act which integrates a person into the order of bishops, presbyters, or deacons, and goes beyond a simple election, designation, delegation, or institution by the community, for it confers a gift of the Holy Spirit which can come only from Christ himself through his Church. Ordination can be performed only by validly ordained bishops representing the communion of the Church" (para. 205). From the practical perspective it is also especially noteworthy that as Lutherans and Catholics we found ourselves able to recognise the key elements of a valid ordination in our respective traditions. The Lutherans write: "In both the Catholic and Lutheran rites the transmission of the gift of the Holy Spirit through word, prayer, and the laying on of hands in episcopally administered ordination [is] clearly central" (para. 209). The Catholics write: "In the ELCF ordination rites many elements are present that are common to both of us. ... The formulations used can be read and understood in a Catholic sense" (para. 210).

Concerning the ordination of a deacon, presbyter, or bishop, it is thus jointly stated: "*We agree* that ordination is carried out by a bishop through word, prayer, and the laying on of hands. Ordination is not understood as merely a demonstrative public confirmation of the call, but as an instrumental and sacramentally effective act, in which the ministry is concretely given. The ordination is based on the self-giving love of the Triune God. It is an expression of the mission of God in the world" (para. 220). We jointly underline the apostolic succession as a sign of fidelity to the divine apostolic mission. Paragraph 231 states: "*We agree* that episcopal ministry in apostolic succession is received through collegial succession, which incorporates the bishops into the episcopal college. The college of bishops is the successor of the college of the apostles..."

From the perspective of the Lutheran confessions it is especially important that together we underline that the "authority of the bishop is founded on the authority of the word of God. When the bishops proclaim the Gospel, they act in the name of Christ and with his authority. The bishops

carry a special responsibility for the apostolic mission of the Church by providing spiritual leadership in their dioceses, a leadership that is exercised in community with the entire people of God (*sensus fidelium*)” (para. 238). This is confirmed by the quotation from *Lumen Gentium* 25 in paragraph 241: “[A]mong the principal duties of bishops the preaching of the Gospel occupies a pre-eminent place.” In paragraph 245 the focus of the episcopal ministry in the service of the Church’s apostolic mission is further underlined; and paragraph 250 states: “*We agree* that the foundation for apostolic continuity is the steady focus of the Church on the redemptive death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and on the apostolic witness to this Gospel.”

There is also an ecumenically important formulation in paragraph 251: “*We agree* that apostolicity is continuity in faith in the life of the Church and in the structures and ministry of the Church.” In other words, if it is our view that the ordained ministry, which serves the apostolic mission of the Church through word and sacraments, is constitutive for the Church, this applies to all ordained ministry. Ordination is not merely an empty rite but is based on the promises of God in his word and on the promised gifts of the Holy Spirit through prayer and the laying on of hands. Thus, ordination is constitutive because it is the special task of the ordained ministry to serve the proclamation of the apostolic Gospel in word and sacraments, and in word and deed.

From the Lutheran perspective this does not imply a denial of the validity of the ordained ministry in a church in which there are no deacons or bishops, but only pastors. Continuity in the ordained ministry which serves the apostolic mission and Gospel is essential. However, it might be said that the sign is richer in the threefold ministry of deacon, priest, and bishop than it is in a onefold ministry.

The conclusion concerning the differentiated consensus on the ordained ministry follows: “The sixteenth-century condemnations seem not to apply when they are seen in the light of this broad consensus on the basic truths of the Church, the Eucharist, and the ministry. It seems that the Second Vatican Council’s understanding of the ordained ministry [in the Lutheran tradition in general] as lacking the fullness of a sacramental sign (*defectus sacramenti ordinis*) can also be questioned on the basis of the differentiated consensus we have attained. It therefore seems plausible to suggest that the Catholic Church might eventually re-evaluate her understanding of the Lutheran ministry in the light of the results of this dialogue” (para. 305).

It should also be underlined that there is a difference in the Catholic-Lutheran understandings regarding the recognition of the ordination of women. Accordingly, the report asks “whether the basic consensus on the sacramentality of the ordained ministry endures, although there are different views concerning who can be ordained” (para. 333).

The Petrine Ministry

We were unable to offer an overall solution to the problem of the understanding of the Petrine Ministry, but we formulated some essential points of consensus and convergence. We hoped to encourage the formulation of something in conclusion through further discussion and elaboration. Paragraph 361 states: “There is a growing common understanding on the Petrine Ministry (cf. 260-275). It refers to the following themes: 1) its biblical background; 2) the divine mission of St Peter and the Petrine Ministry today; 3) the ministry of unity; 4) the Petrine Ministry within the apostolicity of the whole Church; 5) the episcopal ministry of the Bishop of Rome; 6) his role in protecting the freedom of the Gospel’s proclamation and safeguarding the fundamental truths of the Christian faith”. We encourage further discussion and conclude: “Our already emerging consensus suggests that the doctrine of the primacy of the pope does not need to be a Church-dividing difference if the pope is not thereby dissociated from the structure of communion” (para. 354).

Future Visions

This report is a product of the Finnish Catholic-Lutheran theological dialogue. We also received support from Catholic experts in ecumenical theology from the Johann-Adam-Möhlner institute and from the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. This document is not yet a joint declaration on the Church, Eucharist, and Ministry. However, it is hoped that it may serve as a possible model and resource towards that end in international Catholic-Lutheran relationships.

The concluding remarks therefore summarise this:

367. *The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (1999), the milestone of Lutheran-Catholic ecumenism, harvested the fruits of local theological dialogues. The Declaration assured that “[t]he Lutheran churches and the Roman Catholic Church will continue to strive together to deepen this common understanding of justification”. Questions needing further clarification that were mentioned, among others, were ecclesiology, ministry, and sacraments. In the Swedish-Finnish Lutheran-Catholic dialogue report *Justification in the Life of the Church* (2010) and in this Finnish dialogue report on the Church, Eucharist, and Ministry we have deepened our

common understanding concerning these issues. It seems that a joint declaration on the Church, Eucharist, and Ministry is needed as the next step, as Cardinal Kurt Koch's initiative indicates.

368. This document uses the method of differentiated consensus, formulating agreements and explications of them. This is an agreement on "communion in growth". The dialogue wishes to serve as encouragement, because it has been able to say more than previous dialogues. The outcome is intended as a gift and a possible model for future work towards growth in communion in and through international theological dialogue."