

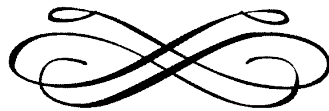
# Spiritual Fathers

*A Treatise on the Lutheran Doctrine of the Ministry,  
with Special Reference to Luther's Large Catechism*

SECOND EDITION

(Revised and Expanded)

David Jay Webber



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To Paul, Ruth †, and John

*... I bow my knees before the Father,  
from whom every fatherhood in heaven and on earth is named,  
that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory,  
to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,  
that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith...  
(Ephesians 3:14b-17a)*

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## *Foreword*

Imagine a scenario like this: The dreaded red and blue lights flash in your rearview mirror, as you pull over to the side of the road. You roll down your window and dutifully place both hands on the steering wheel, as the officer approaches your vehicle. The officer is wearing khaki shorts and a Hawaiian shirt. He is munching on a donut. "Howdy!" he says, between bites. "I clocked you doing 40 in a school zone. Lemme see your license, registration and proof of insurance." As you hand the man your documents, you can't help wondering if he's for real. This fellow doesn't fit the image of authority and professionalism you had pictured for one of your town's finest. Where's the uniform? The badge? The courteous and professional demeanor? Were it not for the flashing lights you would have no indication at all that this man with crumbs on his shirt is an officer of the law.

In a few minutes he comes back and returns your paperwork. This time another young man is with him. "This is my friend," the policeman says regarding his companion. "He's not a police officer. He's just along with me for the ride today. But he's going to write you a speeding ticket." The young man fills out a form, tears off the top sheet, and hands you a court summons. You take the ticket with amazement, wondering what is happening. You can bear the indignity of being called to account for your traffic infraction, but you've been treated contemptuously and unprofessionally by someone who is supposed to represent the law, and you've been served a summons by someone who holds no office and bears no authority. The whole farcical encounter is a disgrace to the police force and the community it represents.



There is arguably more understanding about offices held by those who serve in the kingdoms of this world - what Martin Luther called the left-hand realm of God - than about the office of the public ministry. We understand implicitly that in the world no one can exercise secular authority unless it is given to him (a public call). He cannot assume it for himself. We expect that one who exercises temporal power will be sworn into office and publicly acknowledged as one who has been empowered by the people to serve in their name (ordained or installed). We expect that as he functions under normal cir-

cumstances he will wear a uniform (vestments) or a badge, as a symbol or sign of his authority. We understand that the office of temporal power is filled by people with different names and titles, such as patrolman, deputy, state trooper, detective, agent, and even parking meter reader. While the scope and responsibility of each position is different, all serve in a public office in the name of the people.

Yet when it comes to the office of the ministry of the Word, there is often needless confusion that runs to extremes. At one extreme we find the notion that every Christian is a minister – a viewpoint that scarcely recognizes any formal office of the ministry. The pastor is seen as a role model, adviser and life coach, but little more. At the other extreme we find the hyper-clerical notion that the ministerial office stands alone as a higher priestly caste, lording its unimpeachable authority over the flock, and refusing to be held accountable by God’s people. As the ministerial office at one end of the spectrum is disparaged and held in contempt, a reaction at the other end is to take the ministerial office far beyond the words of Scripture. Neither extreme serves the church or the truth.

Amid such conflicting voices, Pastor Webber cuts through the confusion with a clear exposition of the truth. He echoes the voices of Luther and other Lutheran theologians, who trace the origin of the public ministry, not just to Pentecost or to the call of the apostles, but all the way back to Eden. The public ministry of the Christian church, in its essence, was not born with the appointment of the Twelve, or with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem. It is a continuation of the ministerial office that was present and carefully defined in the Old Testament. The office of father was established by God at creation. From the authority of fatherly oversight flow vocations to govern in the family, in the world, and in the church. The Fourth Commandment, given at Sinai, codifies the unchanging and universal moral law that obedience is owed to those who exercise authority as God’s representatives, whether in the family, in temporal government, or in the church.

When we understand the public ministry as spiritual fatherhood, that spiritual fatherhood – incarnate in the office of the ministry – defines the office itself, along with its roles and functions. The ministerial office is not merely a part of an expedient organizational structure, or a component of a practical business model. It is the loving exercise of spiritual authority in the church (which is our spiritual mother), according to God’s own design: with the use of God’s Word; and under the authority of God’s Word. God’s institution of marriage and family cannot legitimately be re-imagined today as a human contrivance to be redefined according to human notions. In the same

way, God's institution of spiritual authority cannot be redefined for modern times to suit feminist preferences, or to appease any other ideology of this world that is currently waging war on the office of spiritual fatherhood. In a culture that despises authority and disparages fathers, God's design for the loving oversight of his church continues unchanged.

*Spiritual Fathers* is not an exegetical work that focuses on a re-examination of the Scripture passages that speak of ministry. It is, rather, a systematic work that compiles, and weaves together, harmonious testimonies from orthodox voices throughout church history. Drawing from the teaching and example of God's Word, from the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and from the long history of pastoral practice in Christendom, Pastor Webber leads the reader on a fresh and lively walk down the narrow Lutheran middle. *Spiritual Fathers* belongs in the personal library of every Christian who wants to speak with a clear, orthodox voice in addressing the ministry issues of today.

*Jon D. Buchholz, President  
Arizona-California District  
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod  
The Ascension of Our Lord, 2013*



## 1.

### ***“The Lutheran Confessions...clarify...what the Bible teaches about...church and ministry”***

Confessional Lutherans believe that “the Word of God – and no one else, not even an angel – should establish articles of faith,”<sup>1</sup> and that “only on the basis of God’s Word can judgments on articles of faith be made.”<sup>2</sup> They formally declare, in the Formula of Concord, “that the only rule and guiding principle according to which all teachings and teachers are to be evaluated and judged are the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments alone, as it is written, ‘Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path’ (Ps. 119[:105]), and Saint Paul: ‘If...an angel from heaven should proclaim to you something contrary, ...let that one be accursed!’ (Gal. 1[: 8]).”<sup>3</sup>

But Confessional Lutherans also recognize that the Confessions or Symbolical Books of their church – as contained in the Book of Concord of 1580 – are a true and faithful *statement* and *exposition* of the Word of God. They subscribe to these Confessions “because they accurately reflect the teaching of Scripture. They are relevant today because they reflect the unchanging and ever timely word of God.”<sup>4</sup> James F. Korthals expresses the conviction of all orthodox Lutherans when he states that

The Lutheran Confessions in the Book of Concord clarify, as precisely as human language allows, what the Bible teaches about God, sin, Christ, justification, church and ministry, repentance, the sacraments, free will, good works, and other articles of faith. ... They are declarations of belief, making clear that Lutherans have convictions which are not open to question. ... Soon after its initial publication, the Book of Concord became the standard in doctrinal confrontations with Roman Catholics and with Calvinists. Where a Lutheran position seemed unclear or uncertain, the Book of Concord became a reference point for the authentic Lutheran view.<sup>5</sup>

We should always be willing to learn anew from the Confessors of our church, as they unfold for us the teaching of Holy Scripture. In



this way we can humbly apply to ourselves the directives of Hebrews 13:7-9a:

Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings... (ESV)

Joseph A. Seiss does remind us that “We do not believe *in* the Symbols; we only believe *with* them, and that for no other reason than that we are persuaded that they do fairly and truly grasp and declare what, on adequate examination, is found to be the true sense, intent and meaning of God’s holy Word on the points presented in them.”<sup>6</sup> Our consciences are captive to the Word of God, and not to the Symbols *as such*. We therefore agree with Charles Porterfield Krauth when he points out that

We do not claim that our Confessors were infallible. We do not say they could not fail. We only claim that they did not fail.<sup>7</sup>

But as Seiss also reminds us,

The Symbols of the orthodox Church of Christ are the matured fruits of the deepest devotion, experience and learning of its greatest and wisest members in its most trying ages; and as we may practically learn much from the biographies of the good, so we may learn much more from the Spirit-moved biography of the Church and the principles and testimonies which mark her life of faith. They are the sign-posts set up by the faithful along the King’s highway of salvation to designate the places of danger to those who come after them, to warn and admonish us where we would otherwise be liable to err and miss the goal of our high calling in Christ Jesus. They are not laws to rule our faith, for the Word of God alone is such a Rule; but they are helps and tokens to enable us the more surely to find the true import of the Rule, that we may be all the more thoroughly and sincerely conformed to that Rule. They are the human tracks which the best of the saints have left, by which we may the better detect the way which God has laid out and opened for the fallen and sinful children of men to travel, that they may fill their Christian vocation and come to everlasting life.<sup>8</sup>

The Large Catechism of Martin Luther is one of these Symbols or Confessions. What it teaches regarding the doctrine of the Ministry is therefore not simply an interesting example of what

Luther as an individual may have taught. It is, rather, an official testimony of what *the Lutheran Church as a whole* teaches – on the basis of Holy Scripture – regarding the doctrine of the Ministry. The Large Catechism’s formal status as a “normed norm” of Lutheran doctrine is shared by the other Symbolical Books.

Luther himself led the way in emphasizing that the Confessional basis of the Evangelical Lutheran Church is not his personal writings, but is the formally-approved Symbolical Books of the Church. He wrote that

We must confess that the doctrine which was declared and submitted at Augsburg is the true and pure Word of God, and that all who believe and keep it are children of God and will be saved, whether they already believe it or will be illuminated later. For this Confession will endure to the end of the world on Judgment Day. It is indeed written that whosoever believeth on Him and shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved (Rom. 10:11,13). And we must take note not only of those who will be added in the future, but also of the Christian church, which preaches the Word, and of our own people, according to the word: “As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16), which passage excludes none; therefore all who believe and live according to the teaching of the [Augsburg] Confession and its Apology are our brethren, and their peril concerns us as much as does our own. As members of the true church we dare not forsake them, regardless of when they join us, whether they do so secretly or openly, whether they live among us or in the diaspora. This we say and confess.<sup>9</sup>

Because Luther consciously subscribed the Augsburg Confession and its Apology as testimonies of his own faith and of the faith of the church, attempts to find significant doctrinal differences between the private writings of Luther and these Confessional documents (on matters such as the Ministry or justification) are misguided. It is true, of course, that the style and vocabulary of Luther’s writings, and the style and vocabulary of these Confessions, do often differ. But this is not *dogmatically* significant. Hermann Sasse notes that

in every living church there must be room for a variety of theological thinkers, provided they are in agreement as to the dogma of the church. Thus, a difference of interest in, or emphasis on, certain points of doctrine, and even a difference of expression, could well be tolerated. Luther always felt that he and his learned friend [Philip Melancthon] supplemented each

other. As Melanchthon had learned from him, so he had learned from Melanchthon. It has great significance for the Lutheran church that its Confessions were not written by Luther alone. As Melanchthon's *Augsburg Confession*, *Apology*, and *Tractatus* are happily supplemented by Luther's *Smalcald Articles* and *Catechisms*, so even the *Formula of Concord* was written by disciples of Melanchthon and of Luther. This variety in expression of one and the same truth gave the Lutheran Confessions a richness which the confessions of other churches do not possess. Nothing is more significant for the Lutheran church's independence of human authority than the fact that Luther approved of the Augsburg Confession although he clearly stated that he would have written it in a totally different way.<sup>10</sup>

As we consider the relationship between the church's public Confessions and Luther's private writings, we would, of course, also remember what the Concordists declare concerning Luther as a faithful expounder of the theology of the Reformation: "More than all others, Dr. Luther understood the true, correct interpretation of the Augsburg Confession, and he remained committed to it and defended it to the end."<sup>11</sup> Luther is accordingly described by the Concordists as "the foremost teacher of the Augsburg Confession."<sup>12</sup> Luther's private writings can therefore often serve as a guide to a correct understanding of those Confessions that were written during his lifetime. This is especially true of the ones that he himself authored, but it is also true of the ones that were authored by Melanchthon – under Luther's influence, and in the name of the church of which Luther was the chief theologian. In view of our cultural and linguistic distance from the sixteenth century, our own contemporary reading of the Confessions can perhaps be protected from erroneous, anachronistic interpretations if we, when necessary, compare the formulations used by the Symbolical Books in addressing a certain topic, with the formulations used by Luther in addressing that same topic.

The present treatise is not a work of original exegetical theology. It is, rather, a work of historical and systematic theology, focusing largely on the doctrine of the Ministry that is set forth in the Lutheran Confessions and in the writings of representative Confessional Lutheran theologians. The present writer does not consider a careful study of the Biblical passages that deal with the doctrine of the Ministry to be unimportant, but his primary purpose in this work is to present to his readers the exegetical conclusions of those who can more legitimately be seen as spokesmen for the Lutheran Church as a whole.

In setting forth herein what we are convinced is *the Lutheran doctrine of the Ministry*, we do so with a prayerful wish similar to the sentiment expressed in 1857 by delegates from the (old) Norwegian Synod, who had been sent out to investigate the various Lutheran bodies of America, and who – after getting acquainted with the pastors and institutions of the Missouri Synod of that time – issued this report to their church body:

It is a real joy to be able to say, in gratitude to God, that we have invariably got the impression that they are all possessed of the same spirit...: a heartfelt trust in God, a sincere love for the symbols and the doctrines of the fathers, and a belief that in them His holy Word is rightly explained and interpreted; and therefore a sacrificial, burning zeal to apply these old-Lutheran principles of doctrine and order. May the Lord graciously revive this spirit throughout the entire Lutheran church, *so that those who call themselves Lutherans may no longer wrangle over questions settled by the Lutheran Confessions*. May they rather show their true Lutheranism by truly believing that God's Word is taught rightly and without error in the Lutheran Confessions. Otherwise, the Lutheran name is but duplicity and hypocrisy.<sup>13</sup>

Our approach is also in keeping with what Robert D. Preus describes as the "Threefold Tier of Authority in the Church." He writes that

there is a threefold tier of authority in the church, according to our Confessions. 1. "The prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments" are "the pure and clear fountain of Israel, which is the only true norm according to which all teachers and teachings are to be judged and evaluated" (FC SD, Rule and Norm, 3). That statement means two things: (a) Scripture is the one divine source from which, as from a spring or fountain, we draw all our theology; and (b) Scripture is the only norm to judge teachers and teachings in the church. 2. The Confessions, on the other hand, are the "basis, rule, and norm, indicating how all doctrines should be judged in conformity with the Word of God" (ibid., Heading). This means, quite simply, that the Confessions state what we Lutherans believe to be the teachings of Scripture and what we therefore believe, teach, and publicly confess. 3. Other good Christian writings, that is, "good, useful, and pure books, such as interpretations of the Holy Scriptures, refutations of errors, and expositions of doctrinal articles" have their place too. They are not to be rejected or spurned. "If they are in accord with the aforementioned pattern of doctrine [namely, the Confessions], they are to be accepted and used as helpful expo-

sitions and explanations" (ibid., 10). Scripture, the Confessions, other good Christian literature! Scripture's authority is divine and absolute. The Confessions' authority is derived from their agreement with Scripture and is binding for everyone who professes to be a Lutheran. Other Christian writings are authoritative and useful too when they agree with Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions.<sup>14</sup>



## 2.

*“There are also spiritual fathers”*

It is significant that Luther, in his 1529 Large Catechism, does not explain and develop the doctrine of the Public Ministry of the Gospel as a part of his discussion of the Third Article of the Creed, but instead considers this subject chiefly as a part of his commentary on the Fourth Commandment. Those who imagine that the Public Ministry, in its essence, is a post-Pentecost creation of the church, might expect to find a discussion of the Public Ministry in that section of the Large Catechism where the doctrine of the church is expounded. But that is not where such a discussion is to be found. And a part of the reason for this is because the Public Ministry, in its essence, is *not* in fact a creation of the church.

