



CHURCH OF NORWAY

**The understanding of ordination and the ministry of Word and Sacrament
in the context of a plurality of ministries:
Norwegian discussions and conclusions**

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CPCE Conference, Oslo, April 2026

Traditional Lutheranism: THE ecclesial office

- The pastor as THE office holder in the church
- Augsburg Confessio art. V: *De ministerio ecclesiastico*:
- “So that we may obtain this faith, the ministry of teaching the gospel and administering the sacraments was instituted.”
- Ordained
- Bishops understood as pastors with special tasks
- Non-pastors understood as “lay”

New ministries in the church after WW2

- Deacons
- Catecists (responsible for teaching)
- Cantors (church musicians)
- Are they lay or ordained?
- 1974: Temporary liturgy for ordination («vigsling») of deacons and catechists
- 1986: Revision of all ordination («vigsling») liturgies, including pastors
- 1998: Liturgy for ordination («vigsling») of cantors

The terminological problem

- Two words for ordination in Norwegian:
 - «Ordinasjon»: Traditionally used for pastors
 - «Vigsling»: Used for all groups after 1986
 - Are they synonyms?
- Swedish: «Vigning»
- German: Lutheran «Ordination», Catholic «Priesterweihe»

Theological questions

- Which ministries are part of the “ecclesial office” mentioned in the article 5 of the Augsburg Confession, and which are not?
- Differentiation of ministry (“tjenestedifferensiering”)?
- If not, are they “lay ministries”?
- Is the threefold pattern (bishop-priest-deacon) possible to apply? (cf. BEM)
- If so, what should we do with the catechists?

A theological proposal

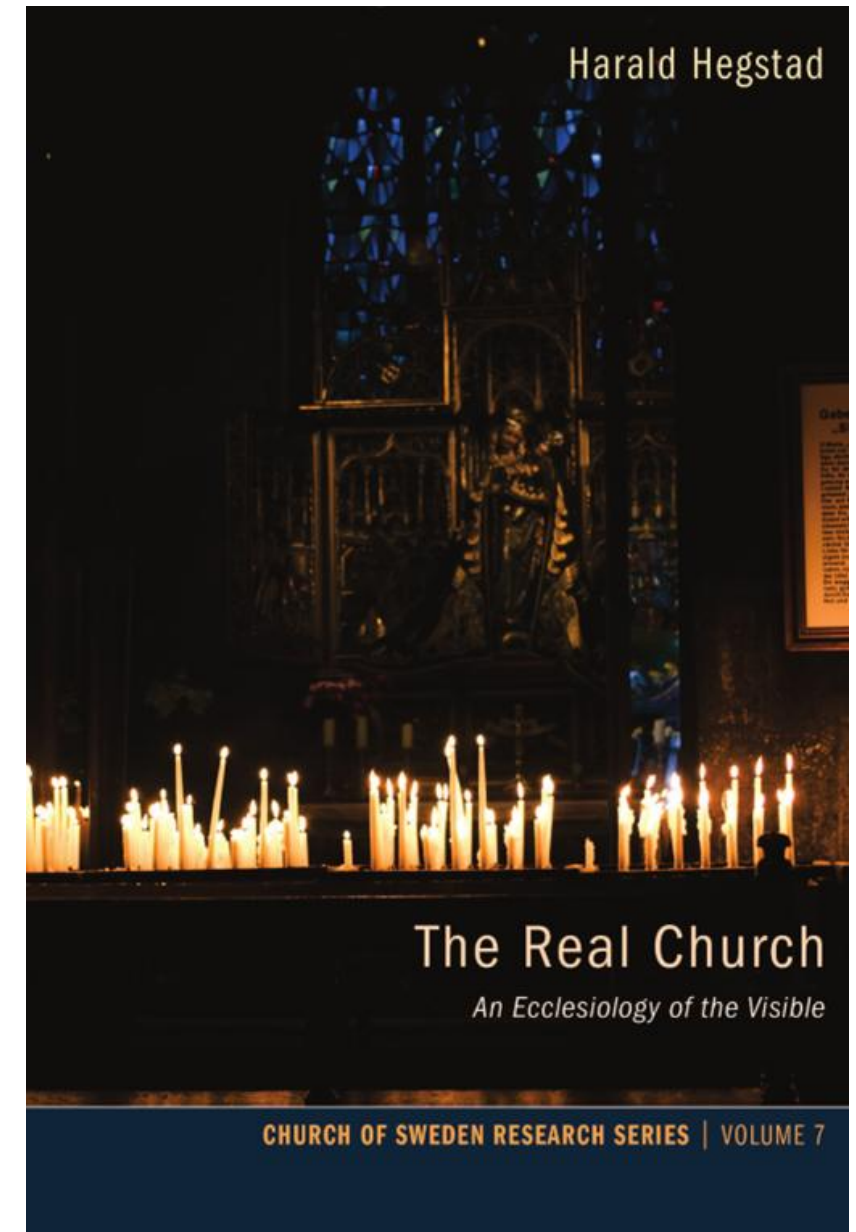
Harald Hegstad:

The Real Church: An Ecclesiology of the Visible.

Church of Sweden Research
Series 7, Eugene, OR: Pickwick
Publications 2012

Norwegian: *Den virkelige kirke.*

Trondheim: Tapir 2009



“The Diaconal Ministry in the Church’s Pattern of Ministry” Bishops’ Conference 2010

- Paul’s theology of spiritual gifts / *charisms* as starting point
- The deacon’s ministry is not derived from the pastoral ministry, it is a ministry with *an independent theological foundation*
- As such deacons should be ordained («vigslet»)
- This also applies to other ordained ministries
- No hierarchical order
- No need to a fixed number of ordained ministries
- Wearing a stole as a sign of ordination

Ordination according to the Bishops' conference 2010

- “Ordination [Norwegian: “vigsling”] is understood as a liturgical act in which the church appoints a servant through calling, blessing, and sending. Ordination is a charismatic act in which the congregation prays that the Spirit will grant the ordained person the necessary gifts. In the act of ordination the church confirms that the candidate has been found suitable for the ministry, and the one ordained promises to perform the ministry faithfully in accordance with the church’s teaching and the commission given in the ministry. Ordination also includes an element of sending. It is not time-limited but is intended as a lifelong ministry. Because ordination concerns the whole church, in the Church of Norway it is performed by the bishop.”
- No theological difference between «ordinasjon» og «vigsling»



Ecumenical implications

- The threefold pattern is not suitable for the Church of Norway
- Is it possible to recognize specific ministries without having the same structure of ordained ministry, or the same number of ordained ministries
- Primary focus on Anglican churches (Porvoo)
- Further conversations within CPCE should be developed further

Two possible starting points

- In the apostolate / calling of the apostles: Leads to a theology of the episcopate and / or the pastoral ministry («Amtstheologie»)
- In the variety of spiritual gifts / charisms: Leads to a broader theology of ministries («Diensttheologie»).

Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (Ministry par 32)

“The community which lives in the power of the Spirit will be characterized by a variety of charisms. The Spirit is the giver of diverse gifts which enrich the life of the community. In order to enhance their effectiveness, the community will recognize publicly certain of these charisms. While some serve permanent needs in the life of the community, others will be temporary. Men and women in the communities of religious orders fulfil a service which is of particular importance for the life of the Church. The ordained ministry, which is itself a charism, must not become a hindrance for the variety of these charisms. On the contrary, it will help the community to discover the gifts bestowed on it by the Holy Spirit and will equip members of the body to serve in a variety of ways.”



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