

# The Doctrine of the Ministry

## As Taught by the Dogmaticians of the Lutheran Church

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There has been much discussion in our Church in this country concerning the doctrine of the ministry; yet to most minds the question does not seem to have been settled. The points at issue are of too great importance to be passed by with utter indifference. The word of God insists upon a proper understanding of the subject, 1 Cor 4:1; 1 Thess 2:13; Lk 10:16; Acts 17:11. Extreme views concerning it either end in the corruptions of Romanism, or overthrow and destroy the Church as a divinely-appointed organism. More than ordinary interest also is connected with the question, as bearing upon the whole future of our Lutheran church in America. Her successful development is conditioned upon her organization in accordance with Scriptural principles; and of these none are more fundamental to proper organization than the doctrine of the ministry. If the present period of experiments is ever to give place to one in which the entire church shall harmoniously co-operate in the great work before us, this question is one of the very first that we must face.

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### I. Why the testimony of our dogmaticians should be regarded.

The clear determination as to the doctrine taught in the word of God, and the manner in which our Lutheran church has understood that doctrine, is, therefore, an end greatly to be desired. Of those who have sought to attain this end, none deserve more consideration for their candor, their vast learning, their habits of thorough investigation, and their sincere desire to reach the truth, than the great dogmaticians of the Lutheran church. They are not infallible; but among fallible men, we claim for their judgment a very high place. Before Chemnitz, the earliest of them, had written his *Examen*, the whole subject had already entered into numerous controversies of the Lutherans against the Papists on the one side, and the Anabaptists on the other. The whole field of dispute therefore was in view; and all statements were guarded with such care as to prevent any misunderstanding that might perhaps interpret them as favoring an opposite extreme. In this respect, they have the advantage of Luther whose language is not guarded with the same care. Those who neglect the two important rules of interpretation: "1. Consider the design with which each particular definition was framed. 2. If there have been controversies concerning the definition, their consideration will bring light,"<sup>1</sup> cannot help but reach the conclusion: "All who have diligently studied Luther's books know that it is difficult to explain clearly what that great man thought concerning every subject."<sup>2</sup> But in our dogmaticians, there is little difficulty to determine from the context itself precisely what was intended, as they have framed their whole treatment of the subject with reference to all the controversies concerning it that had arisen.

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### II. The ministry not a hierarchiacal order.

Against the Romish theory that ministers are priests to the exclusion of other believers, our church has always protested. She recognizes under the New Testament only two priesthods, one the high-priesthood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Heb 4:14, and the other the universal priesthood or priesthood of believers, 1 Pe 2:5. She emphatically denies the existence under the New Testament of any hierarchical order, like that of the Levitical priesthood under the Old Testament, *Ap XIII, 7, 10*.

Yet she has sometimes applied the term priest to her ministers, *e.g., AC XXIII, 3, 9; AC XXIV, 13; Ap XIII, 9*, etc., using it in a wide and general sense, and with a distinct protest against the abuse of the term by the

Papists, *Ap XIII, 11*. The derivation of the word rendering it more nearly allied to the idea of *presbuteros* than of *ierus*, and its almost inseparable connection in the minds of the people, with many of the functions pertaining to the office of the ministry, apart from any taint of sacerdotalism, caused it to be retained in this general sense until it could be abolished without confusion. It is important to bear in mind the qualifications by which our Church-writers guard the use of this term.

CHEMNITZ, *Examen Con. Tri. (De Sacramento Ordinis, Preuss 475)*: "In New Testament Scripture, the name of priest and priesthood is never given the New Testament ministry. The custom of calling the ministry a priesthood and ministers priests grew from the practice of church writers.... If, therefore, the Papists only wished that in the New Testament there should be an outward priesthood, *i. e.*, an outward ministry of the word and sacraments, as we have just explained, there would be no controversy, neither would there be any trouble excited as to the name priesthood, provided only those things which are true and necessary were left in security."<sup>3</sup>

GERHARD, *Loci Theologici (De Min. Ecc., para. 15)* : "The inference from Scripture is that the word priest is received in diverse ways. In the first place properly for a person who presents an outward bodily sacrifice to God; in this signification it is received whenever used either concerning the Levites or Christ. Secondly, figuratively for spiritual priests offering spiritual victims to God; in this sense and respect, all the truly pious are said to be priests.... Although Holy Scripture nowhere particularly mentions ministers of the Church as priests, yet we grant that in a true sense that word can be applied specifically to ministers of the Church, and that it has been so ascribed by old writers.... But the name priest cannot be ascribed in a true sense to ministers, as though they still present to God any sacrifice that is outward, and a sacrifice in the proper sense of the term, since we nowhere read that they have received such a command to offer sacrifice, as in the New Testament there is only one such priest, *viz.* Christ, Heb 5:6; 7:3; 9:15, etc."<sup>4</sup>

Para. 16: "This type of the Levitical priesthood has already been completed in Christ, the only priest of the New Testament, for offering himself on the altar of the cross, "by One offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." Heb 10:14; and therefore in no way is the fulfillment of this type to be sought in the minister of the New Testament, but in Christ alone.

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### **III. The ministry not dependent upon any outward succession.**

The very idea of a hierarchy is that of the transmission of spiritual functions through an outward succession. This is the theory of the Romish, Greek and Anglican churches. Meohler, the greatest of modern Romish theologians thus defines it: "The visibility and stability of the Church, require an ecclesiastical ordination originating with Christ, the fountain-head, and perpetuated in uninterrupted Succession; so that as the apostles were sent forth by the Savior, they in their turn, instituted bishops, and these appointed their successors, and so on down to our own days. By this episcopal succession, beginning with our Saviour, and continued on without interruption, we can especially recognize, as by an outward mark, which is the true church founded by him."<sup>5</sup> Perceval, an approved Anglican authority, says: "The church of England holds that the commission and authority for ministering in the name of God has been transmitted from the Apostles, by what is called episcopal succession; that is to say, that the Apostles left the power which they had received from Christ to govern the churches, and to preach the gospel, and to administer the sacraments, and to ordain other clergy to assist in all these duties, in the hands of a certain class of chief pastors (to whom in very early times the term bishop was appropriated); that this power and commission has been handed down in the Church from their time till now, by Bishops ordaining Bishops; and that none who have not

received episcopal ordination, are lawful ministers of the Church, or warranted to perform any acts in the name and with the authority of God."6

We cannot help but acknowledge that there is a fascination about the idea of an outward succession, and that the thought, which involuntarily presents itself on witnessing an ordination, of the long line of hands reaching backward from those upon the head of the candidate, is a very pleasing one. So too is the outward succession on a long line of pious ancestors, yet that the establishment of the claim to mere outward succession, carries with it no weight, the New Testament repeatedly teaches, Mt 3:9; Jn 8:37-39; Ro 4:12, 13, 16. The necessity of an outward succession is an Old Testament idea; the New Testament requirement is that of an inward succession, *i.e.* a succession of faith and doctrine, Ro 4:16; Gal 1:8. Hence the distinct statement of the Augsburg Confession, Art. VII, that the only marks of the church are the pure preaching of the gospel, and the right administration of the sacraments, and its ignoring of an outward succession of ministers as any test whatever of the true church.

CHEMNITZ, *Loci Theologici* (iii. p. 132): "For as there will always be a church, so there will always be pure teachers. But these promises are not bound to any certain persons, to any certain succession, or to any certain place. For Paul says to the elders of Ephesus, Acts 20:30", etc.<sup>7</sup> Chemnitz' argument in support of this position is very full, and altogether unanswerable. See his *Locus De Ecclesia*, pp. 129-133.<sup>8</sup>

GERHARD, *Loci Theologici* (*De Ecclesia*, Sectio V. para. 190): "The succession of places and persons is an outward and mutable accident, nor is it of any importance without a succession of doctrine.... Those are to be regarded true successors of the Apostles who sincerely embrace the doctrine and faith of the Apostles as contained in their writings, even though they have not that outward and local succession.... As the Apostles appealed from the local and outward succession, in which Caiaphas could have boasted, to a doctrinal and inner succession, when they publicly protested that they taught "none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come," and did not seek ordination of Caiaphas: so also today in the evangelical churches, we justly appeal from a local and personal succession, to a doctrinal succession."

Ibid. (*De Ministerio Ecclesiastico*, Sectio IX, para. 129) "We must distinguish between a personal and doctrinal succession. The latter succession alone is necessary and sufficient to a lawful call." So also QUENSTEDT, *Theo-Did-Pol*, Part IV: p. 410.

