

Faculty of Theology
University of Helsinki

THE EPISCOPAL OFFICE IN TRANSITION

FINNISH LUTHERANISM AND THE LUTHERAN WORLD
FEDERATION DISCUSSIONS ON EPISKOPÉ, 1945–2015

Heidi Zitting

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

To be presented for public discussion with the permission of the Faculty of
Theology of the University of Helsinki, in Auditorium PII, Porthania, on the 27th of
November, 2020 at 12 o'clock.

Helsinki 2020

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Cover design: Topi Kairenius

ISBN 978-951-51-6738-5 (pbk.)
ISBN 978-951-51-6739-2 (PDF)
Unigrafia
Helsinki 2020

ABSTRACT

The episcopal office, apostolic succession, and the apostolicity of the church have played an important role in ecumenical discussions of the late 20th and early 21st century. These topics are often presented in ecumenical studies as divisive church issues. Furthermore, the Lutheran understanding of episcopal office has often been presented as diverse and inconsistent. This study shows that the Lutheran understandings of episcopal office have in fact become more uniform and more coherent over the course of the late 20th and early 21st century.

In the five articles collected here, I examine how the episcopal office is understood in contemporary Lutheranism based on textual sources from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Lutheran World Federation. The evidence presented in these articles form a picture of shared development between these two varied members of the Lutheran family. The tendency in the understanding of the episcopal office by these two organizations changes from one of a pluralistic tolerance of diverse episcopal structures, titles and understandings to a more uniform and distinct understanding of the episcopal office as a personal, collegial and communal spiritual office. The concept of apostolic succession, in turn, develops from a narrow interpretation of apostolic succession as a ‘mechanical’ or ‘external’ chain of laying on of hands in episcopal ordination to a broader understanding of apostolic succession as the apostolic continuity of the church, where episcopal succession is a part, or a ‘sign,’ of this broader continuity. As the concept of apostolic succession broadens and episcopal succession comes to be understood as being in service of apostolic succession, Lutheran attitudes towards episcopal succession likewise become more positive.

The articles also demonstrate that some in the church considered this emphasis on the role of the episcopal office or episcopal succession to threaten certain fundamental Lutheran insights—for instance, the fundamental priority of the gospel, the oneness of *ministerium* and the validity of the ordained ministry in cases where the priest/pastor has not been ordained by a bishop or is ordained by a bishop without formal episcopal succession. As the articles explore, the insights relating to episcopal office became easier for Lutheran thinkers to accept, once these concerns had been sufficiently addressed—namely, broadening the concepts of *successio apostolica* and *episkopé* such that these concepts were understood to be served and carried out not only by episcopal ministers but in various ways by all ordained and non-ordained Christians. Thus, the episcopal task, *episkopé*, was not as such understood as necessitating a hierarchical structure or undermining the equality of all Christians. Furthermore, apostolic succession as a broader concept meant that churches without episcopal succession had nevertheless maintained apostolic continuity and thus continued to enjoy an authentic ministry.

Additionally, *episkopé* and apostolic succession, through various means, were considered as serving the mission of the church and the gospel. Thus, the priority of the gospel was no longer seen as threatened in such instances; rather, the episcopal structures were accepted as necessary, even as God-given structures of the church, so long as they serve the gospel. While episcopal succession came to be considered a valuable concept, it could not be seen as a feature that guaranteed faithfulness to the gospel or the validity of the ordained ministry. The episcopal office was considered a distinct, albeit not entirely separate, part of the ordained ministry—that is, all bishops are pastors, but not every pastor is a bishop. This distinction was even more profound than that between pastor and vicar, since a bishop has his/her own calling, consecration/installation and distinctive tasks, such as the ordaining of clergy and representing the church in public. Nevertheless, the ordained ministry as such was understood to be one interrelated and intertwined entity, comprising both episcopal and other ordained ministers. Thus, episcopal ministers came to be seen as important instruments of *episkopé*, while their leadership position was not taken as indicating an underlying hierarchy, as all Christians remained of equal status.

Overall, these five articles reveal not only the significance of the impact of the ecumenical movement on the theologies of these members of the Lutheran Family but also that, although their theologies have evolved, Lutherans have remained loyal to their own confessional characteristics: the principle of equality, the emphasis on the oneness of *ministerium* and the fundamental priority position of the gospel.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I remember someone pondering, at the beginning of this project, how a social person such as I am could pursue a PhD research. I did not have a proper answer then, since I could not yet have known that a PhD project is truly group work. As I look back at the years spent on this project, I see the faces of numerous people—colleagues, friends, and scholars both in Finland and abroad—each of whom have contributed to this project in one way or another.

First, I want to express my immeasurable gratitude to the supervising professor, Professor Risto Saarinen, for his expertise, support, guidance, and empowering supervision of this project. Under Professor Saarinen's auspices, I have made my way to positions and places I never would have imagined in or managed by myself to reach.

I thank the preliminary examiners Docent Dr Dagmar Heller and Docent Dr Vesa Hirvonen for their professional feedback and constructive critical comments, which have truly profited the final version of this study. I also thank the editors and referees of journals *Ecclesiology*, *Toronto Journal of Theology* and *Finnish Journal of Theology* who have worked to improve and cultivate the pieces of this study. My sincerest thanks go to Hämäläisten ylioppilassäätiö, Olga ja Vilho Linnamon säätiö, Kirkon tutkimuskeskus, Kirkkohallituksen ulkoasiain osasto and the University of Helsinki Doctoral School in Humanities and Social Sciences (HYMY) for placing their trust in and providing financial support for this project.

There are several people at the University of Helsinki I own much to. I want to thank the other two supervisors of this project Dr Elina Hellqvist and Docent Dr Jyri Komulainen for their support and mentorship. I thank members of the grading committee at the faculty, Professor Ismo Dundenberg and Docent Dr Minna Hietamäki for offering their time, and Professors Auli Vähäkangas and Jaana Hallamaa, Docents Dr Pekka Kärkkäinen, Dr Tapani Innanen and Dr Izaak de Hulster for unofficially mentoring my project during their lunch breaks. My gratitude also goes to Rupert Moreton and Kenneth Lai, who have both worked on the language of this study and to Topi Kairenius, who designed the marvelous book covers of this dissertation.

What I feared would be lonely hours in the researcher hall were never actually so. Quite the contrary, day or night, weekday or weekend, summer, winter or public holiday, someone was always there offering peer support, sharing the burden of the work and offering their care. I want to express my deepest gratitude to all my colleagues at the faculty and in the doctoral seminar as well as my fellow theologians: Dr Yuan Gao, Dr Petra Kuivalainen, Dr Raine Haikarainen, Dr Suvi Saarelainen, Dr Anna S. Salonen, Dr Katja Kujanpää, Dr Mallo Antikainen, Aino-Elina Kilpeläinen, Dr. Panu Pihkala, Dr. Joonas Salminen, Dr. Ilmari Karimies, Ida Heikkilä, Dr. Sari Wagner, Miika Ahola, Gabriel Salmela, Vera La Mela and Dr. Antti Laine, to mention a few.

Conducting research in the field of ecumenical theology was not only theoretically ecumenical but also ecumenical in practice. Several national and international scholars and theologians have provided me platforms for ecumenical reflection on the topic of episkopé and ecumenism in general. I want to thank my colleagues in the standing committees of the Ecumenical Research Forum and Societas oecumenica, the members of the Joint Commission of Orthodox Lutheran dialogue, the members of Finnish Lutheran Pentecostal dialogue, and the teachers and students of the Global Ecumenical Theological Institute 2017, as well as the Strasbourg Ecumenical Institute and the Lutheran World Federation. Special thanks go to Ms Béatrice Bengtsson, Dr Marius van Hoogstraten, Dr Jennifer Washmuth, Dr Stephanie Dietrich, Dr Alexi Chehadeh, Dr and Bishop Matti Repo.

As an ordained minister examining the topic of the episcopal office, I also want to thank my own bishops, Bishops Eero Huovinen, Mikko Heikka, Irja Askola, Tapio Luoma and Kaisamari Hintikka. Each of these bishops have contributed to this project in one way or another, providing pastoral oversight, offering a mirror to reflect my thoughts and findings or reminding me to stay focused and continue towards the goal. I also thank my teachers and mentors on my path in my earlier studies and in church: Hilikka Packalén, Pekka Leinonen, Heikki Riipi, Anna-Kaisa Tuomi, Tiro Rohkimainen, Margit Peltovirta and Ossi Tervonen.

I owe my gratitude especially to my beloved friends and family. I know that I have stolen too much time from you over the course of this project. My sisters, Paula and Anna Zitting, my brother, Heikki Zitting, my mother, Stiina Zitting, my father, Antti Zitting, and extended family members Mikko Zitting, Aino-Maija Gerdt, Eeva Kotilainen, Eero Kotilainen and Hannele Piispanen; my dearest friends Hanna Toivonen, Milla Harjula, Katriina Elopuro, Kiira Harjanne, Sanna Vähäaho, Heta Kulla, Minna Meskanen and friends from Hämäläis-Osakunta. I thank you for your endless help, love, support and patience; without you, this would not have been possible.

Finally, for the loves of my life: my son, Niilo, you brought a notebook to your preschool music program at the age of three and explained to the teacher that it was your PhD project; my daughter, Hilikka, you have recently been cheerful that we are going to throw a party soon, since the dissertation is finally finished, and that mom is going to get a new hat. Both of you were born during this project, and both of you are and remain my best achievements now and forever. My husband, Tatu, from you I have stolen the most, knowing that you have promised me the most. Thank you from the bottom of my heart—which is yours.

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LIST OF ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS

This thesis is based on the following publications:

- I 'What is Episcopacy? The understanding of the Episcopal Office According to the Finnish Bishops 1945–1965.' Originally published in Finnish as 'Mitä on piispuus? Suomalaisten piispojen käsityksiä 1945–1965' in Finnish Journal of Theology, Teologinen aikakauskirja 3, 2014, 212–20, 6500 words.
- II 'The turning point of Lutheran anti-Catholicism: The reception of the Second Vatican Council in Finland, 1959–1985' in Toronto Journal of Theology 33, 1, 2017, 17–29, 6000 words.
- III 'Toward a definition of episcopal ministry: Lutheran World Federation Work on episkopé, 1983–2007' in Ecclesiology, 15, 2, 2019, 207–32, 11,000 words.
- IV 'Successio apostolica: Romantic fairytale or valuable tradition? The Finnish Lutheran bishops in 1945–2015 and the Lutheran World Federation in 1983–2007 on Apostolic Continuity' in Die Internationale Kirchliche Zeitschrift, 14,000 words. Forthcoming.
- V 'Priest among priests? Understandings of Finnish bishops 1965–1985.' Original in Finnish as 'Pappi pappien joukossa? Suomalaisten piispojen käsityksiä piispanvirasta vuosina 1965–1985.' Finnish Journal of Theology, Teologinen aikakauskirja 5, 2019, 405–426, 7,800 words.

The publications are referred to in the text by their roman numerals.

ABBREVIATIONS

BEM	Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry
CA	Confessio Augustana
CCM	Called to Common Mission
CG	Communion in Growth
CoE	Church of England (Anglican)
CoN	Church of Norway (Lutheran)
CoS	Church of Sweden (Lutheran)
CJC	Church of Jesus Christ, (Leuenberg text)
DTS	Department of Theology and Study (LWF)
EELC	Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church
EKD	Evangelical Church in Germany
ELCA	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
ELCD	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark
ELCF	Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland
EO83	LWF Statement: The Lutheran Understanding of the Episcopal Office (1983)
Leuenberg	Leuenberg Agreement
Lundo07	LWF document: Episcopal Ministry within the Apostolicity of the Church (2007)
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
M83	LWF document: The Lutheran Understanding of the Ministry
Malta02	LWF document: The Episcopal Ministry within the Apostolicity of the Church (2002)
Meissen	Meissen Declaration
MWB92	LWF document: Ministry - Women – Bishops (1992)
OEA	Office for Ecumenical Affairs (LWF)
OKR	Oberkirchenrat, a title used of the head or regional church
PCS	Porvoo Common Statement
PCC	Porvoo Communion of Churches
RCC	Roman Catholic Church
TA	Finnish Journal of Theology
TCTCV	The Church: Towards a Common Vision
Vatican II	Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican
W83	LWF Statement: Women in the Ministries of the Church
WA	Weimarer Ausgabe, Luthers Works
WCC	World Council of Churches
WWII	Second World War

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 EPISCOPACY AS A LUTHERAN ISSUE

Nordic Lutheranism differs from its Middle European counterpart both visually and terminologically. Pastors in Northern Europe wear clerical collars and are called priests.¹ Nordic bishops have distinctive clerical and liturgical vestments that often appear similar to those of their Roman Catholic colleagues. Continental European Lutheran pastors and bishops, on the other hand, do not make use of a similar variety of distinctive clothing, and, in Germany, the term priest (*Priester*) is only used of Catholic clerics. While the Scandinavian Lutherans seem to imitate Roman Catholics, the continental Protestants distinguish themselves from Catholic symbolism and vocabulary.

Does this difference in vestments and titles, then, imply also a difference in understanding of the ordained ministry in general and episcopacy in particular? Due to historical and theological developments, different geographical regions have adopted somewhat different practices and attitudes around the ordained ministry. In addition, these features have also evolved differently over time in local churches. Within the Lutheran tradition, the office of the bishop has often been the focus of such historical and theological transformations.

The foremost reason for the diversity of the episcopal office among Lutheran churches is the simple fact that the Reformation manifested itself differently in different regions and hence had varying consequences on the structures in distinct churches. For instance, in Central Europe, bishops did not join Luther's Reformation. As bishops did not follow Luther or were otherwise dismissed as unpopular, others were needed to ordain new pastors also in these Lutheran regions. In addition, the oversight of the clergy needed to be assured in some form or another. Therefore, Luther devised 'emergency' solutions. First, he turned to a practice of presbyteral ordination, and, second, he issued a mandate to the secular Princes to arrange and ensure the oversight of the church.² Luther's solution of presbyteral ordination cannot, however, be

¹In Finnish, 'pappi' (and, in Swedish, 'präst') means 'priest.' In Finland, 'pastori' (pastor) is sometimes also used, but 'pappi' is more commonly used. In Swedish, on the other hand, 'pastor' denotes free church and pentecostal ministers.

²Andersen 1990; Borregaard 1970; Brand 1994, 6–9; Brodd 1993, 62–69; Cantell 1994, 221; Cleve 1993, 73–84; Gassmann 2002, 22–26; Grell 1995; Gritsch 2010, 24, 62–67, 86–87, 108–10; Hugason 1993, 104–8; Kouri 1995; Lind 2002, 57; Lislrud 1993, 93–95; Lohse 1970; 1983; Lyby and Grell 1995, 114–44; Montgomery 1995; Muziks 1993; Omari 1987; Parvio 1970a; 1970b; Pedersen 1993, 85–89; Pirinen 1968; Putce 1993, 122–23; Pädam 1993, 110–15; Schmidt-Clausen 1970; Schwarz Lausten 1995.

considered revolutionary. The presbyteral ordination was not unknown to the Western Church at the time. Certain abbots had attained permission from the pope to ordain their monks as deacons and priests. Naturally, though, Luther did not have such a papal permission.³ Moreover, as recent scholars have noted, at the time of the Reformation, the structure of the ministry was still developing. The three-fold office had not yet stabilized, and the episcopal succession had not yet become a central teaching. Hence, it is understandable that the divided church assumed different courses of development.⁴

In Sweden and Finland, on the other hand, the Reformation had less of a consequence on the episcopal order.⁵ King Gustavus Vasa demanded that the Swedish bishop of Västerås, Petrus Magni, install new bishops for the emerging national church. Soon after the installation of these bishops, the country was reformed by regal decree. New Lutheran bishops had hence received their ordination in episcopal succession from a bishop confirmed by the Pope, though they never received papal confirmation. Instead, the King claimed the right to give such confirmation to bishops. The Nordic development was not, however, uniform. In Denmark–Norway,⁶ the bishops were removed from office, as they had become the most unpopular figures as the insights of reformation spread to the country. The new evangelical bishops were entitled ‘superintendents,’ the same title used in several other Lutheran countries.⁷ Consequently, in Central European Lutheranism, the presbyteral ordinations became a living practice, and the chain of episcopal consecrations broke. Moreover, until the 20th century, oversight of the clergy in Germany was undertaken by the secular government, *summus episcopus*.⁸

In Sweden, the episcopal structures of the church remained intact for the most part despite the Reformation, even with the former link to Rome replaced by secular rule, a state of affairs considered a *defectus* to a certain degree in the eyes of Roman Catholic Church (RCC). The King and the government of Sweden did play a prominent role, appointing the bishops and accepting the church law, but the chain of episcopal ordinations and many of the old

³Burkhard 2004, 201–11.

⁴Burkhard 2004, 36–37, 201–11, 227–28; Gassmann 2002, 24; Kocik 2001, 50–51.

⁵Finland was a part of Sweden from the 13th century until 1808.

⁶Denmark and Norway were in a union until 1534, after which Norway became a part of Denmark until 1814.

⁷Andersen 1990; Borregaard 1970; Brand 1994, 8–9; Brodd 1993, 60–61; Cleve 1993, 72–73; Gassmann 2002, 25–26; Hugason 1993, 102–4; Lohse 1970; 1983; Lislrud 1993, 93–95; Parvio 1970a; 1970b, 33–36; Pedersen 1993, 85–86; Schmidt-Clausen 1970; Sullivan 2001, 4. The title of superintendent never became popular in these Nordic churches, and, by the 18th century, the title ‘bishop’ was reintroduced. However, ‘superintendent’ has never entirely disappeared as a title from Lutheran churches.

⁸Gritsch 2010, 82, 110, 144, 182, 223; Schuegraf 2001, 40.

practices remained more or less as they had been before the Reformation.⁹ The historical variety of these events fostered further disparities between the Lutheran churches.

These disparities were later seen as having been endorsed according to differing scholarly interpretations of Luther's writings. Especially passages from Luther's treatise *On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (1520)¹⁰ and *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of Christian Estate* (1520) have created some tension among the Lutheran understandings of ministry. In the latter, Luther writes, 'for whoever comes out of the water of baptism can boast that he is already a consecrated priest, bishop, and pope, although of course it is not seemly that just anybody shall exercise such office.'¹¹ Recent Luther scholars have, however, underscored that Luther does not suggest that there should not be different consecrations, roles, or tasks among Christians; rather, he emphasizes equality in his treatise, opposing any distinction that would emerge from a spiritual or secular office.¹² That is, every Christian is equal before God and is thus allowed to read and interpret the Bible. No one is 'more holy,' merely because he/she is consecrated. Thus, there is no hierarchical structure underlying the status of lay and ordained. Every baptizand belongs to *sacerdotium*, participating equally in Christ's royal priesthood as 'priest.' However, every baptizand does not belong to *ministerium*, which consists of those that are called and ordained to the office of word and sacraments—i.e., 'Predigtamt,' or the pastors and bishops. In this way, every pastor (ordained minister) is a priest (baptizand, sacerdos), but not every priest (baptizand, sacerdos) is a pastor (ordained minister).