In his Large Catechism explanation of the Fourth Commandment, Luther writes:

So we have introduced three kinds of fathers in this [fourth] commandment: fathers by blood, fathers of a household, and fathers of the nation.<sup>15</sup> In addition, there are also spiritual fathers – not like those in the papacy who have had themselves called “father” but have not performed a fatherly function [office<sup>16</sup>]. For the name of spiritual father belongs only to those who *govern and guide us by the Word of God*. St. Paul boasts that he is such a father in 1 Corinthians 4[:15], where he says, “In Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel.” Because they are fathers, they are entitled to honor, even above all others. But they very seldom receive it, for the world’s way of honoring them is to chase them out of the country and to begrudge them even a piece of bread. In short, as St. Paul says [1 Cor. 4:13], they must be “the rubbish of the world, the dregs of all things.” Yet it is necessary to impress upon the common people that they who would bear the name of Christian owe it to God to show “double honor” [1 Timothy 5:17] to those who *watch over their souls* and to treat them well and make provision for them. If you do, God will also give you what you need and not let you suffer want. But here everyone resists and rebels; all are afraid that their bellies will suffer, and therefore they cannot now support *one good preacher*, although in the past they filled ten fat paunches. For

this we deserve to have God deprive us of his Word and blessing and once again allow preachers of lies to arise who lead us to the devil – and wring sweat and blood out of us besides.<sup>17</sup>

Luther's discussion here is concerning our "spiritual fathers," who "govern and guide us by the Word of God," and who "watch over" our souls. We note that Luther applies what he says about the honor that is due to a spiritual father to the way in which a congregation should be willing to provide support for a "good preacher" in its midst. When Luther speaks of "spiritual fathers" in this context, he has pastors and preachers specifically in mind.

This understanding is confirmed by the pertinent section of Luther's "Ten Sermons on the Catechism," which had been preached in 1528. The text of the Large Catechism, issued the following year, followed the text of these sermons very closely. In his sermon on the Fourth Commandment, Luther had said that

there are three kinds of fathers: [fathers by birth, in the household, and] fathers of the land. The fourth kind are the bishops... ..for those who are true Christians, it is right that they should honor their bishops, because they watch over their souls and administer the sacraments to them. I shall not preach much about this, for I too am one of these. In short, if you honor your parents, masters, princes, and bishops, [says God,] you must not worry about where you are going to get a wife, husband, house and home. Let Me take care of that. If you honor your prince, burgomaster, and preacher, let Me take care of how you will get enough to live on. ... This should make us melt with love and lift up our hands in gratitude that we have a master, a mistress, a prince, burgomaster, preacher in whom we honor only God. ... Therefore, honor all who can be called father – father and mother, master and mistress, prince, burgomaster, and preacher!<sup>18</sup>

We see, then, that where the Large Catechism of 1529 had spoken of "spiritual fathers," who govern and guide us by the word of God and who watch over our souls, the 1528 sermon had explicitly spoken instead of "bishops" and "preachers," who watch over our souls and administer the sacraments to us.

These observations regarding Luther's intended application of the idea of a "spiritual father" in the Large Catechism are also validated by an examination of his 1520 "Treatise on Good Works," which obviously stands behind both the 1528 sermon and the 1529 catechism. In commenting on the Fourth Commandment, "Thou shalt

honor thy father and mother," Luther writes in this earlier treatise:

From this commandment we teach that after the excellent works of the first three commandments there are no better works than to obey and serve all those who are set in authority over us. ...what is said and commanded of parents must also be understood of those who, when the parents are dead or not there, take their place, such as friends, relatives, godparents, temporal lords, and *spiritual fathers*. For everybody must be ruled and subject to other men. ... The second work of this commandment is to honor and obey our *spiritual mother*, the holy Christian church, and [its] *spiritual authorities*. We must conform to what they command, forbid, appoint, ordain, bind, and loose. We must honor, fear, and love the spiritual authorities as we do our natural parents, and yield to them in all things that are not contrary to the first three commandments. ... The spiritual authorities should punish sin with the ban and with laws, and constrain their spiritual children to be pious, motivate them to do this work, to practice obedience, and to honor the authorities. You do not see this kind of zeal today. ... They do not preach, they do not teach, they do not restrain, they do not punish, and no spiritual government at all remains in Christendom. ... But spiritual authorities should see to it that adultery, unchastity, usury, gluttony, worldly show, excessive adornment, and other such blatant sin and shame are most severely punished and rectified. And further, the endowments, monastic houses, parishes, and schools should be properly managed and real worship maintained within them. *The spiritual authorities should take care of the young people, both boys and girls, in schools and cloisters, and provide them with learned and pious men for teachers that they may all be well brought up.* ... St. Paul enjoins his disciple Titus that he should properly instruct and govern all classes, young and old, men and women [Titus 2:1-10]. ... If a bishop would devotedly take care of all these demands, see to them, make visitations, and fulfil all his responsibilities in the way that he should, then even one single city would be too much for him. For in the days of the apostles, when Christendom was at its best, each city had a bishop... It is time we prayed to God for mercy. We have plenty of spiritual authorities, but little or no spiritual government. In the meantime, may he who is able give what help he can, so that institutions, monasteries, parishes, and schools may be well ordered and governed.<sup>19</sup>

In this 1520 treatise, Luther speaks of the "spiritual fathers" who rule over us, and to whom we are therefore "subject." He also



describes the holy Christian church as our “spiritual mother,” whom we are to “honor and obey.” He then combines or harmonizes these two complementary parental images by recasting the “spiritual fathers” as those who are also, simultaneously, the “spiritual authorities” of the church, who speak and act on behalf of the church. As Luther goes on to describe the responsibilities of these “spiritual authorities,” he makes it clear that he is speaking of people like Titus in the New Testament, and of the bishops and pastors of the apostolic and post-apostolic church, who properly are to exercise the duties of “spiritual government” among us.<sup>20</sup>

From one point of view, then, such bishops and pastors are our “spiritual fathers.” From another point of view, these same bishops and pastors are the “spiritual authorities” who represent and serve our one “spiritual mother” (that is, the church). This imagery corresponds to the fact that in ordinary human relationships, a father of children can at the same time also be a dutiful son and servant of his own mother. That, in effect, is what the bishops, pastors, and preachers of the church are.



## 3.

***“Preaching is entrusted to the man and not to the woman”***

Implicit in Luther’s descriptions of the church’s pastors and preachers as spiritual *fathers*, is the expectation that such pastors and preachers will be men, and not women. In his 1529 sermon, Luther had said that, for catechetical purposes, a (literal) mother and a (female) mistress “can be *called father*,” together with a (literal) father and a (male) master. But in the 1520 treatise he specifically ruled out that kind of application in regard to *spiritual fathers*, since we are told there that our spiritual *mother* is the *church*, and not a female officeholder. Luther reiterates that point in the Large Catechism, where in his exposition of the Creed he describes the holy Christian church as the Holy Spirit’s “unique community in the world, which is the mother that begets and bears every Christian through the Word of God, which the Holy Spirit reveals and proclaims...”<sup>21</sup> He is clearly not thinking according to a scheme whereby *male* pastors and preachers are spiritual *fathers*, while *female* pastors and preachers – if there would ever be such a thing – would be spiritual *mothers*.

And besides, we know from other sources that Luther taught that Scripture forbids women from serving as pastors or preachers in the ordinary assemblies of the church. He wrote that

in the New Testament the Holy Spirit, speaking through St. Paul, ordained that women should be silent in the churches and assemblies [I Cor. 14:34], and said that this is the Lord’s commandment. Yet he knew that previously Joel [2:28 f.] had proclaimed that God would pour out his Spirit also on handmaidens. Furthermore, the four daughters of Philip prophesied (Acts 21[:9]). But in the congregations or churches where there is a ministry women are to be silent and not preach [I Tim. 2:12]. Otherwise they may pray, sing, praise, and say “Amen,” and read at home, teach one another, exhort, comfort, and interpret the Scriptures as best they can.<sup>22</sup>

St. Paul does indeed operate according to this kind of distinction in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, where he gives instructions re-

garding the proper decorum with which a woman should pray or prophesy (11:5). Later in that same epistle, however, he teaches that “in the churches” women should keep silent, and that “in church” it would be shameful for a woman to speak (14:34-35). J. L. Neve notes that

A careful exegesis always will show beyond all doubt that in 1 Cor. 14:34-36 and in 1 Tim. 2:12-14 Paul forbids the women to preach in the church. In 1 Cor. 11:4-16, where he does not forbid them to prophesy and to pray, [but is] merely criticizing the manner in which they did it, Paul must have a speaking of the women in view that did not take place in the *ἐκκλησία*, in the public assembly of the congregation, but in smaller meetings for devotion. Specifying among the different species of services of a Christian congregation of today, from the public preaching in the pulpit down to Sunday school and women’s missionary meeting, true Christian tact will always easily find what a woman can do without breaking in upon that ground rule of creation which Paul in the above passages has reestablished.<sup>23</sup>

Luther does not think that women as a group are not intelligent enough or gifted enough to carry out pastoral work, or that they are constitutionally incapable of performing pastoral duties. He concedes that a woman may preach, for example, in a case of necessity, where no regular male pastor can be obtained, and where a gathering or community of women would otherwise be deprived of God’s Word:

As St. Paul says in Gal. 3:28, you must pay no attention to distinctions when you want to look at Christians. You must not say: “This is a man or a woman; this is a servant or a master; this person is old or young.” They are all alike and only a spiritual people. Therefore they are all priests. All may proclaim God’s Word, except that, as St. Paul teaches in 1 Cor. 14:34, women should not speak in the congregation. They should let the men preach, because God commands them to be obedient to their husbands. God does not interfere with the arrangement. But he makes no distinction in the matter of authority. If, however, only women were present and no men, as in nunneries, then one of the women might be authorized to preach.<sup>24</sup>

But Luther also recognizes the existence of a divine order – going all the way back to the creation of the first humans – that would ordinarily guide women to make use of their gifts in other ways. He is of the opinion that in the events that transpired in Eden,

the Holy Spirit has shown that God orders the man to carry out the offices of governing, teaching, and preaching. For when Adam is called forward [Gen. 3:9], it is nothing other than a sermon before the Law, by means of which he recognizes what he has done and what he owes to God. Preaching is entrusted to the man and not to the woman, as Paul also teaches, insofar as this has to do with Christian matters. Otherwise, it can occasionally happen that a woman gives better advice, as one reads in Scripture. But apart from that, the offices of leading, preaching, and teaching God's word are commanded to the man.<sup>25</sup>

In his 1521 treatise on "The Misuse of the Mass," Luther had sought to reconcile two ecclesiological principles that might seem at first glance to contradict each other: 1) that "preaching" is "common to all Christians," which Luther deduced from 1 Peter 2:9 and similar passages; and 2) that "A woman is not permitted to preach," as St. Paul states in 1 Corinthians 14:34. Luther concluded that Paul's prohibition is not absolute, but pertains only to the context of a mixed-gender congregation. Luther opined at the time that women are not allowed to preach in such a setting because they are (relatively) deficient in the gifts and abilities that are necessary for this task, in comparison to men. He wrote:

Although everyone has the right to preach, one should not use any person for this task, nor should anyone undertake it, unless he is better fitted than the others. To him the rest should yield and give place, so that the proper respect, discipline, and order may be maintained. Thus Paul charges Timothy to entrust the preaching of the Word of God to those who are fitted for it and who will be able to teach and instruct others [II Tim. 2:2]. The person who wishes to preach needs to have a good voice, good eloquence, a good memory and other natural gifts; whoever does not have these should properly keep still and let somebody else speak. Thus Paul forbids women to preach in the congregation where men are present who are skilled in speaking, so that respect and discipline may be maintained; because it is much more fitting and proper for a man to speak, a man is also more skilled at it. Paul did not forbid this out of his own devices, but appealed to the law, which says that women are to be subject [Gen. 3:16]. From the law Paul was certain that the Spirit was not contradicting Himself by now elevating the women above the men after He had formerly subjected them to the men; but rather, being mindful of His former institution, He was arousing the men to preach, as long as there is no lack of men. ... Therefore order, discipline, and respect demand that women keep silent

when men speak; but if no man were to preach, then it would be necessary for the women to preach.<sup>26</sup>

In this early effort, which is less-thought-through than some of his later writings on the subject, Luther employed an argument that few if any people today would find convincing. He presumed that the chief reason for this apostolic prohibition is because women as a category are less “skilled in speaking” than men as a category. He also presumed that the Old Testament “law” that enjoins female subjection to men – to which St. Paul appeals – is likewise based on the idea that women are naturally less fit for public preaching than men. Of course, neither Paul nor the Old Testament sources actually say this. This is an unproven assumption that Luther brought to the Biblical text.

In some of his later writings, when he revisited these matters, Luther spoke less patronizingly of the gifts and abilities of women. One might hope that as Luther, over time, gradually shook off his monastic prejudices, and actually got to know more women – especially after his marriage! – he became more fair and enlightened in his judgments. Those pronouncements of Luther regarding the roles and relationships of men and women in the church that are of enduring value, are the ones that are based on a careful reading of the pertinent Scriptural texts, and not the ones that are based on the late-medieval cultural misogyny of the sixteenth century. And the pertinent Scriptural texts do speak of a divine order in creation and in the church, according to which (emergencies excepted) it is God’s will that properly qualified and properly called *men* serve in the “fatherly” office of governing and guiding the church by the Word of God.

An example of a more fair-minded approach toward the gifts and abilities of women can be seen in Luther’s 1528 “Lectures on 1 Timothy,” where he acknowledges that “women have been very good at management.” (Might this be a lesson that Luther had by this time learned from his wife Katharina?) In commenting on St. Paul’s directive, “Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness” (2: 11), Luther states that he believes that these words

refer to the public ministry, which occurs in the public assembly of the church. There a woman must be completely quiet, because she should remain a hearer and not become a teacher. She is not to be the spokesman among the people. She should refrain from teaching, from praying [i.e. leading in prayer] in public. ... This passage makes a woman subject. It takes from her all public office and authority.

Luther goes on to acknowledge that the Bible seems to speak differently elsewhere:

On the other side is the passage in Acts (8:27) about Queen Candace. We read many such examples in sacred literature – that women have been very good at management: Huldah, Deborah, Jael, the wife of the Kenite, who killed Sisera [cf. 2 Kings 22:14; Judges 4:14,17].

This is then reconciled, in part, by Luther's observation that what Paul is forbidding is

teaching contrary to a man or to the authority of a man. Where there is a man, there no woman should teach or have authority. Where there is no man, Paul has allowed that they can do this... He wants to save the order preserved by the world – that a man be the head of the woman, as 1 Cor. 11:3 tells us. Where there are men, she should neither teach nor rule.<sup>27</sup>

In nineteenth-century America, as Matthias Loy discussed the relationship between the rights and privileges of the common Christian priesthood, and the public duties of the Ecclesiastical Ministry, he wrote:

The impropriety of women's preaching and praying [i.e. leading in prayer] in public we fully admit; we deem it both immodest and sinful. But to conclude from this that not all believers are priests, is simply to abuse our reason by argumentation against plain Scripture proofs; and to say that, on this account, teaching cannot belong to the common priesthood, has just as much warrant as to say that praying does not; for the command to women to keep silence in the Church, forbids public praying just as much as public preaching. Not every man has the qualifications for this, and women are not naturally as well adapted for it as men. But women are priests notwithstanding; and when in their closets they bring their offerings to the Holy One, or in their homes bring God's precepts and promises to their children, they are exercising priestly functions as fully and as effectually as any public minister. When a case of necessity occurs, woman may bear the tidings of salvation to benighted souls, and disciple them by baptism, as validly and efficaciously as any ordained pastor; for in Christ "there is neither male nor female; ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Gal. 3,28. This the Church has always admitted. While priests who have not the office are not publicly to administer the means of grace, when there is a minister to be

had, and while, in case there is none to be had, the duty falls upon women only when there are no men whose services can be secured, yet all have the right, though thus regulated by divine order, and have it in virtue of their Christian priesthood.<sup>28</sup>

Loy's dependence on Luther – including the quip about women being “not naturally as well adapted” for preaching as are men – is evident. Todd Nichol thinks that Loy's concession that women “might, indeed, serve in the public ministry of the church under certain emergencies” was a “startling conclusion,” and that in reaching it, “Loy thus took first, halting steps toward conclusions some American Lutherans would reach a century later when certain of their churches authorized the ordination of women.”<sup>29</sup> But Loy's correct observation that “the Church has *always* admitted” that women may perform certain pastoral duties in extraordinary situations, suggests that there was actually nothing “startling” about his own admission of this. Loy was not a prophet or forerunner, in any meaningful way, of the practice of ordaining women as pastors.