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#### **IV. The ministry not identical with the spiritual priesthood.**

But the doctrinal succession, while essential to the ministry, is not the only requisite. Not every one who embraces the pure word of God, thereby attains the rights of a Christian minister. As extremes often meet, so the Romish and Anabaptist theories unite in confounding the ministry with the priesthood; the former by establishing a hierarchical order of ministers who are regarded as the only priests, and the latter by asserting that the whole community of spiritual priests are ministers. Thus the Anabaptists, at the period of the Reformation, insisted from 1 Pe 2:5, 9; Rev 1: 6, that all believers have the right to exercise the public ministry of the word, and that no farther call to the office was necessary. This opinion the Augsburg Confession in Art. XIV plainly condemns. But the kindred idea that the spiritual priesthood confers upon every individual believer the right to exercise the ministry, yet that for the sake of good order this right should not be assumed by all, but only by a limited number to whom the rest would delegate these rights has caused some confusion in the discussion of this subject. Nothing can be clearer than the antagonism of our great Lutheran divines to this position, nor anything more convincing than their arguments against it.

CHEMNITZ, *Examen Conc. Trid.* (Locus, *De Sacramento Ordinis*): "All Christians are indeed priests, 1 Pe 2, Rev 1, because they offer spiritual sacrifices to God. Each one also at his own home, both can and should teach the word of God, Deut 6, 1 Cor 14. Nevertheless it is not every Christian who should take upon himself the public ministry of the Word and Sacraments. For not all are apostles, not all teachers, 1 Cor 12, but those only who by a peculiar and lawful call, have been separated by God to this ministry, Acts 13, Jer 23, Ro 10."9

CHEMNITZ, *Loci Theologici* (Locus, *De Ecclesia, Cap. IV*, p. 119): "They also object : But Christ has made all believers priests, Rev 1:6; 5:10 ; 1 Pe 2:9 : and the office of priests among other things is to teach the church, Lev 10:10, 11; Mal 2:7. I reply: Paul, 1 Cor 12:7, 8, 9, and likewise v. 29, expressly writes, that God does not give all the gift of explaining the Scriptures, but that for the advantage and edification of the church, he distributes in different ways the gifts of his Spirit : and in Eph 4:11, that he gives some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers for the work of the ministry. Peter also explains his own words, that all Christians are priests not that all should promiscuously, without a peculiar call, discharge the duties of the ministry, but that they should offer the spiritual sacrifices which are described, Rom 12:1, 'that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service,' and Heb 13:15, 16, 'By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.' On the other hand, they insist: 'Peter says that all believers are priests to show forth the praises of God, 1 Pe 2:9, and fathers of families have the general command to instruct the members of their households, Deut 6:20, 1 Cor 14:35,' I reply : 'To all Christians indeed, the general call to speak with each other concerning the word of God, Eph 5:19, and to comfort each other with the word, 1 Thess 4:18, and to confess the gospel, Ro 10:9, is common; and upon fathers of families, this is enjoined by a special command. But to administer those things which belong to the public ministry of the Word and sacraments, is not commanded to all Christians in general; as those two passages, 1 Cor 12, and Eph 4, above cited clearly show. Nor is the general call which all believers receive in Baptism, sufficient for the ministry, but a peculiar call is required, as has been already shown, Ja 3:1. But it is of advantage to consider why it takes so much importance that the minister of the church should have a lawful call. For we must not think that this happens from any human institution, *or only for the sake of order*: but the reasons are of the greatest importance, the consideration of which teaches us many things."10

GERHARD, *Loci Theologici*, (Locus XXIII, Cotta xii, 2, 65, Preuss, vi. 43) in reply to the arguments of the Anabaptists, Photinians and others who cited 1 Pe 2:9; Rev 1:6; 5:9, 10, against the necessity of a call to the ministry: "They are called spiritual priests, not with respect to ecclesiastical office, ...but with respect to the spiritual sacrifices which are to be offered to God, just as Peter himself explains it in v. 5, "ye are a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ," such are prayer, Ps 141:2; Rev 5:8; 8:4; giving of thanks, Heb 13:5, alms for the poor, Phil 4:18; He 13:16, mortification of the old man, Ro 12:1, martyrdom endured for Christ's sake, Phil 2:17; 2 Tim 4:6. Such sacrifices can be offered by all the pious as by spiritual priests.... Although indeed the preaching of the gospel belongs also to spiritual sacrifices, Mal 1:11; Ro 15:16, yet from the appellation of spiritual priests ascribed to all the pious *it cannot be inferred that to all belongs this spiritual sacrifice, namely the preaching of the gospel in the public congregation* of the Church, inasmuch as the reason for the name is derived from the spiritual sacrifices which all can offer, but not from that which is in no way common to all. This is clearly inferred from the words of the apostle, 1 Cor 12:20, "Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers?" All believers are spiritual priests, and yet all are not on this account teachers or prophets, since not all are instructed in the gift of prophecy, or called to the ministry of the Church, Eph

4:11. Therefore, as not all are prophets or apostles, so also not all are pastors and teachers. Nor is there any force in the objection, that Peter adds that the pious are a royal priesthood to show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvelous light for we must distinguish between (a) the *general* command and call, which all the pious receive at their reception of Christianity, and by which it is required of them to proclaim the praises of God, to repay him by whom they have been called to the fellowship of the Church, by words and deeds to confess Him, privately to instruct their own families in true piety, Deut 6:26, to be careful that the word of God dwell in them richly in all wisdom, and that they teach and admonish one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16, and that they comfort each other by the word of God, 1 Thess 4:18, etc., and (b) the *special* call by which it is demanded that the ministry of the word and sacraments be administered, in the public assembly of the Church according to the public, consent of the Church, by certain persons fit for it; and that this call is not common to all Christians is evident from 1 Cor 12:29; Eph 4:11; Ja 3:1. To this special call belongs the administering of the sacraments, as is inferred from 1 Cor 4:1. Now the mutual administering of the sacraments is nowhere either commanded or permitted all believers. Therefore, the public ministry of the word does not pertain to all."

HOLLAZ, *Examen Theologicum (De Ministerio Ecclesiastico)* in opposition to the same argument of the Anabaptists and Photinians: "Whoever are priests before God, can teach and instruct others without a peculiar call (for to teach others is an office of priests). All Christians are priests before God. Therefore--. We reply: 1. By making a distinction between priests so called by reason of their ecclesiastical office; and by reason of spiritual sacrifices. All Christians are priests by reason of spiritual sacrifices, such as prayers, praises, alms, mortification of the body; but not all are priests by reason of the public ecclesiastical office. For to women also belongs the priesthood with respect to spiritual sacrifices; but not by reason of the ecclesiastical office, 1 Tim 2:12, 2. Christians are called not only priests, but also kings before God. If, therefore, even when there is no case of necessity, Christians are permitted, on account of their spiritual priesthood, to perform acts belonging to the ecclesiastical priesthood, it follows that the same persons, on account of their spiritual kingship, can equally, even when there is no necessity, perform acts pertaining to a political kingdom; from which execrable anarchy would result."

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**V. A private Christian, notwithstanding his spiritual priesthood, dare not, without a call to the office, exercise any of the special duties pertaining to the ministry, except in cases of extreme necessity.**

This is included in the discussion of the preceding point; yet it is of such importance that it requires distinct reference. The language of the Augsburg Confession, Art. XIV, is very emphatic: "They teach that *no man should publicly teach in the Church, or administer the sacraments, except he be rightly called.*"

CHEMNITZ, *Loci Theologici (De Ecclesia, III. 119)*: "It is certain from the word of God, that *in the Church no one ought to be heard, who has not been lawfully called.* For Paul distinctly says, Ro 10:15, that they cannot preach (viz by right, even though they may actually attempt it) who have not been sent. And in Jer 23:21, God complains, "I have not sent these prophets; yet they ran." Indeed the churches ought not and cannot with any profit hear those who have not testimonies of a lawful call. For the words of Paul, Ro 10: 14, are manifestly: How can they hear so as to receive from hearing that faith which justifies and saves, if they have not a teacher who has been sent. Jer 27:14, 15; Heb 5:5. Therefore the Anabaptists, whom Luther calls deceitful sneaks, who enter houses and confuse men in faith, are justly censured and rejected. For verily they say that if any one understand the doctrine

of the gospel, whether he be a shoemaker, or a hoer, or a blacksmith, he ought to teach and preach."<sup>11</sup>