While this relationship has been taken as a rejection of ministerial hierarchies, according to recent Luther scholars, Luther himself never explicitly opposed the episcopal office.¹³ Rather, he emphasizes in his writings only that the bishop and pastors are both servants of the word and sacraments. The similar descriptions of the two offices demonstrate the theology of one *ministerium* but has also led to a situation where the office of a bishop has been considered as an adiaphora, irrelevant, or at least less relevant than the 'Predigtamt,'¹⁴ a term that typically refers collectively to the office of the pastor. Thus, some Lutherans consider the office of a pastor more relevant for the church than the episcopal office. On the other hand, there is no unanimous

Andersen 1990; Brodd 1993, 60–61; Cleve 1993, 72–73; Lind 2002, 57, 61–62; Parvio 1970a, 1970b 33–36, 47.

¹⁰WA 6, 525–568; Helmer 2017, 149–50.

¹¹WA6, 408.

¹²Bayer 2008, 274–75; Lohse 2011, 286–97; Wengert 2008, 8–32; cf. Tjørhom 2004, 60.

¹³Gassmann 2002, 22–24; Lohse 2011, 297; Meyer 2002, 138; Wengert 2008, 108; cf. Brand 1994, 6–7; Lind 2002, 53, 61; Tjørhom 2004, 56–57.

¹⁴Brand 1994, 7–8.

answer among Lutherans as to whether a church must have a specific episcopal office.¹⁵

Over time, the episcopal structures continued to develop and differentiate, since the Lutheran national churches continued to develop as independent units.¹⁶ Oversight of the church therefore became, and remains, arranged in more than one way among the Lutheran churches, with different episcopal structures and synodical structures consisting both lay and ordained members, as well as different titles for the leading ministers, such as superintendent, church president, ephor, and bishop. Persons in these tasks are variously installed for a certain period or consecrated for life, chosen by secular authorities or elected by pastors and synod members, and may or may not always belong to the clergy – though they often do. Moreover, the churches have variously had, reintroduced, or opposed the principle of episcopal succession. The presbyteral ordination has variously been a normal practice, been a seldom observed, or then has been avoided altogether.¹⁷ Churches in cultural melting points, such as in the United Republic of Tanzania, add further diversity to the Lutheran understanding of episcopal office.¹⁸

Although there are approximately as many threads of development as there are Lutheran countries, the title of ‘bishop’ became increasingly common among Lutheran churches over the course of the 20th century. The title of ‘superintendent,’ on the other hand, did not last long in Nordic churches, whereas the title ‘bishop’ never entirely disappeared from Lutheran churches in Germany.¹⁹

¹⁵Työrinoja 1994, 78.

¹⁶On the developments of different national churches, see Andersen 1990, 144–71; Borregaard 1970, 116–24; Brand 1994, 9–14; Brodd 1993, 62–69; Buthelezi 2002, 86–89; Cantell 1994, 221; Cleve 1993, 73–84; Cooper-White 2002, 125–31; Erling 2002, 97–101, 110–19; Forsberg 2002, 59–65; Hugason 1993, 104–8; Lodberg 2002, 76–86; Lohse 1970, 51–71; 1983, 31–47; Lisperud 1993, 93–95; Muziks 1993, 117–20; Parvio 1970, 125–37; Pedersen 1993, 94–99; Pirinen 1968, 89–97; Putce 1993, 122–23; Pädam 1993, 110–15; 2002, 65–69; Schmidt-Clausen 1970, 72–115; Schumacher 2002, 70–76.

¹⁷Andersen 1990; Brand 1994, 18; Burkhard 2004, 56, 205–6; Buthelezi 2002, 86–87; Gritsch 2010, 24, 61–67, 75, 82, 105, 110, 232, 256; Elton 1999 144–71; Evans 2002, 82; Kouri 1995; Lohse 1983, 42; 2011, 296–97; Montgomery 1994.

¹⁸Omari (1987, 4–12); explains that traditional African offices, like ethnic chieftain or headman, have merged with understandings of episcopal and pastoral offices in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania. Tanzania is described as a cultural melting point, since several different African and European religious and cultural traditions meet and merge in Tanzania.

¹⁹Lohse 1983, 42–46.

1.2 EPISCOPACY AS AN ECUMENICAL ISSUE

The traditional approach in ecumenism has been to pursue adequate consensus on relevant doctrinal topics in order to achieve ecclesiastical unity. However, there has not been a consensus among different denominations on whether or not the theology of episcopal ministry is a doctrinal issue that requires consensus.

The largest Christian churches—such as the Roman Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox churches, and the Anglican churches—have generally considered that there should be consensus on central teachings and practices relating to the episcopacy and apostolic continuity.²⁰ For Lutherans, the guiding principle on their quest for unity has been the *satis est* principle, found in CA7.²¹ This *satis est* principle has been interpreted differently in different Lutheran churches. For some churches, such as some Central European Lutheran churches, the shared understanding of the gospel and sacraments has been ‘sufficient’ (*satis*) for unity, whereas, for other churches, such as ELCF, a sufficiently shared understanding of the word, sacraments and ministry are understood as a necessary requirement (*necesse est*) for unity.²² However, the diversity of episcopal structures and the issue of episcopal succession among Lutheran churches have never been divisive within the Lutheran family itself, diversity having been the status quo of Lutheranism.

Some argue that consensus ecumenism will never reach its goal and that the ecumenical movement should therefore pursue the tolerance of differences. Even in this case, however, a certain amount of consensus would be preferable to emphasize not only what unifies the Christian churches but also to explore how theological issues are understood even within groups, such as between the Lutheran churches itself. At the other extreme of consensus-seeking is a pluralistic approach that is complacent with only the least common denominator among traditions.²³ However, consensus-seeking ecumenism and pluralistic ecumenism are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

²⁰Avis 2010, 116; Birmelé 2003, 270; Burkhard 2004, 165–200; Eckerdal 2017, 17; Evans 2002, 84; Hietamäki 2010, 174–175; Kallis 1983, 48–49, 59–61; Kasper 1983, 86; Sanders 1983, 123, 128–29.

²¹CA 7: ‘The church is the assembly of saints in which the gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly. And it is enough [*satis est*] for the true unity of the church to agree concerning the teaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments. It is not necessary that human traditions, rites, or ceremonies instituted by human beings be alike everywhere.’

²²Hellqvist 2015, 277; 2016, 138; Repo 2015, 35; 72.

²³Hietamäki (2010, 174–209) explicates different ecumenical perspectives on consensus and difference, concluding that consensus and differences are not necessarily mutually exclusive. According to Hietamäki (2010, 208), ‘there are sufficient grounds for preferring at least modest but still normative conception of consensus.’ On the usefulness of the hermeneutics of differentiated consensus in Lutheran–Roman Catholic dialogues, see De Mey (2018, 385–403).

Reconciled diversity can work as a valuable step toward a more progressive goal, such as full visible unity.²⁴

To some extent, all Christian churches struggle to establish how the ordained ministry aligns with the biblical witness. Notwithstanding, the present study does not take up the complex exegetical issue surrounding the concept of priesthood (*hieros*) witnessed in the Old and New Testament, nor does this study make any claims about the order of importance of the concepts of *episkopos*, *presbyteros* and *diakonos* in the canonical epistles.²⁵ Historical studies often claim that the offices stabilized in the early church little by little, having been reshaped throughout the entire history of the church.²⁶ However, as disagreement over these questions continues, the issue remains a divisive issue between churches and a discussed topic in ecumenical dialogues.²⁷

²⁴Hellqvist (2015, 270, 282) argues that ‘the Leuenberg model of reconciled diversity could be understood as a step and a practical tool on the way to the full, visible unity, which, according to TCTCV, is the ultimate goal of the ecumenical movement.’

²⁵Avis 1990, 91–96; Grundy (2011, 49–54) analyzes NT passages on priesthood and ministry from an ecumenical point of view; Marshall (1999, 42–54, 145–50, 170–82, 512–28) and Saarinen (2008, 60–75) address the structures of and different interpretations about the office in their commentaries on the Pastoral Epistles; Pelikan (2005, 91–99) analyses the development of the offices in his commentary on Acts.

²⁶Burkhard (2004, 213–18) explains that, in the second century, the episcopal ministry was exercised in close relationship with presbyters and deacons in such a way that no one derived power from the other; rather, the three were understood as indispensable and separate, though intertwined, offices. The bishop’s role was thus both spiritual and liturgical, with the bishop presiding over the Eucharist and baptisms. Only later did the monarchical episcopacy, the three-fold office, and a system of hierarchy develop, whereas Stewart (2014, 3–7, 11–53) makes an interesting terminological distinction, avoiding the phrase ‘monarchical bishop,’ which is loaded with negative connotations, and instead speaking of ‘*monepiskopos*,’ which he uses to denote the third-century model, where the bishop was in charge of several congregations (*Kirchenamt*) alongside subordinate ministers (*viz.*, presbyters and deacons). In his study, Stewart also avoids the term ‘presbyter-bishop,’ since, according to his study, these offices were never synonymous. Instead, he uses ‘*episkopos*,’ arguing that there is one bishop in one congregation (*Gemeindeamt*), and the aforementioned ‘*monepiskopos*’ of the later form, where the bishop is in charge of several congregations. According to Stewart, the early leaders of different congregations were called ‘presbyters’ when they gathered together to discuss relevant issues. Some of them might have been *episkopoi*, others lay members. At any rate, the episcopal succession, according to Stewart, only became a practice, once the tradition of *monepiskopos* had already been introduced, prior to which presbyters ordained episcopal ministers; Breuning (1983, 9–29) explores the influence of Vatican II on the understanding of the episcopal office; Grundy (2011, 49–54) and Hill (1994, 21) argue that there is not only one Anglican theology of episcopacy.

²⁷Burkhard (2004, 36–37, 201–11) questions whether there really is, in light of historical events, any reason for Catholic authorities to cast a doubt on the validity of Lutheran ministers; cf. Sanders 1983, 117–30. Likewise, according to Sullivan (2001, 4, 227–28), the Catholic Church, ‘never officially expressed judgement on the validity of orders’ in the churches of Finland and Sweden. However, he

Even if no immediate consensus is yet in the horizon, however, some ecumenical achievements have been critical to recent church history. As Oliver Schuegraf's study has produced a masterful overview on the questions of episcopacy and apostolic succession in bilateral dialogues until 2001,²⁸ there is no need here to expand on every dialogue attached to these topics. Therefore I only briefly introduce four ecumenical documents, which are central to this topic and relevant for Lutherans but also differ from each other. These documents are the Leuenberg Agreement (Leuenberg) of 1973, the convergence document on Baptism Eucharist Ministry (BEM) of 1982, the Meissen Declaration (Meissen) of 1988, and the Porvoo Common Statement (PCS) of 1992.²⁹

The Leuenberg Agreement of 1973 created a pulpit and altar fellowship between certain European Lutheran, United, and Reformed churches, following the model of unity in reconciled diversity.³⁰ While the ELCF did not sign Leuenberg, the church participated in the theological discussions.³¹ Notwithstanding its important ecumenical achievement in establishing the pulpit and altar fellowship, Leuenberg has been criticized for its tenuous

points out, these churches also teach that the validity of the ministry does not depend on episcopal succession, which makes the topic a church-dividing issue.

²⁸Schuegraf 2001, 38–41, 59–61, 72, 76–91, 94–99, 112–13, 124–31, 133, 147, 155, 175, 185, 196–198, 205, 211–15, 220, 232–34, 246–47, 252, 256–57, 261–62, 266–67, 275–85, 297–99, 315–18, 321–22, 333–34, 340–41, 350–52, 354, 359–60, 390–97, 403. These dialogues have continued, and episcopacy and apostolic succession have continued to be discussed in both global and national bilateral dialogues after 2001. See, e.g., Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission (<https://www.lutheranworld.org/content/lutheran-orthodox-dialogue>), Apostolicity 2006; CG 2017.

²⁹Birmelé 2003 (270–77) compares and evaluates the understandings of *episcopé*, the episcopal office, and the historic episcopate in Leuenberg, Meissen and PCS; Gassmann (2002, 28–36) analyzes some bilateral ecumenical documents, such as Niagara and PCS, from the point of view of the episcopacy; cf. Repo 2016a, 99–113; Root 2002, 15–33.

³⁰Leuenberg, 33c; Kindt-Siegwalt (1999, 194) notes that the model of reconciled diversity was introduced by Harding Meyer and Lukas Visser a year after Leuenberg; cf. Huovinen 1987, 155–6; Dietrich (2018, 382) explains the model in following way: “The main reformation principle from the Lutheran Augsburg Confession, *Confessio Augustana*, CA VII – *satis est*, “what is sufficient for church unity” – gives the theoretical framework. The unity achieved does not embrace unity in all aspects of church fellowship, but it embraces unity in the most important aspects: the understanding of word and sacrament as a sufficient basis for communion. On the other hand, the model underlines and gives freedom to uphold one’s own identity and culture. Diversity in itself is not a goal, but is a natural part of being different churches, in different contexts, with different forms of ecclesial identity’; Birmelé 1995, 57–56; Dietrich 2010 87–91; Fykse Tveit 2000, 1–7; Hellqvist, 2015, 270–283; Hüffmeier 2004, 51–52; Persenius 1996, 106–7; Saarinen (2002, 258–69) and Schjorring (1997b, 67) have analyzed the compatibility of PCS and Leuenberg.

³¹Hüffmeier 2004, 51.

theological basis,³² offering especially little on the issue of episcopal office.³³ The theological work of the Leuenberg Fellowship³⁴, however, only commenced from the 1973 statement.³⁵ On the issue of the episcopal ministry and the apostolic succession, the most relevant Leuenberg document today is *The Church of Jesus Christ* (CJC) 1995, which affirmed certain ‘Tampere Theses.’ Tampere Thesis were issued 1986 following a Nordic consultation on ministry and ordination.³⁶ According to Tampere thesis 3, *episkopé* should be understood broadly, as being in ‘service of the Word’ and in which office all members of the church should participate.³⁷

One particularly important multilateral achievement on the topic of apostolic succession is Faith and Order Paper 111 (1983), titled *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (BEM).³⁸ Faith and Order, an official commission of the World Council of Churches (WCC), focuses on doctrinal issues.³⁹ Thus, as

³²For critical view of the doctrinal basis of Leuenberg, see Avis 2010, 99; Hill 1996, 108–13; Karttunen 2008, 1–24; Persenius 1996, 106–7; Tjørhom 2002b, 164–7. Avis (2010, 99) argues that, ‘although the Leuenberg agreement has been very fruitful in facilitating doctrinal convergence in ecclesiology between the participating traditions and has enabled more than 100 Protestant churches in Europe to enter into “table and pulpit fellowship”, it has done so at the cost of relativizing to some degree the confessional identity of the participating churches. It is probably true to say that (...) the role of the historic confessions is currently somewhat uncertain in the churches that have upheld them until now and this must inevitably be having some effect to the self-consciousness and the public witness of those churches.’ The ELCF participated in continuing discussions but never signed Leuenberg; Haikarainen (2018, 258–66) explicates the early Leuenberg discussions in Finland; on the contextual and church political reasons for the ELCF’s criticisms of Leuenberg, cf. Birmele 1996, 61–62; Fykse Tveit 2000, 2; Saarinen 2002, 268–69.

³³Birmele 1996, 67–68; Persenius 1996, 106–7.

³⁴The Leuenberg Church Fellowship was renamed ‘the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe’ in 2003.

³⁵Hüffmeier 1996, 84–86; 2004, 51–52; Saarinen 2002, 264–67.

³⁶The issues of ministry and ordination were discussed in two groups, Nordic European group and Continental European group. The continental European group issued Neuendettelsau–Theses 1982/1986; and the Nordic group issued Tampere–Theses 1986. The Church of Scotland, United Free Church of Scotland, Danish Reformed Synod, ELCF, ELCD, CoN and CoS participated in Tampere consultation.

³⁷CJC, 2.5.1.1.; Tampere–Theses 1986, 3; Beintker 2004, 73–88; Hüffmeier 1996, 85–86; Saarinen, 2002, 265; Repo 2015c.

³⁸BEM is sometimes referred to as the ‘Lima document.’

³⁹<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/member-churches>; the WCC includes among its member churches most of the world’s Orthodox churches (Eastern and Oriental), as well as African Instituted, Anglican, Assyrian, Baptist, Evangelical, Lutheran, Mennonite, Methodist, Moravian, Old Catholic, Pentecostal, Reformed, United/Uniting, and Free/Independent churches, in addition to the Disciples of Christ and Friends (Quakers). The WCC is ‘a fellowship’ of churches, not a church union or ‘a church’. Although the RCC is not a member of the WCC, the RCC sends official representatives to Commission on Faith & Order.

an official Faith and Order document, BEM concerns a wide variety of churches. Remarkably, a majority of Christian churches worldwide responded to BEM in 1982–1988, and their responses can be read online.⁴⁰ BEM broadened the understanding of the apostolic succession from polarized, extreme, or overly simplistic interpretations to a wide concept, one that combined several different positions.⁴¹ According to BEM, ‘The primary manifestation of apostolic succession is to be found in the apostolic tradition of the Church as a whole.’⁴² Apostolic succession thus means the apostolic continuity of the church, comprising the succession of gospel, teaching, ministry, and tradition. The historic episcopate, on the other hand, can be considered as a sign, though not a guarantee, of the apostolicity of the church:

These considerations do not diminish the importance of the episcopal ministry. On the contrary, they enable churches which have not retained the episcopate to appreciate the episcopal succession as a sign, though not a guarantee, of the continuity and unity of the Church. Today churches, including those engaged in union negotiations, are expressing willingness to accept episcopal succession as a sign of the apostolicity of the life of the whole Church. Yet, at the same time, they cannot accept any suggestion that the ministry exercised in their own tradition should be invalid until the moment that it enters into an existing line of episcopal succession. Their acceptance of the episcopal succession will best further the unity of the whole Church if it is part of a wider process by which the episcopal churches themselves also regain their lost unity.⁴³

This paragraph made it possible to consider the ministry of all churches valid regardless of the possible lack of episcopal succession. However, at the same time, the paragraph encouraged churches to find ways to accept and introduce episcopal succession to their churches. The findings of BEM were further

⁴⁰BEM Responses, available also online:

https://archive.org/stream/wccfops2.136/wccfops2.136_djvu.txt.

⁴¹It was a common stereotype before BEM that only the succession of the correct teaching was relevant for Protestant churches, whereas only the formal succession of episcopal office matters was relevant for Anglican churches and the RCC. These stereotypes had their roots in reality. See, for instance, Busch-Nielsen 2002, 184, 193; Tjørhom (2002a, 169–170), explains the extreme positions, which had developed in Lutheran and Anglican churches.