In “Dr. Luther's Retraction of the Error Forced Upon Him by the Most Highly Learned Priest of God, Sir Jerome Emser, Vicar in Meissen” – a sarcastically-entitled tract from 1521 – Luther made a particular statement that has been cited, in support of their cause, by modern advocates of women's ordination in the Lutheran Church. Luther wrote in this “Retraction”:

I shall be glad to humble myself and hear women and children preach. But how do we convince Emser...to do the same? He will not want to be in the common priesthood. Besides, he will not permit women to teach him – even if they were only pretty, smooth young maids – because he is too chaste. But I wish he could be persuaded to make his confession to such a confessor at a secret place and to wait most humbly for his absolution!<sup>30</sup>

Advocates of women's ordination have seen this as evidence that Luther, *in principle*, would not object to the practice of women preaching to or teaching men, or to the practice of women hearing confessions from men. But this is not a correct conclusion.

Luther made this statement in the context of a defense of his teaching that “all Christians should be priests; yet not all should be consecrated by bishops, not all should preach, celebrate mass, and exercise the priestly office unless they have been appointed and called to do so.”<sup>31</sup> He expressed his belief that the Christian priesthood, and the power of this priesthood, are bestowed upon all Chris-

tians in their baptism. This is a common theme in his early writings. Yet he also went on to say in this "Retraction":

But to exercise such power and to put it to work is not every man's business. Only he who is called by the common assembly, or the man representing the assembly's order and will, does this work in the stead of and as the representative of the common assembly and power.<sup>32</sup>

Those who are familiar with Luther's polemical style, and with his other pronouncements on the subject, would hesitate to draw any practical conclusions from this one statement on the supposed permissibility of women carrying out the duties of the pastoral ministry with men – or of children carrying out the duties of the pastoral ministry with adults! The obviously hyperbolic character of this verbal blast was intended by Luther to illustrate, in a vivid manner, what can conceivably be done in a case of necessity, when a regular pastor is not available; or to illustrate, in a vivid manner, what can conceivably be done in private settings, as compared to public settings. It is an example of Luther's common but frequently-misunderstood tendency, in his polemical writings, to overstate or exaggerate his case, for effect. When he did actually go on in this writing to address the practical question of who should be called by a congregation to such a ministry, he spoke in exclusively *male* and *adult* terms, of "the *man* representing the assembly's order and will."

In his later writings, Luther is much more guarded in how he expresses and illustrates this and similar points. We can surmise that one of the reasons why he became more reserved in this respect, is that he had learned of a situation elsewhere in Electoral Saxony in which some women, under the influence of the enthusiast "Zwickau Prophets," had actually begun to function as self-appointed preachers and spiritual leaders in illicit house congregations:

Among the Zwickau Prophets there were a number of women who were recognized as religious leaders... Indeed, there were a number of prominent women who had been "infected" with heresy. One of those was Soff Teucher, who apparently ignored the city council's admonition to stop preaching and conducting private religious meetings. In 1521 the council gave this order: "She and her husband [Caspar] are to be sent for and told that the wife is henceforth to cease her doings."<sup>33</sup>

Mrs. Teucher, together with other women in the community who were engaging in similar activities, had justified their preaching with



the claim that they were “illuminated by God.”<sup>34</sup> After intermittent efforts to silence these female preachers, the Zwickau city council once again felt the need, eight years later, to deal with the various women who were still involved in unauthorized religious gatherings. A 1529 document states that

All sorts of impropriety have been caused by enthusiasm (*schwermerey*); such has often been reported to the pastor. They are supposed to get together periodically and preach. Above all Mrs. Vetter, who has carried this on for a long time and is the master (*meisteryn*), in the Langengasse at Fritz Gettner’s; Ludwig Reudnitz’s housewife in the Judengasse; Wolff Kratzber’s wife; Soff Teucher, who can never keep quiet, her influence (*geist*) must also be removed; Mrs. Newmark from the Obersteinweg, led astray by Mrs. Vetter...<sup>35</sup>

We can easily imagine that when Luther became aware of these problems in Zwickau, and perhaps also of similar problems in other communities, he would have resolved to be more circumspect in his writing and speaking, and to make sure that from then on nothing he wrote or said could be misconstrued as an endorsement of such practices. And he did in fact never again say or imply that a man may – in non-emergency circumstances – place himself under the ministry of a woman.

In the “Table of Duties” appendix to Luther’s Small Catechism, where the responsibilities of “Bishops, Pastors, and Preachers” (*Bischöfen, Pfarrherren und Predigern*) are described on the basis of St. Paul’s Pastoral Epistles, we read that

A bishop is to be above reproach, *the husband of one wife*, temperate, virtuous, moderate, hospitable, an apt teacher, not a drunkard, not vicious, not involved in dishonorable work, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not stingy, one who manages his own household well, who has obedient and honest children, not a recent convert, who holds to the Word that is certain and can teach, so that he may be strong enough to admonish with saving teaching and to refute those who contradict it. From 1 Timothy 3[:2-4,6a; Titus 1:9].<sup>36</sup>

When Luther here quotes the Pauline directive that a bishop is to be “the husband of one wife,” he is citing a verse that he understands to be a divine requirement that bishops or pastors must be *men*, and not only that they must be monogamous in their marital life. In his 1539 treatise “On the Councils and the Church” – after mentioning Bap-

tism, the Sacrament of the Altar, the Word of God, and the Keys – Luther states that “There must be bishops, pastors [*Pfarrher*], or preachers, who publicly and privately give, administer, and use the aforementioned four things or holy possessions in behalf of and in the name of the church, or rather by reason of their institution by Christ...” According to Luther, “The people as a whole cannot do these things, but must entrust or have them entrusted to one person,” and “he alone should be allowed to preach, to baptize, to absolve, and to administer the sacraments.” Luther then adds this Scriptural restriction:

It is, however, true that the Holy Spirit has excepted women, children, and incompetent people from this function, but chooses (except in emergencies) only competent males to fill this office [*Wahr ist's aber, daß in diesem Stück der Heilige Geist ausgenommen hat Weiber, Kinder und untüchtige Leute, sondern allein tüchtige Mannspersonen heizu erwählet (ausgenommen die Noth)*], as one reads here and there in the epistles of St. Paul [I Tim. 3:2, Tit. 1:6] that a bishop must be pious, able to teach, and *the husband of one wife* – and in I Corinthians 14[:34] he says, “The women should keep silence in the churches.” In summary, *it must be a competent and chosen man*. Children, women, and other persons are not qualified for this office, even though they are able to hear God’s Word, to receive Baptism, the Sacrament, absolution, and are also true, holy Christians, as St. Peter says [I Pet. 3:7]. Even nature and God’s creation makes this distinction, implying that women (much less children or fools) cannot and shall not occupy positions of sovereignty, as experience also suggests and as Moses says in Genesis 3[:16], “You shall be subject to man.” The Gospel, however, does not abrogate this natural law, but confirms it as the ordinance and creation of God.<sup>37</sup>

The Greek word in St. Paul’s Pastoral Epistles that is rendered here as “husband” is *ανηρ* [*anēr*], and the German word that Luther uses to translate this Greek word (in the original version of the Small Catechism) is *Mann*. But in Greek, the *primary* meaning of *ανηρ* [*anēr*] is actually “man” or “male person.” And in German too, the *primary* meaning of *Mann* is likewise “man” or “male person.” In both of these languages, the same word is used for the idea or concept of a “husband” and for the idea or concept of a “male person.” Alternative translations of St. Paul’s directive could therefore be that a bishop is to be a “man” who has (or will have) only one wife; or that a bishop is to be a one-woman (or one-wife) “man.”

The significance of what St. Paul teaches in this respect is

especially highlighted in his First Epistle to Timothy, where his description of a male-only episcopate appears side-by-side with his description of a *diaconate* that is comprised of *both men and women*. The apostle does not in any way envision an office of a female “bishopsess,” who as “the wife of one husband” would complement the office of a male bishop within a dual-gendered pastoral ministry. But as far as the *diaconate* is concerned, he *does* envision, and describe, both *male deacons* and *female deaconesses*. Henry Eyster Jacobs points out that

In 1 Tim. 3:8-10, there is a statement concerning the qualifications in general for “deacons.” Then, in v. 11, it is the female deacons, who are meant by the designation “women”; after which v. 12 refers to the male deacons. It would be a strange break to understand v. 11 as meaning women in general, or the wives of deacons.<sup>38</sup>

Jacobs also writes that “the Deaconesses of the early Church” were

Women officially commissioned for congregational service. They were nothing more than female deacons. Rom. 16:1-“Phoebe, our sister, who is a deaconess of the church that is at Cenchreae.”<sup>39</sup>

In 1933, C. H. Little weighed in on what he described even then as the “very contentious question” of the admission of women to various offices of authority in the church. He wrote:

A few years ago demand was made that women be granted voting power in the Church. This was generally acceded to without serious questioning. Then, here and there, women were elected and sent as delegates to synods or conferences. Another step that followed was the seeking of positions on Church Councils of the congregations, which may already have taken place in a few instances. The next and final stage will be the admission of women into the pastorate. Happily for the present [1933] the Church still stands firm on this question, but how long it will do so no one can tell. Since we have no confessional declaration on this subject, how is the matter to be decided? Manifestly, only by the teaching of God’s Word.

Here are two passages that are very explicit. The first of these is 1 Cor. 14:34, “Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but let them be in subjection, as also saith the law.” And in the next verse it is said, “for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.” In this

passage, and in general throughout the chapter, St. Paul is giving counsel for decency and orderliness in the public worship of the congregation where both men and women are assembled for common public worship. He is careful to explain what he means by their "keeping silence" in the churches. It is that they are not to be allowed to speak or address the congregation, or preach a sermon. It carries with it no restraint from engaging in the general worship, or hymns, or songs of praise rendered to God. An easy way of getting around this prohibition is to say that it is counsel or advice no longer applicable to our enlightened age, or to aver that it pertains only to the local conditions at Corinth. But there is no evidence of this, and it is a dangerous resort, according to which one may easily rid himself of any obligation that appears to him disagreeable or unreasonable. These are the words of an inspired Apostle; and they do not merely lay down a principle, but establish a definite rule governing public worship in a congregation composed of mixed sexes.

The other passage bearing upon this point is 1 Tim. 2:11-13, which reads, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve." Here we have, as in the preceding passage, silence again enjoined, and that not once, but twice. Here again we have the silence explained as not suffering a woman to "teach," and in addition to this the implication that in so doing she is exercising dominion over man - a dominion which does not belong to her according to the order of creation: "For Adam was first formed, then Eve." This passage not only excludes women from the pastorate, but also from every other office in the church in which she would be "exercising dominion over the man." This certainly excludes her from the church councils of the congregations, where such authority is exercised. It does not exclude her from doing Christian service among those of her own sex, or from teaching in the Sunday School, or from rendering a service of praise in the choir, or from becoming a deaconess and discharging the ministry of mercy and love, for which she is peculiarly fitted; neither does it exclude her from becoming a missionary, where women can so often only be reached by women. It leaves a wide sphere of activity open to women for faithful and laudable service; but not the ministry or the subordinate office of those who are the minister's assistants and who with him bear rule in the congregation, or in the conferences or synods.

Advocates of "women's rights" here seek to get over this by appealing to other passages of Scripture which speak of the perfect equality of believers before the Lord. Such a passage is

Gal. 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye all are one in Christ Jesus." Similar passages are 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 5:6; Col. 3:11. But to introduce these passages is only to darken the issue. These passages have to do with the spiritual relation in which the believer, whatever his outward condition, stands to his Lord as a member of His mystical body, the Church. They have nothing whatever to do with the Church in its organized form. The gifts of divine grace render all conditions of men alike before the Lord; but they do not in any way affect the order of creation by which God made them male and female and differentiated them.

With a sense of foreboding, Little then concluded his discussion with this declaration: "This view may be old-fashioned and contrary to the trend of the age, the progress of which we may not be able to stem; but to be faithful to the Scriptures we must not be silent, but let the voice of our protest be heard."<sup>40</sup>

Little, who died in 1958, was a seminary professor in the United Lutheran Church in America. In 1962 the ULCA merged with three other groups to form the Lutheran Church in America. Little would have been deeply disappointed to know that the LCA would approve the ordination of women twelve years after his death.<sup>41</sup> Today, a majority of professing Lutherans in the world belong to church bodies that ordain women to the pastoral ministry. The Kenyan Lutheran bishop Walter Obare Omwanza would remind us, however, that "the majority of *Christians* worldwide do *not* practice women's ordination. The Roman Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox, and many Protestant churches in both the south[ern hemisphere] and the north[ern hemisphere] do not believe in this doctrine." He describes "the doctrine of women's ordination" as "an idiosyncratic teaching of a few liberal, northern Protestant churches," and adds - from the vantage point of his own distasteful experience with the Lutheran World Federation - that "it is largely enforced through the domination of a powerful elite that brooks no dissension."<sup>42</sup>

In a discussion of what in Scripture may speak to the issue of the ordination of women, John H. P. Reumann (then of the LCA) admitted that

the whole question is basically one of hermeneutics: how do you interpret and apply the Scripture? If one argues by proof texts, certain individual verses seem to exclude women from ordination - and from engaging in many functions in which they commonly participate in our churches nowadays. If a rigorous historical criticism is applied, some of these texts most frequently

cited against ordaining women can be excluded (as glosses) or demoted in value (as deuterio-Pauline). If the entire mass of biblical evidence is considered, it is possible that there are seemingly conflicting views, even in the verses claiming to be from the same writer, Paul.<sup>43</sup>

Professor Little would, of course, say that the “seemingly conflicting views” on women and the Ministry that Reumann thinks may be found in Paul’s writings are seen not actually to be in conflict, when Paul’s various statements on the roles and status of women in the church are read in context.