GERHARD, *Loci Theologici (De Min. Ecc., cap. iii., sec. 1)*, is so full that it is difficult to make a selection. The discussion occupies fifteen double-column, fine type, large quarto pages. Among other things he says: "These words of the Confession are opposed: 1. *To the calumnies of the Papists* who made the charge that in our churches all things were done in confusion and without order, and *that the power to teach was granted by us to every one in the church....* 2. To the confusion of the Anabaptists, who without a call take upon themselves the parts of the ministry of the Church, and allow all promiscuously the office of teaching, introducing in this way barbarous disorder into the Church."... "We show the necessity of the call: 1. By the express testimonies of Scripture. 2. By approved examples which comprise the practice of the entire Church of the Old and New Testament. 3. By reasons founded upon Scripture." Under the first head, each of the following passages is examined at length, Jer 23:21; 27:9, 14, 15; John 3:27; Ro 10:15; Heb 5:4, 5. "The second class of arguments contains approved examples, in reference to which we lay down the general rule that *no one either in the Old Testament or the New, has rightly administered the public office of teaching in the Church unless divinely called to it*, nor do we think that an example to the contrary can be produced." Of the third class, we select the following: "*He who without a call takes upon himself the public office of teaching in the Church, invades the province of another; is not an ambassador and minister of God, but a thief and robber, since he does not enter by the door, nor a minister of the Church, since he has not been called by it; disturbs the order appointed by God; introduces confusion of which God is not the author, 1 Cor 14:33; violates the example of Christ, the prophets and apostles, none of whom preached unless first sent and called; makes the dignity of this most revered office vile; deprives himself of needed consolation, and soon brings upon himself an unhappy end.*" In answering the counter arguments of the Anabaptists, he notices 1 Cor 14:29, 30: "It is certain that the apostle does not speak there concerning a promiscuous assembly of the pious (for this is clearly inferred from chapter 12:29: "Are all prophets?"); but concerning a certain order among the pious, although opinions vary as to what it was. Most of our theologians understand by the name of prophets, the ordinary teachers of the Church, endowed with the gift of prophecy, *i.e.*, of interpreting Scripture. From Acts 13:15, it can be inferred that formerly in the primitive Church, such a mode of teaching was customary that after the singing of hymns some passage of Scripture would be read, and then one of the teachers of the Church would rise to explain the passage that had been read, and to derive doctrine from it. When he would finish speaking, another likewise skilled in the gift of prophecy or of interpreting Scripture would rise, so that there would be not only one, but two or even three preachers who spoke in turn. They think that the apostle in these words has reference to such a custom;... but in no way can it be inferred from this, that to teach publicly in the church without any call ought to be lawful, since the apostle immediately afterwards adds, v. 33: God is not the author of confusion, but of peace."

Yet, in cases of extreme necessity, the word may be preached, or Baptism administered without a call. Thus the Appendix to the Smalcald Articles says: "In case of necessity, a mere lay man may absolve another, and become his pastor; as St. Augustine relates that two Christians were in a ship together, the one baptized the other, and afterwards was absolved by him" (*Tr 67*).

GERHARD, *Loci Theologici (De Min. Ecc., para. 74)*: "In cases of extreme necessity, when a man must either depart without baptism, or baptism must be administered by the private person, it is better that baptism be administered by private person than that the man should depart without baptism; nevertheless the administration of baptism ordinarily belongs to the ministers of the Church."

HOLLAZ, *Examen Theologicum*, (*De Min. Ecc.*, q. VIII, ob. ii.): "In the collecting and establishing of a church where there are not those present who having been ordinarily called, may teach, nor any at hand to give a call, in this extreme case of necessity, where the glory of God and the salvation of our neighbors are alone to be regarded, we willingly grant that any Christian is bound to instill the catechetical milk of righteousness to those unskilled in speech."

Ibid., (*De Baptismo*, q. IV): "Extraordinarily and in case of necessity, any pious Christian, whether male or female, acquainted with sacred rites, can administer baptism."

Ibid. (*De Eucharistia*, q. IV): "Not even in case of necessity is the administration of the holy Supper to be committed to a layman or private Christian; because there is a distinction in this respect between baptism, which is a sacrament of initiation, and the eucharist, which is a sacrament of confirmation. Concerning the necessity of Baptism Christ bears witness, Jn 3:5. But the use of the Holy Supper has not been made of equal necessity; and therefore when there can be no resource to the ordinary ministry, then the remark of Augustine is in place: 'Believe and thou hast eaten.'"

GERHARD, (Ib. para. 74) : "Some limit the necessity of the call in such a manner as to concede that one not called can teach: 1. When a Christian is with men ignorant of the Christian faith; for then every one is bound to seek and promote the glory of God to his utmost ability. 2. In a church, the Church order of which has not as yet been fully organized; for since the call of teachers is part of the order, when the former is deficient, the latter cannot be so strictly observed. 3. When the ordinary teachers degenerate into wolves, and altogether neglect their duty." See Hunnius, "Vindication of Luth. Ministry against the Papists."

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## VI. What is the call to the ministry?

The ministry we have thus found to be neither an order transmitted by outward succession, nor an office belonging to all Christians, which they can use or delegate as they see fit, but that it rests upon a divine call. Without this call, no one is permitted to assume to himself the position of an ambassador of God; nor dare Christian people recognize him as such, or allow him, without extreme necessity, to discharge any of these duties which God has entrusted to the ministry. A clear answer to the question, "What is the call to the ministry," is, therefore, of the utmost importance. By confused ideas on the subject, we may either fail to respond to what is a true call, by waiting for evidences of a call not required by the holy word; or may press forward into the holy office, when we have no right there, mistaking our own fancy for the voice of God. Those who in obedience to a true call have entered the office, may deprive themselves of much comfort by failing to apprehend those promises, Is 59:21; 2 Cor 13:2; Lk 10:16; 2 Cor 2:12; 1 Tim 4:12; Is 49:2; 51:16; Lk 1:16; 1 Tim 4:16; 1 Cor 15:58; 19:9, etc., which are so richly offered to rightly called ministers. If those to whom is committed the setting apart of ministers, are to discharge their duty conscientiously and in the fear of God, they must reach some definite conclusion regarding the teaching of God's word concerning this call. Nothing too can be more important for all true Christians, than some rule whereby to distinguish those whom they can regard as duly authorized to teach in public as ministers of Christ, from those who are not.

CHEMNITZ, *Loci Theologici* (*De Ecclesia*, III, p. 120); "The certainty of a divine call to the ministry is also profitable to this end, that the ministers may fulfill their office with greater diligence, faith and zeal, and be less easily deterred. This doctrine concerning the call also excites in hearers, true respect and obedience to the ministry."<sup>12</sup>

## VII. The immediate call no longer given.

The immediate call was a direct outward revelation from God to an individual, appointing him to the office. It was in most cases absolutely independent of any human agency. The call to the ministry no longer has this form; yet, in the discussion it is important to bear in mind the distinction between the two forms, in order to avoid confusion of the circumstances peculiar to the immediate call with those of the call as at present given.

CHEMNITZ, *Loci Theologici* (ib. p. 121): "The immediate call is when one is called to the ministry not by men, nor through men, as ordinary means, but immediately by God himself, and through God himself... In an immediate call, God himself either appears or speaks immediately to those whom in this manner he calls. Thus without doubt the prophets and apostles were called. Thus God immediately calls Moses from the burning bush, Ex 3:4. Thus the call of Aaron is immediately confirmed by God, Nu 17:8; while his rod buds. The call of Matthias also was immediate, Acts 1:26; as God reveals his will, through the casting of lots. So Paul, Gal 1:1, describes his call, that it was 'not of men, neither by man.' But if any one should ask, whether an immediate call is to be expected also in our time, I believe that we ought to reply: That while it is true that we ought not to be ready to prescribe anything to the will and infinite power of God, yet we have no command pertaining to us, to expect an immediate call; neither have we any promise that God wishes at this time by an immediate call to send laborers into his harvest. But through the Apostles he has delivered and committed to the Church a certain form as to how he now desires to send and call ministers, namely through a mediate call. Nor is there any necessity now for an immediate call. For God wishes the ministry to be bound until the end of the world to that declaration of doctrine which was received from the Son of God, and immediately delivered to the Church by Apostles who were immediately called, Gal 1:8; 2 Tim 1:14; Heb 1:1. Therefore no new doctrine whatever is to be received. Even though some should rise up, who would boast of an immediate call, and in addition would produce stupendous wonders, and would teach an entirely new and different doctrine from that of Christ and the Apostles, yet we ought not to believe them. For Christ predicted that antichrist would arise, who would produce such miracles, so that, if it were possible, even the elect would be deceived into error; and Paul testifies of the coming of the son of perdition 'after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,' 2 Thess 2:9. The advantage of this distinction between the immediate and the mediate call must also be noted... For the prophets and apostles, inasmuch as they were called, have the witness of the Spirit and of miracles that they did not err in doctrine; so that other ministers, in the church, might be obliged to derive their doctrines from the prophets and apostles, and prove it thence, or be accursed. Neither was their ministry restricted to a definite place, but they have the command to teach everywhere. But those who have not an immediate call cannot claim these two things for themselves, nor ought they to be allotted to them." 13

GERHARD, *Loci Theologici* (*De Min. Ecc.*, para. 79); "To those whom God calls immediately, without the aid and ministry of men, he either himself appears and converses immediately with them, as he called Abraham, Moses, and some prophets in the Old Testament, and as John the Baptist and the Apostles also were called by Christ in the New Testament; or announces to them the call and command by intervening messengers, to whom he has appeared and spoken, as he called Aaron through Moses, and Elisha through Elijah..." (Para. 81): "It is customary for the Anabaptists and enthusiasts to boast of such revelations, but mindful of the divine warning, Jer 14:14, let us not hear them, but hold to that norm and rule according to which an immediate divine call may be distinguished from the seductions of the enthusiasts. God himself declares this, Deut 13:1-3. Therefore, if he, who boasts of divine revelations, bring a strange doctrine, he is not to be regarded as immediately called, even though he may seem to firmly establish his call by means of miracles. The same rule is laid down, Jer 23:21; 27:15; 29:9; viz., that whoever prophesies anything false, whether in

doctrine or predictions, is not a prophet immediately called by God, but a most wicked seducer, because the Spirit of God by whom prophets are sent, is the Spirit of truth."