⁴²BEM M35. Cf. M36: ‘Apostolic tradition in the Church means continuity in the permanent characteristics of the Church of the apostles: witness to the apostolic faith, proclamation and fresh interpretation of the Gospel, celebration of baptism and the eucharist, the transmission of ministerial responsibilities, communion in prayer, love, joy and suffering, service to the sick and the needy, unity among the local churches and sharing the gifts which the Lord has given to each.’

⁴³BEM M38.

elaborated and put into practice in bilateral statements such as PCS and Called to Common Mission (CCM).⁴⁴

Meissen is one bilateral statement that was formulated by the German Evangelical Church (EKD) and the Church of England (CoE) in 1988. This statement generated the notion of eucharistic hospitality and co-operation of ministers between the two signatories, though it did not manage to achieve full-fledged interchangeability of ministries. Ministers were thereafter able to participate in each other's churches in the acts of ordination, but, for instance, Anglican bishops cannot participate in the laying on of hands in the sense of conferring an office of the EKD church.⁴⁵ This is because a solution could not be found to the question of historic episcopate for Meissen, which explained that the Anglican understanding of full unity included the historic episcopate, whereas EKD churches held that episcopal succession could not be a necessary condition for full visible unity.⁴⁶ With Meissen, both parties acknowledged that *episkopé* as such is exercised in both episcopal and non-episcopal churches, albeit by different means: 'a ministry of pastoral oversight (*episkopé*), exercised in personal, collegial and communal ways, is necessary to witness to and safeguard the unity and apostolicity of the Church.'⁴⁷

PCS (1993) is a bilateral statement between certain Lutheran and Anglican Nordic and Baltic churches. PCS was able to acknowledge the full interchangeability of ministries. With the adoption of PCS, the churches' ministries were mutually recognized and only thus was the historic episcopate reintroduced to those churches, which were lacking it. According to PCS the historic episcopate is as a sign, not a guarantee of the apostolic continuity. Hence, reaccepting the sign of the historic episcopate did not mean that the former ministry was invalid in the churches for which the historic episcopate had lapsed.⁴⁸ The ELCF was among the first churches to sign the PCS, and the statement has since come to be highly regarded within the ELCF.⁴⁹

⁴⁴Birmele 1996, 61; Repo 2010b, 91–93; Tustin 2016, 13–14. Called to Common Mission (CCM) is an agreement between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and The Episcopal Church (ECUSA), establishing full communion between them.

⁴⁵Meissen 17 (ii, iii); Hietamäki (2008, 184) questions why the interchangeability of the ministries does not follow in Meissen as the text recognizes the ministries as God-given instruments of God's grace.

⁴⁶Meissen 16; Birmele 1996, 70.

⁴⁷Meissen 15 (ix); 17 (iv).

⁴⁸Birmelé 1996, 69; Brand 1994, 16.

⁴⁹Forsberg 2002 59; Repo 2010b, 91–93; Saarinen 2002, 263; Vikström 2011a, 16–17; 2011b, 32–33; 2011c, 63–64; (2011d, 66): 'Never before has our church approved an ecumenical document the significance of which is as profound as is that of the Porvoo Common Statement'; on the approval of PCS in other countries, cf. Lind 2002, 58–59; Brand (1994, 16); Eckerdal 2017, 20; Thiessen 2014, 39; Meyer (2002, 138) praises PCS but also finds some 'problems of potential misunderstandings' in PCS; similarly, Busch Nielsen 2002, 182–99; Bouteneff (2002) evaluate the PCS critically from an Orthodox perspective; Puglisi (2002) evaluates PCS from a RC point of view.

As a whole, then, the episcopal office has been a topic that has been widely discussed in and posed a challenge to ecumenical dialogues. Furthermore, ecumenical dialogues always seem to have had an impact on the participating churches. Consequently, it can be surmised that the ecumenical movement has thus influenced also the understandings of the churches that participated in dialogues on the topics examined in this study.

2. RESEARCH AIM AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

2.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This collection of articles studies the understanding of the episcopal office in contemporary Lutheranism. The dissertation examines the issue through two collections of source materials—namely, the writings of Finnish Lutheran bishops (henceforth, Finnish bishops) and certain documents issued by the Lutheran World Federation (henceforth, LWF).⁵⁰

The general aim of this dissertation is to investigate how the episcopal office and its related concepts, such as *successio apostolica*, are understood in these sources and how these understandings evolved during the deepening ecumenical exchanges of the late 20th and early 21st century. To this end, I seek in this dissertation to uncover what the typical Lutheran issues, concepts, insights, and claims in these sources are regarding this particular topic of episcopal office and how these concepts, insights, and claims evolve during the period studied. Each article examines the issue with one specific focus, as is described in the following.

Article I examines what kind of insights the Finnish bishops have regarding the episcopal office before the Second Vatican Council (henceforth, Vatican II). A specific question of interest in this article is whether the aforementioned stereotype of ‘Nordic Lutheranism’ (see section 1.1) can be seen in the ELCF already between 1945 and 1965.

Article II investigates whether the intensifying Roman Catholic influence on Finland after Vatican II likewise impacted the Finnish understanding of the episcopal office. This article thus continues the examination of the ‘Nordic position,’ studying whether there is a correlation between attitudes towards the RCC and attitudes towards episcopacy and apostolic succession.

Article III explores how the episcopal office and related concepts, such as *episkopé*, installation, and consecration, are understood and used in the LWF statements, tracing the possible developments in the understandings of these concepts between 1983 and 2007. This contributes to the overall study by widening the scope from one national Lutheran church to global Lutheranism.

Article IV concentrates on the understandings of apostolic succession in the writings of Finnish bishops (1945–2015) and in LWF documents (1983–2007). Furthermore, this article investigates how the understandings of this concept have developed in both of these sources and whether any common trends of development can be found between these two different Lutheran sources. This article thus bridges the two sources of the overall study.

⁵⁰These sources are introduced in detail in section 3.

Article V examines how the episcopal office and its related concepts are understood in the writings of Finnish bishops after Vatican II and how and why these understandings developed from 1965 to 1985. In particular, this study clarifies what was considered the Lutheran theology of episcopal ministry and how the terminological understanding of installation and consecration developed in these writings—namely, what is written about the apostolic succession, the liturgical vestments and symbols, and the spiritual and collegial nature of the episcopal office. Article V also analyzes the emergence of a ‘Nordic position’ between 1965 and 1985.

2.2 METHODS

This study applies methods in the fields of Systematic Theology and Church History. The study is based on a careful close reading and systematic textual analysis of the primary sources in light of their historical context. Through close reading, the relevant concepts, argumentation, and assumptions are identified and analyzed. One specific unit of research is conducted for and explored in each article, the correlations between which are examined and analyzed in section 4 below, where the overall findings are discussed. The first two articles as well as the introductory part of the third article focuses on the historical context of the sources to set the scene of the study and present relevant issues that have impacted the development of these concepts and the theologies examined in this study. The latter three articles offer a systematic analysis of the relevant concepts, such as the episcopal office, the ordained office, installation, consecration and ordination, *iure divino* and *iure humano*, *ordo*, apostolic succession, and episcopal succession.

Research was conducted organically, with research questions drawn from and further research dictated by close readings of the sources studied in each article. Nevertheless, there was one underlying preconception at the beginning of the research process. I hypothesized at the outset that the Nordic emphasis on episcopacy would be present in the ELCF from early on, whereas the LWF documents would represent a Lutheran middle position. However, the sources turned out to be more complex even in the earliest primary source, and therefore this simplified view of the conceptual history was abandoned early in the research process.

One important methodological decision has to do with the form of the study—namely, as an article dissertation. Following the instructions of the University of Helsinki, the article dissertation consists of 3–5 peer-reviewed scientific articles and 30–60 pages of overall analysis, including an introduction and a discussion of the results of the study. The article dissertation has both its own advantages and limitations compared to the monograph, the traditional form of the dissertation. However, the University of Helsinki has encouraged doctoral students for some years to present their

PhD dissertations in the form of a collection of articles. Since this form also has the benefit of producing focused research, the approach has increasingly gained popularity also in the field of Theology.

Some of the benefits to the article dissertation are more practical and some are more methodological. For instance, one practical advantage of this form is that the researcher learns to communicate the research results to the international academic community from the early phase of their doctoral studies. Furthermore, the individual units of research are published as soon as they are finished. Therefore, feedback is given not only by the doctoral student's supervisors but also by an international academic forum. Each article also undergoes double-blind peer review such that the doctoral study benefits from attention by and feedback from researchers representing various related fields of study. Furthermore, the piecemeal publication of the research results is beneficial not only for the growth of PhD candidates and their research process but also for the scientific community as a whole. The article dissertation thus disseminates the results of the study to a wide audience more quickly than the monograph dissertation, more effectively benefitting the scientific community and, in the case of this dissertation, modern ecumenical research.

Notwithstanding, the main benefit of the article dissertation is methodological. Through the article dissertation, the researcher is free to examine a broad phenomenon from several different individual angles. The articles constitute separate, individual pieces of research that are nevertheless connected to one another. Every article is its own individual work of research, which offers one detailed look at a larger picture. Therefore, an article dissertation allows the possibility to use several different sources and contexts to explore interrelated research questions.

Thus, this dissertation combines disparate primary sources—the writings of the Finnish bishops and the LWF documents on episcopacy—and secondary sources—the background materials from the ELCF, such as General Synod Minutes, and from LWF identity study process, such as e-mails and responses from member churches (see section 3).

The larger phenomenon studied in this dissertation is the development of the contemporary Lutheran Christian understanding of the episcopal office—specifically in the ELCF and LWF. While the episcopacy as such is a large and complex issue in Lutheranism, it can be explored from different perspectives in an article dissertation, allowing for a fuller picture of the development, including the extent to which the development was a related process in the two case studies undertaken.

Nevertheless, as well suited as this form is for this research topic, the form has also its limitations. As journals generally call for articles of 6,000–8,000 words in length, or approximately 10–18 pages, the length of the articles is highly restricted. This practical demand limits the research question and sources that can be consulted and analyzed. Thus, in this collection of essays, there is less of a focus on secondary sources as there might be, for instance, in

a monograph dissertation. This is a deliberate decision of the author to ensure a critical examination of the primary sources in the limited space of the journal article format. Each footnote referencing secondary sources necessarily means that certain details from or about the primary sources must be discussed more briefly or left out altogether. This introductory chapter offers an overview of the collection, which allows for some discussion of secondary literature. I have also attempted to limit repetition of background information between the articles, though certain background information will have necessarily been repeated in multiple articles for the benefit of the readers. All articles are, at any rate, attached here in their originally published form.

2.3 TERMINOLOGICAL REMARKS

One challenge in theological studies has to do with certain terms that are used liberally in Finnish and English but which have somewhat vague, loaded, or uncertain meanings. In terms of Lutheran understandings of ministry, such terms include, for instance, 1) High Church vs. Low Church; 2) ordination, consecration, and installation; 3) different terms that relate to apostolic succession; 4) titles of those belonging to the episcopal and ordained ministry.

‘High Church’ (in Finnish, ‘korkeakirkollinen’) and ‘Low Church’ (in Finnish, ‘matalakirkollinen’) are often found in the writings of the Finnish bishops. By ‘High Church,’ bishops usually refer to a theological understanding that values liturgy, the historic episcopate, an ordained ministry, and episcopacy. By ‘Low Church,’ they usually refer to the opposite.⁵¹ The terms ‘High Church’ and ‘Low Church,’ which originate from Anglican tradition, are sometimes useful generalizations, but they also carry positive and negative connotations. For some, the designation ‘High Church’ can almost be an insult, whereas ‘Low Church’ can be said in praise and vice versa. In this dissertation, the concepts ‘High Church’ and ‘Low Church’ are avoided as much as possible. There is not, however, a perfect objective equivalent to either of these terms. In the first article, the dichotomy Catholic–Lutheran is used. However, this dichotomy is no less problematic than ‘High Church’ and ‘Low Church’ and is perhaps even more vague and problematic, because there is no solid consensus among Lutherans as to what is the Lutheran stance and because the Roman Catholic stance has also developed over time. That is, the theologies of ministry for either tradition are not static.

In article III, I have used the dichotomy Porvoo style–Leuenberg style. By ‘Porvoo style,’ I mean an understanding whereby the episcopal ministry is considered an important and highly valued structure, and the historic episcopate is considered as an important sign of the apostolicity of the church. By ‘Leuenberg style,’ I mean an understanding that does not consider either of

⁵¹Paarma 2012, 18–19.

these structures necessary and might even oppose them or consider them problematic.⁵² In this study, I have sometimes also used the term ‘Nordic position,’ by which, I mean something similar to ‘High Church’ and ‘Porvoo style.’ Although none of these terms are entirely without their problems, they nevertheless make it easier to express the connotations and arguments underlying certain claims in the sources.

The second terminological consideration has to do with the terms installation, consecration, and ordination. The difficulty of these terms for Lutherans might be surprising for non-Lutherans, especially as Lutherans traditionally do not consider ordination a sacrament. Nevertheless, *ordination* as a title of inauguration for an episcopal minister has been considered problematic among some Lutherans, since this concept seems to violate the Lutheran emphasis on one ministry. If the ministry is one, should there be only one ‘ordo’ and therefore one ordination?⁵³ Due to the nature of the Lutheran understanding of the one ministry, this term is sometimes translated as *consecration* in theological literature. However, the difference between the terms ordination and consecration is not easy to demonstrate. For Lutherans, churches, chapels, marriages, and bishops can all be ‘consecrated.’ Interestingly, though, ‘consecration’ is also the term used for when the Eucharist is sanctified, the Eucharist being one of two Sacraments according to Lutheran teaching.

The Nordic languages bring more layers to this issue. In Finnish and Swedish the same word, ‘vigsel’ or ‘vihkimys,’ is used to refer to the inauguration rite of a priest and of a bishop. That is, whether a priest is ordained or a bishop consecrated, the term ‘vigsel’ / ‘vihkimys’ is used. Furthermore, the ordination/consecration formulae for priests/bishops in the ELCF are very similar. However, if a bishop is assigned to a new diocese or a priest is assigned to a different task, such as that of dean or vicar, this is referred to as installation.⁵⁴ While ‘vigsel’ / ‘vihkimys’ is always performed only once, installations can be repeated.

Since there is only one term for the act of ordination and consecration in the Finnish language (‘vihkimys’), the terminological debate has been difficult to resolve for the ELCF.⁵⁵ To explicate the difference between the inauguration rites of a pastor and a bishop, the ELCF ordination formulae refer to the

⁵²These categories ‘Leuenberg style’ vrs. ‘Porvoo style’, however, are hardly unproblematic, since the episcopal ministry was not even explicated in the original agreement of Leuenberg, whereas it was explored in detail in PCS. See PCS, 34–57; cf. Leuenberg; however, CJC (2.5.1.1) quotes the ‘Tampere Thesis’ and thus speaks of *episkopé*.

⁵³This is another divisive issue among Lutherans; see Brand 1994, 18; Brodd 2005, 18–28, 53–57; Lind 2002, 63; Persenius 2016, 127–31; Repo 2016b.

⁵⁴In Swedish, ‘installering’; in Finnish, ‘asettaminen.’

⁵⁵ELCF Minutes; 1958, 34–35, 150–52.

‘ordination of a priest’⁵⁶ and the ‘ordination to the office of a bishop.’⁵⁷ Juhana Pohjola, in his study on the development of ordination formulae in the ELCF, found that ‘office’ specifies that the act is simultaneously ‘installation’ and ‘ordination.’⁵⁸ The debate over and differences between these concepts are explored in articles I, II, and V of this collection. In this study, either ‘ordination’ or ‘consecration’ is meant to denote an act that is not normally repeated⁵⁹, whereas installation is used to refer to an act which can be repeated.

The third terminological issue relates to the different terms used to refer to apostolic succession, such as ‘episcopal succession’, ‘historic episcopate’, and ‘apostolic continuity.’ Sometimes, in theological literature, ‘apostolic succession’ is used to refer to episcopal succession.⁶⁰ However, the terms are not interchangeable, and the understandings of these concepts have evolved over time. In this dissertation, ‘apostolic succession’ is most often used in a broad sense. ‘Episcopal succession’ or ‘historic episcopate’ are used to denote the chain of episcopal consecrations. It is, nevertheless, worth noting that terms may also carry other meanings in the source material (see article IV). In article I, for instance, I refer only to ‘apostolic succession’, since the sources of this article explicitly use this term.

Fourth, the names and titles of the different Lutheran ministers have been a point of division for Lutherans.⁶¹ Some Lutherans have traditionally avoided certain titles such as, ‘bishop’ and ‘priest,’ which have often been considered as overly ‘high church’ or inaccurate.⁶² These churches prefer other titles, such as pastor, pfarrer, superintendent, or president. In this dissertation, to avoid this point of contention, I have opted to use ‘episcopal minister’ to refer generally to Lutheran ministers tasked with oversight and ‘bishop’ to refer

⁵⁶ELCF Church Manual III, ‘Papiksi vihkiminen.’

⁵⁷ELCF Church Manual III, ‘Pispan virkaan vihkiminen.’ See ELCF Minutes (1963, 232–3), where Kansanaho explains that these wordings are ment to suggest that this act is ‘installation’, in stead of ‘ordination’, (in Finnish ‘virkaanasettaminen’).

⁵⁸For a study of Finnish ordained ministry and the ELCF ordination formulae, see Pohjola 2014, 113–23, 310. Pohjola notes that some changes in the ELCF understanding of ministry indicate the shift towards a ‘Nordic position’ discussed above; on similar considerations in the Church of Sweden, cf. Hansson 2014, 271–72; Repo 2010a.

⁵⁹Finnish ‘vihkiminen’; ‘vihkimys’.

⁶⁰Avis 2000, 23; Busch-Nielsen 2002, 188–89; Eckerdal 2017; Evans 2002, 80–81; Krapu 2009, 73–74; Pajunen 2008, 21; Tjørhom (2002a, 163–65) explains that apostolic succession has gained wider use due to the ecumenical movement, whereas it was earlier used most often to denote episcopal succession.

⁶¹Lind 2002, 54.

⁶²‘Priest’ derives from Latin *sacerdos*. According to Bayer (2008, 275) and Lohse (2011, 289–91), Luther distinguished between *sacerdotium* and *ministerium*, where *sacerdotium* was used to denote the task of all Christians—i.e., ‘royal priesthood’—and *ministerium* to denote that of the ordained ministry.

strictly to episcopal ministers that bear the title 'bishop' (in Finnish, 'piispa'). Furthermore, I have used both 'priest' or 'pastor' depending on the context to denote ordained ministers that are called 'präst' or 'pappi' in their home countries. However, I have most often used either 'ordained minister' or 'pastor' to refer to Lutheran ordained ministers in general.