Historical criticism places human reason over the sacred text as its judge. A practical effect of this methodology is that its practitioners are easily able to read into Scripture whatever modern notions they have already decided they want to believe in anyway. When the subjectivism and accommodating tendency of historical criticism are accepted as valid hermeneutical principles by a church that exists in a society imbued with a spirit of feminism and gender egalitarianism, such a church will eventually and inevitably succumb to the cultural pressures that surround it, and will authorize the ordination of women pastors. But as E. H. Klotsche states, “the church that follows Christ’s example and obeys his word, commits those public functions to men and not to women. Scripture plainly says that it is not permitted unto women publicly to teach in the church, 1 Cor. 14:34-35; 1 Tim. 2:11-15.”<sup>44</sup> Bo Giertz agrees with Klotsche’s observations concerning the example and word of Christ. Giertz writes that

it is a striking and remarkable fact that Jesus Himself never called a woman to be an apostle. And yet, there are many women among Jesus’ followers, whom the gospels portray as good examples of discipleship. It shall never be forgotten that after the apostles fled there were some women who faithfully remained at the cross. Women, too, were the first witnesses of the resurrection. Even so, none of them was commissioned to be a witness of the resurrection as an apostle. The reason could not really have been a concession to Jewish customs which did not measure up to God’s true law and mercy. He transformed the role of married women, who previously had no legal rights in marriage. But He did *not* call a woman to the apostolic office.<sup>45</sup>

After summarizing the naturalistic presuppositions of the “higher critical” or “historical critical” method of Biblical interpretation, John R. Stephenson describes his own differing approach

toward the reading of Sacred Scripture, according to the faith and assumptions of one who has been placed into Christ by Holy Baptism:

Against such infidel preconceptions we confess that Holy Scripture resembles the fully divine and fully human person of Christ in being at one and the same time entirely the product of its human authors and wholly the result of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Our refusal of the extra-baptismal pursuit of higher or historical criticism does not, however, entail unawareness of the historical development of the Biblical writings or unthinking rejection of any and all source hypotheses, but simply proceeds from acknowledging that the actual sense of a Scriptural statement, when interpreted in context and according to the rule of faith, is a deliverance of the Holy Spirit from which no creature may piously differ.<sup>46</sup>

Luther also testifies to this kind of incarnational understanding of the character and authority of Scripture, when he writes that "The Holy Scripture is God's Word, written and, so to speak, lettered and put into the form of letters (*gebuchstabet und in Buchstaben gebildet*), just as Christ, the eternal Word of God, is clothed in humanity."<sup>47</sup> And in view of the fact that the divine-human *Savior* is without sin, Luther says things like this regarding the divine-human *Scripture*:

I have learned to ascribe the honor of infallibility only to those books that are accepted as canonical. I am profoundly convinced that none of these writers have erred.<sup>48</sup>

...the holy teachers of the church...at times...erred, as men will; therefore, I am ready to trust them only when they give me evidence for their opinions from Scripture, which has never erred ... St. Augustine writes to St. Jerome to the same effect, "I have learned to do only those books that are called the holy Scriptures the honor of believing firmly that none of their writers has ever erred. All others I so read as not to hold what they say to be the truth unless they prove it to me by holy Scripture or clear reason." ... Scripture alone is the true lord and master of all writings and doctrine on earth. If that is not granted, what is Scripture good for?<sup>49</sup>

The saints could err in their writings and sin in their lives, but the Scriptures cannot err...<sup>50</sup>

The Word is so irreproachable that not a single *iota* can err in the Law or the divine promises. For that reason we must yield to no sect, not even in one tittle of Scripture, no matter how much they clamor and accuse us of violating love when we hold so strictly to the Word.<sup>51</sup>

...this must be the attitude in...discourses...which involve the clear witness of Scripture, that we dare not give preference to the authority of men over that of Scripture! Human beings can err, but the Word of God is the very wisdom of God and the absolutely infallible truth.<sup>52</sup>

According to Kurt E. Marquart,

Luther's view of the Bible is shaped *not* by *abstract* notions of inspiration but by the great "model" of *the Incarnation*. ... But if the Incarnation is the model for inspiration, then the full humanity of the Bible implies error no more than Christ's humanity implies sin or error. On the contrary, Luther's incarnational-sacramental understanding of [the] Scriptures honours God's Word precisely in its humblest outward details. The mystery of the Bible is holy ground; criticism is sacrilege.<sup>53</sup>

E. Thestrup Pedersen discusses the way in which Luther's incarnational view of Scripture and its authority was "fleshed out," theologically and practically, in the Reformer's fulfillment of his vocation as a Christian exegete:

The earthly word in which God is near is not a sign, which points to a divine Word lying behind it, beyond the created world... Luther's "spiritualism" is, from his early years already, completely dominated by his "incarnationalism." ... Luther's intention as interpreter of Scripture is not *criticism* of Scripture, but the positive *use* of Scripture in the proclamation of the Gospel, and in a critical break with all human doctrine, religious and temporal, within and without the Church. Scripture is judge, and is not itself subject to any judgement. Scripture tests and criticizes us, not we it. As sinner man possesses no criterion by the use of which he might be able to distinguish between God's Word and man's word in Scripture. Therefore Scripture must come to us primarily in the form of law and the letter, and say: This you *must* believe, because it is *God's Word*, also before it has accredited itself as such before your conscience. Luther's belief in inspiration is not an unpurified scholastic element in his conception of Scripture; it has its roots deep in the centre of his



doctrine: The testimony of the justification of the ungodly through faith alone. Luther's concept of inspiration is a genuine Reformation idea, the belief in verbal inspiration is an indispensable piece of the Protestant doctrine of Scripture. ... Luther's belief in inspiration and the scholastic doctrine of inspiration differ, because Luther breaks with the whole monophysite framework of medieval theology. ...also his conception of Scripture is determined by his confession of the Incarnation.<sup>54</sup>

A church that consistently follows a Confessional Lutheran hermeneutic built on such incarnational convictions will never conclude that God or Holy Scripture approve of the ordination of women as pastors, regardless of the cultural pressures that it must endure in maintaining its Biblical position on this issue.



#### 4.

#### *“The apostles, prophets, and patriarchs”*

When Jesus commissioned Peter and the other apostles to bring the message of salvation to all nations, the apostles were thereby authorized to govern and guide the church by the Word of God, and to serve as spiritual fathers to those who would believe their message. The Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope explains it in this way:

As to the passages “Feed my sheep” [John 21:17] and “Do you love me more than these?” [John 21:15], they do not support the conclusion that a special superiority has been given to Peter. Christ orders him to feed the flock, that is, *to preach the Word or govern the church by the Word* – something Peter holds in common with other apostles. ...Christ gave to his apostles only spiritual authority, that is, the command to preach the gospel, to proclaim the forgiveness of sins, to administer the sacraments, and to excommunicate the ungodly without the use of physical force. ... Indeed, Christ said, “Go, ...teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you” [Matt. 28:19-20]. Again, “As the Father has sent me, so I send you” [John 20:21].<sup>55</sup>

This apostolic commissioning by the Lord was *not*, however, the *beginning* or *inauguration* of the office or ministry of governing and guiding God’s people with God’s Word – that is, the office or ministry of spiritual fatherhood. That there will be spiritual fathers, who exercise a ministry of spiritual oversight among God’s people, is not a new development at this point in history. But in Jesus’ commissioning of the apostles, the previously-existing office of a spiritual father or spiritual overseer is now being *shaped* and *filled* in a distinctly New Testament way.

This office of oversight and teaching, *in its essence*, had existed for a very long time, in earlier Old Testament configurations, from long before the advent of the New Testament apostolate. Luther therefore writes:

Hear St. Peter himself, who is an apostle, ...who writes in his epistles to his bishops in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia,

Bithynia, I Peter 5[:1-2], "I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ as well as a partaker in the glory that is to be revealed. Tend the flock of God that is your charge," etc. Look at that – Peter calls himself a fellow elder, that is, equal with pastor or preacher; he does not want to rule over them, but to be equal with them, although he knows that he is an apostle. *The office of preacher or bishop is the highest office, which was held by God's Son himself, as well as by all the apostles, prophets, and patriarchs.* God's word and faith is above everything, above all gifts and personal worth. The word "elder," in Greek "presbyter," is in one case a word for old age, as one says, "an old man"; but here it is a name for an office because one took old and experienced people for the office. *Now we call it pastor and preacher or minister [Seelsorger].*<sup>56</sup>

We need to realize the significance of what Luther is saying here. He is not claiming merely that the people of the Old Testament era had an office that was *similar to* the office of preacher or bishop that we have. He is claiming that they had *that very office itself* – albeit in various Old Testament forms and configurations. On the basis of Malachi 3:3 – "[A]nd he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness" – the Apology of the Augsburg Confession similarly recognizes an essential commonality and continuity between the Levitical priests of the Old Testament, and the teachers and preachers of the New Testament. After citing this verse, the Apology explains that "the sacrifices of the sons of Levi (that is, those in the New Testament who teach) are the preaching of the gospel and the good fruits of such a preaching, as Paul speaks in Romans 15[:16] of 'the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit,' that is, that the Gentiles might become offerings acceptable to God through faith, etc."<sup>57</sup> In another Old Testament exegetical observation, the Apology also states that "Scripture prophesies about bishops and pastors in the passage where Ezekiel says [7:26], 'Instruction shall perish from the priest.'"<sup>58</sup> The Apology understands this verse to be predicting and describing the negligence and error of the papal clergy in the Christian era, and not to be speaking only of the shortcomings of literal Levitical priests in the days of the Old Testament.

It is, of course, chiefly the *teaching* component of the ministry of the Old Testament priests – as referred to in each of these instances – that is perpetuated and expanded in the calling of today's teachers and preachers, and not their offering of animal sacrifices and other ritual duties. *Christian "priests" or presbyters "are not called to offer*

sacrifices for the people as in Old Testament law so that through them they might merit the forgiveness of sins for the people; instead they are called to preach the gospel and to administer the sacraments to the people.”<sup>59</sup> Another difference is that “the ministry of the New Testament is not bound to places or persons like the Levitical ministry, but is scattered throughout the whole world and exists wherever God gives God’s gifts: apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers [cf. Eph. 4: 11].”<sup>60</sup>

The ancient prophets are also included in this “pre-apostolic” succession of Old Testament spiritual fathers. They and the Levitical priests together constituted the “ecclesiastical ministry” of that era. Johann Gerhard explains that “Ordinarily *the ecclesiastical ministry*, from Moses until the time of Christ, was committed to the Levitical priests [cf. Lev. 10,11], but because they were sometimes negligent in the preservation and propagation of the purity of the heavenly doctrine, nay, even contaminated it with Baalitic and other idolatrous worship, God extraordinarily called prophets, by whose ministry the corruptions should be removed, the promises concerning the Messiah repeated and illustrated, and men invited to repentance by the menace of special punishments.”<sup>61</sup> This viewpoint is reflected (albeit obliquely) also in the Smalcald Articles:

...we should and must insist that God does not want to deal with us human beings, except by means of his external Word and sacrament. Everything that boasts of being from the Spirit apart from such a Word and sacrament is of the devil. For God even desired to appear to Moses first in the burning bush and by means of the spoken word [Exodus 3:2ff.]; no prophet – not even Elijah or Elisha – received the Spirit outside of or without the Ten Commandments; John the Baptist was not conceived without Gabriel’s preceding Word [Luke 1:13-20], nor did he leap in his mother’s womb without Mary’s voice [Luke 1:41-44]; and St. Peter says: the prophets did not prophesy “by human will” but “by the Holy Spirit,” indeed, as “holy people of God” [2 Peter 1:21]. However, without the external Word, they were not holy – much less would the Holy Spirit have moved them to speak while they were still unholy. Peter says they were holy because the Holy Spirit speaks through them.<sup>62</sup>

Luther – who is the author of these Articles – speaks here of the necessity and efficacy of “the external Word and sacrament.” This is, of course, a reference to the means of grace in their specific New Testament form. But Luther illustrates his point with a quotation from St. Peter’s Second Epistle regarding the ministry of the prophets in the

Old Testament era.

Gerhard's recounting of the history of the Ministry, throughout the millennia, is both fascinating and faithful to the Biblical, Lutheran conceptualization. He observes that

God Himself not only performed the office of teaching in His own person when, still in the state of integrity, He promulgated the law about not eating the fruit of the forbidden tree and, after the fall, from the secret abyss of the divine counsels spoke the promise about the blessed Seed of the woman. He also committed the duty of teaching to others: by placing Adam and the other patriarchs as teachers over His church, which had been almost enclosed in their families; by sending Moses and the prophets; and by establishing the Levitical priesthood. In this way, the ecclesiastical ministry in the Old Testament was divinely established and preserved. In the New Testament the Son of God Himself, in His assumed human nature, performed this duty and selected apostles whom He equipped with sufficient, necessary gifts and sent out as His ambassadors into all the world to preach the Gospel. Even now, seated at the right hand of the Father, He still gives His church "shepherds and teachers for the completing of the saints for the work of the ministry for building up His mystical Body" (Eph. 4:11-12).<sup>63</sup>

With reference specifically to the New Testament and Christian versions of this ministry of spiritual oversight, the Treatise explains that

The gospel *bestows upon* those who *preside over the churches* the commission to proclaim the gospel, forgive sins, and administer the sacraments. In addition, it *bestows* legal authority, that is, the charge to excommunicate those whose crimes are public knowledge and to absolve those who repent. It is universally acknowledged, even by our opponents, that this power is shared *by divine right* by all who *preside in the churches*, whether they are called pastors, presbyters, or bishops. For that reason Jerome plainly teaches that in the apostolic letters all who *preside over churches* are both bishops and presbyters. He quotes Titus [1:5-6]: "I left you behind in Crete for this reason, so that you should... appoint presbyters in every town," which then continues, "It is necessary for a bishop to be the husband of one wife" [v. 6]. Again, Peter and John call themselves presbyters [1 Peter 5:1; 2 John 1; 3 John 1]. Jerome goes on to say: "One person was chosen thereafter to oversee the rest as a remedy for schism, lest some individuals draw a following around themselves and divide the

church of Christ. For in Alexandria, from the time of Mark the evangelist until that of bishops Esdras [Heracles] and Dionysius, the presbyters always chose one of their number, elevated him to a higher status, and called him bishop. Moreover, in the same way that an army provides a commander for itself, the deacons may choose one of their own, whom they know to be diligent, and name him archdeacon. What, after all, does a bishop do, with the exception of ordaining, that a presbyter does not?" Jerome, then, teaches that the distinctions of degree between bishop and presbyter or pastor are established by human authority. That is clear from the way it works, for, as I stated above, the power is the same. One thing subsequently created a distinction between bishops and pastors, and that was ordination, for it was arranged that one bishop would ordain the ministers in a number of churches. However, since the distinction of rank between bishop and pastor is *not by divine right*, it is clear that an ordination performed by a pastor in his own church is valid by divine right.<sup>64</sup>

When the text here quoted says that "The gospel" bestows a special divine commission on those who serve in the presiding ministry of the church, this should be understood as the equivalent of saying that *the New Testament revelation* bestows this commission on them. This is in keeping with a similar usage of the term "gospel" earlier in the Treatise, where we read: "let us show from *the gospel* that the Roman bishop is not superior by divine right to other bishops and pastors."<sup>65</sup> This is then followed by an exegetical discussion of several passages from Luke, Matthew, John, Galatians, 1 Corinthians, and 1 Peter.<sup>66</sup> The "gospel" in its narrower meaning – that is, the message of God's grace in Christ – bestows the forgiveness of sins, and does not bestow "legal authority."<sup>67</sup>

Note, too, that the Treatise does not say that the "gospel," or New Testament revelation, *establishes* or *inaugurates* a presiding ministry in and for the church. It says instead that the New Testament revelation "bestows upon" the presiding ministers "the commission to proclaim the gospel, forgive sins, and administer the sacraments," and "the charge to excommunicate those whose crimes are public knowledge and to absolve those who repent." The presiding office is, as it were, *already there* – as it always has been – waiting, however, to be *shaped* and *filled* according to the fullness of the New Testament revelation, and according to the salvific needs of the New Testament church, as God himself defines those needs.