(Gerhard's argument against any immediate call at the present day is the same as that of Chemnitz.) 1. "We are without the promise that at the present time, since the New Testament canon has been established, we ought to expect an immediate call." "2. No necessity of an immediate call appears." "3. From which we must infer that if those who glory in an immediate call, and boast of divine revelations, bring a new doctrine, different from that of Christ and the Apostles, they are not to be heard, nor to be regarded as lawfully called, even though they endeavor to establish their call by miracles, Mat. 24:24."

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### VIII. No immediate inner call known in Holy Scripture.

The existence in the present period of an immediate *outward* call, and the necessity of this form of call, was involved in the old struggle between the Reformers and some of the extreme Anabaptists, such as the Zwickau prophets, who pretended to have received outward revelations, and who fanaticism was soon easily recognized.

Kindred, however, to this error, there was another theory of the call that gained for itself more adherents. Abandoning the idea of the necessity of an immediate *outward* revelation, it rested the call upon an immediate *inner* revelation of the Holy Spirit. Such was the theory, for instance, of Weigel from whose Postils, Gerhard quotes as follows: "Faithful preachers ought to be angels of God, *i. e.*, they ought to be taught and sent by God, not by men: for those who themselves run without being called to preach, are mercenaries, such as we all are now without any exception; for who of us has been taught by God? who suffers himself to be called by God? Are we not all appointed from the Academy, and by favor and power?" Again: "You are a doctor, but you have not been promoted by the Holy Spirit, but by the academies, where no Holy Spirit has ever been found; you have not been called or sent by God, but you have been ordained, chosen and appointed by men, and therefore you cannot teach spiritual things." It was the theory of Schwenkfeldt, and Boehme and most of the mystics. It is the theory, at the present day, of the Quakers, and is thus stated by Barclay in his Apology, (Proposition X., Intro. ;) "As by the light or gift of God, all true knowledge in things spiritual is received and revealed, so by the same, as it is manifested and received in the heart, by the strength and power thereof, every true minister of the gospel is ordained, prepared and supplied in the work of the ministry; and by the leading, moving and drawing hereof ought every evangelist and Christian pastor to be led and ordered in his labor and work of the gospel, both as to the place, where, the persons to whom, and as to the time wherein he is to minister. Moreover, they who have this authority may and ought to preach the gospel, *though without human commission* or literature." What Barclay means by this "light or gift of God," can be understood by referring to Proposition II, "Of Immediate Revelation:" "By the revelation of the same Spirit, he hath manifested himself all along unto the sons of men; which revelations of God by the Spirit, whether by outward voices and appearances, dreams or *inward objective manifestations in the heart*, were of old the formal object of their faith, and remain yet so to be; since the object of the saints' faith is the same in all ages, though held forth under divers administrations. Moreover *these divine inward revelations, which we make absolutely necessary* for the building up of true faith, neither do nor can ever contradict the outward testimony of Scripture, or right and sound reason. Yet from hence it will not follow that these divine revelations are to be subjected to the test, either of the outward testimony of the Scriptures, or the natural reason of man, as to a more noble or certain rule and touchstone; for this divine revelation and inward illumination, is that which is evident and clear of itself."

To this professed call by an immediate impulse of the Spirit, our theologians deny not only an existence in the present state of the church, but also affirm that the immediate call was never of such a nature.

CHEMNITZ, *Loci Theologici (De Ecclesia, III, p. 121)*: "The immediate call is... and not as the fanatics boast that they are forced to preach by some inner movement or other of the Spirit. But the immediate call, God himself either immediately appears or immediately addresses those whom he calls,"<sup>14</sup> GERHARD qualifies somewhat this statement of Chemnitz; yet still so as to exclude this inward form of an immediate call (*ut supra*): "To those whom God call immediately, ... he either himself appears and converses immediately with them,... or announces to them the call and command by intervening messengers, to whom he has appeared and spoken." ... "Although we do not deny that such an inner inspiration and impulse concurred in the immediate call, yet an outward manifestation and confirmation of the immediate call were added, either through the appearance and declaration of God himself, or by the announcement of the Divine will, nor is there any doubt that this occurred, in the prophets and apostles who were immediately called, *by the special design of God to oppose the errors of the fanatics, who boast that they have been immediately called, when they imagine that they have been forced to preach by some inner impulse or other of the Spirit.*" So also QUENSTEDT, (IV p. 395), BAIER, (*De Min. Ecc.*, para. 3), HOLLAZ, (*De Min. Ecc.*, q. 5)

The entire subject of the immediate call is admirably summed up by

HOLLAZ, *Examen Theologicum (Prolegomenon, III, q. 3)*: "The certainty of a call to the ministry is derived not from a new, peculiar and immediate revelation of the Holy Spirit, but from mediate revelation contained in Holy Scripture. For Scripture teaches the gifts with which a suitable minister of the church should be endowed, 1 Tim 3:1 seq. It likewise teaches that the church has the power of the keys of Heaven, Mt 16:18, and therefore the power of entrusting the holy ministry to certain persons. If therefore a candidate of Theology knows (for the spirit of man knows what is in man, 1 Cor 2:11) that he has been divinely furnished with those gifts which Holy Scripture requires in a minister of the Church, and he sees at hand before his eyes a written call from any church, having the right to call him, he is certain, without any new and immediate revelation of the Holy Spirit, of his lawful call to the ministry."

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## IX. The doctrine "Of the Call," as related to the doctrine "Concerning the Word."

The call to the ministry being thus entirely dependent upon the word of God, any erroneous doctrine concerning the call, or any want of clearness on the doctrine concerning the word will end in either doubt and uncertainty, or positive error concerning the call. For how can we determine the call, while we are unable to determine the word?

The Romish doctrine of the ministry as a hierarchical order, transmitted by outward succession, is a corollary to their doctrine which asserts the incompleteness of the Sacred Scriptures as the word of God, and maintains that oral tradition is of equal authority with the written word. According to this theory, there is an esoteric or secret, as well as an exoteric or public word; and to hand down this esoteric word, there must be a succession of men, chosen in accordance with its requirements. Bishops are inspired in their selection of candidates for the ministry. Their commission is, therefore, the call from God: and the call is consequently entirely independent of and superior to the written word.

The Wiegelian or Quaker doctrine of the ministry, differs from the Romish doctrine only *per accidens*. Essentially the two theories are identical. An inner light, or an *esoteric* word, is the true source of the call. In this *esoteric* word, or immediate call, and nowhere else do we hear the true voice of the Holy Spirit. Those who seek the Holy Spirit's voice in the outward word alone are not true ministers of Christ. The call must be entirely independent of and superior to the written word.

Well were it if the doctrine of the insufficiency of Holy Scripture, as the means through which the Holy Spirit speaks to us, were restricted to the Romish church and the mystical sects; but to our surprise we often find it prevalent in a *subtle* form, where in its grosser form, it is denied and combated. Wherever it appears there we find either the Romish or Quaker theories of the ministry taught, or more commonly the necessity of a divine call insisted upon, and then the question as to what the call is, shrouded in doubt, as though it belonged to those *arcana* which nothing but the inner light dare reveal.

Thus many Protestants, while affirming that Holy Scripture is the word of God, deny the doctrine of the inseparable connection between the Holy Spirit and Holy Scripture, and maintain that there is an inner illumination beyond and in addition to that offered and communicated by the Spirit through the written word.

LATTER HELVETIC CONFESSION. (Art XVIII, Niemeyer, p. 506): "Let us believe, therefore, that God in his word teaches us publicly through his ministers; but that within through the Holy Spirit he moves the hearts of his elect to faith."

CALVIN (*Institutes*, Book III, C. xxiv. para. 8; Eng. Trans. of Presb. Board, II:187): "there is a universal call, by which God in the external preaching of the word, invites all, indiscriminately to come to him, even those to whom he intends it as a savor of death and an occasion of heavier condemnation. There is also a special call, with which he, for the most part, favors only believers, when by the inward illumination of his Spirit, he causes the word preached to sink into their hearts." So also Book IV, C. xiv, para. 8: "The Lord first teaches and instructs us by his word; then confirms us by the sacraments; and lastly shines upon our minds by the light of his Spirit."