2.4 PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Episcopal office and apostolic succession are both widely examined and still largely debated topics. The early development of these concepts continue to interest and divide theologians and historians ever more in the 21st century. New insights are still being produced and new theories are built around the concepts. Some such studies have focused on the early development of the offices, others on apostolic succession, but, since these topics are intertwined, both are usually addressed at least to some extent in the same studies.⁶³

Not only the development of offices in the early church but also the Lutheran Reformation and its consequences on the Lutheran understanding of ministry are widely researched—and tend to be highly controversial subjects. Books and articles on the events of the Reformation and the developments in different Lutheran churches thereafter abound.⁶⁴ Furthermore, there is a substantial literature, both old and new, on Luther's

⁶³See, Aejmelaeus 1994; Burkhard 2004, 1–250, (216–218) explains that in light of the early church, there are at least two ways of arranging the episcopal office; Kocik 2001, 1–42; Kretchmer 1999; Marshall 1999, 52–54, 145–50, 177–81, 512–21 (on the Pastoral Epistles and different positions, such as Roman Catholic and Protestant); Saarinen 2008; Sullivan 2001; Stewart 2015, 14–27. According to Stewart, there is little evidence of any biblical distinction between the bishop and the priest such that, during the first Christian centuries, presbyteros and episcopos were synonymous terms. Rather, according to Stewart, episcopos and presbyteros were near synonyms. Stewart argues that presbyteroi, as a collective term, referred to the group of leaders of several congregations, both lay and episcopoi, which gathered from time to time to discuss important issues. Hence, not all presbyteroi were episcopoi, but an episcopos could also have been a presbyteros. Furthermore, according to Stewart, episcopal succession was not the normal practice. An episcopos was consecrated by presbyteroi, but these presbyteroi were not always themselves ordained.

⁶⁴Andersen 1990; Borregaard 1970; Brodd 1993, 62–69; Cantell 1985; 1994, 221; Cleve 1993, 73–84; Forsberg 2002; Goppelt 1970; Grell 1994; Gritsch 2010, 24, 62–67, 86–87, 108–10; Hugason 1993, 104–8; Kouri 1995; Lislserud 1993, 93–95; Lodberg 2002; Lohse 1970; 1983; Lyby & Grell 1995; Montgomery 1995; Muziks 1993; Omari 1987; Parvio 1970a; 1970b; Pedersen 1993; Pirinen 1968; Putce 1993; Pädam 1993; 2002; Schmidt-Clausen 1970; Schumacher 2002; Schwarz Lausten 1995; Tammi 1994.

understanding of the ordained ministry, the priesthood of all believers, and even the episcopal office.⁶⁵

Although the historical developments of the episcopal office have interested the theologians for hundreds of years, few studies focus on contemporary development and even fewer on the LWF or the ELCF. There are some notable exceptions. Two recent dissertations discuss the topic of apostolic succession from an ecumenical perspective. Eric Eckerdal studies the understanding of apostolic succession in PCS, while Toan Tri Nguyen examines apostolic succession in Catholic-Lutheran Dialogues after Vatican II. Both these studies are detailed and thorough.⁶⁶ Furthermore, both of these studies make note of the Lundo7 document, which is one of the sources also used in this collection of articles.⁶⁷ In general, the history of the LWF has been studied until 1996.⁶⁸ However, no study has taken up the LWF documents on ministry (viz., EO83, M83, W83, MWB92, Malta02, and Lundo7) or the LWF identity study of 1999–2007.

In his dissertation, Klas Hansson examines the developments in the understanding of the archiepiscopacy in Lutheran Sweden, 1914–1990. Traditionally, in most Lutheran churches, there are no archbishops. However, the Church of Sweden (CoS) and ELCF have always had such an office.⁶⁹ Especially interesting in this study is how, among other areas of focus, Hansson examines how the archbishops of Sweden themselves have understood their office. Hansson finds that, during this period, the Swedish understanding of archiepiscopacy comes close to the understandings of the CoE. The archbishop's role as primate of the church strengthens during the period, and the ecumenical role of the archbishop's office increases as well as their role as the public voice of the church. Hence, the Archbishop is considered, according to Hansson's study, the office of unity and the voice of the CoS.⁷⁰ As the CoS shares hundreds of years of history with the ELCF, Klas Hansson's doctoral research is somewhat entangled with that of this collection

⁶⁵Bayer 2008, 273–78; Brunotte 1959; Daniel 2014, 344–49; Goertz 1997; Haendler 1981; Krarup 2007; Lieberg 1962; Lohse 1970; Peter 1997, 4–7, 70–76; Stein 1974; Wegert 2008, 56–62. Many of these studies also analyze earlier research on the issue; on the 19th-century discussion, see Brunotte 1959, 10–29; on the 20th-century discussion, see Goertz 1997, 1–27.

⁶⁶Eckerdal 2017; Nguyen 2016; cf. Busch Nielsen 2002; Furberg 2002; Hind 2002; Tjørhom 2002a.

⁶⁷For Lundo7, see Eckerdal 2017, 177, 194, 340, 342, 443; Nguyen 2016, 221, 293, 319, 399, 422, 525, 596, 671, 695. Malta02 and Lundo7 are briefly discussed in Repo 2015a, 7–14; 2015b, 15–27; MWB92 and the 1983 statements are mentioned in Brand 1994, 15, 17–18.

⁶⁸Schjørring et al. 1997.

⁶⁹See Hansson 2014, 432: According to Hansson, the office of Archbishop in the ELCF as well as of presiding bishop in the Church of Norway are very much similar to the archbishop's office in the CoS.

⁷⁰Hansson 2014, 413–33. Hansson's study is, unfortunately, only published in Swedish. However, the study includes an English summary of 14 pages (see 432–47).

of articles, which studies the understandings of the episcopal office in the writings of the Finnish bishops.

Another related study is to be found in the field of Practical Theology. Leena Kurki has empirically studied how the Finnish Lutheran and Orthodox bishops understand their own leadership. Kurki lays special emphasis on the spiritual aspect of this office. According to Kurki, it was nearly impossible to draw a coherent picture of episcopal office from her interviews with the Finnish bishops, since their understandings of the office were so diverse. As for the interviews with the Orthodox bishops, on the other hand, the task was easier. Notably, for the present work, similar themes and insights can be found in Kurki's interviews with the Finnish Lutheran bishops as can be found in the writings of the Finnish bishops examined in this study.⁷¹ In addition to this, Kirsi Ojansuu-Kaunisto studies in her recent MA thesis in Practical Theology, how the Finnish Lutheran bishops understand the role of the Bishops' Conference.⁷²

One particularly interesting MA thesis in Art History studies the portraits of Finnish bishops from the 16th century until today. Ari Luomajoki concludes that prominent changes in the understanding of the episcopacy in the ELCF in the 20th and the 21st centuries are reflected in visual changes to the portraits of the Finnish bishops. According to Luomajoki, the visual changes are always somewhat delayed. Changes in the portraits of the bishops' surface later than certain historical changes—for instance, the first purple shirt is found only in Bishop Kalevi Toiviainen's portrait of 1992, even though Finnish bishops began using these shirts shortly after the 1960s. Especially useful is the collection of portraits found in the appendix of this thesis. The visual changes in the bishops' portraits over the 20th century are remarkable. The appearance of liturgical vestments and purple shirts as well as the use of liturgical or spiritual symbolism increases dramatically in these portraits in the late 20th and early 21st century.⁷³

In the field of Systematic Theology, no recent study has been on the understanding of episcopacy in the ELCF. However, in his dissertation, Juhana Pohjola has examined the Finnish ordination formulae and developments in the understanding of the ministry in the ELCF based on these formulae. Pohjola's study is also entangled with the issue of episcopacy as he, among other ministerial offices, analyses bishop role in ordination. Pohjola

⁷¹Kurki 1994, 53–56, 78–100, 133. Ignatian spirituality, among others, is considered the methodological framework of the study: 'In addition to Christian spirituality, reference is made to Hindu [spirituality]... Special emphasis, however, is laid on Ignatian spirituality, which forms the methodological framework of the study. Through this an attempt will be made to show the firm methodological connection between leadership and spirituality.' The interviews with the Finnish bishops were conducted in 1993. This study is published in Finnish with an abstract in English.

⁷²Ojansuu-Kaunisto 2020.

⁷³Luomajoki 2019, 70–71, 79–84, 86–92, 106–7, 137–44, published in Finnish with an abstract in English.

notes changes in the understanding of office between 1963 and 2003, comparing the wordings of the ELCF formulae helpfully in tables.⁷⁴

Article II notes the Anti-Catholic and Anti-ecumenical attitudes of Finnish bishops. By the time article II was published, there was one Finnish article and one Finnish MA thesis in the field of Church History on anti-Catholic attitudes in Finland before Vatican II. In his article, Antti Laine examined Bishops' Conferences request on secret survey concerning assumed missionary work of RCC in Finland and in his MA thesis, Tatu Kotilainen studies the public reception of Vatican II in Finland. Soon after article II was published, Mikko Ketola published two articles in Church History on developments in Lutheran-Catholic relations. In his study, also Ketola notes that Vatican II marked a distinct change in the attitudes of Finnish Lutheran theologians and clerics toward the RCC.⁷⁵ There is, however, no systematic study on this field from the perspective of Finnish bishops.

In addition to these, there are some historical studies and popular books on related topics, such as the history of the Bishops' Conference, the histories of certain Finnish dioceses, and the biography of Finnish bishops.⁷⁶ In the Finnish context, the publication of the PSC also energized the general discussion on the structures of the ordained office, as can be seen from the number of publications on the topic around shortly thereafter in the Finnish Theological Journal, TA.⁷⁷ Some of these studies explore 'the Nordic position' on episcopacy, and others have briefly noted that there seems to have been

⁷⁴Pohjola 2014, 114, 242–64, 319 (published in Finnish with an abstract in English); cf. Puglisi 1996, 1998, 2001. Puglisi's comparative study on ordination rites in different Christian traditions is published in English in the form of a trilogy, examining, inter alia, the Lutheran ordination formulae.

⁷⁵Ketola 2017, 279–91; 2018, 355–67; Kotilainen 2006; Laine 2009. For the Roman Catholic perspectives on Vatican II, episcopacy, and the Lutheran observers, see Breuning 1983; De May 2019. On anti-Catholicism in Sweden, see Werner 2013. According to Werner, anti-Catholic attitudes were, like in Finland, also widespread in Sweden prior to Vatican II.

⁷⁶Alaja 1983; Alhonsaari 1987; Björkstrand 2016; Heinimäki 2015; Heininen 2008, Juva 1989; Kankkonen 1991; Krapu 2009; Mattila 2004; Mustakallio 2009, 2012; Nieminen 2008, 2011; Niiranen 2008; Paarma 2015; Pajunen 2008, Palmu 1990; Pihkala 2018 (a popular presentation of the development and theology of the bishop's office); Seppo 2013, 2015; Simojoki 1994; 1995; Tapaninen 2010; Toiviainen 1999; Virkkunen 1977; Vuori 2014; Ylikangas 2018. Unfortunately, of these, only Pajunen's (2008) dissertation is published in English. There is also some MA Thesis in Church History and in Systematic Theology studying certain individual Finnish bishop in various specific question. See Eriksson 2013, Kiviniemi 2003, Pentikäinen 2009, Puustinen 2016, Ylianttila 2020. One particularly interesting MA thesis, Puustinen (2016), studies Bishop Olavi Rimpiläinen's influence in Church Synod, and notes that Bishop Rimpiläinen's aim was to further the acceptance of the threefold structure of ministry in ELCF. Puustinen's study is published in Finnish with an abstract in English

⁷⁷Aejmelaeus 1994; Ahonen 1994; Arffman 1994; Cantell 1994; Grönvik 1994; Kiviranta 1994; Kopperi 1994; Kotila 1994; Tammi 1994.

changes in the understanding of episcopal office in Finland.⁷⁸ However, the topic has not previously been examined in detail.

⁷⁸Saarinen 2002, 260; Pohjola 2012, 310; cf. Laurinkari 2012, 84–86.

3. SOURCES

3.1 THE WRITINGS OF THE FINNISH BISHOPS

The episcopal office remained for the most part untouched by the Reformation in the Kingdom of Finland–Sweden (further, see section 1.1), with the Archbishop in charge of ordaining new bishops in Uppsala Cathedral until the Russian annexation of Finland in 1809. The Emperor of Russia granted the title of Archbishop to the bishop of Turku in 1817, who was then charged with consecrating new bishops in Finland. However, in 1884, all three Lutheran bishops died within a span of ten months.⁷⁹ The newly elected bishop, Torsten Thure Renvall, was a follower of pietistic insights of Johann Tobias Beck and considered episcopal succession to be a ‘Roman Catholic’ tradition and thus irrelevant. He therefore asked to be ordained by respected professor emeritus of Systematic Theology A. F. Granfelt. As Professor Granfelt was not a bishop but an ordained pastor, episcopal succession broke with Renvall’s ordination, but presbyteral ordination remained as a practice. Notably, this incident raised little discussion, suggesting that episcopal succession was of little importance to Finnish Lutherans at the time.⁸⁰ Although Nordic countries were predominantly Lutheran, with only small Catholic minorities, suspicions about the RCC and anti-Catholic attitudes began to arise soon after the Reformation.⁸¹

However, some acts in the 1930s, as would later be confirmed in the PCS, set the stage for the reintroduction of episcopal succession. Dialogue between the ELCF and CoE began in 1933. Separately, the following year, the Swedish Archbishop Eidem of Uppsala participated in the consecration of Bishop Aleksi Lehtonen, meaning that the episcopal succession had technically been reintroduced, since the chain of episcopal consecrations had never broken in Sweden. However, Finns never emphasized in the dialogue that episcopal succession had already been reintroduced by the CoS. Rather, Archbishop of Turku Erkki Kaila insisted that episcopal succession was not a *conditio sine qua non* for a valid ministry. Furthermore, the ELCF’s invitation of the bishops of CoE to participate in the bishop’s consecrations in Finland was only meant as a sign of unity and not an act to restore succession.⁸² The ELCF’s history of both episcopal and presbyteral succession makes the church a particularly

⁷⁹Krapu 2009, 74; Paarma 2012, 19; Pajunen 2008, 35.

⁸⁰Paarma 2012, 17–19; Pajunen 31–42. The Finnish bishops were ordained at Uppsala Cathedral until the Russian annexation of Finland in 1809. The Emperor of Russia granted the title of Archbishop to the Bishop of Turku in 1817.

⁸¹Werner 2013, 166–72.

⁸²Krapu 2009, 73–78; Paarma 2012, 19; Pajunen 2008, 35.

interesting case study for exploring the issues of the episcopal office and apostolic succession in Lutheran Christianity.

The pietistic theological emphasis combined with anti-Catholic sentiments defined the Finnish theology of ministry, but ecumenical encounters in the 1930s and the Swedish liturgical movement had already begun to introduce new insights.⁸³ For instance, while the old symbols of the bishop's office—such as the bishop's miter and staff—were considered overly 'high church,' Roman Catholic, and hierarchical, such symbols gradually became more widely accepted as ecumenical dialogues continued in earnest.⁸⁴ Today, while approximately half of the Finnish bishops still avoid the miter as daily attire, it is commonly worn at least during a bishop's own consecration. All other symbols of the office, such as bishop's robe, staff, and cross are commonly used in liturgical settings. Finnish bishops have also adopted the purple shirt as casual attire since the 1960s.⁸⁵

In addition to bishops and priests, there are in Finland deacons and deaconesses, who provide church social care yet are understood as belonging to the lay ministry. The place and role of the diaconate has been an ongoing discussion in the ELCF for almost 50 years. The traditional three-fold clergy has not been an accepted theology of the ELCF but has been considered throughout the years. The main issue at hand is whether the diaconate should be considered as belonging to the lay or the ordained ministry. The issue is complicated, as deacons do wear the green clerical collar, the alb, and the deacon stole and can be ordained/consecrated in ELCF when they graduate.⁸⁶

In a church with an episcopal-synodical structure, the official voice can usually be found in either the Church Synod or the Bishops' Conference. In the ELCF, the Bishops' Conference is an advisory board of the Church Synod with some specially designated tasks, such as dogmatic and ecumenical issues. The Church Synod, on the other hand, makes official decisions about the Church Order and Church Law.⁸⁷ The topics of the episcopal office and apostolic succession are, on the other hand, seldom discussed in either body, and there

⁸³Pohjola (2014, 95–100) suggests that the collision of pietism with the new liturgical movement that came to Finland from Sweden was initiated by Archbishop Aleksi Lehtonen.

⁸⁴Kansanaho 1982, 180–81; the bishop's cross had been accepted symbol of the office since 1805.

⁸⁵Luomajoki 2019, 60–61, 70–71, 79, 106–7, 137–44.

⁸⁶Huovinen 1990, 121; Komulainen 2002; 130–35; 2012, 193–205; Malkavaara 2015, 132–223; cf. Brodd 2005, 22–28, 53–57; Dietrich 2006, 65–66, 70–71. Dietrich explains that the diaconal ministry can be considered 'an integral part of the one ministry of the church which publicly proclaims teaches and witnesses to Christ' through diaconal service; cf. Repo 2006, 96. Bishop Repo suggests that deacons ought to be integrated into the ordained ministry with their office rooted in liturgical life. For Repo, ordination indicates a connection with worship life in the church. See Repo 2016b, 132–33: 'The Lutheran folk churches do not exactly seem to know whether their deacons are ordained, consecrated or commissioned.' For a discussion of the diaconate in different Lutheran churches, cf. Boettcher 2006, 90–100; Pädam 2016; Tjørhom 2004, 59.

⁸⁷The requested changes in the Church Law has to be accepted by the Finnish Parliament.

is remarkably little about the episcopal office in Finnish Church Law. One sentence explains that the bishops shall preside over the administration and operation of their diocese and supervise congregations and priests,⁸⁸ another that the bishop shall decide, together with other members of the board of the diocesan chapter whether a candidate is to be ordained as a priest,⁸⁹ and another that the bishop is the chair of the board of the diocese.⁹⁰ In addition, one paragraph explains that bishops can voluntarily resign from their office or can be dismissed by the diocesan chapter for health-related reasons.⁹¹

The Church Order expands on the tasks of the bishop but is still rather brief. According to the Church Order, bishops ordain priests and are the highest supervisor of the priests and congregations within their diocese.⁹² The Church Order also gives the following list of the tasks of bishops:

- 1) to foster the unity of the church and enhance the fulfillment of the objectives of the church in the diocese;
- 2) to supervise that the tasks connected to the objectives of the church are administered faithfully according to the confession of the church, church law, and church order and with respect to the church's electoral system and the rules and regulations attached to them;
- 3) to support and guide priests of their diocese in their work and supervise that they fulfill the obligations of their priestly ministry and priestly office;
- 4) to enhance effective co-operation in congregations and supervise that priests and other officers and employees of the congregation are irreproachable for their teaching and conduct themselves according to a Christian lifestyle;
- 5) to advance the co-operation of congregations and support the appropriate administering of finances and administration and supervise that such actions be taken in accordance to the pertinent rules and regulations;
- 6) to administer ordinations/consecrations and installations in their diocese or to command another ordained minister to administer such tasks, except in the cases outlined in §5.1.2;⁹³
- 7) to conduct other tasks and deliberate over issues assigned to them according to the Church Law and the Church Order.

⁸⁸Church Law 1993, 18:1 (30.12.2003/1274).