The form and content of the Word and Sacrament ministry that these New Testament "spiritual fathers" are to carry out is de-

fined and determined by the mandate and commission of Christ. This is at least partly what Article V of the Augustana is talking about when it speaks of the divinely-instituted “ministry of teaching the gospel and administering the sacraments.”<sup>68</sup> But the divine will and mandate for there to *be* spiritual fathers, who preside in and over the gatherings of God’s people, was not in itself instituted and originated by Christ during his time on earth. This kind of oversight arrangement, *in its essence*, was inherited by the church from the Old Testament. And as Luther and Gerhard have pointed out, Jesus himself served in a unique version of this fatherly office during his earthly ministry, in his capacity as prophet and teacher. In a sermon from the later years of his ministry, Luther reiterated this truth:

“As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you” [John 20, 21]. With these words [Christ] takes away from his disciples first their carnal mind, which they still possessed after his resurrection, that he would, like a temporal King and Lord, rule and reign with external and carnal power. Therefore he says: You have now seen what kind of an office I have filled upon the earth, for which I was sent by my Father, that I should establish a spiritual kingdom against that of the devil, sin and death, and thereby to bring them that believe on me to eternal life. This I have now done, and finished it as far as my person is concerned, and have not taken upon myself anything of a worldly character and rule. Yea, I have also been put to death by the world because of this my office and service, and am separated from it, but now through my resurrection I have entered into that glory where I shall reign forever over all creatures at the right hand of my Father. Therefore I send you also forth in like manner to be my messengers, not to engage in temporal affairs, but *to conduct the same office as I have hitherto filled, namely: to preach the Word you have heard and received from me*, an office through which people are delivered from sin and death, who experience sin and death, and wish to be delivered from them. By means of this office *the apostles and their successors* are exalted also as lords unto the end of the world, and there is given to them such great authority and power as Christ, the Son of God, himself possessed, in comparison with which the power and dominion of all the world is nothing... Therefore he says: “Whose soever sins ye remit” [John 20, 23]. This “whose soever” means nothing else than that all are included, Jews, Gentiles, great and small, wise and ignorant, holy or unholy; that no one shall enter heaven and come to eternal life, except he receive it from you, that is, through the office which you have received. For they all are also subject to and concluded under sin through these words, by which he

shows that upon earth they shall find nothing but sin, and he pronounces the judgment, that all mankind to whom *the apostles and their successors* shall be sent are sinners and condemned before God in their person and life, and that one of two things must take place: either their sins are forgiven, if they confess and desire forgiveness, or they must remain eternally bound in sin unto death and condemnation.<sup>69</sup>

The German version of Article V of the Augsburg Confession states:

To obtain such faith God instituted the office of preaching, giving the gospel and the sacraments. Through these, as through means, he gives the Holy Spirit who produces faith, where and when he wills, in those who hear the gospel. ... Condemned are the Anabaptists and others who teach that we obtain the Holy Spirit without the external word of the gospel through our own preparation, thoughts, and works.<sup>70</sup>

We know from “The Confutation of the Augsburg Confession” how these words were understood by the Lutherans’ Roman opponents at Augsburg. The Confutation states that “Article Five, which says that the Holy Spirit is given by Word and sacrament, as through instruments, is approved.”<sup>71</sup> The Seventh and Eighth Articles of “The Schwabach Articles” of 1529 – on which Article V of the Augsburg Confession was based – had also said:

[7.] To obtain such faith or to give it to us human beings, God has instituted the preaching office or spoken Word (that is, the Gospel) [*das predigamt oder mündlich Wort, nämlich das Evangelion*], through which he has this faith proclaimed, along with its power, benefits, and fruits. God also bestows faith through this Word, as through an instrument, with his Holy Spirit, when and where he wills. Apart from it, there is no other instrument or way, passage or path, to obtain faith. Speculations [about what happens] apart from or previous to the spoken Word, as holy and good as they appear, are nevertheless useless lies and errors. [8.] With and alongside of this spoken Word, God has also instituted external signs: Baptism and the Eucharist. Through these, alongside the Word, God offers and gives faith and his Spirit and strengthens all who desire him.<sup>72</sup>

Loy points out that the purpose of Article V of the Augsburg Confession



is not to elucidate the law of order in the Church which limits the public ministration of the means of grace to the pastoral office, or to those who are called by the Church to the performance of such public functions. That subject is treated later, in the fourteenth article. What is here set forth is the divine institution by which God provides for the creation of faith in human hearts... This is manifest from the connection of this with the preceding article [on justification through faith], from its contents, and from the antithesis expressed. To obtain this justifying faith the ministration of the Word and Sacraments is necessary because these are means divinely appointed for this end, to which the divine promises which give assurance to the believer are attached. The pastoral office of the Church, which God has instituted for the orderly administration of these means..., is not the essential factor in the Holy Spirit's working of faith. Ordinarily faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God, because the Lord sends out preachers of the everlasting Gospel into all the world. But we would miss the main point in the matter if we imputed to the preacher what belongs to the Gospel which is preached.<sup>73</sup>

Augustana V, then, is not about pastors and preachers *per se*, or about the divine ordering of the position of responsibility or station in life that they hold. It is, rather, about the necessity and the saving power of the means of grace, which God calls pastors and preachers to administer publicly.<sup>74</sup> The German word *Predigtamt*, or "preaching office," as it appears in this article, is being used in a way that is similar to its use in the Large Catechism's explanation of the day of rest, in its commentary on the Third Commandment. We read there, in the Kolb/Wengert translation, that "The real business of this day should be preaching for the benefit of young people and the poor common folk."<sup>75</sup> But if this sentence were to be translated more literally, it would read as follows: "The real office [*Amt*] of this day should be the preaching office [*Predigtamt*], for the benefit of young people and the poor common folk."<sup>76</sup> This real "office," or *assigned duty*, or *authorized activity* of the Lord's day, is then described in this way:

...God's Word is the treasure that makes everything holy. ... At whatever time God's Word is taught, preached, heard, read, or pondered, there the person, the day, and the work is hallowed..., on account of the Word that makes us all saints. Accordingly, I constantly repeat that all our life and work must be based on God's Word if they are to be God-pleasing or holy. Where that happens the commandment is in force and is fulfilled. ... Note,

then, that the power and force of this commandment consists not in the resting but in the hallowing, so that this day may have its special holy function.<sup>77</sup> ... Places, times, persons, and the entire outward order of worship have therefore been instituted and appointed in order that God's Word may exert its power publicly.<sup>78</sup>

The position of responsibility or station in life of a pastor is definitely not what is being described here. And the "preaching office," in its application to the Lord's day, does not pertain only to what the pastor does with God's Word either (in sermonizing and in sacramental administration). It pertains more broadly to what *God's Word* does *with the pastor - and with everyone else* - in all the various ways in which it impacts the lives of God's people when it has free course among them.

Returning to the topic of the ancient origins of the ministry of spiritual oversight, we are reminded of what Luther said in his "Treatise on Good Works," concerning the way in which the office of a spiritual father is in a sense derived from, and stands in the place of, the original office of a (literal) father: "what is said and commanded of parents must also be understood of those who, when the parents are dead or not there, take their place, such as...spiritual fathers." The Large Catechism, a few paragraphs previous to the section where it discusses "spiritual fathers," speaks in a virtually identical way: "For all other authority is derived and developed out of the authority of parents."<sup>79</sup>

For as long as there have been fathers in general, there have been *spiritual* fathers. The ancient patriarchs, in their multifaceted primeval paternal office, exercised the domestic duties of a literal father; the civil duties of a political father, *and the religious duties of a spiritual father*. All three of these fatherly offices were at first bundled together, and were exercised by one and the same person in God's name and by God's authority.

In his Large Catechism explanation of the Fifth Commandment - which forbids murder - Luther notes that

neither God nor the government is included in this commandment, nor is their right to take human life abrogated. God has delegated his authority to punish evildoers to the civil authorities *in the parents' place*; in former times, as we read in Moses [Deut. 21:18-20], *parents had to judge their children themselves and sentence them to death*. Therefore what is forbidden here applies to individuals, not to the governmental officials.<sup>80</sup>

Similarly, we would say that God has also vocationally delegated his authority to govern and guide us by his Word to *the pastors and preachers of the church* in the father's place. And because it is *God* who extracted this ministry of spiritual oversight from the original patriarchal office, and who perpetuates the ministry of spiritual oversight now as an office that is separate and distinct from the office of a modern-day literal father, a modern-day father may not, *by virtue of his office as housefather*, exercise in his domestic realm the distinctive oversight duties of an ecclesiastical *spiritual* father – just as a modern-day father may not judge and execute his children for capital crimes.

A housefather certainly does have God's vocational permission to instruct his wife and children, and any other members of his household, in God's Word. This instruction may and should include catechesis on the nature and purpose of the sacraments. But a housefather *as such* does *not* have God's vocational permission to *administer* the sacraments to his wife and children. According to the divine order that is now in effect, this would be one of the duties of the family's pastor or pastors. Martin Chemnitz writes:

*But all believers are called priests, Ro 1:6; 5:10; 1 Ptr 2:9. Have all, therefore, a general call to the ministry? All we who believe are indeed spiritual priests, but we are not all teachers. 1 Co 12:29-30; Eph 4:11-12. And Peter explains himself: All Christians are priests – not that all should function without difference in the ministry of the Word and of the Sacraments, without a special call, but that they should offer spiritual sacrifices. Ro 12:1; Heb 13:15-16. Yet all Christians have a general call to proclaim the virtues of God, 1 Ptr 2:9, and especially family heads, to instruct their households, Dt 6:7; 1 Co 14:35. It is true that all Christians have a general call to proclaim the Gospel of God, Ro 10:9, to speak the Word of God among themselves, Eph 5:19; to admonish each other from the Word of God, Cl 3:16; to reprove, Eph 5:11 [and] Mt 19:15; [and] to comfort, 1 Th 4:18. And family heads are enjoined [to do] this with the special command that they give their households the instruction of the Lord. Eph 6:4. But the public ministry of the Word and of the Sacraments in the church is not entrusted to all Christians in general, as we have already shown, 1 Co 12:28; Eph 4:12. For a special or particular call is required for this, Ro 10:15.<sup>81</sup>*

In responding to a query on whether a father may, under certain circumstances, administer the Lord's Supper to the members of his household, Luther also writes:

Kindly tell your dear sir and friend that he is not in duty bound to go ahead in this matter and commune himself and his household. Nor is this necessary, since he has neither call nor command to do so. And if the tyrannical ministers of the church will not administer it to him and his family, though they are in duty bound to do so, he can still be saved by his faith through the Word. It would also give great offense to administer the Sacrament here and there in the homes, and in the end no good would come of it, for there will be factions and sects, as now the people are strange and the devil is raging. The first Christians, mentioned in Acts, did not administer the Sacrament individually [*insonderheit*] in the houses, but they came together. ... But if a father wishes to teach the Word of God to his family, that is right and should be done, for it is God's mandate that we should teach and bring up our children and household; that is commanded to everyone. *But the Sacrament is a public confession and should have public ministers*, because, as Christ says, we should do it in remembrance of Him; that is, as St. Paul explains it, we should show forth or preach the Lord's death till He comes [cf. 1 Corinthians 11:26]. And here [Paul] also says that we should come together, and he severely rebukes those who, each in his own way, use the Lord's Supper individually. On the other hand, it is not forbidden but rather commanded that everyone individually should instruct his household in God's Word, as well as himself, though no one should baptize himself, etc. *For there is a great difference between a public office in the church and [the office of] a father in his household*. Hence the two must neither be mingled into each other nor be separated from each other. Since there is *neither an emergency nor a call* here, we must do nothing out of our own devotion without God's definite mandate, for no good will come from it.<sup>82</sup>

Jesus, during his earthly ministry, did not directly and explicitly *institute* and *command* the office of spiritual fatherhood and pastoral oversight, in the way that he instituted and commanded Christian Baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar. He did not tell his disciples, in so many words: "Go, therefore, and appoint men to the public ministry of Word and Sacrament." Some have erroneously concluded from this that the arrangement of having pastors or bishops of some kind is therefore simply a pious invention of the church. This arrangement arises, it is imagined, on the basis of the internal impulse for preaching that the Holy Spirit places within all the regenerate - in coordination with the general need for good order in all things - and not on the basis of a divine ordinance. Francis Pieper observes that

Among others [J. W. F.] Hoefling of Erlangen questioned the teaching that the public ministry is divinely ordained. He contended that what Paul and Barnabas did, Acts 14:23, and Paul commanded, Titus 1:5 ff., was of only temporary and local significance, was intended for primitive conditions and “newly formed congregations” of the Apostolic Church. But this restriction is not in the text. The text does not urge the ordaining of elders, or bishops, because the congregations were young and inexperienced, or “newly formed congregations,” but the congregations are described as congregations in which something is lacking as long as they have no elders or bishops as “stewards of God” (Θεου οικονομοι).

Pieper acknowledges that, at least rhetorically, “Hoefling...grants that the ministry is divinely ordained, but only in the sense as ‘everything wise, appropriate, morally necessary’ can be said to have ‘divine sanction,’ not in the sense that an express divine command for the establishment of the public ministry can be shown.”<sup>83</sup>

According to Gottfried Herrmann (of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church in Germany), there were some remarks made in the early twentieth century by the Wisconsin Synod’s “Wauwatosa theologians” on the topic of church and ministry “that we might consider over-stated and even polemic. We will want to read these remarks with caution.”<sup>84</sup> Elsewhere, however, Herrmann has observed that “the sometimes provocatively presented original position of the Wauwatosa theology is not identical in all points with the present-day positions of the WELS. There are throughout contemporary presentations more precise expressions and warnings against imprecisions in concepts conditioned by the English language, e.g., when the term ‘public ministry’ is involved.”<sup>85</sup> One of the “Wauwatosa theologians,” John Philip Koehler, explicitly endorsed Hoefling’s teaching. In regard to the theological situation in Germany in the mid-nineteenth century, he wrote:

In the first years after 1848, a controversy existed over the teaching of Church and Ministry. Kliefoth, Vilmar, Muenchmeyer and Loehe had a High-Church view of the pastor’s office and the church, similar to that of Grabau in America. Most Lutherans of other circles stood against it, especially the Erlangen faculty. *Very freely and correctly – according to Scripture – stood only Hoefling with some of his colleagues.*<sup>86</sup>

But Hoefling’s position is officially *rejected* in the “Theses on the Church and Ministry” that the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Syn-

od adopted in 1969, where we read that “It would be wrong to trace the origin of this public ministry to mere expediency (Hoefling).”<sup>87</sup>

It is often maintained by outside observers that Wisconsin’s current official teaching on church and ministry contradicts the earlier teaching of Wisconsin theologian Adolf Hoenecke (especially as found in his *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics*), as well as the earlier teaching of C. F. W. Walther. In response, John F. Brug makes the interesting (and challenging) comment that “Anyone who accepts the present WELS statements on church and ministry won’t find anything in Hoenecke (or for that matter in Walther) that contradicts those statements or even anything that makes them very uncomfortable.”<sup>88</sup>

The reason why Jesus did not directly institute or command the office of spiritual fatherhood and pastoral oversight is because there was no need for Jesus to do this. That office, most fundamentally, already existed. For the needs of the church in the New Testament era, this office would indeed have to be fleshed out now with the fullness of the message of the risen Christ, and with the administration of the sacraments that Jesus himself instituted. But the office itself was already there, before the New Testament era began, waiting to be reconfigured in these ways by the Lord of the church, and then to be filled with qualified men, in accordance with his will, for as long as this world endures.

The situation is similar perhaps to the way in which Jesus gave special instruction during his earthly ministry concerning marriage (as recorded in Matthew 19:3-9 and Mark 10:2-12). In his public teaching, Jesus clarified, and expanded on, the true meaning and character of marriage, and instilled among his followers a deeper commitment to the lifelong nature of the marital union. In the process of doing this, he distanced himself – and his followers – from the relative laxity of the Mosaic civil law regarding divorce and remarriage. Nevertheless, in saying what he did say about marriage, and in giving this kind of fresh moral direction to the church concerning marriage, Jesus was not establishing and inaugurating marriage itself as a divine institution. That did not have to be done, because marriage as a divine institution already existed.

And the fact that Jesus himself did not establish and inaugurate marriage must not be taken as an indication that this domestic arrangement is now optional for a Christian man and woman who want to live together in an intimate relationship. Marriage is not optional, but remains as the one and only divine arrangement that is to be implemented in such a situation. So, too, would we say that it is not optional whether the church of today would have male bishops

and pastors of some kind, for the spiritual oversight of God's people. It is, rather, a *divine* arrangement that certain qualified men will be called to govern and guide the church by the Word of God. We do not need to have a *direct* mandate from Jesus to this effect, in order for this to be so.