While DR. HODGE, in the first volume of his *Theology*, completely overthrows the position of Schleiermacher that the inspiration of the sacred writers was nothing supernatural, and that of Maurice and others that every believer possesses the gift of inspiration just as the sacred writers possessed it, yet in volume III (pp. 479-485), he attempts by a long argument to disprove "the inherent, divine and constant power of the word," as the means of the Spirit's influences. Thus (p. 483):

"The theory in question is contrary to Scripture, in that it assumes that the reason why one man is saved and another not, is simply that one resists the supernatural power of the word, and another does not"... "This Lutheran doctrine is inconsistent with the experiences of believers individually and collectively. On the day of Pentecost, what fell upon the Apostles and the brethren assembled with them? It was no 'verbum vocale;' no sound of words; and no new external revelation. The Spirit of God Himself, enlightened their minds and enable them to remember and understand all that Christ had taught, and they spoke every man as the Spirit (not the word) gave them utterance. Here was a clear manifestation of the Spirit's acting directly on the minds of the Apostles.... What, according to the Lutheran theory, is meant by being full of the Holy Ghost? or by the indwelling of the Spirit? or by the testimony of the Spirit? or by the unction of the Holy One that teaches all things? or by the outpouring of the Spirit?" So also vol. II, p. 650.

So far as these arguments possess any weight, we oppose them with the following from volume I, p. 100, of the same work. It will be perceived that the author strikes one note when attempting to bolster up the Calvinistic doctrine of election, and another when contending against Mysticism.

"The appeal has always been to the law and testimony. The prophets came saying, 'Thus saith the Lord.' Men were required to believe and obey what was commanded to them, and not what the Spirit revealed to each individual. *It was the outward and not the inward word to which they were to attend....* In no case do we find the Apostles calling upon the people, whether Jews or Gentiles, to look within themselves, to listen to the inner word. They were to listen to the outward word; to believe what they heard, and were to pray for the Holy

Spirit to enable them to understand, receive and obey what was thus externally made known to them."

If to this we add that in the outward word, the Holy Spirit is waiting, and through it communicates Himself to all who thus earnestly listen to the word, exciting within them the desire to receive it, and then enabling them to believe, and through the word communicating his graces, we have all that the strictest Lutheran could desire.<sup>15</sup>

But wherever the former theory is held, the doctrine of the call to the ministry is obscured. The individual is turned away from the revealed word of God, to search within himself for an undefined inner call. The candidate must declare that he has been "inwardly moved of the Holy Ghost" to assume the office, while but little importance is attached to any test whereby a true inner call, by the Holy Spirit speaking in the outward word, may be distinguished from the vagaries of the individual's fancy. If the individual himself be a person of good character, and have decided that he possesses the inner call, the fact of his call to the ministry is regarded either as sufficient, or at least such as should not be denied. In ordinary cases, ordination, or the judgment of the church is necessary for entrance into the ministry, yet simply as a confirmation of the inner call, upon which everything depends. And yet, even Vinet, with all his moderation on this subject, remarks: "No man, nor body of men, can know with entire certainty that we are called; as, on the other hand, they cannot, in every case, declare with certainty that we are not called. In short, there are times and places in which a man can not be sent except by himself, and in which he who ought to be called is the last who would be called." (Pastoral Theology, p. 99)

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## **X. Is there then no inner call?**

Our theologians are far from denying the importance of what may in a certain sense be termed the inner call; but insist upon two things, viz., first that this call be rightly understood and not confounded with anything else, and, secondly, that it be assigned its proper place.

Nothing can be more severe than the rebukes given in the prefaces to both the Smaller and Larger Catechisms, to worldly-minded pastors, who have entered the ministry simply to eke out a living, and without any love of souls. So too all our theologians insist upon a close adherence, in judging the qualifications for the ministry, to the rules laid down in the Pastoral Epistles, 1 Tim 3:1-6; Ti 1:6-9, which clearly forbid entrance into the office for any other reasons than devotion to the work of the Master. They recognize also a true movement of the Holy Ghost upon the mind of the individual, in leading him through the study of the outward word of God, to the conviction that it is his duty to seek the holy office. If this be understood as the inner call, they are willing to accept the term; but still regard this conviction, wrought though it is by the Holy Ghost, not as the call properly speaking to the ministry, but only as preparatory to the call. Where an outward call does not follow, this inward call is not to be regarded farther than to lead the individual to persevere in the proper way to obtain the outward call. Where an outward call cannot be given any one, and the individual is still constrained by this inner call, there by virtue of the powers conferred upon the spiritual priesthood, he may exercise his office, until one properly endowed with an outward call can be obtained. Where, on the other hand, notwithstanding the fact that there is no inner call, the outward call is given, that outward call by itself constitutes the individual a true Christian minister. The inner call may succeed instead of precede the outward call. Or the inner call may never be heard; the Church may have made a grievous mistake in entrusting the holy office to such hands; but the person thus appointed still remains a minister, until he either voluntarily abandons the functions of the office, or the Church deprive him of them. To contend otherwise is to fall into the error of the Donatists and Novatians, as condemned by the Augsburg Confession, Art. VIII. The outward call alone is, therefore, to be accounted the true call; the mediate inner call, through the outward word, is either a call to seek the office, or to exercise it after the outward call has been received.

CHEMNITZ, *Loci Theologici (De Ecclesia, III, p. 119)* on 1 Tim 3:1: "To desire the office of a bishop, is not without a lawful call to take upon yourself ministerial functions; but he who understands the foundations of heavenly doctrine, and is to a certain extent endowed with the gift of teaching, in offering his labor to God and the Church, by this very act, seeks for nothing else than that God, by a lawful call, may declare whether, when, and where, he wishes to use his ministry in the Church. And such a one ought to be endowed with such a mind, that, if a lawful call would not follow this petition, he would not take it upon himself, but would say with David, 2 Sam 2:26: 'But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee, behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.'" 16

GERHARD, *Loci Theologici (De Min. Ecc., para. 75)*: "We grant that God, by an inner impulse and inspiration, breathes into some this disposition to undertake the ministry of the church, without regard to dangers or difficulties; to which belongs also that mysterious impulse by which some are drawn to the study of Theology. We also grant that it is absolutely required of the minister, that he be not allured either by ambition or avarice, or any other wicked desire, but that induced by the pure love of God, and the desire of edifying the Church, he should accept the ecclesiastical office offered him; and if any one desire to apply, in a proper sense, the name of secret call, to these dispositions, both of which are especially worthy of praise, we do not greatly object. Yet in the meantime we give the warning, that, in order that the doors be not opened to the disturbances of the Anabaptists or the revelations of the enthusiasts, no one, by reason of this secret call, ought to take upon himself the duties of the ministerial office, unless there be added to it the outward and solemn call of the Church."

This inner impulse he afterwards declares to be not the call, but "an accident of the same," and a description of the proper disposition or quality in the person called.

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## **XI. The call is given through the church.**

Thus the *Smalcald Articles* (Appendix, Mueller 341, Henkel 404) declare: "The churches undoubtedly retain the authority to call, to elect, and to ordain ministers. And this authority is a privilege which God has given especially to the Church, and it cannot be taken away from the Church by any human power, as Paul testifies, Eph 4:8, 11, 12. And among these gifts which belong to the Church, he enumerates pastors and teacher, and adds that these were given for the edifying of the body of Christ. Wherefore, it follows that wherever there is a true church, there is also the power to elect and ordain ministers... To this point the declarations of Christ pertain, which show that the keys are given to the whole Church, and not merely to some particular persons, Mt 18:20. Finally, this is also confirmed by the declaration of Peter, where he says, 'ye are a royal priesthood,' 1 Pe 2:9" (*Tr 67-8*)

The relation of the spiritual priesthood to the ministry, is, therefore, according to the conception of our Lutheran authorities, this: The spiritual priesthood does not possess the right to the ordinary exercise of the functions of the ministry, but only in its collective capacity the right to choose, in God's name, certain persons for the office.

CHEMNITZ, *Loci Theologici (De Ecclesia, p. 123)*: "God does not ordinarily use, for a mediate call, the ministry of angels... But Christ has committed the keys to the Church as to his bride, Mt 18:17, and has promised that whatever they agree upon, and ask of Him, concerning any matter upon earth, He will also give from His Father who is in heaven. He has committed the word and sacraments to the same. Just as Paul declares concerning God's ancient people, Ro 3:2, that 'to them were entrusted the oracles of God,' and Ro 9:4, 'to

whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises.' And the ministry belongs to the Church, Eph 4:12. For all things belong to the Church, 1 Cor 3:11. And hence Paul, when 1 Tim 3:15 he had been treating of the mediate call, added that the Church is 'the pillar and ground of the truth.'"17

HUTTER, *Compend*: "A minister is a person regularly called by the Church."

GERHARD, *Loci Theologici (De Min. Eccl.* para. 85) adopts the very words of Chemnitz above given, and adds: "To the Church, then, belongs the delegated right, as they say, of appointing suitable ministers of the word."

BAIER, *Comp. Th. Pos. (De Min. Eccl.* para. 3, (e)): "For she has the keys of the kingdom of heaven, Mt 16:18; 18:17, given her as a bride of Christ her groom, and therefore as it is her prerogative to open and close the kingdom of heaven, so is it also her prerogative to appoint ministers, through whom she may open and close the same."