⁸⁹Church Law 1993, 5:1.

⁹⁰Church Law 1993, 19: 2 (30.12.2003/1274).

⁹¹Church Law 1993: 6: 49 (21.12.2012/1008).

⁹²Church Order 1991/1993; 5:1 (11.5.2001/439);

⁹³Church Order 1991/1993; 5:1,2 (11.5.2001/439); a bishop administers ordinations of the clergy. In the case that the office of bishop is vacant or the bishop unable to administer the ordination, the diocesan board can invite another bishop to officiate the ordination.

There are not many ‘other tasks’ given in the Church Order, but the bishop does, for instance, grant certain honorary titles to the clergy and decide together with the diocesan chapter whether a priest ordained by another church might be granted permission to officiate in the ELCF.⁹⁴ In addition to these passages, there is also an official report from the ELCF committee of ‘the structure of ordained ministry,’ which bases its one-page examination of the bishop’s office on describing what is said in BEM and PCS.⁹⁵

While the Church Law and the Church Order does not offer a rich resource for examining the ELCF understanding of the episcopal office and apostolic succession, the ELCF Church Synod Minutes and Bishops’ Conference Minutes are sometimes useful sources. The theologies of episcopal office as such are rarely discussed in these instances, but the topic is sometimes entangled with other topics. This was the case in the Church Manual of 1963, where the title ‘installation of a bishop’ was replaced by ‘ordination/consecration to the office of a bishop’. The phrase ‘to the office’ was a compromise solution, since the title ‘ordination of a bishop’ was resisted for theological reasons.⁹⁶ Moreover, once the ordination of women was accepted in the 1986 Church Synod and the first women were ordained to the ministry of word and sacrament in 1988, there was an initiative to elect women to the episcopal office. This initiative was considered in the 1988 Bishops’ Conference and the 1988 and 1990 Church Synods, and generated discussion on oneness of ministry and on the relationship between the ordained office and the episcopal office.⁹⁷ Additionally, the bishop’s role in ordination was

⁹⁴Church Order 1991/1993; 5: 8 § (11.5.2001/1558); such an individual must also fulfill the basic requirements for a priest in ELCF—for instance, having proper education, such as a master’s degree in theology.

⁹⁵Palvelijoiaksi vihityt 2002, 126; cf. BEM M 29–31; PCS 41–43; correspondingly in Sweden, see Biskopsbrev 1990, 17–20.

⁹⁶ELCF Minutes 1958, 32–39, 150–52; 1963, 232–3; ELCF Church Law Committee statement 1963, 79–83; Church Manual Committee statement 1958, 90–94; 1963, 14–16, 82–88; Alaja 1965, 278–81; Pohjola’s (2014, 95–124) study includes a detailed overview, how different issues relating the offices are addressed in ELCF Church Synod committees.

⁹⁷ELCF Minutes 1988, Initiative of Helsinki Diocese 9/1988; Constitution Committee statement 1/1989; Bishops’ Conference statement 12th September 1989. There was at strong emphasis on oneness of ministry in this initiative and in its following statement and discussions. According to the Constitution Committee, it would be natural to accept female bishops, since they already serve in ordained ministry. They also noted some episcopal features in the tasks of the vicar, an office, which women already had permission to enter. It was therefore deemed consistent that women could also be elected as bishops. The statement also offers a general consideration of the theology of episcopal office, basing its arguments mostly on CA 5, CA7 and CA28. For example, the statement concludes that the ordained office belongs essentially to the church, is one and is divinely instituted (*iure divino*) but that the different tasks are determined based on human jurisdiction (*iure humano*). According to this statement, while these different offices may have developed in the early church with spiritual guidance, they are still ultimately determined by humans. Furthermore, this statement

discussed, as the practice of presbyteral ordination was excised from the Church Law in 2001.⁹⁸ Separately, the role of ‘the field bishop’ was briefly discussed in the 2014 Church Synod, as the structure of the Bishops’ Conference had undergone changes, and the role of the field bishop is again under investigation now in 2020.⁹⁹

Since Church Law, Church Order and General Synod Minutes offer little evidence for how the ELCF understanding of the episcopacy has changed over time, the primary sources for this study come largely from the writings of the Finnish bishops themselves. Finnish bishops are traditionally highly educated theologians,¹⁰⁰ having completed a doctorate in theology and having often been professors in a faculty of theology before being elected as bishops. Moreover, many Finnish bishops have been prolific writers and, in their writings, have sometimes discussed the episcopal office and apostolic succession.¹⁰¹ Their reflections provide a fruitful source for examining the evolution of the understandings of, attitudes towards, and preconceptions about the episcopal office and apostolic succession in the ELCF.

emphasizes that the bishop’s office is an office of unity. The statement also points out that each bishop’s election is a spiritual act, where the church puts its faith in providential guidance. The Bishops’ Conference also issued a statement on the matter in 1989. Their considerations were not as simple as those evidenced in the Constitution Committees statement. According to the bishops, the episcopal office is both a part of ministerium and also its own *ordo*—cf. ELCF Minutes 1990, 60–67; 91–92, where the bishops expressed their views in the Church Synod on 9 May 1990 as follows: Bishop Erik Vikström, ‘a Lutheran bishop is entirely a priest, but a Lutheran priest is not necessarily entirely a bishop’; Bishop Kalevi Toiviainen, ‘the relationship between the office of the bishop and the office of priest [is not] as simple as some statements here tend to express’; some, on the other hand, emphasized the oneness of ministerium and its divine origin (e.g., Bishop Samuel Lehtonen, ‘The office is one, *iure divino*, but its organising to different tasks, is *iure humano*’), cf. Huovinen 1987, 87–92; for a historical background of the discussions see, Björkstrand 2016, 310–13.

⁹⁸Church Law 1993 5:1; Church Order 1991/1993; 5:1 (11.5.2001/439); ELCF Minutes 2001, 244–51; changes were accordingly made also in the Church Manual of 2003. The change was one concrete application of PCS. See, Bishops’ Conference statement 2000; Constitution Committee statement 2000; Church Law Committee statement 1/2001; 2/2001.

⁹⁹Law Committee Report 1/2014; ELCF Minutes 2014, 2020 (available online): the arguments defending full membership at Bishops’ Conferences for the field bishop have been more patriotic, entangled in post-war nationalism, than theological. Cf. ELCF Minutes 1968, 270–7.

¹⁰⁰Stjerna 2002, 147–48.

¹⁰¹Traditionally, in Finland, a newly elected bishop has presented his/her main theological insights in the form of a book, entitled ‘a pastoral letter’, to the clergy and laity of his/her new diocese. These pastoral letters are also presented whenever a bishop moves to a new diocese. The composition of pastoral letters was a common procedure in the 20th century but has become rare in the 21st century, as bishops have access to new media to interact with their diocese. In addition to these pastoral letters, bishops publish a wide range of works, including autobiographies, personal diaries, theological research, popular theological books, prayer books, journal articles, collections of speeches, and sermons.

This study concentrates mostly on pastoral letters and popular theological books, since these publications most often address the episcopal office and apostolic succession.¹⁰² Due to the prolificness of Finnish bishops, I decided to concentrate mainly on the books published after their election as bishops. In the period researched, there have been in total 47 bishops serving the dioceses of ELCF.¹⁰³ There were six bishops supervising the six dioceses in Finland at the beginning of this period, in 1945.¹⁰⁴ Over the following centuries, however, three more dioceses were established, and a separate bishop's seat was granted for the archbishopric of Turku. Thus, by the end of the period, in 2015, there were a total of ten bishops serving nine dioceses.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, in the service of the Finnish Defense Forces, there is an office entitled 'Field Bishop.' The title of this office was formerly known as 'Field Dean,' but the secular government changed the title in 1941.¹⁰⁶ Since this office is theologically closer to the office of a dean rather than the office of a bishop, the writings of Field Bishops are not included in this examination.

Nevertheless, while the number of bishops has increased in Finland, the practices of publishing and public communicating have changed dramatically in correspondence with society. Bishops of the 21st century use Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.¹⁰⁷ They also publish fewer autobiographies, diaries, and monographs compared to their predecessors. However, more of them publish journal articles and article collections than was the case before the 1990s. Therefore, journal articles addressing topics of episcopacy and apostolic succession are handled as primary sources especially in the later period studied in this dissertation.

¹⁰²Each article contains bibliographical notes on the sources used; therefore, the writings of bishops used in the articles are not repeated the bibliography of this introduction.

¹⁰³There were 27 bishops serving the Finnish dioceses in 1945–1985. In total, 22 of these 27 bishops wrote about the episcopal office in their writings, whereas 28 of the 47 bishops over the whole of 1945–2015 have written about apostolic succession in their writings.

¹⁰⁴Bishop Aleksi Lehtonen of the archdiocese of Turku, Bishop Max von Bonsdorff of the diocese of Porvoo, Bishop Eelis G. Gulin of the diocese of Tampere, Bishop Ilmari Salomies of the diocese of Mikkeli, Bishop Väinö Malmivaara of the diocese of Oulu and Bishop Eino Sormunen of the diocese of Kuopio.

¹⁰⁵Archbishop Kari Mäkinen and Bishop Kaarlo Kalliala of the diocese of Turku, Bishop Björn Vikström of the diocese of Porvoo, Matti Repo of the diocese of Tampere, Bishop Seppo Häkkinen of the diocese of Mikkeli, Bishop Samuel Salmi of the diocese of Oulu, Bishop Simo Peura of the diocese of Lapua, Bishop Irja Askola of the diocese of Helsinki, Bishop Tapio Luoma of the diocese of Espoo, and Bishop Jari Jolkkonen of the diocese of Kuopio.

¹⁰⁶Vuori 2011, 169–94.

¹⁰⁷See, e.g., Luoma 2017, a collection of Twitter 'sermons,' known in Finnish as 'twaarna' (i.e., 'twermon'). The Archbishop of Turku and former Bishop of Espoo Tapio Luoma publishes tweet-sermons, Bishop of Oulu Jukka Keskitalo posts actively on Instagram, Bishop of Kuopio Jari Jolkkonen is participates actively in Twitter discussions, and Bishop of Tampere Matti Repo actively updates his official Facebook account.

Notably, some of the writings of Finnish bishops are more often popular books rather than theological studies. Therefore, not all sources used here can be considered theologically grounded arguments. Consequently, underlying attitudes and preconceptions are easier to unravel in these popular books than in more systematic theological presentations, though biases are hardly lacking in these latter sources.

3.2 THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION DOCUMENTS ON THE EPISCOPAL OFFICE

In addition to the understandings of episcopacy in the writings of Finnish bishops, this study examines the understandings of the episcopal office in LWF documents.¹⁰⁸ The documents chosen for this study concentrate on different perspectives on the Lutheran understanding of ministry. Besides the common topic explored in them, these two sets of documents are also connected to one another in the sense that the composers of the latter documents used the earlier documents as study and background material.

The Lutheran World Federation is a global communion of Lutheran churches.¹⁰⁹ It was established in Lund in 1947 as a free association of autonomous churches belonging to the Lutheran tradition. A new constitution was adopted in Curitiba in 1990, after a protracted over debate whether the decisions of LWF should be more binding. According to this new constitution, the LWF was theretofore a ‘communion of churches’ tied together in ‘pulpit and altar fellowship’—i.e., LWF churches share the Eucharistic table and ministry, at least in principle.¹¹⁰

However, the nature of this communion is somewhat difficult to define.¹¹¹ The LWF is not a church, but the LWF churches still have a common doctrinal basis and have agreed to engage in pulpit and altar fellowship. The doctrinal basis for such unity is the Augsburg Confession (CA) and Luther’s Catechism.¹¹² According to CA, ‘the church is the assembly of saints in which

¹⁰⁸The Lutheran Understanding of Ministry (M83), The Lutheran Understanding of Episcopal Office (EO83), Ministry–Women–Bishops (MWB92), The Episcopal Ministry within the Apostolicity of the Church (Malta02), and Episcopal Ministry within the Apostolicity of the Church (Lund07).

¹⁰⁹LWF website 15 August 2019: ‘The LWF is a global communion of 148 churches in the Lutheran tradition, representing over 75.5 million Christians in 99 countries’; for a brief description of the development of the LWF and the role of Strasbourg institute, see Gritsch 2010, 230–34; for a detailed history of the LWF up to 1997, Schjørring, Kumari and Hjelm 1997.

¹¹⁰Gritsch 2010, 230, 234; Root 1997, 216–43; Schjørring 1997a, 3–39; 1997b, 42–45, 76–81.

¹¹¹In LWF study document ‘The Self-Understanding of the Lutheran Communion’ (2015), the communion of LWF churches is described as ‘a gift and a task’, which is lived in ‘unity and diversity’; cf. Gritsch 2010, 242; Root 1997, 244.

¹¹²Gritsch 2010, 230–34; Root 1997, 216; Schjørring 1997b, 44–49.

the gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly.’¹¹³ Because LWF member churches share this doctrinal basis in teaching and the sacraments (CA and Luther’s Catechism), it has sometimes been difficult to explain how this communion is not therefore ‘a church.’¹¹⁴

At the international level, the LWF has nevertheless operated as an ecumenical organization, representing its member churches in ecumenical dialogues. From the beginning, the LWF has had a secretariat in Geneva, led by the General Secretary.¹¹⁵ The highest decision-making body in the LWF is the LWF Assembly, which convenes every sixth or seventh year. Between the Assemblies, governance is overseen by the LWF Council, which is elected by the Assembly. Between the Council meetings the LWF is overseen by the Executive Committee. Furthermore, the Strasbourg Ecumenical Institute was founded in 1963 to conduct research in support of the ecumenical aims of the LWF.¹¹⁶ While the LWF has few means for disciplining its member churches, the LWF Assembly can suspend churches if a church is found to violate the shared confessional basis, as happened in 1984.¹¹⁷

Regardless of variation among churches in their structures and the forms of their ordained ministry, the LWF member churches are committed to engaging in pulpit and altar fellowship. For instance, the Lutheran communion comprises churches both with and without historic episcopate. There are churches with a more rigid episcopal structure and those that lay greater emphasis on lay leadership and synodical structures. Most LWF member churches ordain women, but some member churches still restrict their ordained ministry to men. This range of approaches has been possible, since Lutherans have traditionally held that communion requires a common understanding of ‘teaching of the gospel and administration of the sacraments’ but not necessarily similar church structures.¹¹⁸ What has remained unresolved among Lutherans, however, is the extent to which a common understanding of gospel and the sacraments requires a common understanding of ministry. Therefore, it is understandable that the LWF’s nature as a church communion needed further clarification after the new

¹¹³CA 7; Kärkkäinen 2017, 301.

¹¹⁴Root 1997, 216; 239–40, 243.

¹¹⁵In the beginning titled the ‘Executive Secretary’ but later renamed the ‘General Secretary’. See Schjørring 1997b, 49.

¹¹⁶Gritsch 2010, 233; LWF website, www.lutheranworld.org.

¹¹⁷Gritsch 2010, 231, 242; Schjørring 1997b, 73; Root 1993, 227–34, 238–39: the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (Cape Church) and the German Evangelical Lutheran Church in South West Africa (Namibia) were suspended 1984–1991 because they refused to reject the policy of apartheid.

¹¹⁸CA7: ‘it is enough for the true unity of the church to agree concerning the teaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments. It is not necessary that human traditions, rites, or ceremonies instituted by human beings be alike everywhere. As Paul says [Eph. 4:5, 6]: “One faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.”’

constitution of 1990. The identity study process was thus initiated, particularly to clarify how different churches viewed the episcopal office and apostolic succession.

Such topics were hardly new to LWF. The LWF Assembly in Dar es-Salaam (1977) recommended that the LWF Studies department and Strasbourg Institute concentrate on the issue of Lutheran understanding of ministry. The particular focus of this study ought thus to have been clarifying the relationship between the priesthood of all believers and the ordained ministry.¹¹⁹ Although the Assembly prioritized the examination of the issues of all baptised and ordained ministry, the mandate led to a broader examination. Of the three consultations subsequently held, one addressed the topic of priesthood of all believers, one the episcopal office, and the last the issue of the ordination of women.¹²⁰ The consultations resulted in the publication of *The Ministry of All Baptized Believers* in 1980 and three other documents in 1983: *The Lutheran Understanding of Episcopal Office* (EO83), *Women in the Ministries of the Church* (W83), and *The Lutheran Understanding of Ministry* (M83). These latter three documents—namely, EO83, W83, and M83—are explored in this dissertation.¹²¹ EO83 and W83 were used by the LWF Studies Department as background material for M83; hence, some parts of M83 are very similar to the other two documents. The statements were published as separate booklets in the LWF Studies series in 1980 and 1983, but the latter

¹¹⁹LWF Archives, proceedings from 'In Christ a New Community': The Sixth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania. June 13–25, 1977 (LWF: Geneva 1977), 113; EO83, 3: the foreword explains that EO83 is part of 'the ministry project' mandated by the Dar es-Salaam Assembly in 1977. EO83 lists various reasons why such a study is necessary and explains that aim has been to 'assist [LWF member churches] in clarifying and dealing with their problems of ministry, both theological and practical.'

¹²⁰The participants in the 1983 consultation on the episcopal office were Bishop Andreas Aarflot (CoN), Bishop Helge Brattgård (CoS), Bishop Manas Buthelezi (Southern Africa), Dr. Eugene Brand (LWF), Rev. Phyllis Comte (LWF), Bishop Kleopas Dumeni (Ovambo-kavango), Dr. Günther Gassmann (LWF), Rev. Karl Gervin (LWF), Metropolitan Emilianos (Ecumenical Patriarchate), OKR Folkert Ihmels (Saxony), Dr. Yoshiro Ishida (LWF), Bishop S. T. Jacobson (Canada), Bishop Eric Kemp (CoE), Bishop Sabastian Kolowa (Tanzania), Bishop Paavo Kortekangas (ELCF), Dr. Anza Lema (LWF), Bishop Andar Lumbantobing (Indonesia), Professor Per Lønning (CoN), OKR Käte Mahn (Hannover), Rev. Dorothea Millwood (LWF), Bishop Jacob Nag (Jeypore), Rev. Meinrad Piske (Brasil), Dr. David Preus (American Lutheran Church), Professor Karoly Pröhle (Hungary), Dr. Gerhard Reitz (Papua New Guinea), Bishop Paul Werner Scheele (RCC), Bishop Karlheinz Stoll (VELKD), Fr. Max Thurian (Reformed, Taizé), and Bishop Wilson Touhsaent (United Lutheran Church in America).

¹²¹These three documents are used as background material for MWB92, Malta02, and Lundo7. The document concentrating on the priesthood of all believers (1980) is left out from examination, since it has not been part of the later process that resulted in Lundo7. EO83 and M83 play a more central role in this examination than does W83, since W83 concentrates on the ordination of women and only addresses the issue of episcopacy briefly.

three were also included in the appendices of the booklet *Ministry, Women, Bishops* (MWB92), issued in 1993.