But we do need to listen to Jesus regarding the full New Testament *form and content* of the Christian Gospel by which the Christian church is now to be governed and guided by its spiritual fathers. The various specific offices of pastoral oversight that have existed in the history of the church, and that still exist in the church of our time, are characterized by the same marks of the New Testament ministry of Word and Sacrament that Jesus first entrusted to his apostles. The Augsburg Confession describes the defining features of this enduring ministry of spiritual fatherhood, as it will continue to exist throughout the Christian era, when it points out that,

according to the gospel, the power of the keys or the power of the bishops is the power of God's mandate to preach the gospel, to forgive and retain sins, and to administer the sacraments. For Christ sent out the apostles with this command [John 20:21-23]: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you. ... Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." And Mark 16[:15]: "Go...and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. ..." This power is exercised only by teaching or preaching the gospel and by administering the sacraments either to many or to individuals, depending on one's calling. ... Consequently, according to the gospel, or, as they say, by divine right, this jurisdiction belongs to the bishops as bishops (that is, to those to whom the ministry of Word and sacraments has been committed): to forgive sins, to reject teaching that opposes the gospel, and to exclude from the communion of the church the ungodly whose ungodliness is known...<sup>89</sup>

The "running together" of apostles and bishops in this text does not mean that all bishops and pastors are actually apostles. But it does mean that the apostles, in essence, were bishops and pastors, "to whom the ministry of Word and sacraments has been committed." In this respect we recall the Treatise's observation that "Peter and John call themselves presbyters [1 Peter 5:1; 2 John 1; 3 John 1]," and Luther's observation that in his First Epistle "Peter calls himself a fellow elder, that is, equal with pastor or preacher; he does not want to rule over them, but to be equal with them, although he knows that he is an apostle."

Francis Pieper taught that God's Word prohibits the church from calling women to the office of bishop or pastor, or to any other office that involves the exercise of authority over men. In regard to the existence of *female* prophets or "prophetesses" in the Old Testament, which some might see as undermining the belief that women should not serve in offices of spiritual oversight among God's people, Pieper made these helpful observations:

I know that the objection has been raised against this stand of ours that the Old Testament records a number of instances in which women did serve as teachers, and not of their own accord, at that, but because they were moved by the Holy Ghost to appear before the congregation of the Lord and to instruct them in God's Word. We have such an example in Miriam, the sister of Moses, as recorded [in] Ex. 15,20.21. Our explanation of this passage is that Miriam in this case acted as the musical director of Israelitish women, not of the men. However, even the case of Deborah, who was both judge and prophetess, and who by divine command acted as a teacher of men (cf. Judg. 4 and 5), does not prove the contention that women may serve as teachers of men. God Himself most certainly may grant exceptions to the rules which He has laid down for us; but it is not for us to do so. We are forever bound to observe His rules. To make exceptions is His business, never ours. Luther has this fact in mind when he declares: "God hangs the Law downward, but He never draws it up to Himself again." He means that God acts as He pleases; but we mortals are always bound to His Law.<sup>90</sup>

These principles would apply as well to the prophetess Anna, mentioned in Luke 2:36-38 in the New Testament. In a discussion of a sermon from Chemnitz's 1594 *Postilla*, Beth Kreitzer observes that, according to Chemnitz,

Anna was allowed, like Simeon, to preach and teach in the temple, both publicly and privately... Chemnitz does not indicate that women should learn from this example to take on the role of public teachers or preachers, for he stresses that Anna had the office of prophet, which gave her a special and unusual status. ...her main responsibilities were in the girls' school, where she would have taught Scripture along with proper behavior and modesty.<sup>91</sup>





## 5.

***“A ministerial succession unbroken in the church”***

When Jesus entrusted to the apostles the commission to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments, he was thereby inaugurating and establishing a new configuration of the already-existing office of spiritual oversight. With the commissioning of the apostles, he invested that office of spiritual oversight with the full content of New Testament truth and fulfillment, by which the apostles would now govern and guide the church. This marked a significant and permanent change in the basic form and appearance of this office, as compared to the form and appearance of those versions of the office that existed before the founding of the Christian church. For this reason the commissioning of the apostles has sometimes been described as the divine institution of the *Christian* ministry. In the words of Hoenecke,

The ordinary preaching office is the continuation of the extraordinary apostolic office, a continuation God himself wants. It is of divine institution in and with the apostolic office.<sup>92</sup>

Krauth explains this in more detail:

Through the history of the Jewish race there rise before us constantly prophecies of a kingdom of God to be established by the Messiah on earth, destined to embrace all mankind. The series of promises was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. He established a kingdom not of worldly glory, but a kingdom of the life of God in the soul of man – a kingdom which comes not with observation, not with outward show or glory, but is within men, Luke 17:20. The means of grace which our Lord gave to the world and the commission under which He sent forth his Apostles, clearly demonstrate, however, that the internal fellowship of His kingdom was to have a corresponding outward expression. His Apostles were to teach; to make disciples of all nations: to baptize them into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and Christ was to abide with the Apostles in their work always, even to the end of the world, all the days, to the consummation of the era. Matt. 28:19,20. ... After the ascension of our Lord, the Apostles waited

for the promise of the Father, and when the day of Pentecost was fully come, the disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost and Peter uttered his witness for the crucified and arisen Saviour. "They that gladly received his word were baptized, and they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and in the fellowship and in the breaking of the bread and in the prayers" [Acts 2:41-42]. This power of the Word, which from the first drew men into the fellowship, gathered believers into the congregations. The Apostles were missionaries, not merely under the necessity of the case, but, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit gave security to the work and wrought and made a basis for its extension by organizing congregations in which the life of the disciple found its home and sphere of labor. With the establishment of these congregations, and as an essential part of their organization was connected the institution of the congregational pastorate, the vocation which was to superintend and spiritually rule the congregations, to conduct the public services, to administer the sacraments, to labor in the word and in doctrine and to watch for souls to the conversion of sinners and the building up of saints. The pastorate was the determination to a distinct office of so much of the Apostolate as pertained to the single congregation. *The institution of the Apostolate was the general institution of the entire ministry, whose specific forms, especially the Presbyterate-episcopate, and the diaconate, were but concrete classifications of particular functions involved in the total idea of the ministry. The specific ministries are but distributions of the Apostolate in its ordinary and permanent functions.*<sup>93</sup>

The ministerial colleagues and successors of the apostles – the New Testament prophets and evangelists, and the ordinary pastors and teachers of the church – would likewise carry out the ministry of governing and guiding God's people on the basis of the full New Testament revelation as first received by the apostles. In his 1539 treatise "On the Councils and the Church," Luther sees a clear and organic connection between the ministry of the "bishops, pastors, or preachers" of his day, and the statement of St. Paul in Ephesians 4:8 that Christ's ministerial "gifts" to the church "were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some teachers and governors, etc." Luther explains that "if the apostles, evangelists, and prophets are no longer living, others must have replaced them and will replace them until the end of the world, for the church shall last until the end of the world [Matt. 28:20]. Apostles, evangelists, and prophets must therefore remain, no matter what their name, to promote God's word and work."<sup>94</sup> Further on in this treatise, Luther also says:

Now wherever you find these offices or officers, you may be assured that the holy Christian people are there; for the church cannot be without these bishops, pastors, preachers, priests; and conversely, they cannot be without the church. Both must be together.<sup>95</sup>

Marquart elaborates on these thoughts:

At first sight the New Testament features a luxuriant and irreducible variety of offices. ... Behind the appearance of multifor- mity, there is one basic ministry, for the church has not several life-principles but only one: Christ's alone-saving Gospel (which always includes the sacraments). From this one and only divine fount and source flows all life and salvation upon the church and, through her, upon mankind (Is. 55; Lk. 8:5; Jn. 6:63; Rom. 1:16; 10:17; I Cor. 1:21; II Cor. 2:14-5:21; Gal. 3:2,5; Eph. 3:5-7; I Pet. 1:23-2:3; I Jn. 5:7,8). It is this one Gospel-ministry which is confessed to be divinely instituted in AC V. ... In defining the one divinely established office the Augsburg Confession does not begin by fastening upon New Testament "bishops" or "pres- byters" or other particular offices, in order to derive from them a divinely prescribed set of offices and structures, in the manner of Calvinism. Instead, it sees "in, with, and under" the variety of offices like those listed in Eph. 4:11 (apostles, prophets, evan- gelists, pastors, teachers) the one great office of the Gospel and sacraments, distributing forgiveness, life, and salvation. Because there is one Gospel, there is fundamentally one ministry to serve it, and this one ministry is just as much a divine institution as are the means of salvation themselves. ... What is divinely instituted, according to Scripture and the Confessions, is not some par- ticular pecking order (Lk. 22:24-27!), but the glorious and perma- nent (II Cor. 3:11) ministry of life and justification. The Gospel and sacraments themselves - not organizational chains of com- mand - are the content, nature, task, and power of the office.<sup>96</sup>

Luther's treatise "On the Councils and the Church" is from his later years. In the carefully-stated and balanced manner in which Luther formulates his own evangelical doctrine of the Ministry in this writing, one can see the influence of his theological controversies with both Roman clericalism and Anabaptist enthusiasm. Paul Althaus observes that

In his *On the Councils and the Churches*, Luther lists the signs of the church's presence. Among these he includes the fact that the church has offices and calls men to fill them. ... Luther describes

a double basis for the necessity and authority of this official ministry. On the one hand, he proceeds from the priesthood of all the baptized. By the power of the priesthood they are authorized and called to serve through the word and the sacrament. It would not, however, be possible for every member of the community to publicly administer the word and sacrament to the entire community. That would lead to a deplorable confusion. To avoid this the community must commit this public ministry to some one person who administers it "for the sake of and in the name of the church." The necessity of and authority of this office is, however, "much more" derived from its institution by Christ. According to Ephesians 4:8-11 he has "given gifts to men" and appointed some to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers, etc. This institution does not only refer to the first generation of Christians. For the Church will remain until the end of the world. For this reason, when the first Christian apostles and other ministers were no longer living it was necessary for others to take their place and to "teach God's word and carry on his work." Thus God himself has "commanded, instituted, and ordered" the office of preaching. Luther without hesitation coordinates these two derivations of the office of the ministry - the one from "below" and the other from "above." He sees no contradiction in them. There are, however, two different lines of development. In the first, he bases the office on the presupposition of the universal priesthood and thus describes it as a mediated office. In the second, he derives it directly from its institution by Christ without reference to the universal priesthood. In the latter case, it is an office which Christ gave to the preachers of the gospel from the very beginning. Both derivations presuppose that the gospel must be preached and the sacraments administered as long as the world stands, so that the church may endure.<sup>97</sup>

As Walther compares Luther's exegesis of 1 Corinthians 14 in his 1523 treatise "That a Christian Assembly or Congregation Has the Right and the Power to Judge All Teaching and to Call, Appoint, and Dismiss Teachers, Established and Proven by Scripture,"<sup>98</sup> with Luther's exegesis of the same chapter in his 1532 treatise on "Infiltrating and Clandestine Preachers,"<sup>99</sup> he points out that

Luther in 1523...believed that those in 1 Corinthians 14[:30] called "those who sit by" were laymen, while he later bears witness that by this word must be understood called preachers. But...with...respect to the doctrine, Luther remained completely consistent until his death. As earnestly as Luther fought on the

one side against the papistic doctrine of a particular priestly estate and its consequences, even so earnestly had he fought for the biblical doctrine of the order of the preaching office against the *Schwaermer*. To be sure, in the first struggle, Luther called upon 1 Corinthians 14, among other texts. But concerned about the false exploitation of this text by the *Schwaermer*, he soon recognized that this passage is not so much a witness against the papistic view, but much more against the separatistic one. But in the doctrine itself, he neither added nor took away anything. ... Luther teaches this: The Keys or the Office [*Amt*] are originally and immediately possessed by the entire Church [*ganze Kirche*], that is, all believers. God has, however, established within the Church the order [*Ordnung*] that this office be administered publicly only by persons specially called to it, who are apt to teach, and who now, in a special sense, by virtue of their office, can act in the name and in the stead of Christ. But because the Church has the office originally, so can and shall every Christian make use of this privilege, where its order is not overturned. [This may happen,] for example, among the heathen, or where the need supersedes the order, when, for instance, no preacher is present to baptize a child who is near death, or when within the Church a wolf opens his mouth, and whom then every Christian has the power to contradict, indeed, the duty and responsibility to do so. This doctrine...is found throughout Luther, and there is no statement of Luther, either from his earlier or later period, which contradicts it.<sup>100</sup>

As Walther goes on to apply these differing yet complementary emphases in Luther's doctrine of the Ministry to the ecclesiastical circumstances of nineteenth-century America, and to the various controversies that orthodox Lutheran synods had been waging with various theological foes, he - from within the Missouri Synod - speaks these words of encouragement to his friend Jakob Aall Ottesen, in the Norwegian Synod:

God give you good courage for the struggle that He has ordained for you! While we have had to struggle chiefly against hierarchy and the dominance of priestly rule [*Pfafferei*] by advocating the rights of Christians, perhaps your lot is to guard God's order against *Schwaermerei*. Well then! Let's proceed in both directions!<sup>101</sup>

The mature Luther did, however, explicitly acknowledge that there had been a salutary development in his personal understanding of the Ministry, and a deepening of his appreciation of the necessity of a

divine call thereto, in comparison to the inadequate thinking of his earlier years as a theologian – especially before the beginning of his work as an evangelical reformer. He said in 1535:

Thus in our time the sectarians have the vocabulary of faith in their mouths, but they do not produce any fruit. Their chief aim is to attract men to their false opinions. To remain in their saving task, those who have a sure and holy call must often bear many severe conflicts, as must those whose teaching is pure and sound, against the devil with his constant and endless wiles and against the world with its attacks. ...we who are in the ministry of the Word have this comfort, that we have a heavenly and holy office; being legitimately called to this, we prevail over all the gates of hell (Matt. 16:18). ... In the past, when I was only a young theologian and doctor, I thought it was imprudent of Paul in his epistle [to the Galatians] to boast of his call so often. But I did not understand his purpose, for I did not know that the ministry of the Word of God was so weighty a matter. I did not know anything about the doctrine of faith and a true conscience. In the schools and churches no certainty was being taught, but everything was filled with the sophistic trifles and nursery rhymes of the canonists and commentators on the *Sentences*. Therefore no one could understand how forceful and powerful is this holy and spiritual boasting about a call, which serves first to the glory of God, secondly to the advancement of our own ministry, and also to our own benefit and to that of the people.<sup>102</sup>

One of the most interesting documents in American Lutheran history is the certificate of ordination for Justus Falckner, the first Lutheran pastor to be regularly ordained in America. This remarkable document is really more like a treatise on the doctrine of the Ministry, than like the kind of ordination certificates with which we are familiar today. And the doctrine of the Ministry that it teaches is the same doctrine that was explicitly taught by Luther and Gerhard, and that is substantially reflected in the Lutheran Confessions:

GOD Himself, the Establisher and Preserver of the Holy Ministry, first discharged the office of preaching [*concionandi munere fungebatur*] in Paradise and raised the first parents, deceived by the devil in disguise, for the hope of salvation by the promised Seed of the woman, that he would tread upon the head of the serpent. Nor is there any doubt that Adam had instructed his children as to how they ought to preserve their faith in the Promised Seed. Before and after the flood, there existed luminaries of the restored Church and heralds of righteousness [*in-*

*stauratae Ecclesiae lumina justitiaeque praecones*], Noah, Abraham and other ministers of the Divine Word [*verbi Divini ministri*]. And after the promulgation of the law by Moses, already from then on, for a time of amendment, there were priests and Levites who enlightened the people of God by teaching and by exemplary life. However, since numbers of Levitical priests often executed this their duty rather negligently, it pleased God not only to censure their morals and degenerate life through the prophets, but also, when the time for the Church was nearer, for the Virgin Birth and the Nativity of the promised Seed, to put forth more clearly, by a succession of prophecies, the divine mystery for the restoring of the human race. For in the New Covenant, by his own ordination, God distinguished between the teachers and those who heard, and guarded his order against the rancor of the devil and the malice of the world. John the Baptist, by the order of God, assumed the office of preacher [*concionatoris munus auspicatus est*], whom Christ himself succeeded, who [being] dipped in the water of Baptism, was publicly inaugurated into this office [*ad id munus publice inauguratus est*]. Since it was necessary for Christ by his passion and death to redeem salvation and to ascend into the heavens, as soon as he had assumed the office of teaching [*docendi munus*] on the earth, he called twelve apostles, taught them his sacred things, and commanded them that they should go forth to teach all nations. To these, as equal to them, he sent seventy disciples that they might proclaim the Word to the inhabitants of the Jewish cities. The promised Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, has fulfilled the duties of the ascended Christ. Hence, Paul in his speech to the elders at Ephesus says that these inspectors [*inspectores*] of the Lord's flock have been placed there by the Holy Spirit. From this we are taught that no one of his own accord ought to assume the honor (of a priest) without a divine call. For the ministers of the Church are ambassadors of God. But no one assumes for himself the role of ambassador without the authority of the one sending him. They are stewards of the mysteries of God; thus they are as master of the household, managers of dispensing the goods of the Lord. ...those who truly and legitimately have been called to this sacred office [*sacrum hoc munus*] are able to enjoy a tranquil conscience and to remember their call not without singular consolation. And by it as a shield they are able to protect themselves against all weapons of adversaries. In their number has been assessed the most esteemed and the most excellent JUSTUS FALCKNER, a German, who through prayers and the imposition of hands has been initiated by rite into holy orders [*rite sain ordinibus initiatus*]. He has been designated on the 24th day of November of this year [1703] for the ministry of the Church [*ad*