HOLLAZ, *Examen (De Min. Eccl.)*: "A mediate or ordinary call is that by which God calls a certain person to the ministry of the Church, through the intervention of the judgment of those men who are members of the Church." So also QUENSTEDT, IV, p. 402.

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## **XII. The church in communicating this call, must be constrained thereto and guided therein solely through the Word of God as revealed in Holy Scripture.**

The church no more than the ministry, or the individual believer, possesses any *esoteric* word, by which to appoint ministers. There is no magical power inherent in its decisions. They avail only when in harmony with Holy Scripture, as it is only, as the church follows the directions of the written word, that it can be regarded as an instrument through which the Holy Spirit speaks.

CHEMNITZ, *Loci Theologici (De Ecclesia*, III, p. 124): "The Lord of the harvest has given the Church a form, and so to speak an instruction as to the character in doctrine and in life of those persons who are to be chosen and called to the ministry of the word. 1 Tim 3:2-6; Ti 1:6-11. Let the Church in the true fear of God adopt this rule for her guidance, inasmuch as God himself wishes by this means to call and send laborers into his harvest."18

GERHARD, *Loci Theologici (De Min. Ecc.*, para. 88): "According to the norm of Scripture, therefore, the doctrine of every pastor must be accurately examined, and according to this as a rule and plummet, Ps 19:4, pastors are to be judged; ordinary pastors are to be heard, but on the condition that they also listen to Christ speaking in his word, teach those things which Christ commanded, and deliver no other than the true doctrine of Christ, Mt 28:20; John 10:1, 2; 2 John 10."

If it be urged against this position that the power of setting apart ministers, is derived from the power of the keys, as independent of the written word and superior to it, our church writers, in their loyalty to Scripture, find no difficulty in giving a satisfactory answer. For the power of the keys is not an arbitrary power, but one which is bound to the word of God. It is simply the application to the individual of what God's written word declares concerning his salvation. Hence the Church must see to it that only such men are allowed to exercise this power, as fully understand what God's word teaches, and are competent in the fear of God to apply its general principles to individual cases.

Prior, therefore, to entrance upon the ministry, an examination must be made of the candidate to determine whether he have the proper qualifications for the call.

GERHARD, *Loci Theologici (De Min. Ecc.*, para. 166): "The Apostle with great earnestness admonishes the bishop Timothy, 1 Tim 5:21, 'Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins,' where the last clause is aetiological to the former, and therefore in ordination hands are not to be laid suddenly, *i.e.* not without careful judgment and a diligent examination by the bishop, so that he may not become a partaker of other men's sins."

Ibid. (para. 168): "In this examination, diligent search should be made into the qualifications of the candidate for ordination, whether he have the ability to perform aright the duties of a minister of the church, 2 Tim. 2:2. If you say that the apostle denies that any one is sufficient for an office so important and so difficult, 2 Cor. 2:16, I reply that shortly afterwards in the succeeding chapter, he explains this, by saying, 2 Cor. 3:5; 'But our sufficiency is of God.' To this sufficiency belong: 1. Sincerity of confession... 2. Skill in teaching... 3. Integrity of character."

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### **XIII. The call communicated by the church proceeds not from the ministry alone.**

CHEMNITZ, *Examen (De Sacramento Ordinis*, Pr. 485): "The question in this place is, By whose voice and suffrage ought the election and call to be made so that it can be determined to be divine, *i.e.* that God himself, through these means chooses, calls and sends laborers into his harvest. In Holy Scripture there are certain and clear examples pertaining to this subject. Acts 1, when another is to be substituted for Judas, Peter proposes the matter in the presence not only of the Apostles, but also of the rest of the disciples, as believers then were called; and the number of these who were assembled at the same place was about a hundred and twenty... Acts 6, when deacons were to be chosen and called, the Apostles were unwilling to arrogate to themselves the right of the call.... Acts 14, Paul and Barnabas appoint presbyters in every church, in which they preached the gospel. But they did not take upon themselves alone the right and authority of an election and call, but Luke uses the term *cheirotomasantes*, which 2 Cor 8 employs concerning the election made by the vote of the church.... And Acts 15, when persons were to be chosen to be sent with a commission to the church at Antioch, Luke says that it seemed good to 'the Apostles and elders with the whole church to select Barnabas and Saul.'"<sup>19</sup>

CHEMNITZ, *Loci Theologici (De Ecclesia III*, p. 123): "Inasmuch as the ministers are not the whole church, but only a part of it, Eph 4:11; neither are they lords of the church, but helpers and overseers, 2 Cor 1:24; 1 Pe 5:3; therefore, they neither can nor ought to assume the mediate call to themselves alone, the remaining members being excluded."<sup>20</sup>

BAIER, *Comp. Th. Pos. (De Min. Ecc.*, para. iii. [c]): "If we consider that the church is a republic, and that the ministers of the word are as it were the magistrates or managers of the public business, on whom the entrusted care of the whole state rests, it is easily understood that the power of appointing these resides in itself and by its own nature, in *the entire church*, neither does it belong to any part unless transferred to a certain part by the common consent of all."

QUENSTEDT, *Theo. Did-Pol.* (De Min. Ecc., q. ii.): "The power of electing and calling ministers of the word by divine right, is not in the power of the priests or ecclesiastical order alone."

HOLLAZ, *Examen*, (De Min. Ecc., q. vii.) mentions the following argument of the Papists, and replies: "'The Apostles appointed bishops without the vote of the magistracy and people, e.g. Paul appointed Titus bishop in Crete, Ti 1:5. Therefore, bishops and pastors are at the present day to be called without the vote of the people.' We reply: 'There is a distinction between a church which is to be planted, or first established, and one which has been planted and established. When a church was first to be planted and established among the heathen, the vote of the people was not to be expected, and the authority of an unbelieving magistracy was not to be regarded. When the Apostles sent bishops and pastors to people who were yet to be converted, the consent of the hearers was not required; but when the church had been planted and established, they did not send forth ministers to the churches without the consent of the people, Acts 1:24; 6:3; 14:23.'"

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#### **XIV. The call communicated by the church proceeds not from the people alone.**

CHEMNITZ, *Examen (De Sacramento Ordinis, ut supra)*: "But they," (i.e. the Apostles) "do not renounce the care of the call, and leave it to the blind and confused pleasure of the common people or multitude, but they are as it were the directors and controllers of the election and call; for they give the doctrine and rule, according to which the latter should elect."<sup>21</sup>

CHEMNITZ, *Loci Theologici (De Ecclesia III, p. 123)*: "It is certainly and clearly evident, both from the commands and examples of Scripture, Ti 1:5; 1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 2:2; Acts 14:24, that those who are already in the ministry, and profess the sacred doctrine, should be employed whenever through a mediate call the ministry is entrusted to any one... Therefore, the election and call of ministers of the church should not be submitted either to the ministers alone and the magistrate alone, or to the ignorance and inconsiderateness of the promiscuous multitude alone."<sup>22</sup>

GERHARD, *De Min. Ecc.*, para. 86) "In general we say that neither to the presbytery alone, nor to the magistracy alone, much less to the judgment of the promiscuous and ignorant multitude is the appointment of ministers to be submitted, but the right to give the call belongs to the whole church." So also QUENSTEDT and HOLLAZ, *passim*.

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#### **XV. The call communicated by the church proceeds not from the magistracy alone.**

CHEMNITZ, *Loci Theologici (De Ecclesia III, p. 123)*: "Yet a Christian and pious magistrate is not permitted without the will and consent of the ministry and the rest of the church, to call and appoint ministers in the church. For just as the Pope of Rome, with his adherents, has committed sacrilege in this that he has withdrawn the choice and call of ministers of the church, and has transferred it to himself and to his adherents; so also is the magistrate subject to the same charge, when to the exclusion of the ministry and the rest of the church, he claims for himself alone the power of appointing the ministry in the church. For a pious magistrate is not the whole church, but only a member of it."<sup>23</sup>

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**XVI. The call communicated by the church proceeds from the whole church, both ministry and people, and where church and state are united under devout Christian rulers, the magistracy also.**