The impetus behind drafting yet another document in 1990s on the Lutheran understanding of ministry was ecumenical. This time, the focus was more on episcopacy than on the priesthood of all believers. The LWF General Secretary and the Standing Committee on Ecumenical Relations noted that the Lutheran understanding of episcopacy should be examined as a follow-up to the bilateral Lutheran – Anglican Niagara report.¹²² Therefore, the LWF Executive Committee voted in the Addis Ababa meeting of 1988 for ‘the Lutheran concept and practice of episcopacy’ to be clarified,¹²³ as would happen in a consultation on the ordained Ministry in Cartigny, Switzerland in 1992.¹²⁴ The report from this consultation was then published in 1993 and sent to the LWF member churches ‘for study and for reference in ecumenical conversations.’ This report likewise included the 1983 documents in its appendices.¹²⁵

In spite of the publication of MWB92, the topic of episcopacy continued to pose a challenge for Lutherans in ecumenical dialogues. Hence, clarification of this topic remained among the top priorities of the LWF Office for Ecumenical Affairs (OEA), the LWF Department of Theology and Study (DTS), and the Strasbourg Institute. The ‘Lutheran identity study’ was thus approved by the LWF Council in 1998.¹²⁶ Already from the beginning, the role of a bishop and the compatibility of several binding ecumenical statements, such as PCS, CCM and Leuenberg, were among the issues to be clarified.¹²⁷ For the purpose of

¹²²LWF EC Minutes 1988, 23–24; cf. Niagara Report 1982, 5; Seils (1988, 5.2.4) also BEM as an impetus for the need to reflect on episcopal ministry in the Lutheran tradition.

¹²³LWF EC Minutes 1988, 23–24.

¹²⁴The participants in this consultation were Bishop Andreas Aarflot (Norway), Rev. Dr. Phyllis Anderson (USA), Bishop Sven-Erik Brodd (Sweden), Professor Karlfried Froehlich (USA), Rev. Dr. Niels Hasselmann (Germany), Rev. Donna Herzfeldt Kamphrath (Canada), Bishop Georg Kretschmar (Latvia), Rev. Rose Materu (Tanzania), Dr. Dr. Harald Schultze (Germany), and Rev. Pirjo Työrinoja (Finland)

¹²⁵LWF Archives, Minutes of the Lutheran World Federation, Meeting of the Council 20–30 June 1993, Kristiansand, Norway, 43.

¹²⁶LWF Archives X.8.6.1, LIS 1998–2001; Agenda of LWF Standing Committee for Ecumenical Affairs, 10–12 June 1998, 7: ‘It is recommended that the plan submitted for an inter-departmental Identity Study be implemented’; *exhibit 7.2; LFIR- Meeting of the board of trustees*. Strasbourg, 15–16 April 1999, 1; Notes from Meeting of Steering Group Strasbourg, 25 January 2001; ‘LWF Study Project: Lutheran Identity in Ecumenical Relationships’ (presentation), 22 June 2001.

¹²⁷LWF Archives X.8.6.1, LIS 1997: Sven Oppegaard’s letter ‘Concerning task force on “historical episcopate”’ to Sven Erik Brodd, Eugene Brand, William Lazareth, George Lindbeck, Inge Lönning, Harding Meyer, David Yaego and Gunther Wenz; Harding Meyer’s letter to Sven Oppegaard 21 December 1997; LWF LIS 2000: e-mail from Arthur Leichnitz to LWF, 24 August 2000; email from Sven Oppegaard to Eugene Brand 12 May 2000; *Signatory’s Protocol by the Church of Norway on the signing of The Agreement between Reformation Churches in Europe (Leuenberg Agreement)*.

this clarification, a meeting was held in Geneva in 2000.¹²⁸ Once the project officially began, a steering group for this study project was formed, comprising one member from OEA, DTS, and the Strasbourg institute.¹²⁹ To involve the Lutheran churches from different continents into the project, the steering group decided to develop ‘a working paper’ and a questionnaire as tools for the regional meetings that would soon be held.¹³⁰ In addition, MWB92, comprising the 1983 documents (EO83, M83 and W83) were sent in advance to the participants of the regional meetings. This phase of the study was relatively short, with the first regional meeting taking place in North America already in December 2001. Regional meetings included presentations, discussion, and joint work on the draft report.¹³¹

Soon after these regional meetings, select Lutheran participants from bilateral dialogues were invited to a consultation in Malta.¹³² These

EELC signed Leuenberg in 1975 and PCS in 1996; CoN signed Leuenberg in 1999 and PCS in 1996; ELCD signed Leuenberg in 2001 and PCS in 2010.

¹²⁸LWF Archives X.8.6.1, LIS 2000: Agenda of the Ecumenical Profile of Lutheran Churches Relating Simultaneously to Churches of Episcopal and Non-Episcopal Traditions, Geneva, 20–24 August 2000. The participants came from Lutheran, Anglican, and Reformed churches; e-mails from David Hamid to Sven Oppegaard, 5–6 July 2000; e-mails from Oppegaard to Hamid 5–6 July 2000. Ecumenical guests were invited as ‘active observers.’ Their ‘active’ role was discussed in e-mails exchanged between Hamid and Oppegaard and in a memorandum on the consultation written by Oppegaard. Presentations during this consultation were given by Sven Oppegaard, Randal Lee, Olav Fykse Tveit, Mike Mattox, André Birmelé, and Karen Bloomquist.

¹²⁹LWF Archives X.8.6.1, LIS 2001; Notes from Meeting of Steering Group Strasbourg, 25 January 2001: Wolfgang Greive (DTS), Mickey Mattox (Strasbourg), and, as chair, Sven Oppegaard (OEA) were in the steering group in 2001; ‘LWF Study Project: Lutheran Identity in Ecumenical Relationships’ (presentation), 22 June 2001.

¹³⁰LWF LIS 2001: Notes from Meeting of Steering Group Strasbourg, 25 January 2001. Theodor Dieter was invited to participate in the drafting of this document; ‘LWF Study Project: Lutheran Identity in Ecumenical Relationships’ (presentation), 22 June 2001: Reference Group is formed. This group functions through emails, consists of members from different regions.

¹³¹LWF Archives X.8.6.1, LIS 2001: ‘LWF Study Project: Lutheran Identity in Ecumenical Relationships’ (presentation), 22 June 2001; LWF LIS 2002, Regional Meetings: North America, 2–4 December 2001; Nordic countries, 25–28 February 2002; Australia, 13–15 April 2002; South America, 6–9 May 2002; Central Europe, 23–26 June 2002; Africa, 19–21 August 2002.

¹³²LWF Archives X.8.4.1: *Preparation Malta*: The consultation took place 16–21 November 2002 in Malta. The participants in the consultation were Prof. Dr. Anna Marie Aagard (ELCD), Prof. Dr. André Birmelé (France), Rev. Fui-Yung Chong (Malaysia), Prof. Dr. Theo Dieter (Strasbourg Institute), Prof. Dr. Luis Henrique Dreher (Brazil), Bishop Guy Edmiston (North America), Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Greive (Germany), Bishop Dr. Béla Harmati (Hungary), Rev. Dr. Hartmut Hövelmann (Germany), Archbishop Dr. Georg Kretschmar (Latvia), Prof. Dr. Kristen Kvam (ELCA), Superintendent Dieter Lorenz (Germany), Prof. Dr. Eeva Martikainen (ELCF), Prof. Dr. Mickey Mattox (Strasbourg Institute), Rev. Sven Oppegaard (LWF), Prof. Dr. Ricardo Pietrantonio (Argentina), Prof. Dr. Hermann Pitters (Romania), Rev. Dr. Roman Pracki (Poland), Prof. Dr.

participants received the notes from the regional meetings and MWB92, which included the 1983 statements, for study beforehand.¹³³ In the Malta consultation, presentations were given, and the draft statement, written by the steering committee, was presented, discussed, and worked on jointly afterwards. At this meeting, an editorial committee was selected to finalize *The Episcopal Ministry within the Apostolicity of the Church* (Malta02), which was published online December 2002.¹³⁴ The Executive Committee of LWF received this statement 20 March 2003. The statement was also circulated at the 10th Assembly in Winnipeg in 2003.¹³⁵

Notably, the statement was sent to all LWF member churches and LWF national committees for study and response in 2003. The LWF received responses from some member churches from 2003 to 2005. In addition, the Anglican Communion issued a thorough, balanced response by the LWF's Committee's request in 2006. The LWF also received some critical feedback from WordAlone network¹³⁶ in 2003. All responses then accounted for in the new document, *Episcopal Ministry within the Apostolicity of the Church* (Lund07), which was developed by the editorial committee and presented to the LWF Council in Lund 2007. The LWF Council then voted in Lund 'to affirm the text as an appropriate current expression of the Lutheran understanding of the ministry of oversight.'¹³⁷ LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr. Ishmael Noko

Michael Root (ELCA), Prof. Dr. Risto Saarinen (ELCF), Rev. Klaus Schwarz (Germany), Prof. Dr. Turid Karlsen Seim (CoN), Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Silcock (Australia), Prof. Dr. Yoshikazu Tokuzen (Japan), Rev. Dr. Pirjo Työrinoja (ELCF), Prof. Dr. Gunther Wenz (Germany).

¹³³As background material, members of Malta consultation used MWB92, comprising EO83, M83, and W83, as well as some of the reports from regional meetings and presentations by André Birmelé, Michael Root, Ola Tjørhom, and Gunther Wenz. The presentations of Georg Kretschmar, Pirjo Työrinoja, Turid Karlsen Seim, Risto Saarinen, Anna Marie Aagard, and Theodor Dieter as well as some further notes from the regional meetings were handed out in Malta.

¹³⁴Editorial committee members: Theodor Dieter, Randal Lee, Joachim Track, and Sven Oppegaard.

¹³⁵LWF Archives X.8.6.1, LIS 2002, Follow-up to Malta: letter from Sven Oppegaard to James Nestingen (WordAlone), Geneva, 13 November 2003; letter from General Secretary Ismael Noko to the LWF Member Churches and National Committees, Geneva, 6 December 2005.

¹³⁶WordAlone is a Lutheran network of congregations within ELCA. It is generally considered theologically conservative and known of its critical attitude towards the historic episcopate.

¹³⁷LWF Archives X.8.6.1, LIS 2000: Documents Malta, Agenda; LIS 2002: Follow-up to Malta, Responses from LWF member churches to the three documents; letter from Sven Oppegaard to James Nestingen (WordAlone), Geneva, 13 November 2003; letter from James Nestingen (WordAlone) to Sven Oppegaard, 17 October 2003; WordAlone, A Lutheran Response to The Episcopal Ministry within the Apostolicity of the Church, 24 July 2003; News release 25 July 2003; Minutes of the LWF Council, Bethlehem, 11 August–6 September 2005, 37–38: the council voted that the LWF General Secretary should arrange in consultation with DTS a new text based on Malta02 and the responses from member churches. Furthermore, the committee decided that Malta02 is to be sent to the ecumenical partners for comments. Because no responses had yet been received from the African member churches, the professors from the Strasbourg Institute promised

emphasized that Lundo07 is not intended to be a magisterial document but a significant contribution to an important issue.¹³⁸ This multiphase procedure reflects and affirms the nature of the LWF as a church communion—thus, member churches from all continents have participated in the process—and as an ecumenically committed organization—thus, the nature of the documents examined are clarified and ecumenical perspectives profoundly accounted for in drafting the statements.

EO83, M83, W83, MWB92, Malta02, and Lundo07 are the primary sources in this study for LWF as a case study. In addition, relevant background materials from the LWF archives are also used—for instance, the responses of member churches, e-mails, drafts versions of the documents, and presentations at different consultations.

As discussed above, the LWF is not a church (see section 3.2), and therefore the LWF documents are not ‘magisterial’ in nature. Therefore, the normativity of the LWF statements is difficult to define, and the value of the document shifts to its reception. Nevertheless, as the aim of the Lutheran identity study was to clarify the Lutheran understanding of episcopal ministry and to strengthen the identity of the LWF as a communion of churches. This document has helped to guide further ecumenical efforts and should be analyzed as such.¹³⁹

Furthermore, LWF statements are always to some extent compromises. The statements try to harmonize different theologies of episcopacy into one theology acceptable to all member churches. However, my analysis of these documents identifies their main features and the characteristically Lutheran issues raised in them. Moreover, this analysis attempts to trace how the LWF statements change over time in an effort to indicate tendencies of the development of LWF member churches.

to travel to Africa to aid in the request to respond to the Malta02 statement. The editorial meeting took place in Geneva, 7–8 September 2006. The new text was built on Malta02, but it included a more profound biblical background and extended the Early Church section. Comments for the draft were received upon request from Reinhard Boettcher, 31 August 2006, by e-mail. The final text was presented to the Executive Committee, which recommended it to the council meeting in 2007. Some amendments were made in 2007 and the statement was then adopted by the Council in Lund.

¹³⁸https://ecumenism.net/2007/04/lwf_affirms_statement_on_episcopal_ministry.htm.

¹³⁹LWF Archives X.8.6.1, LIS 2002: letter from Sven Oppegaard to James Nestingen (WordAlone), Geneva, 13th November 2003: ‘the intention is to search for the highest possible degree of consensus within the LWF constituency. The procedure involved is one of full openness.’

4. RESULTS AND REFLECTION

4.1 MAIN FINDINGS OF THE FIVE ARTICLES

Article I: ‘What is Episcopacy? The Understanding of the Episcopal Office According to Finnish Bishops in 1945–1965,’ *Finnish Journal of Theology, Teologinen aikakauskirja* 3, 2014.¹⁴⁰

Article I explores the insights of the Finnish bishops on the episcopal office in their books from 1945 to 1965. The aim is to find out whether a ‘Nordic position’ (see section 1.1) toward episcopacy can be discerned from these sources before Vatican II. The findings of article I contribute to the overall study by describing the main issues raised by the topic of the episcopal office in the ELCF before Vatican II. As such, it sets the scene for the subsequent articles.

Some events that would later contribute to PCS took place in the ELCF before 1945 (see section 3.1). Hence, my hypothesis was that the roots of this ‘Nordic position’ were present already in the writings of bishops from 1945 to 1965. However, this hypothesis was not directly supported by the analysis. There are some notions of development taking place in the ELCF; however, the Finnish bishops do not seem to be enthusiastic about this development.

There is not much emphasis in the writings of the Finnish bishops from 1945 to 1965 on the role of the bishop as being distinct nor any significance attributed to episcopal succession. However, there are some indications that suggest that the discussions between the ELCF and CoE had influenced in the decisions of the General Synod and had also shaped the understanding of episcopacy among some theologians and clergymen in Finland. However, the bishops’ stance is more reserved than supportive regarding this development.

Notably, the bishops do not express their views on episcopacy systematically or widely during this period. Article I also demonstrates that there is no visible consensus among the bishops that do address the matter, except that episcopacy is at least generally considered to be conducted properly in Finland. Overall, then, the bishops’ emphasis on the episcopal office is moderate. They underline that episcopacy is not a separate ordained office, since the ordained office in its essence is one. Bishops are considered as pastors with certain tasks. Therefore, Bishop Alaja argues that presbyteral ordination should remain as an option in church law. Even Archbishop Lehtonen’s position is rather circumspect, though he promotes the episcopal structures and episcopal succession, emphasizing their practical value. Bishop Eino Sormunen is an exception, as he lays great emphasis on episcopacy as

¹⁴⁰Originally published in Finnish as ‘Mitä on piispuus? Suomalaisten piispojen käsityksiä vuosina 1945–1965.’

being a distinct form of ministry fundamental to the church's essence. Most bishops, however, considered the Anglican influence a threat to the Lutheran teaching of the ordained office. Overall, the bishops were more concerned with apostolic succession than the theology of the episcopal office as such and were generally suspicious of episcopal succession, which they considered to be an Anglican insight alien to Lutheranism.

Two relevant issues concerning the episcopal office come to the fore in Article I and are further examined in subsequent articles. First, the concept of *successio apostolica* is clearly a central, albeit unresolved, issue for the ELCF in the years 1945–1965. The various meanings ascribed to this concept are inconsistent, though most of the bishops were suspicious of the concept in their books. Secondly, many of the bishops nursed mildly anti-Catholic and anti-ecumenical sentiments in their writings, with the Lutheran position often presented as contra Catholicism and Anglicanism—i.e., Lutheran, or 'correct,' teaching as being other than the Roman Catholic and Anglican position. Since the period studied in Article I covered the pre-Vatican II period of 1945–1965, a question that arises from this limitation is whether Vatican II helped to bring about changes in the attitudes of the bishops and hence in their understandings of the episcopal office and apostolic succession. Hence, Article II studies the impact of the Vatican II reception process on the understanding of episcopacy in the ELCF, Article IV addresses the development of the concept of apostolic succession in further detail, and Article V examines the post-Vatican II development in the writings of Finnish bishops.

Article II: 'The Turning Point of Lutheran Anti-Catholicism: The Reception of the Second Vatican Council in Finland,' *Toronto Journal of Theology* in 2017 (originally presented at the 2016 annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion).

Article II examines the reception process of Vatican II and its impact on the ELCF theology of the episcopal office. The article aims first to shed further light on the 'Nordic position' of the ELCF by exploring the attitudes of the Finnish bishops towards the RCC and, second, to investigate any possible relationships between these attitudes and the ELCF understanding of the episcopal office. Hence, this small piece of research contributes not only to the field of the theology of ministry but also to the study of anti-Catholicism and of the Vatican II reception process, providing a case study from the Finnish context to an international audience in English.

The hypothesis, based on article I, is that there is a correlation between attitudes towards the RCC and attitudes towards theologies of episcopal ministry and apostolic succession. Namely, as the RCC was received more positively, so episcopacy and apostolic succession increased in value. The findings of this study confirm the hypothesis. The critical attitudes of the Finnish Lutheran bishops towards the RCC before Vatican II softens soon after

the council. These changes in attitude are also consciously tied to this very council in the bishops' writings. Furthermore, the issues that had been avoided as 'overly Catholic'—such as liturgical vestments and Christian symbolism—are presented more favorably after the council than in the earlier writings of the Finnish bishops. The debate between installation and ordination also ends, and 'ordination to the office of a bishop' received common acceptance. Furthermore, episcopal succession is no longer considered irrelevant or a suspicious tradition but a practice to be valued.

Although the correlation between the Vatican II reception process and the attitudes and understandings of Finnish bishops is present in the writing of Finnish bishops, this should not be treated as a causal relationship. Additional factors led to this development and later to the signing of PCS in ELCF. For instance, Bishop Simojoki suggested already in 1957 that the Finnish clergy needed to update themselves with current facts about the RCC (see Article II, 19). Better knowledge, along with intensifying ecumenical encounters and ecumenical work done in both bilateral and multilateral dialogues, are then the main reasons behind this development in the ELCF. These are both, nevertheless, also related to the Vatican II reception process. Journalist and observer of Vatican II Seppo A. Teinonen provided detailed information about Vatican II and RCC to Finnish Lutheran theologians and clergy. Later, in his influential post as a professor, he supervised several MA theses and doctoral dissertations related to the study of Catholicism. Furthermore, Teinonen's influence lasted long after his retirement, since several of his former students were later appointed to influential posts in the church and represented the ELCF at ecumenical dialogues.