*Ecclesiae ministerium*]. We ask the Most High God that he might add success to the office [*officio*] and each day to increase the gifts given by him to the new minister to the glory of his Name, the well-being of the Church, and not for his personal gain.<sup>103</sup>

Our ordained friends in the Orthodox, Catholic, and Anglican traditions often find great satisfaction in the thought that they can trace the succession of their ministry back to the apostles. In regard to the specific claims of this form of the doctrine of “apostolic succession,” Confessional Lutherans would counter, in the words of Krauth, that

In their extraordinary powers and functions the Apostles had no *successors*. In their ordinary [powers and functions] all true ministers of Christ are their successors. There is a ministerial succession unbroken in the Church; but, there is no personal succession in a particular line of transmission. The ministry that is, ordains the ministry that comes. The ministry of successive generations has always been inducted into the office by the ministry preceding; but, the so-called Apostolical succession or canonical succession does not exist, would be incapable of demonstration if it did exist, and would be of no essential value even if it could be demonstrated.<sup>104</sup>

We would also recall the words of Olavus Petri, the great Swedish Reformer: “The true succession is a succession of teaching, and a succession in the episcopal chair is of significance only when the succession of teaching is maintained.”<sup>105</sup>

From a Lutheran perspective, Pastor Falckner – and indeed *all* Christian pastors – are actually able to claim an essential continuity in their ministry that stretches back even *beyond* the apostles, all the way to Adam, Noah, and Abraham! For a faithful pastor, this sense of “connection” to all prophets and preachers, of all eras, is not something that nurtures pride, but instead brings about a greater realization of the need for humble reliance on God’s grace and strength. Sasse explains that

No one can understand the ministry of the Word who has not understood why the Old Testament prophets call the “word” a “burden.” No one can understand it unless he knows what Jeremiah and Paul have understood: “Necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel” (1 Cor 9:16). For *the ministry of the Word in the Old and New Testament is essentially one*, although the offices of apostle and prophet are not identical. As the prophetic message always contains, though often in a hidden



way, the promise of the coming Christ, so the apostle is a witness of the Incarnate and Risen Christ (Matthew 10; Acts 1:22; 10:41 ff.; 1 John 1:1 ff). Also the task of the apostles transcends all human possibilities. How could this little band carry out the Great Commission of Matt 28:19 and “make disciples of all nations,” “go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation,” as Mark 16:15 reads? How could they be his witnesses not only in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, but even “to the end of the earth” [Acts 1:8]? The impossible task, a commission which goes on without limitations in space and time, became possible, like the task of the prophets, only through the “I am with you” (Matt 28:20). So they obeyed the call, leaving to him how he would see to it that the Great Commission was carried out, even after the last of the eyewitnesses of the Risen Christ would have died. ... This ministry, this office which preaches the Word of God and administers the Sacraments of Christ, goes on in the history of the church until the end of all history. We ministers of Christ are not apostles – none of us is an eyewitness of the incarnate and risen Son of God. Nor are we prophets. ... The task of our office is to preach the Word of God which is given to us once for all in the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testament.<sup>106</sup>

As Sasse indicates, there are some obvious differences between the specific office of an Old Testament prophet and the specific office of an apostle, even as there are obvious differences between the specific office of an apostle and the specific offices of pastoral oversight that exist in our day. These differences illustrate and exemplify the multiplicity of forms and configurations in which the general office of a spiritual father has existed throughout the ages. But as Sasse also indicates, “the ministry of the Word in the Old and New Testament is essentially one,” even as “This ministry, this office which preaches the Word of God and administers the Sacraments of Christ, goes on in the history of the church until the end of all history.”

In regard to the “Great Commission” of Matthew 28, to which reference is made in the above Sasse quotation, Sasse says elsewhere:

To the Twelve Jesus gave the office of preaching the Gospel to every creature and making disciples of all nations by baptizing them. To them He gave the mandate at the Last Supper: “Do this in remembrance of Me.” Who were the Twelve? They were the first ministers (*Amtsträger*). From them proceeds “the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments” [AC 5]. But they are at the same time the church, the *ekklesia*, the representatives of God’s new people of the end time. It is therefore in

fact impossible in the New Testament to separate ministry and congregation. What is said to the congregation is also said to the office of the ministry, and vice versa. The office does not stand above the congregation, but always in it.<sup>107</sup>

Krauth observes that

The ministry is not an order, but it is a divinely appointed office, to which men must be rightly called. No imparity exists by divine right; an hierarchical organization is unchristian, but a gradation (bishops, superintendents, provosts) may be observed, as a thing of human right only. The government by consistories has been very general. In Denmark, Evangelical bishops took the place of the Roman Catholic prelates who were deposed. In Sweden the bishops embraced the Reformation, and thus secured in that country an "apostolic succession" in the high-church sense; though, on the principles of the Lutheran Church, alike where she has as where she has not such a succession, it is not regarded as essential even to the order of the Church.<sup>108</sup>

The way things went in Sweden was nevertheless in keeping with the stated preference of the Reformers. The Apology responds to the Confutation of the Augsburg Confession as follows:

Article fourteen [of the Augsburg Confession], in which we say that no one should be allowed to administer the Word and the sacraments unless they are duly called, they accept with the proviso that we use canonical ordination. Concerning this subject we have frequently testified in the assembly that it is our greatest desire to retain the order of the church and the various ranks in the church - even though they were established by human authority. We know that church discipline in the manner described by the ancient canons was instituted by the Fathers for a good and useful purpose. However, the [papal] bishops compel our priests either to reject and to condemn the kind of doctrine that we have confessed, or by new and unheard cruelty they kill the unfortunate and innocent people. This prevents our priests from acknowledging such bishops. Thus the cruelty of the bishops is the reason for the abolition of canonical order in some places despite our earnest desire to retain it. Let the bishops ask themselves how they will give an answer to God for breaking up the church. We have clear consciences on this matter since we know that our confession is true, godly, and catholic. ... Moreover, we want to point out again that we would willingly retain ecclesiastical and canonical order as long as the

bishops desisted from their cruelty against our churches. This willingness will be our defense, both before God and among all nations, present and future, against the charge that we have undermined the authority of the bishops.<sup>109</sup>

Approaching the question of an “apostolic ministry” in the church from another angle, it would be correct to say – with Gustaf Wingren – that “it is difficult to make a comparison between the ministry as it existed in the Church of the New Testament period and our modern equivalent,” in view of “the fact that the apostolate was a unique phenomenon and limited to this foundation period.” From this perspective, it would also be correct to say “that the apostolic ministry in our day is not the responsibility of any successors to the apostles, but is still exercised by the apostles themselves, and that the instrument through which the original and unique apostolic ministry is continued today is the writings of the New Testament. These alone speak to us with apostolic authority, and our ministry is merely a ministry of expounding and interpreting them, a ministry subordinate to the word of scripture.”<sup>110</sup>

In his *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Chemnitz presents, in great detail, the Lutheran position on the origin and character of the specific office of bishop – as distinct from the office of presbyter or priest. Following the lead of the Treatise, his historical argument is dependent largely on the testimony of St. Jerome, who – as Chemnitz observes –

shows and proves that at the time of the apostles, bishops and presbyters were one and the same, or that one and the same person was both presbyter and bishop, one of these being a term for his office and dignity, the other for his age. For Paul says (Phil. 1:1) that in that one church there were bishops and deacons. In Acts 20:17 Luke says that the presbyters of the church at Ephesus were called out. When Paul has assembled them, he calls them bishops [“overseers”; Acts 20:28]. In Titus 1:5 ff. Paul speaks of appointing presbyters in every town. And as he explains what kind of presbyter ought to be ordained, he says: “For a bishop must be blameless.” In 1 Peter 5:1-2 Peter, addressing the presbyters calls himself a fellow presbyter and ascribes to the office of presbyters *to episkopein* [“oversight”]. That the same ordination was common to [bishops and] presbyters Jerome shows from 1 Tim. 4:14, which speaks of the laying on of hands of the presbyters. This opinion did not fall from the lips of Jerome accidentally while he was concerned about something else, but he argues it *ex professo* and repeats it in a number of places, e.g., on the Epistle to Titus, in his *Letter to Evagrius*,

likewise to Oceanus. Ambrose follows this opinion, likewise Bede in the chapter on Philipians, likewise Isidore, dist. 21, ch. *Cleros*. The same Jerome also explains what was the cause and origin of the difference which was later made between a bishop and the presbyters, why and for what use this difference was accepted by the church. Thus he says, on Titus 1: "Before, by an impulse of the devil, a zeal in religion developed and it was said among the people, 'I belong to Paul; I to Apollos; I to Cephas,' the churches were governed by the common counsel of the presbyters. But after everyone thought that those whom he had baptized were his, not Christ's, it was decreed that in the whole city one who was elected from among the presbyters should be placed over the rest, to whom the care of the whole church should belong, and the seeds of schisms would be removed." Likewise: "With the ancients, presbyters and bishops were one and the same. But little by little, in order that the seedbeds of dissensions might be rooted out, the whole responsibility was conferred on one." The same says in the *Letter to Evagrius* (and this is quoted in dist. 93, ch. *Legimus*): "However, that later on one was elected who was placed over the rest, this was done as a remedy against schisms, lest everyone draw the church of Christ to himself and split it. For also at Alexandria, from the time of Mark the Evangelist until Dionysius, the presbyters always chose one from among themselves and placed him in a higher rank. Him they called *episcopus*, just as if the army would make a commander-in-chief for itself," etc. Moreover, a little before the time of Jerome, Aerius began to urge this equality of presbyters and bishops, which existed at the time of the apostles, in such a way that he simply condemned the custom of the church which made the bishop superior to and placed him over the presbyters and gave him the supervision of the whole church as a remedy against dissensions and for the sake of order and harmony. However, when this opinion of Aerius was seen to give occasion for confusion and dissensions, it was rejected and disapproved. Then the bishops grew arrogant, despised the presbyters, and thought this prerogative was due them by divine right. Because these controversies were still raging in his time, Jerome, as he himself declares, interposes his opinion from Scripture and shows that at the time of the apostles and with the ancients there was no distinction, but that presbyters and bishops were one and the same and that the churches were governed by their common counsel. Then he explains for what reason, for what purpose and use one bishop was placed over the others as head, namely, to remove the seedbeds of dissensions and schisms. To this extent Jerome approves this arrangement. But the pride of the bishops he curbs with these words: "Therefore as the presbyters know

that, from the custom of the church, they are subject to the one who has been placed over them, so the bishops should know that they are greater than the presbyters more by custom than by the truth of an arrangement of the Lord, and that they ought to govern the church in common." Of the office of bishops Jerome says to Evagrius that the bishop does the same thing a presbyter does. Therefore the ministry of the Word and the sacraments and the care of ecclesiastical discipline were at that time the joint duty of the bishop and the presbyters. ... At that time ordination was specifically the duty of the bishops, as Jerome says: "What does a bishop do that a presbyter does not do, ordination excepted?" And Chrysostom says, on 1 Timothy, that a bishop is greater than a presbyter only in that he performs ordinations.<sup>111</sup>

In the Smalcald Articles, Luther picks up on some of this early Christian history in his discussion of why "the pope is not the head of all Christendom 'by divine right' or on the basis of God's Word," and of why the church on earth does not require something like the papacy even as a practical matter. In considering the legitimate need for "the unity of Christendom" to be "preserved against sects and heretics," Luther does not concede that a pope is required for this, but he suggests instead that "the church cannot be better ruled and preserved than if we all live under one head, Christ, and all the bishops - equal according to the office (although they may be unequal in their gifts) - keep diligently together in unity of teaching, faith, sacraments, prayers, and works of love, etc. So St. Jerome writes that the priests at Alexandria ruled the churches together in common, as the apostles also did and afterward all bishops throughout Christendom, until the pope elevated himself over them all."<sup>112</sup>

Luther lists here some of the important ways in which orthodox bishops and pastors mutually strengthen and affirm their unity under Christ and his Word. This includes joint use of the marks of the church (the means of grace), as well as joint participation in spiritual activities that flow from, and testify to, a common adherence to these marks. Since these confessional actions testify to a fundamental unity in faith on the part of those who together engage in them, these actions would in principle *not* be engaged in with those who do *not* confess, or adhere to, the pure marks of the church.

Perhaps the most obvious example of this is joining together in the Lord's Supper, since "fellowship at the Lord's table is a testimony of consensus, harmony, and unity in doctrine and faith, as Paul says: 'We who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread' (1 Cor. 10:17)."<sup>113</sup> But this is not the only religious act or activity which properly testifies to a "consensus, harmony, and unity in

doctrine and faith" on the part of those who are together engaging in it. Luther states in his "Lectures on Galatians" - with reference to the "Sacramentarians" of his time - that "we *shall* pray for those who slander our doctrine and persecute us out of ignorance, but *not with* those who knowingly offend against one or more articles of Christian doctrine and against their conscience."<sup>114</sup> In saying this, Luther is not just expressing his personal pique, but he is applying the ancient conciliar principle that "No one shall join in prayers with heretics or schismatics."<sup>115</sup>

In an attempt to resolve a twentieth-century controversy among Lutherans in America regarding these matters, the Synodical Conference's "Overseas Brethren" prepared and offered thirteen theses on "Fellowship in Its Necessary Context of the Doctrine of the Church," the last three of which are:

11. The marks of the church are all-decisive. Everything must be referred to them. This duty is hindered by presumptuous judgments or statements concerning the faith or lack of it in individuals. It is Enthusiasm to build on subjective faith (*fides qua*) and love, for faith is hidden and love is variable. Both are in man. The means of grace are objective, solid, apprehensible. Since these are God's own means, we must attend entirely upon them and draw from them the distinction between the orthodox church and heterodox churches. ... 12. The fellowship created by Word and sacraments shows itself fundamentally in pulpit and altar fellowship. It can show itself in many other ways, some of which, like prayer and worship and love of the brethren, the church cannot do without; others of which, like the holy kiss or the handshake or the reception into one's house, vary from place to place and from time to time. In whatever way the fellowship created by Word and sacraments shows itself, all visible manifestations of fellowship must be truthful and in accordance with the supreme demands of the marks of the church. The "sacred things" (*sacra*) are the means of grace, and only by way of them is anything else a "sacred thing" (*sacrum*). Acts 2:41-47; 1 Cor. 1:10; cf. 15:1-4; 10:16,17; 11:22-34; 12:13; ch. 14; 2 Cor. Chs. 8,9. ... 13. Prayer is not one of the marks of the church and should not be coordinated with Word and sacraments, as though it were essentially of the same nature as they. As a response to the divine Word, it is an expression of faith and a fruit of faith, and when spoken before others, a profession of faith. As a profession of faith it must be in harmony with and under the control of the marks of the church. Dan. 9:18; Acts 9:11; Gal. 4:6; Rom. 10:8-14; 1 Tim. 2:1,2; Acts 27:35. - Ap XIII:16; XXIII:30,31; LC, Lord's Prayer: 13-30.<sup>116</sup>

The point made in Thesis 13 is very similar to a statement that Luther made in his "Lectures on Genesis," that "*by their nature preaching and prayer are connected with each other. It is impossible to pray unless one has first instructed the people concerning God.*"<sup>117</sup>



## 6.

***“It is wicked to interpret a poor choice of words as error”***

During the controversy between the “Wauwatosa Theologians” of the Wisconsin Synod and the “Saint Louis Theologians” of the Missouri Synod, in the first few decades of the twentieth century, Koehler (of Wisconsin) stated that the *Pfarramt* “is a species of the preaching ministry [*Predigtamt*] that first originated in the German Middle Ages.”<sup>118</sup> Francis Pieper (of Missouri) stated in response that the *Pfarramt* “has existed since the time of the Patriarchs and before.”<sup>119</sup> When Koehler and his Wauwatosa colleagues argued *against* the specific divine institution of the *Pfarramt* (as they defined it), and when Pieper and his Saint Louis colleagues argued *for* the specific divine institution of the *Pfarramt* (as they defined it), the two faculties appeared at the time to be at an irreconcilable impasse. But it seems clear now (and it should have been clear at the time!) that they were operating with different definitions of the term *Pfarramt* – one narrow (Wisconsin) and one broad (Missouri) – and were at least in some ways simply talking past each other.