CHEMNITZ, *Examen (De Sacramento Ordinis)*, Pr. 485): "It is useful to observe this fact in the history of the Apostles, that the ministers and the rest of the church sometimes concurrently elected those whom they judged suitable, as Acts 1. Sometimes the church proposed and selected them, and the election was submitted to the judgment of the apostles for approval, Acts 6. But often the Apostles who could judge better concerning these matters, proposed to the churches those whom they judged to be suitable for the ministry, and when the vote and consent of the church were added, the call was ratified. Thus Paul sends Timothy, Titus, Sylvanus, etc., to the churches. Thus in Acts 14, elders are proposed to whom the church agrees through *cheirontian*. Sometimes also some offered their work to the church, 1 Tim 3:1. Yet always in the time of the Apostles the consent of the church, and the judgment and approval of the presbytery accompanied and were necessary to a lawful call. Thus Titus was appointed to govern and direct the election of elders in Crete, so that this might be done in a proper way, and that he might confirm the election properly made. For in reference to the appointment of elders, Paul, Titus 1, uses the same word which is found in Acts 14, where mention is made at the same time both of *cheironia* and the appointment of elders: and he commends Titus to rebuke those sharply who are not sound in the faith, and do not teach what they should, *i.e.* as he more clearly says, 1 Tim 5:22: "Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins." These examples of apostolic history clearly show that the election or call belongs to the whole Church in a fixed manner, so that in the election or call, both presbyters and people may have their own parts.... Afterwards when emperors and kings embraced the Christian religion, their will, judgment and authority also were applied to and required, because they ought to be nurses of the Church (Is 49:23), and, according to the example of Jeoshaphat, Hezekiah and Josiah, a supervision of the right appointment and administration of the Church has been entrusted them.... This is the opinion of the primitive Apostolic Church, and of the ancient Church, concerning the lawful election and call of the ministers of the word and sacraments; and those churches which now have been established according to the word of God, hold this opinion as applying to places where there is a presbytery embracing that faithful form of words which is according to doctrine and loving piety. But where in the time of the apostles the priests were idolatrous, the magistracy impious, and the people walking in darkness, there in the beginning the ministry could not be established through such an election, but either the Apostles went thither, or sent others elsewhere properly chosen, in order that these might first lay the foundation. Thus Acts 13, Paul and Barnabas are sent to the Gentiles: and Acts 11, the gospel is thus spread to Pheniece and Cyprus and Antioch. Thus Paul had many persons about him whom he sent hither and thither to the churches. But when the church had been for some time founded, the ministry was established in the manner which we have stated, Acts 14."24

GERHARD, *Loci Theologici (De Min. Ecc.)*, para. 85): "Since in the Church there are three distinct classes or orders, the ecclesiastical, the political and the domestic; or the presbytery, the magistracy and the people, of all of whom, as members, the Church consists, no class belonging to the Church should be altogether excluded from this work, but in the mediate call of ministers each should be allowed its own parts and duties. 1. That bishops and presbyters are to be employed when the ministry is to be entrusted to any one, is evident both from the apostolic command and approved examples of Scripture, Acts 14:23; 1 Tim 4:14; 5:22; 2 Tim 2:2; Ti 1:5. The same is confirmed by a clear reason. For those who have been previously engaged in the ministry, and who profess the sound doctrine, can judge most correctly concerning the qualifications of those who are to be called to the office of teaching."

Ibid. (para. 86): "The reason that in this practice no mention is made of the magistracy, is found in the fact that the magistracy was not as yet Christian, and did not embrace the doctrine, the preaching of which is committed to ministers. If it had been truly Christian its own part would also have been assigned it, since from the ordination of God it is a nurse of the Church, Is 49:23; a guard of both tables, Deut 17:19, a shield of the earth to the people of Abraham, Ps 47:9, a part of whose office it is to lift up the gates that the King of Glory may enter, Ps 24:7,... And in addition... we should add the examples of the pious kings of the O.T. for instance, David, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Josiah, etc., 2 Ki 18:4; 22:2; 1 Chr 23:2; 2 Chr 17:6 *sqq.*; 34, and the pious emperors of the N.T., as Constantine, Theodosius, Justinian, etc."

(The argument of Gerhard proving that the laity also should participate in the call, is very full. We present a brief outline: He proves his position) "I. From the Scriptures. (1) The delivery of the keys to the whole Church. Compare Mt 16:19 with 18:17, 18; 1 Cor 5:4; 2 Cor 2:6. (2) From the testing of teachers. Whoever is charged with the duty of distinguishing teachers from seducers, of testing sound doctrine, of distinguishing the voice of Christ, the chief Shepherd, from the voice of false shepherds, of following no other but fleeing from him, of anathematizing those who preach a gospel other than that which was preached by the apostles, has the duty assigned him, in his own manner and order, to call ministers of the Church. But by the force of the divine command, all the former duties rest upon the sheep of Christ, or hearers, Mt 7:15; Jn 5:39; 10:27; Gal 1:9; 1 Thess 5:19, 21; 1 Jn 4:1; 2 Jn 10, 11. Therefore the latter dare not be denied them. (3) From the name of ministers. They are ministers of the Church, and therefore the Church must have the right to call them, 1 Cor 3:21; 2 Cor 1:24; 1 Pe 5:2, 3. (4) From the advantage of the hearers. If the ministers is to have a good report of those who are without, 1 Tim 3:7, how much more necessary is it that he should have this report of the Church over which he is to preside... (6) The calling of ministers with the consent and by the vote of the Church, over which they are appointed, cherishes mutual concord between hearers and pastors, and removes dissension." "II. From the practice of the Apostles, Acts 1:23; 6:3; 14:23." (Each of these passages is explained at great length, and the exceptions of Bellarmine against their application in this connection are refuted.) "III. The practice of the primitive church is proved from: (1) The decrees of the Councils, (2) The sayings of the fathers. (3) Approved examples of a lawful call."

(The arguments of Bellarmine against the rights of the laity are then successively presented and refuted. The most significant one, perhaps is:) "(7) *The disadvantages following an election by the people.* 'In the first place the people are ignorant, and cannot judge, even if they very greatly desire to do so, as to whether one is suitable or not for the priesthood. In the second place, if the people have the power of electing, it will necessarily follow that those will always be put in office whom the worse and the less intelligent desire; for the larger number will prevail, and in every association there are more wicked than good, more foolish than wise person.' We reply: (1) This is rightly opposed to the Anabaptists, who grant the power of election to the ignorant multitude, and exclude the magistracy and presbytery. In the election we neither approve nor introduce confusion, nor grant to the people alone the right of electing... (2) Although the people cannot give such an exact judgment concerning the learning and qualifications of the one to be elected as the presbytery can, yet from the catechetical instruction they can give some judgment concerning his purity of doctrine, from the trial sermon some judgment as to his gifts, and from conversation or the report of others some judgment as to his character, and hence they should not be altogether excluded from his election. (3) The practice of our churches shows that the people can be admitted without confusion to the election of ministers... If these disadvantages would follow the election of pastors by the people as such, *i.e.* directly and *per se*, and do not rather occur... *per accidens*, how did it happen that the apostles gave the people the power of making the choice?"

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**XVII. That each portion of the church may discharge aright the duty entrusted to it in the call of ministers, a certain fixed and definite order is desirable.**

CHEMNITZ, *Loci Theologici (De Ecclesia, III, p. 123)*: "Inasmuch as God is not a God of confusion, but of order, 1 Cor. 14:33d; in order that all things be done decently and in order, the matter of the election and call of ministers, both in the time of the Apostles and since their times in the older and purer Church, was always transacted in a certain order *by the chief members of the Church in the name and by the consent of the entire Church*. Thus Acts 1:5, Peter presents a description of the character of the person who should be chosen; and afterwards the Apostles, together with the Church make the choice. Acts 6:2. The Apostles propose the election of deacons to administer the external affairs of the Church; they also describe of what character these persons should be, and according to the rule the Church elects. But afterwards they submit those whom they have elected to the judgment of the apostles, who confirm the election by their approval. Often the Apostles also proposed suitable persons to the Church. Thus Paul sent Titus, Timothy, Sylvanus and others; and the Church afterwards approved this election by its vote and consent, Acts 14:22; 2 Cor 8:16. Titus is proposed with another to convey alms to Jerusalem, and the Church agrees. Thus nevertheless the election was made by the Church, but yet in a definite order."<sup>25</sup>

GERHARD, *Loci Theologici (De Min. Ecc., para. 86)*: "This order is most properly observed, if the matter of the election and call of ministers be transacted by certain *chief members of the Church, in the name and by the consent of the entire Church*. Although it seems scarcely possible to lay down a certain rule, in speaking most particularly, and descending to particular cases, since the rights of the patron vary, and that which has been agreed in regard to this matter is of much importance,... yet speaking generally and to give an example we may say that the examination, ordination and inauguration belong to the *presbytery*, the nomination, presentation and confirmation to the *Christian magistrate*, and the consent, vote and approval, or according to circumstances the demand of the people. Therefore the general principle that pastors should be called with the consent of the Church, or that no one should be obtruded upon the Church when it is unwilling, has express testimonies in Scripture, and was approved by the constant practice of the primitive Church; but the form of the election *in specie* varies for sometimes the vote of the people was necessary in nominating persons, and sometimes their approval was required for those before nominated, Acts 1:15, 23, 26; 6:3; 14:23; 1 Cor 16:3; 2 Cor 8:19; 1 Tim 3:7; 5:22; 4:14."