Article II indicates that the office of bishop develops to more a distinct office from that of pastor in the ELCF. The understanding of this office also seems to advance towards a more spiritual understanding, driven forward by the ecumenical movement and the reception process of Vatican II. Article II contributes to the overall study by explicating the importance of Finnish attitudes to the development of these concepts. However, changes in the understanding of Finnish bishops after Vatican II needed further documentation. Hence, Article V concentrates on the understandings of episcopacy in the writings of Finnish bishops in the years following Vatican II.

Article III: 'Toward a Definition of Episcopal Ministry: Lutheran World Federation Work on *Episkopé*, 1983–2007,' *Ecclesiology* 2019.

Article III broadens the scope of this dissertation from one particular church to the wider context of global Lutheranism based on LWF statements M83, EO83, W83, MWB92, Malta02, and Lundo07, issued in 1983, 1993, 2002, and 2007. Article III examines the developments in the understanding of episcopal office in LWF statements as relates to *episkopé*, *episcopal ministry*, *ordination*, *consecration*, *installation*, *hierarchy*, *iure divino*, *iure humano*,

ordo, and *propria*. It also offers a short historical background to the LWF identity study process. This article also makes use of the dichotomy ‘Porvoo style’–‘Leuenberg style’ (see section 2.3).

The findings of this article indicate a somewhat uniform development towards a ‘Porvoo style’ approach that begins to manifest in the writings of the Finnish bishops (see Articles I and II). The understanding of episcopacy and related concepts gradually changes from a ‘Leuenberg style’ tolerance of plurality towards ‘Porvoo style’ uniformity, where the leadership and spiritual role and the specific tasks of the episcopal office are given greater emphasis and presbyteral ordinations omitted. In general, the 1983 documents (EO83, M83, and W83) constitute an acknowledgement and acceptance of the diversity of Lutheran titles and episcopal structures in the church, whereas later statements favored the creation of uniform terminology and/or emphasized the special role of the bishop.

This development is not, however, entirely coherent between statements or even within any particular statement, which is understandable due to the challenging nature of the topic for Lutherans and the nature of the process undertaken in the LWF. Malta02, which Lutheran ecumenists contributed to, is, in some aspects, closer to the ‘Porvoo style’ than the final statement, Lundo7, which tries also to take responses from the member churches into account. This is manifest, for instance, in the terminology used to designate the rite of inauguration to the episcopal office, which is primarily called *consecration* in Malta02 and *installation* in Lundo7, with the appeal to the uniform title of ‘bishop’ found in MWB92 and Malta02 omitted in Lundo7. However, in some other aspects, Lundo7 seems to emphasize the importance of episcopal ministry more than Malta02 (see Article III, 227).

This article also explicates the typically Lutheran theological tension between the equality of all Christians, the oneness of *ministerium*, and differences in the ordained roles of Christians. The statements struggle to strike a balance between the demand that no status hierarchy ought to exist between Christians and the existence of different positions such as lay and ordained offices and pastors and bishops divided into a temporal and functional hierarchy and assigned different tasks, sometimes even differentiated by lifelong inauguration rites such as ordination or consecration. One solution attempted in these documents is to emphasize *episkopé* as a broad concept, to be considered a task shared by different lay and ordained roles.

There is also a clear ecumenical influence in the documents, which is hardly surprising. The LWF deliberately invited the ecumenical partners and the Lutheran members of the bilateral dialogues to contribute to the process of the ‘identity study’ that resulted in the publication of Malta02 and Lundo7. Even the starting point of this ‘identity study’ was ecumenical, since the examination of the compatibility of certain bilateral ecumenical agreements was the impetus behind this entire process.

Overall, Article III contributes to this collection of articles by identifying the main issues underlying the LWF statements characteristic to the Lutheran theology of the episcopal office. The close reading of these sources reveals that the question of apostolic succession so central, it needed to be addressed at length. Hence, Article IV concentrates on the issue of apostolic succession in both the main case studies of the dissertation, the LWF and the ELCF.

Article IV: ‘*Successio Apostolica*: A Romantic Fairytale or a Valuable Tradition? – The Apostolic Continuity according to Finnish Lutheran Bishops in 1945–2015 and the Lutheran World Federation in 1983–2007,’ forthcoming.

Article IV concentrates on the central concept of apostolic succession in both sources of this study, the writings of the Finnish bishops and LWF documents EO83, M83, MWB92, Malta02, and Lundo07. The three sections of this article examine the concept of apostolic succession, first, in the writings of Finnish bishops before 1983, then in LWF documents from 1983 to 2007, and finally in the writings of the Finnish bishops after 1983. Furthermore, this article studies how the understandings of this concept developed in both sources, investigating whether there are any correlations between these two Lutheran sources. This article thus bridges the two main sources of the overall study.

Article IV offers a broad overview of the development of the understanding of apostolic succession and related concepts such as historic episcopate in the LWF documents and the writings of Finnish bishops. The study demonstrates that the terminology had not yet stabilized in either corpus. Apostolic succession and historic episcopate are given various definitions in the writings of Finnish bishops and the LWF documents. Secondly, in both cases, the ecumenical movement influenced the understanding of apostolic succession evidenced in the works. Central ecumenical documents, such as BEM, and certain bilateral ecumenical documents, such as PCS, had a clear impact on how this concept was understood by either body of authors. Thirdly, three main concerns characterizing Lutheran resistance to the historic episcopate can be discerned: the equality of all Christians, the priority of the Gospel, and validity of the ministry. Once these three concerns had been sufficiently addressed, the concepts of apostolic succession and historic episcopate were seen as acceptable in the sources.

The answers to these concerns are mainly to be found in BEM. For instance, the historic episcopate would be acceptable so long as it was not considered a *guarantee* of the correct teaching or of the validity of the ministry. This insight addressed the second and third concerns. The concern about the equality of all Christians is addressed by expressing that apostolic succession is a broad concept, served by all Christians, not only by those ordained or the episcopal ministers. A similar solution is also present in LWF statements via the concept *episkopé* (see article III).

Both bodies of work demonstrate that the understanding of episcopal succession develops towards a 'Porvoo style' emphasis on apostolic succession, a development further explicated in section 4.4. This development, however, comes closer to PCS in the writings of the ELCF bishops than in the LWF documents. The main reasons for this development are the increased ecumenical encounters that have deepened knowledge of the theological insights behind these concepts and mollified anti-ecumenical attitudes, thus further contributing to the success of the BEM document.

Article V: 'Priest among Priests? The understanding of the Episcopal Office According to Finnish Bishops in 1965–1985,' *Finnish Journal of Theology, Teologinen aikakauskirja*, 5, 2019.¹⁴¹

Article V examines the writings of the Finnish bishops after Vatican II and thus proceeds from the issues raised in the preceding articles. Article I showed that the bishops seemed to have little consensus about how the episcopal office or its related concepts ought to be understood, based on their writings from 1945 to 1965. However, there were already some indications of later development in the ELCF towards a Porvoo-style understanding of episcopacy, as demonstrated in articles I, II, and IV. Furthermore, articles II and IV demonstrated that changes in the attitudes of bishops towards Catholicism or ecumenical development were correlated positively with changes in how they understood the episcopal office. These changes are further examined and documented in article V.

Hence, Article V examines how the bishops understood the episcopal office and its related concepts after Vatican II. The guiding questions for this article were as follows: what was considered to be the Lutheran theology of episcopal ministry, how did the terminological understanding of installation and consecration develop in these writings, and what is said about apostolic succession, liturgical vestments and symbols, and the spiritual and collegial nature of the episcopal office. The hypothesis of a Porvoo-style development is again tested in this article. This hypothesis is mildly affirmed in this article based on how the terminology related to the inauguration rite of a bishop stabilized as the *consecration/ordination* (in Finnish, 'vihkimys'; see section 2.3), episcopal succession was given more value than earlier, and liturgical vestments becomes mundane during the period researched. Furthermore, as one of the bishops points out, there was a new tendency among theologians to emphasize the office of the bishop in Finland.

However, this article demonstrates that the underlying concerns attached to the discussion of episcopacy related to the priority of the gospel and the

¹⁴¹Originally published in Finnish as 'Pappi pappien joukossa? Suomalaisten piispojen käsityksiä piispanvirasta vuosina 1965–1985.'

equality of all Christians. These two concerns led to an emphasis on the oneness of ordained offices and resistance against hierarchies. First, signs of these concerns emerge already in earlier ELCF writings and are also present in LWF documents (see articles I, III, and IV). Especially prominent is the concern expressed by Finnish bishops that the office of bishop ought never to be seen as its own *ordo*. Opposition to the concept of *ordo* does not, however, seem to correlate with the understanding that the bishop is ordained/consecrated to this office, as this act of ordination/consecration is never repeated, even if a bishop moves to another diocese; bishops retain their symbols of office and are still considered bishops even after retirement. However, these concerns gradually disappear from the bishops' writings during this period, and the term 'ordination/consecration to the office of a bishop' becomes standardized.

Article V also demonstrates that bishops used liturgical vestments as statements of their theological position. Some bishops abstained from using any symbols of the office except the cross, while most refused to don the bishop's miter. Bishops that tended to reject any symbol of the office considered the donning of such symbols as evidence that a bishop was 'set apart' from ordained ministry—i.e., that a bishop was different from a pastor and hence belonged to a separate *ordo*. Those that refused to don the bishop's miter either had practical reasons behind the decision or considered it a symbol of a monarchic episcopacy and hierarchy.

Overall, this article finds that the understanding of the episcopal office does develop in the writings of the Finnish bishops between 1965 and 1985. The spiritual nature of the office of the bishop increases in the discourse as well as their role as the public voice of the church. Moreover, concerns towards hierarchies and the separate nature of this office are mollified, and the liturgical symbols of the bishop's office, such as bishop's robes and staves, become mundane. This section presented the general outcome of each article. However, although each article is its own individual piece of research, they constitute the overall research of this dissertation. In the next section, the overall findings of this collection of articles are presented thematically. Lastly, I discuss topics for further research.

4.2 FROM PASTOR TO BISHOP

Lutherans have traditionally considered bishops and pastors as sharing in the same ministry. The three-fold office or the division of separate tasks of *ministerium* is established in the church by human authority only (*iure humano*). These being human decisions, it has not been problematic for Lutherans that some churches have a three-fold office but not others. Furthermore, some Lutheran churches, in part as a result of the Reformation have also contributed to this dilemma (see section 1.1), have deliberately

avoided such a structure, since it has been seen as a hierarchical structure that contorts the Lutheran emphasis on the equality of all Christians and the oneness of ministry.

In both case studies examined in this dissertation, oneness of the ordained ministry was found to be an important feature of the church. The ordained office is in its totality instituted by God, but the office of the bishop is not. However, the understanding that the bishop is considered a pastor, different only in the tasks assigned to this office by human authority (*iure humano*), is featured more prominently in earlier sources than in later ones (see articles I–V). In earlier sources, there is often little distinction between bishops and other oversight ministers, such as vicars and deans, since these writings emphasize that a bishop is ‘nothing more’ than a pastor with a task of oversight. However, opposition to the insight of the episcopal office being its own ordinance decreases over time.

In later sources, the distinction of ordinances does not appear as problematic. Distinctions between ordained and episcopal ministry increase, and the three-fold office is no longer thought to jeopardize the Lutheran teaching of equality of all Christians or the teaching of one *ministerium*. Some notions suggest the division of one *ministerium* into different tasks, such as diaconos, presbyteros, and episcopos is not an adiaphora but an indispensable principle that ought to be upheld, except in extreme cases where the correct teaching of the gospel might be under threat.

More specifically, later LWF statements define the episcopal office as a distinct, though not separate, form of the one ministry (see articles III and IV), outlining certain *propria* that belong to the episcopal minister, heightening the distinctiveness of the episcopal office with respect to other ordained offices. These *propria* include, among other things, the task of ordaining pastors. Earlier statements also recognise presbyteral ordination.

The same development can be observed in the ELCF (see articles I, II, IV, and V). The ELCF Church Manual of 2001 no longer includes the possibility for presbyteral ordination, and the Finnish bishops no longer write in opposition of this change by the end of the 20th century. This development in the understandings of Finnish bishops is not only a matter of generational differences. Over time, some, such as Bishops Gulin, Simojoki, Alaja, and Kares, likewise come to accept episcopal ordination and episcopal succession (see articles I, II, and V).

Moreover, Lundo7 states that, according to CA, bishops should be obeyed *iure divino*, so long as they teach according to the gospel. This does not mean that the episcopal office as such is instituted by God; the statement simply underlines the authority and distinctiveness of the office. Furthermore, this particular notion is interesting also from another respect. The overall findings of this study demonstrate that one reason for opposing the imposition of episcopal succession and the elevation of the episcopal office is the concern that they might compromise the priority of the gospel. The solution to this concern raised in MWB92 and the writings of the Finnish bishops (see article

III, IV and V) is to treat episcopacy or episcopal succession as a fundamental practice, so long as the gospel comes first.

In Finland, Seppo A. Teinonen (1975) and Risto Cantell (1969, 1985) have promoted the office of the bishop as having been, according to CA, instituted *iure divino*. Namely, Cantell interprets CA as indicating that bishops enjoy a special position in the church, because God has established their tasks (nach gottlichen Rechten / *iure divino*) by divine law (see article V). Teinonen similarly explains that, while the temporal office belongs to a bishop by human law, the spiritual office belongs to a bishop by a divine law (see article II). Similar insights can be found later in both Lundo⁷ and the writings of the Finnish bishops.

Furthermore, new perspectives have arisen in this discussion of *iure humano–iure divino*. In MWB92, it is explicated that, just because a practice or office has been established *iure humano*, it does not necessarily mean that it is adiaphora. According to this statement, there is room between these two extremes, such as offices that are indispensable except in the case of emergencies. That is, if one must choose between episcopal succession and the gospel, surely the gospel must come first (see article III).

As bishops are considered to belong to the same ministry as all who are ordained, however, the issue of holding a separate inauguration rite, such as ordination/consecration, arises in both case studies. The LWF statements do not ultimately reach a consensus as to whether this rite ought to be called installation or consecration. Despite this, there is a consensus that the episcopal ministers are *called* and inducted to this particular office, meaning that certain conditions must be filled before entering the office. Due to having a separate calling and induction, then, this office is not far from being its own *ordo*. The terminological issue is nevertheless indicative of the issue that remains for the Lutheran family: there is no consensus as to whether or not this rite of inauguration is permanent.

This same topic arises in the discussions of Finnish bishops. The notion that bishops are ordained/consecrated is strongly opposed to in some earlier writings, in spite of which the Church Synod adopted ‘consecration/ordination to the office of a bishop’ as the official name of the ceremony in 1963. Furthermore, the 1968 amendment to the ELCF Church Manual explains that the ‘ordination to the office of a bishop’ takes place only once, whereas the bishop is only ‘installed,’ if he/she moves to another diocese. This clarification underlines the distinction between the bishop and other ordained offices. Once a bishop is ordained/consecrated, this ordination/consecration is permanent, and a bishop continues to be a bishop even after he/she has changed dioceses or left his/her office. As shown in articles I, I, IV, and V, the Finnish bishops did gradually begin to adopt ‘ordination/consecration to the office of a bishop’ in favor of the formerly preferred ‘installation.’

The ‘Lutheran position’ evidenced in the later writings of the Finnish bishops and in the LWF statements do not tend towards one extreme or the other. Therefore, article II speaks of, *faute de mieux*, a ‘semi-ordo.’ This term

tries to capture the prevailing position in the ELCF, which is that the office of a bishop is somewhere between being its own ordinance and belonging strictly to the same ordinance as other pastors (see the discussion on ordination/consecration/installation in section 2.3). The findings of these articles indicate that the understandings of the episcopal office have thus shifted towards but have not quite yet embraced an understanding of episcopacy as constituting a separate *ordo*. This is demonstrated in the Finnish case study in the Church Synod's decision to use 'consecration/ordination to the office of a bishop' instead of 'the ordination of a bishop' and in the difficulty for the LWF to establish a consensus view in their statements on the permanence of this office (see articles III and IV).

Overall, these developments show that, in a strict sense, there is no longer only one ordinance. The emphasis on one ministry continues, but the episcopal office is at the same time distinguished from other ordained offices by its separate affiliation rite, separate calling, and separate tasks. Since Finnish bishops are ordained/consecrated for life, it is a matter of (somewhat artificial) semantics that the episcopal office is described as not having its own ordinance, especially as there is a clear difference between a bishop and other leading offices, including the office of vicar or dean.

The changes observed in both case studies indicate that the bishop's is a two-fold ordained office. The one *ministerium* is divided into two separate roles, one of which (i.e., the bishop's) requires its own *calling* and installation/ordination/consecration and has its own unique symbols and vestments.

The final issue observed in this study is the question of the temporality of this office. If the office is permanent, it is difficult to argue that it does not subsequently constitute its own *ordo*. This should not, however, be overly problematic for Lutherans. The oneness of *ministerium* and the equality of all Christians can be justified by focusing on the shared *episkopé*, even if this might be characterized by a two-fold or three-fold structure.

The guiding concerns in the discussion of episcopacy among Lutherans in these sources have been the teachings of priority of the gospel, the equality of all, and the teaching of the one *ministerium*. These three ideas have resulted in a natural resistance to monarchical episcopacy, a priestly hierarchy, including the recognition of separate ordinances, and the historic episcopate. One interesting pattern that emerges from this study is the solutions that have been pursued in both case studies. The tasks of the episcopal office—namely, *episkopé*—is treated as belonging to a broader concept, consisting of episcopal functions that serve the gospel. This concept is then explained to be *served* by all Christians, not only the episcopal ministers. The episcopal ministers do have a *special* call and responsibly attached to this task, but the entire Christian community participates in this effort. The same rationale applies to the concept of apostolic succession: apostolic succession is a broad task of the mission and/or the task of gospel that is *served* by all Christians and of which the bishops have a *special* responsibility. The historic episcopate only *serves*

this apostolic *mission/gospel* as one important *sign* within this broader ‘stream of life.’ Finally, both broadened concepts (viz., the episcopal office and historic episcopate) serve the Christian *mission* and the *gospel*.

These solutions seem to be amicable to modern-day Lutherans. With *episkopé* and apostolic succession democratized, the hierarchical structure and bishops’ extended role in these tasks become easier to accept. In reality, the episcopal minister does supervise other pastors, but, at the same time, pastors and all Christians are called on to supervise the bishop. All these structures are finally aimed at the faithful service of the gospel, which is also the task of every Christian.

