

An Update from the MTC Director RE: LLDs in the LCMS

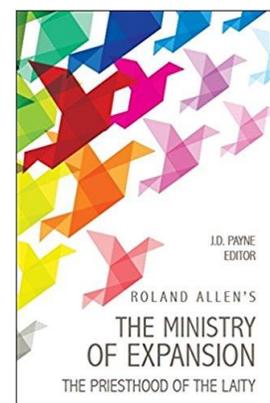


First of all – you may still train for and serve as a licensed deacon in the LCMS! Of that there is no debate or controversy. But there is some misinformation being shared. Since the moment Resolution 13-02A was passed at the synodical convention in Milwaukee, implementation of that resolution has been moving forward. However, significant misunderstanding of what implementation means is rampant. To begin: **the resolution DOES NOT eliminate the use or continued licensing of deacons for ministry in their respective districts.** Districts continue to license deacons for ministry. If you have heard that deacon ministry through the resolution has been completely suspended, the information is erroneous and false. Deacons are still being trained, licensed, and released to do ministry in the LCMS. If you hear anyone indicating otherwise, please correct them.

Now let me explain the parameters for LLDs in the LCMS. Any deacon might be licensed by their district. It is a district decision whether or not it will consider using licensed deacons, but there is no synodical resolution which prohibits a district from doing so. The only deacons who cannot be licensed for ministry are those who intend to serve in Word and Sacrament ministry over 50% of the time. If a deacon is supporting the work of a pastor in a congregation, but is not involved in Word and Sacrament ministry for more than 50% of that work, they can be licensed. However, many licensed deacons are still involved in Word and Sacrament ministry – they fill in during moments when the pastor is out of town, sick, or on vacation. They might help out in a vacancy situation for a moment in time. But they are also involved in visiting sick and shut-in individuals, leading Bible Studies or small group ministries. The need for licensed deacons to help in ministry is enormous. They simply cannot be involved in Word and Sacrament ministry if it encompasses more than 50% of their LLD work. In that regard, they could not serve a vacancy on an ongoing regular basis for an extended period of time, they could not be involved in a church plant which included Word and Sacrament on an ongoing basis as a regular part of that church plant for an extended period of time. However, do know that the Northwest District has filed a dissent with the LCMS against the resolution on theological grounds. They are convinced that LLDs, under ecclesiastical supervision and supported by the local congregation should be allowed to minister in Word and Sacrament ministry even if it includes more than 50% of their time in those ministry contexts.

Hope this clears up some of the misunderstanding regarding the resolution. MTC still offers the missional courses which train deacons who will be licensed in their respective districts. In addition, we hope that others not pursuing deacon ministry and desire training will take advantage of the courses.

In addition, a new book was recently published which discusses the issue of lay persons involved in sacramental ministry. It was written by Roland Allen, a name of which you might be familiar. I commend it to you as an option. It addresses some of the same issues we have been discussing in our church. The title: *The Ministry of Expansion – The Priesthood of All Believers*, J.D. Payne, editor, published by William Carey Library.



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