QUENSTEDT, *Theo. Did-Pol. (De Min. Ecc. III, 402)*: "Each part of the Church has its own functions in the calling of ministers. It is the office of the clergy to examine the candidates for the ministry, to inquire into their learning and life, to consider and judge concerning the gifts necessary for the ministry of the Church, and to inaugurate them by the laying on of hands. It belongs to the Christian magistrate to nominate them, to present them when called, and to ratify their examination. The duty of the people is to give the call, to approve by their vote and testimony, and to elect."

HOLLAZ, *Examen (De Min. Ecc., q. vii. Prob. b)*: "The call of ministers generally and comprehensively considered (as embracing election, ordination and the call specially so called) should be so attended to by the whole Church, and all its three orders, that due order be preserved and confusion be avoided. For God is not a God of confusion, but of order, 1 Cor 14:33. Therefore 'the examination, ordination and inauguration belong to the presbytery, the nomination, presentation and confirmation to the Christian magistrate, and the consent, vote and approval to the people.'"

A definite mode must, therefore, be agreed upon by the Church. The word of God nowhere specifies this mode. The Church is hence at liberty to adopt any mode whereby the end in view may be reached, and all parts of the Church be guaranteed its own rights. Hence, with proper limitations, *the delegation to representatives of power originally vested in the Church as a whole, is both scriptural and Lutheran.*

GERHARD, *Loci Theologici (De Min. Ecc.*, para. 106): "Among us consistories have been established, composed of highly respectable ecclesiastical and political persons, who represent the Church, neither does the whole multitude of the people participate in the election, but the power of speaking and acting is entrusted in the name of the rest to certain persons, viz. elders. In some Churches, the people, relinquishing in a certain sense their own rights, have handed over this part to their magistrates, and such of the ministry as unite in the same confessions, and to the choice thus made the quietly acquiesce. In other Churches they transfer their own power to certain highly respectable persons who transact all things in the name of the people. In neither mode, does the right to call ministers cease to belong to the whole Church; for the right is entrusted to the fidelity of others, and is not lost, since each one with a free will for a time relinquishes his right, neither can it tend to the loss or damage of right."

QUENSTEDT, *Theo. Did-Pol.* (De Min. Ecc. IV, 402): "To avoid confusion in the election of bishops and presbyters, there have been established church consistories or presbyteries composed of honored ecclesiastical and political men, who represent the Church and are charged with the duty of furthering the business of the Church, and inquiring into the studies, the life and the character of those who are to be ordained."

Ibid. (p. 403): "Bishops or teachers cannot alone represent the Church, since the hearers also are included in its definition; but the presbytery can represent the Church, to which belong not only those who labor in the word, but also the elders, i.e. very highly respected members of the Church, set over the business of the Church, who together with the ministry constitute the presbytery, or as we at the present call it, the consistory." So also BAIER (*De Eccl.*, para. xxx.)

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### **XVIII. The call has reference to a particular place.**

CHEMNITZ, *Loci Theologici (De Ecclesia*, III, p. 124): "What we have above said concerning the call of the Apostles that it extends itself to the whole earth, we cannot now say also concerning those who have been mediately called. For teachers (*doctores*), pastors, bishops, presbyters are called to certain churches, and have not absolute power of teaching everywhere or in all churches, Acts 14:22, Ti 1:5. And thus God through a special call is accustomed to show in what place He wishes to use the services of any one. Therefore by virtue of this call they do not have the power to teach in other churches, to which they do not have a special call. Hence in the Council of Chalcedon, Canon VI, and, according to Gratian, Canon XVI, there was a statute that no one ought to be absolutely ordained, unless to a certain and special church."<sup>26</sup>

GERHARD, *Loci Theologici (De Min. Ecc.*, para. 138): "A mediate call is to a certain place, since among other points of difference, the immediate call of the Apostles is commonly thought to differ from the mediate call of bishops, presbyters, pastors and teachers in this, that the former received absolute power, yes the command to preach everywhere, Mt 28:19; Mk 16:15; Ro 10:18; Col 1:28. But the latter had a certain flock committed them in a certain definite place. Thus Acts 14:23; Ti 1:5; 1 Pe 5:2."

Ibid. (para. 158): "The question is asked whether one should be ordained who has not yet been called to a definite place. We answer: No, because ordination is the declaration and witness of a call, and hence where no call has preceded, ordination ought by no means to be conferred.

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**XIX. Ordination is not the call, and, therefore, is not a rite by which men are invested with ministerial authority. It is only a ceremony by which the call is publicly recognized.**

Thus the SMALCALD ARTICLES teach (Appendix, Mueller 244, Henkel, 404): "In former times the people elected pastors and bishops; then the bishop living in or near the same place, came and, by the laying on of hands, confirmed those elected; and at that time ordination was nothing else than this approbation" (*Tr 70*).

CHEMNITZ, *Loci Theologici (De Ecclesia*, IV, p. 126): "If the lawful call be in accordance with those matters hitherto mentioned, what therefore does the rite of public ordination confer? For in the Romish church this rite is employed without any consideration of a call. And if any one be ordained they think that he has sufficient power to teach, absolve and administer the sacraments, even though he be without a lawful call. On the other hand, there are some not only among the Anabaptists, who have altogether rejected this rite; but even elsewhere they sometimes dispute very bitterly concerning it. For sometimes cases happen in which some one has a call and is prevented from betaking himself to a higher church, in which to receive the rite of ordination. The question, therefore, is whether his ministry is invalid. Some affirm this, and others deny it, since the rite of ordination is not necessary, provided the call be lawful. But yet on account of those who run and are not sent, the call ought to have a public testimony. And the rite of ordination is nothing else than such a public bearing of testimony, by which that call in the sight of God, and in his name, is declared to be lawful and divine; and by this rite, as by a public designation, the ministry is committed by the consent and approval of the whole Church, to the one who has been called. Thus Paul, although immediately called, yet is sent to Ananias, that he may put his hands upon him, that the Church may be sure of the call, Acts 9:17, and afterwards Acts 13:3. When he was about to be sent to the Gentiles, he was again, by the laying on of hands, appointed a teacher of the Gentiles.... If therefore this was done in reference to one who was immediately called, how much more becoming is it to do this in reference to mediate calls? Although therefore ordination does not make a call, yet if any one has been lawfully called, this rite is a declaration and public confirmation that the call which preceded is legitimate."<sup>27</sup>

GERHARD, *Loci Theologici (De Min. Ecc.*, para. 139): "Ordination is a public and solemn declaration or attestation, through which the ministry of the Church is committed by the Church to a suitable person called thereto, to which he is consecrated by prayer and the laying on of hands, rendered more certain of his lawful call, and solemnly and seriously and publicly in the sight of the entire church admonished concerning his duty; for which reasons we preserve the rite of ordination inviolate in our churches."

HOLLAZ, *Examen Theologicum (De Min. Ecc.* q. IX. Prob. a): "Although therefore ordination does not constitute an election and call, but presupposes it: yet if any one have been lawfully called, this church rite declares and publicly confirms that call, which preceded it, as lawful."

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## XX. Conclusion.

We have thus endeavored to present with all impartiality and fairness a summary of the principles laid down by our great theologians, concerning certain points involved in controversies, touching the nature of the ministry, at present occupying the attention of our church. Other topics, of great importance connected with the subject, our limits compel us, at least for the present, to withhold.

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1 Martin Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici*, tr. by Preus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989), 16.

2 Daniel, *Codex Liturgicus Ecc. Luth.*, p. 1.

3 Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent, Part II*, tr. by Fred Kramer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978), 679.

4 Although it is not possible to footnote Gerhard's *Loci Theologici* at the time of this publication, the Gerhard Institute is in the process of publishing an English translation of this entire *Opus Magnus*. For information contact the Johann Gerhard Institute (34 South Country Club Road, Decatur, IL 62521).

5 Moehler's *Symbolism*, Eng. trans. p. 299.

6 Perceval on *Apostolical Succession*, p. 7

7 *Loci Theologici II*, 711.

8 See *Ibid.*, 708-13.

9 *Examination II*, 678.

10 *Loci Theologici II*, 698-9.

11 *Ibid.*, 698.

12 *Ibid.*, 699.

13 *Ibid.*, 699-700.

14 *Ibid.*, 699.

15 Quenstedt thus treats the Calvinistic distinction of an inner and outward call to the kingdom of grace: "We admit the distinction, but so as not to oppose the inner to the outward call, or separate the one from the other; since the outward call is the means and organ of the inner call, and through this God is efficacious in the hearts of men." Johannes Quenstedt, *The-Did-Pol III*, 467.

16 *Loci Theologici II*, 698.

17 *Ibid.*, 701.

18 *Ibid.*, 703.

19 *Examination II*, 707.

20 *Loci Theologici II*, 701.

21 *Examination II*, 707.

22 *Loci Theologici II*, 701-2.

23 *Ibid.*, 702.

24 *Examination II*, 708-13.

25 *Loci Theologici II*, 702.

26 *Ibid.*, 703.

27 *Ibid.*, 704-5.

25 June 1997

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This essay first appeared in the October 1874 issue of *Quarterly Review* (V/4:557-96).