4.3 FROM BUREAUCRATIC LEADERSHIP TO SPIRITUAL OVERSIGHT

In the early second-century Church, the role of the bishop was first and foremost a liturgical one—the bishop was the one who presided at the Eucharist table. However, as role of the bishop became monarchic in the fourth century and onwards, bishops have become charged with a governing role over larger geographical areas than those in the first centuries. Consequently, presbyters and deacons took over the concrete everyday tasks at the Eucharistic tables. After the Reformation, the office further developed and differentiated in the Lutheran churches (see sections 1.1–2; 3.1). Consequently, the spiritual role of the episcopal minister has sometimes become inundated with the administrative work. Even the title ‘president,’ which is used in certain Lutheran churches, suggests an administrative and bureaucratic role.

However, the findings of this study show that, in comparison to the earlier sources of this study, later sources pay more attention to the spiritual than the administrative role of the episcopal office. The understanding of the episcopal office seems to have developed from a bureaucratic to a more spiritual one over time.

This development is evidenced in the writing of the bishops in Finland (see articles II, IV, and V). In his early writings, Archbishop Martti Simojoki warns that it is anti-Lutheran to emphasize the spiritual nature of the bishop’s office. Later, however, he reverses this statement, as echoed by several others bishops, such as Sariola and Repo. As a result, Finnish bishops in later sources emphasize that the episcopal tasks are spiritual in nature, underlining the liturgical and pneumatological aspects of episcopal consecration. Professor Teinonen also highlights the spiritual nature of the episcopal office.

Similar development takes place also in the LWF statements (see articles III and IV). The spiritual role of the episcopal office is emphasized in MWB92, Malta02, and Lundo7 compared to in the 1983 statements. Lundo7 states that the episcopal ministers should regularly lead the services, preach and preside

at the Eucharist, and administer the ordinations. One aspect that also indicates a more spiritual or liturgical understanding of this office is the language used in MWB92 and Malta02. Both statements give preference to the use of the title ‘bishop,’ encouraging Lutheran churches led by pastors with other titles, such as presidents and superintendents, to uniformly call these officials ‘bishops.’ The rationale behind this is practical but the title of bishop nevertheless ‘appears as more spiritual and liturgical’ than, for instance, ‘president’, which is also used in secular instances.

In the period studied, the liturgical vestments of the bishop, or ‘signs of the office,’ gradually become accepted by all Finnish bishops. The bishop’s robe, staff, and miter bring with them a manifestly more spiritual understanding of the episcopal office. Furthermore, the bishop’s role as a public voice of the church and spiritual leader increases in both instances (see articles III and V). In sum, these developments falls very much in line with the overall trend in the development in this period of Lutheranism toward a ‘Porvoo style’ emphasis in understandings of the episcopal office.

4.4 APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION IN TRANSITION

It soon became clear in the research process of this study that the understanding of apostolic succession is a central issue for how the episcopal office is understood by the both the ELCF and the LWF. Apostolic succession has also been a particularly central topic in ecumenical dialogues with the Catholic, Orthodox, and Anglican traditions, the major strands of Christianity in the world. Due to the centrality of this topic, apostolic and episcopal succession are both, to some extent, addressed in all of the articles. Article IV additionally focuses on the concept of *successio apostolica*.

The concept of apostolic succession develops in these sources from a very narrow interpretation of apostolic succession as a ‘mechanical’ or ‘external’ chain of a laying on of hands in episcopal ordination to a broader understanding of apostolic succession as the apostolic continuity of the church, where the historic episcopate is a part, or a sign, of this broader continuity. As the concept of apostolic succession has broadened, episcopal succession has come to be interpreted as being in service of apostolic succession—i.e., in service of the Christian *mission* and the *gospel*. As this change has taken place, attitudes around episcopal succession have also changed.

The insights concerning episcopal succession observed in this study can be categorized into roughly four stages of development. In the first stage, the historic episcopate is treated as something to be avoided, seen as alien to Lutheranism and potentially even a threat to the priority of Christ and the gospel. These insights are found especially from the Finnish bishops before Vatican II (see articles I, II, and IV).

In the second stage, episcopal succession is considered a neutral concept, or somehow useful, at least as a practical human arrangement. These attitudes are found in M83, EO83 and are even more present in the earlier books of the Finnish bishops than in 21st-century writings (see articles I–V).

In the third stage, the episcopal succession is generally treated positively, as a sign or metaphor of continuity in the church or even as a gift from God but *not strictly a guarantee* of the apostolicity of the teaching or as necessary for the validity of the ministry. Later LWF statements—viz., MWB92, Malta02 and Lundo07—reflect this category of insights, and these views also become more common in the later writings of Finnish bishops (see articles II, III, IV, and V). In both case studies, this third category of development is often rooted in BEM, but somewhat similar insights seem to have already emerged from in some of the writings of the Finnish bishops antedating BEM.

In addition to these three categories, some writings of Finnish bishops stretch, accidentally or intentionally, beyond the spirit of BEM (see article IV), treating episcopal succession as a valued sign and gift from God, guided by the Spirit, and even a ‘guarantee’ of some kind. This understanding can be found only in some of the most recent books of Finnish bishops. Although such insights might emerge as the result of the generality of these writings, such a change in attitude is remarkable, given the brief period of time during which attitudes towards episcopal succession changes in the writings of Finnish bishops from suspicion to appreciation. This development attests clearly to the success of BEM and PCS. The early writings of the Finnish bishops already indicate the success of the theological insights that would later be taken up in BEM; nevertheless, the prominence of BEM in the entire process of this development cannot be overemphasized.

The results of this study are especially interesting in the particular issue of apostolic succession. Notably, while apostolic succession is often used as a synonym for episcopal succession before BEM, the term is understood more broadly in both case studies examined here after BEM. Episcopal succession, on the other hand, is considered only one component of apostolic succession. This broad understanding of apostolic succession does not seem to violate the priority of the gospel or the Lutheran emphasis on the equality of all Christians, as episcopal succession is considered to be in service of the gospel. Interestingly, in this process, attitudes towards episcopal succession likewise change. Since episcopal succession is not considered an absolute necessity for ministry but rather only one thread in the larger rope, or one flow in the larger stream, it does not mean that Lutheran pastors are invalid, nor does it seem to violate the primacy of gospel or the equality of all Christians. Therefore, it can be accepted, and, as it has become accepted, it has quickly become a cherished Lutheran tradition that has begun slowly but surely to add value to the ordained office.

Thus, episcopal succession, once considered irrelevant or even alien to Lutheranism in the early writings of Finnish bishops, soon became revised as

a feature that Reformers had tried earnestly to maintain. Both case studies, the LWF statements from 1993 to 2007 and the later writings of Finnish bishops, also underscore that the episcopal structure and episcopal succession are, and have been, normal policies of the church from its early days. In addition, neither 21st-century Finnish bishops nor the LWF statements seem to see episcopal succession as a threat to Lutheran teaching, so long as the maintaining of an unbroken chain of consecrations is not considered a necessary criterion for the validity of ministry.

It is hardly surprising that this notion of an unbroken chain of laying on of hands not being an absolute necessity for the validity of ministry was the pivotal insight of BEM and was thus echoed in PCS. If an unbroken chain would have been considered as an absolute necessity for valid ministry as a precondition, the ELCF would have been admitting that their ministry was somehow defective in the past by signing PCS. The episcopal succession was only gradually reintroduced after 1934 in the dioceses of ELCF, and it was only after signing PCS that the ELCF omitted presbyteral ordinations from the church law. Thereafter, episcopal succession quickly became a self-evident truth for the new generation of ordained ministers, as fewer ordained ministers had colleagues or relatives that did not carry the sign of episcopal succession, thus eliminating any lingering doubts about the concept. As time passed, 'the sign of episcopal succession' became a reality for every pastor's ordination. Hence, the validity of the ministry was no longer threatened by the demand for episcopal succession. Consequently, the practice has become a valued tradition and has nearly even gained the status of indispensability.

The recent report from the Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue Commission for Finland *Communion in Growth* (CG) supports the development described above. Episcopal succession is strongly attached to apostolic succession in this document,¹⁴² with episcopal succession regarded as 'necessary' and even 'a

¹⁴²CG 181: 'The apostolic ministerial succession was necessary, but it was not *the* guarantee, but *a* guarantee'; 182: 'There is a slight difference in meaning between "apostolic ministry" and "apostolic succession." Apostolic ministry deals with ministry as such. Apostolic succession deals with its two components, namely, the apostolicity of tradition and of ministry. The apostolic succession is the process by which the Church of the post-apostolic generations continues as the same Church established by Christ on the apostolic foundation. The succession seeks to realise and serve the plenitude of salvation present in Christ until its absolute fulfilment in the Holy Spirit'; 251: 'We agree that apostolicity is continuity in faith in the life of the Church and in the structures and ministry of the Church. The ministerial succession is a constituent part and an expression of the apostolicity of the Church. The same applies to the ordination of a bishop in historic succession through the laying on of hands. This apostolic tradition contains many elements in which the sacramental and the historical perspectives complement one another'; 259: 'From the Lutheran perspective the apostolic succession is also a guarantee, but it does not by itself guarantee the fidelity of the church to every aspect of the apostolic faith, life and mission. There have been schisms in the history of the churches using the sign of historic succession. Nor does the sign guarantee the personal faithfulness of the bishop. Nonetheless, the retention of the sign remains a permanent challenge to fidelity and to unity,

guarantee,' even if the statement immediately thereafter quotes PCS in stating that this guarantee 'does not by itself guarantee' the validity of ministry. Albeit inconsistent, the general acceptance of episcopal succession found in this document falls in line with the overall development of the concept of apostolic succession in the ELCF.

4.5 THE INFLUENCE OF THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

The ecumenical movement of the 20th century has largely been successful. The churches that had grown further away from each other in the centuries following the Reformation has reached a significant consensus in many fundamental aspects over that past century. Nevertheless, episcopacy, apostolicity, and apostolic succession are still at the heart of the obstacles that remain on the path to unity among the Christian churches. It has become a well-known fact that these issues remain highly divisive. However, this study shows that the ecumenical movement has been effective in directly impacting how certain Lutheran traditions relate to these topics.

The findings of this study reveal the significant influence of the ecumenical movement. Already the findings of article I and II demonstrate that the ecumenical movement effectively resolved issues surrounding episcopal office and apostolic succession. These topics seem to be surface most often in the writings of Finnish bishops, when other Christian denominations are discussed. The new ecumenical era after Vatican II indicated an ever intensifying reflection on these topics. Furthermore, in the ELCF, dialogue with the CoE also contributed to the overall development, as can already be seen, for instance, in the early writings of Bishop Alaja (see article I).

In addition to more direct ecumenical relations, the ecumenical opportunities following Vatican II brought a change in direction for ELCF–Roman Catholic relations (see article II). Increased exposure to Catholicism quelled irrational fear over concepts like 'apostolic succession', which had previously been considered 'Roman Catholic' and therefore 'not Lutheran.' After Vatican II, anti-ecumenical and anti-Catholic sentiments soon dissipated from the writings of Finnish bishops, signaling the success of both the increasing ecumenical encounters and the reception process of Vatican II in the Finland aided by Professor Seppo A. Teinonen.

Unlike in the early writings of bishops, anti-ecumenical sentiments were hardly a significant part of the LWF statements. The ecumenical movement was generally received favorably in these documents. The LWF even recommended ecumenically minded actions, such as reintroducing episcopal succession and the uniform use of the title 'bishop,' both of which changes

a summons to witness to, and a commission to realise more fully, the permanent characteristics of the Church of the apostles'; cf. PCS D51.

would have been beneficial for furthering the ecumenical movement. In fact, the ecumenical influence is evident in the very *raison d'être* of the LWF as a unified body for the disparate Lutheran churches and thus informs the entire process of its identity study.

The impetus behind the identity study, undertaken in 1999–2007 was ecumenical. Some of the LWF member churches had signed bilateral agreements with both episcopal and non-episcopal churches, and the compatibility of these ecumenical initiatives needed to be examined. Even more revealing are the letters written by the LWF Secretary Sven Oppegaard, in one of which Oppegaard even describes 'our credibility as a global ecumenical partner [being] at stake' (see article III, fn. 2). The ecumenical partners of LWF as well as the Lutheran members of the bilateral dialogues played a prominent role in the process of conducting the identity study, which culminated in Lundo⁷. Hence, it is hardly surprising that the voice of certain ecumenical documents, such as BEM, Niagara, and PCS, is prominently echoed in these statements. The findings of this study demonstrate the prominence of BEM's influence in shaping Lutheran understanding of apostolic succession. In the development of the concept of *episkopé*, PCS likewise features prominently in addition to a lesser role played by CJC.

Due to the limited space of the articles, not all dialogues that contributed to or bore similarities with the LWF documents are discussed. For instance, Meissen and Reuilly could also have been listed in footnote 91 of article III, but, due to the limited space, only PCS and CCM are mentioned, whereas the body text speaks more generally of 'Lutheran-Anglican dialogues.'

Furthermore, the findings of this study show that, despite the LWF's invitation to both the Anglican and Reformed Church to participate in the identity process, there was clear preference to heed the Anglican voice. This preconception can be seen already in Secretary Oppegaard's personal communication: 'I am not ready to involve us in one-sided Leuenberg politics . . . pan-Protestantism is not our line' (article III, fn. 3). The findings of this study thus demonstrate that pan-Protestantism, the approach connected to the Reformed Church, was not the direction that either the LWF documents or the ELCF took during the period studied.

4.6 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

Overall, these five articles found that the main concerns for Lutherans regarding the episcopal office and apostolic succession were the equality of all Christians, the priority of the gospel, oneness of *ministerium*, and the validity of the ordained ministry. These concerns underlay resistance to certain episcopal structures, separate ordinances, hierarchies, and the historic episcopate. The findings of this dissertation indicate that the ecumenical answers found in the sources addressed and allayed these concerns.

Namely, the ecumenical responses to these concerns were, first, to broaden the concepts of *successio apostolica* and *episcopé* in such a way that these concepts were understood as being *served* and carried out not only by episcopal ministers and through episcopal succession but in various ways by all ordained and all Christians. Both concepts are important, as they served the *mission* of the church and the *gospel*. Second, the episcopal structures needed to be accepted as necessary and even as God-given structures of the church so long as they *served* the *gospel*. Episcopal succession was also to be understood as valuable and serving *apostolic succession* and hence the *gospel*, though not a *guarantee* of faithfulness to the gospel or the validity of the ordained ministry.

Finally, the findings of this dissertation indicate a correlation in the development of these two, admittedly diverse, members of the Lutheran family, a development towards a ‘Nordic-,’ or ‘Porvoo style’ position in episcopacy. Neither body of work is completely uniform, with the development occurring earlier on and even being taken further in some writings of the Finnish bishops than in the LWF statements, but there is nevertheless an eventual embrace of the episcopal ministry.

These developments in the LWF and the ELCF are indicative of the ongoing success of the ecumenical movement from the perspective of consensus-seeking ecumenism. The ecumenical developments in ministry are also relevant for those seeking unity through reconciled diversity. While proponents of reconciled diversity find value and richness in differences between denominations, their aim is not to pursue blurry or more incoherent theologies or intensify differences between denominations but ultimately to grow in unity. Interdenominational coherence and increased theological understanding of one another should thus be considered a positive evolution towards unity, so long as the denominations are able to maintain their unique confessional traits.

Discussions on the nature of the episcopal office, albeit a divisive topic, have both fostered unity among church denominations and allowed the LWF and ECLF to preserve their confessional theologies. While both have clearly been engaged in accommodating the Anglican tradition, the changes in the two institutions have nevertheless been consistent with what 21st-century scholars and church historians have found about Luther’s insights on ministry. Moreover, it seems that Lutherans have been able to reintegrate themselves with the development of the early church while still upholding the values characteristic to their confession: the demand for the equality of all Christians, oneness of *ministerium* and the fundamental priority of the gospel.

4.7 FURTHER RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The Lutheran understanding of the episcopal office is a large and complex topic to study in a single doctoral dissertation. The decision to conduct this study in article form perhaps protected me from getting lost in this subject. Consequently, I make no claim that this study is a comprehensive examination of the development of the episcopal office in the Lutheran tradition or even in the two particular sub-traditions examined. Rather, this dissertation is a collection of insights that shed light on a complex, loaded, and diverse topic.

Further, as the Lutheran family is diverse, especially on this topic, the findings of this study should not be generalized as addressing wider trends in Christianity or even in Lutheranism. It is up to other research to test whether the findings of this study are relevant, for instance, to the Lutheran churches born in different area, such as the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania, or to churches that have not signed Porvoo-style agreements, such as certain Lutheran churches of Central Europe. While episcopal succession and the diversity of episcopal structures have never themselves been a divisive issue within the Lutheran family, if the development observed here continues to advance, it might become a matter of debate to what extent Lutheran diversity can be unproblematic. Hence, the direction of development on the matter in other Lutheran instances especially in Central European Lutheran churches, which follow different interpretation of *satis est* than Nordic Lutheranism, should also be examined, an issue discussed in section 1.2.

In light of the findings of this study, it would also be intriguing to examine the concepts of *ordo* and *hierarchy* in detail. One focus could be a comparative analysis of Lutheran and Anglican understandings of these concepts. This study has demonstrated that these two concepts at least proved difficult for Lutherans to marry with the Lutheran emphasis on the equality of all Christians. Hence, it would be interesting to examine how the question of the equality of all Christians has been answered in churches that have either maintained or reintroduced a three-fold clergy.

Another interesting topic for further research would be whether these developments address questions surrounding the place of the diaconate in Lutheran churches. Some Lutheran churches such as ELCA¹⁴³ have recently started to apply ordination rite also for deacons and deaconesses. It would thus be interesting to investigate the extent to which the main Lutheran concerns—viz., the emphasis on one ministry and the equality of all Christians—have been addressed in discussions concerning the diaconate, or if the concern is only raised around episcopal leadership.

This study showed that the ecumenical movement was highly influential in shaping the views of the ELCF and LWF on the episcopacy. This influence is

¹⁴³ELCA ERGD (2019), 1: ‘The Entrance Rite Discernment Group recommends the use of ordination as the rite of setting apart both ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service.’

perhaps rooted in the fact that neither the Lutheran confessions nor the bible offers much information about how the church should be structured. Thus, one question worth of investigating further would be whether the ecumenical movement has been able to exert a similar influence to that observed in this study on global churches that have had a stronger history of central administration, such as the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches. Furthermore, as this study touched on how attitudes were a factor in the development of theological concepts and ecumenical work, it might be worth examining the extent to which anti-Catholic, anti-Protestant, or even anti-ecumenical attitudes hinder the project of unity. Such attitudes can also be studied through interdisciplinary research, combining the methodology of ecumenical theology, history, and behavioral sciences.

One final issue profoundly absent from this collection of articles is that of women bishops. This concept is seldom discussed in the sources used here, but, when it is discussed, it does not seem to be an issue in either body of work. In brief, as Lutherans consider the ministry to be one, so long as the church ordains women, then women ought to be able to become bishops. In general, the rationale for women's ordination in these LWF statements has moved from arguments based on social construction and the common priesthood to biblical arguments during the period studied. However, the topic of women's ordination is left out of this study, as I have chosen to focus on episcopal ministry, not on the broader Lutheran understanding of priesthood.

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