Such misunderstandings were not a new problem in the area of intra-Lutheran discussions on the doctrine of the Ministry. In the nineteenth century, when disputes on this topic were also raging, Charles A. Hay had offered this historical observation, and this conciliatory suggestion:

In endeavoring to fix with precision the meaning they attached to the terms Priesthood, Office, Call, Keys, etc., we are unfortunately met at the threshold, with the fact that the Reformers (and, among them all, especially Luther), employed these expressions often in a vague and variable sense, rendering their utterances, at different times, more or less inconsistent, thus affording an opportunity for those, who differ from one another in their views upon this subject, from both sides to appeal to them for sanction and authority. Hence it has resulted that the present controversy is to a great extent a mere logomachy. If these and kindred terms were precisely defined and the respective parties would agree to use them *in the same sense*, more carefully noting



the varying phases of thought expressed by them at different times, by the same early writers, those who now so bitterly denounce each other would probably be found, after all, not to be so very wide apart.<sup>120</sup>

Confusing terminological inconsistencies appear not only in the personal writings of the sixteenth-century Reformers, but also in the Lutheran Church Orders of that century. Ralph F. Smith writes that

A point of confusion throughout the period under discussion (1525-1580) was how broadly one should interpret the office of the *ministerium verbi*. Was it one office, namely that of pastor, so that presbyter and bishop were not different orders? Did it include deacons or the minor orders? Was there a place for elders, such as in the Hesse churches, and were they considered laity or clergy? *One cannot answer these questions definitively because of the fluid way in which the various offices come and go as one moves from territory to territory.*<sup>121</sup>

For all these reasons, we should hesitate to conclude too quickly that a fellow Lutheran, whose manner of explaining the doctrine of the Ministry differs in some ways from our manner of explaining it, is necessarily a false or errant teacher. The Eighth Commandment would also guide us to take seriously the counsel of Walther – and through him of Gerhard:

As important as it is to be concerned with purity of doctrine, we dare not become irrational about it. If a member of a communion says something that is not correct, we must avoid attacking him immediately as a heretic. ... Very sternly the apostle Paul writes, "Let there be no divisions among you!" [1 Cor. 1:10], and then he sharply rebukes [the Corinthians] because there already were divisions among them, and he adds, "Those who make divisions are carnal" [1 Cor. 3:3]. Let us take that to heart! Let us watch and pray that no unnecessary disputes will *ever* arise and be fostered, and that no one will go public in uncertain matters until he has informed others about it, so that, whenever possible, the fire can be quenched. ... Only when God's glory or the salvation of souls are clearly at stake, then we must engage in battle, even if it means the destruction of a synod that previously enjoyed God's blessing. ... When it comes to insignificant matters that have nothing to do with the salvation of immortal souls, we should never get involved in a serious dispute. But if someone who is always itching for a fight starts one, we must firmly put such a fellow in his place. Appropriate is 2 Tim. 2:14: "...warn

them before God against quarreling about words." A person may express an idea in a way that is completely wrong, even though he intended to say the right thing. That is why Gerhard writes: "It is wicked to interpret a poor choice of words as error, when you know that the right *meaning* was intended" (*Locus on Good Works*, sec. 38). Let us avoid ever doing that...! When someone makes "a poor choice of words," we should avoid immediately labeling him as either a heretic or a false teacher. If necessary, we should instead correct him gently.<sup>122</sup>

In hindsight, then, the most charitable interpretation of the dispute between Koehler and Pieper on the origin of the *Pfarramt* – and on the *meaning* of the term "Pfarramt" – would be that they were *both* essentially correct in the respective points that they were intending to make, in regard to these specific questions. But there were also other questions.

Francis Pieper's brother August – another of the "Wauwatosa Theologians" – wrote in an article published in 1916, that "there can be no doubt that the ministry of the church, including the administration of the sacraments, both the public as well as the private ministry, has not only been earned by the blood of Christ and created by the Holy Spirit, but has also been ordained by explicit words of the Lord." August Pieper went on to say that "the ministry of the church and the congregational pastorate are not simply interchangeable concepts. The concept *the ministry of the church* embraces absolutely all forms of the administration of Word and sacrament, while the congregational pastorate designates only a *specific form* of the *public* administration of the means of grace." August continued with a reiteration of his earlier point – that "The ministry of the church has...been expressly commanded and ordained by the Lord." But it would seem that in what he said next, he *understated* the Biblical and Confessional position – perhaps as an overcorrection to certain *exaggerated* statements that had been made by others regarding the significance of the congregational pastorate as such. August Pieper wrote that

all species and forms of this ministry self-evidently share in the divine institution of the genus, the ministry of the church. This is especially true also of every public proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments carried out in the name of a group. But for no specific form of that ministry (the apostolate excepted) can a clear special prescription and ordinance of the Lord be established from Scripture.<sup>123</sup>

According to August, what is expressly commanded and ordained by the Lord is the administration of the means of grace, plain and simple. This is what he meant by “the ministry of the church.” August Pieper certainly would have affirmed that God providentially guides and blesses the church in *its* establishing of offices of public ministry, for the orderly exercise of the public functions of “the ministry of the church.” But he apparently did not recognize a *dominical command or ordinance* for any particular kind of vocational arrangement for the carrying out of a public administration of the means of grace. Even a category of public ministry less narrowly-configured and less concrete than the “congregational pastorate” *per se* – such as what Luther describes as the “spiritual fathers” who “govern and guide us by the Word of God” – was not included by August among the enduring evangelical institutions that God has prescribed for, and entrusted to, the church.

August Pieper’s practical exhortation, further on in the article, tends to confirm (and heighten!) our suspicions in this respect. He wrote:

Why do not we Lutherans learn something in this matter of spiritual freedom from the Reformed churches round about us? They know how to draw the laity into the service of the church, also in the individual congregations, and how to make them co-workers of the pastor. It’s remarkable! ... Let us recognize that there is no divinely instituted and prescribed form of the ministry, even for the administration of Word and sacrament; that the Holy Spirit here works freely through free Christians; [and] that the edification of the church amidst the social development of the world is the real guide for the forms of the ministry of the church.<sup>124</sup>

Erling T. Teigen remarks:

August Pieper is certainly correct in saying that there is no New Testament prescription of a particular form of the ministry – viz. *Pfarramt* as it is conceived today. But along with that, Pieper has swept out any divine institution of the [public] *Predigtamt*, which is again reduced to a vague abstraction – either as what all believers have, or as the ministry of the Means of Grace (subjective genitive). But the *Predigtamt* goes well beyond that. It is the office which exercises the keys on the public behalf, which administers word and sacrament in the place of Christ. One is called to this *Amt* (Rom 10:15), mediately by the royal priesthood, but is set in the office by God (Acts 20:28) and has the specific appointment by Christ (Jn 20:21) along with the promise of Christ, “He who

hears you hears Me" (Lk 10:16). The incumbents of this office hold an apostolic ministry and are "stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor 4:1). There are specific qualifications for the office, e.g. 1 Tim 2:12, 3:1-7, 1 Cor 14:34; the office holders are to have their livelihood by that work (1 Tim 5:17) and they are to be seminary graduates, i.e. not in form, but in substance, properly trained (2 Tim 2:2, 2 Tim 3:8-17, Ti 1:9). All of this is distinct from the *Pfarramt*, the congregational ministry, the specific office which has developed and may continue to develop. A missionary, a seminary professor, a college or hospital chaplain, may not have the *Pfarramt*, but they certainly have the *Predigtamt* as much as does the pastor in a local congregation. Luther was not the pastor of a local congregation in today's sense, but he was certain that as a Doctor of Theology he had God's call to the Gospel ministry, and he would then point to his call to the university as his call to preach and teach the Gospel, not only as a royal priest, but as one called to the *Amt*.<sup>125</sup>

In a 1916 letter from the Saint Louis faculty to the faculty at Wauwatosa, penned soon after the appearance of August Pieper's article, Francis Pieper and his Missouri Synod colleagues wrote:

Throughout the whole New Testament the public ministry is spoken of in such terms as can be used only of a divine arrangement. Though we are indeed able to offer no word of specific institution, yet the whole New Testament shows us that divine ordering is involved.<sup>126</sup>

The Wauwatosa men considered this to be a concession to their position. And in a sense it was. But they in turn should have acknowledged the legitimacy of the observation of the Saint Louis men, that in the New Testament there is indeed a "divine ordering" at work in the appointment of spiritual overseers among God's people. And how could the New Testament public ministry *be* a matter of "divine ordering," when there is "no word of specific institution" for it *in* the New Testament? Because the "divine ordering" that is in place in the New Testament is a divine ordering that has been "carried over" from the *Old* Testament - not in details but in essence - as Luther, Gerhard, and others had already noted.

We are pleased to note that in the Wisconsin Synod of today, the shortcomings of the "Wauwatosa Theologians" have been rectified by fuller and clearer explanations of what God has instituted for the church of all times and places. Thomas P. Nass writes:

Further study could be done on exactly what the Wauwatosa theologians meant when they talked about divine institution. But certainly they would have denied that the public ministry is a strictly human creation. Subsequent WELS writing has made clear that the WELS does teach the divine institution of the public ministry. ...the WELS teaches that the public ministry is not optional. Wherever Christians are, God wants there to be servants who shepherd them with the means of grace as representatives of Christ.<sup>127</sup>



## 7.

***“Limited to the pastorate of a local congregation?”***

“Spiritual fathers” who govern and guide the church by the Word of God are necessary as a matter of the divine will, and not merely as a matter of human expediency. But what are we to think of the diversity of forms or manifestations that the office of a spiritual father may and does take in the life of the church, in various times and places? Is only *one* of those forms or manifestations of pastoral ministry the “real thing” in God’s eyes? A little more than a century ago, Jacobs asked and answered this pertinent question:

*Is the Call which constitutes the ministry limited to the pastorate of a local congregation? Many so maintain. But even in Apostolic times, the ministry of preaching the Word and administering the Sacraments was not confined to a form so restrictedly local. Wherever there are general interests of the Church that are served by preachers and teachers filling such offices as are needed and in accordance with clear calls, there are also true ministers of the Church. What a congregation of Christian people can do in the call of a pastor, a congregation of congregations in the representative Church can also effect.<sup>128</sup>*

Some theologians of the Missouri Synod, especially in the twentieth century, did hold to the position that Jacobs here criticizes. But Francis Pieper was not one of them:

Quoting an earlier *Lehre und Wehre* statement, “The ministry [*Predigtamt*] goes through the world in a two-fold form, in a missionary [*missionisierenden*] and a parish-pastoral [*pfarramtlichen*] one,” F. Pieper argued that missionaries called by Synod or its Districts should also be called and ordained: “This Call is not a human, but a divine Call, and those who have received and accepted this Call, have received and accepted a divine Call just as much as those called to parish-pastoral activity by already existing congregations.”<sup>129</sup>

John Buenger (of the Missouri Synod) also writes:

You can often hear it said that Missouri teaches that the pastoral office is the only divinely instituted office in contrast to all other offices. This is false, even if it is stated by Missourians who are not well enough informed. Never did Dr. Walther make such a statement.<sup>130</sup>

(In the context of Buenger's remarks, "pastoral office" here means "parish pastorate.")

C. H. Little - who had studied under Jacobs, and who took his teacher's position on this question - stated in 1933 that

The Call may be defined as the election and designation of a man for the work of the ministry. ... This call may be the call of the congregation to the pastorate, or the call of the representative Church to the mission field or to professorships in a theological seminary, or executive offices in the Church, or to any other work in which the Church may be engaged, or which it may find it necessary to perform.<sup>131</sup>

But in an otherwise favorable review of the book where Little had said this, Paul E. Kretzmann - then a professor at the Missouri Synod's Concordia Seminary in Saint Louis - demurred on this understanding of the call. He wrote that "we cannot subscribe to the statement that the call by the 'representative church' (synod) is on the same level with that issued by a congregation; for there is no sound Scriptural basis for such a declaration."<sup>132</sup>

In the actual teaching of Walther, however, the "one office" that God instituted is not limited to "the office of rescuing souls" as that would be carried out in congregational settings, but also includes "the office of teaching" as that would be carried out in the church's educational institutions. In a sermon that Walther preached on the occasion of the installation of two (ordained) gymnasium teachers - a new director and his assistant - he said this:

What can comfort us, when men, who have prepared themselves for the office of rescuing souls, yes, who have already administered this office with blessing, assume the office of teaching at our institutions of learning? ... This shall comfort us: 1) that also their office is the office of our God; 2) that also their work is the work of our Lord. ... God has actually instituted only one office, namely the office, in his name to gather his church on earth, to rule over it, provide for it, and preserve it. This office the Lord has ordained and given to his church when he gave Peter the keys to heaven and finally said to all his disciples: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach

all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" [Matt 28:18-20]. Now this office accordingly has such a sphere of duties and tasks of such a diverse variety, also calls for so many different outstanding gifts, that no man is in the position, even in a small sphere, to fulfill all its tasks. As the Messiah's office as mediator falls into three different offices, that of prophet, high priest, and king, so also the office of the church falls into the most diverse offices, demanding manifold gifts of the Spirit. Fully carrying out the office of the church requires among other things not only that those filling this office feed the flock of Christ in every way and do battle for it, but above all also this, that they take care that after them there will always be new faithful shepherds and well-equipped warriors, who will take up the lead with the shepherd staff when it has fallen from them and who will wield the sword which death has wrenched from their hand. ... It is therefore not a human arrangement, that there are men in the church, who train and instruct young boys so that they may some day carry out the office which preaches reconciliation. Their office is a holy, godly office, a branch [*Zweig*] of the office which Christ instituted and established in presenting the keys of heaven. ... Not only is it a divine institution, but all its tasks have also no other goal, no other final objective, than the glorification of God's name and the salvation of lost souls. Not only are particularly you, esteemed Director, from now on in the real sense the guardian, the spiritual father and house-pastor [*Hausseelsorger*] of the boys and young men in our college; not only are they in a real sense a house church and house congregation of precious, immortal souls, purchased at a high price, who have been laid as a trust upon your soul from this day on, who are here not only to be educated, but also to be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and to be trained for heaven; but whatsoever we may pursue here, apart from the word of God itself, be it the original languages of the Holy Scriptures or those of profane authors, be it the history of the church or of the world, be it geography, or the mathematical or natural sciences, or the fine arts, music and painting... everything is to be pursued here for the purpose and with the objective that men are to be trained here who will have the general education and the required abilities, the proper spirit, the necessary love, self-effacement, and self sacrifice to call people from all classes, all vocations of life, all cultural levels into Christ's kingdom, to feed the flock of Christ, and to wage the Lord's battles.<sup>133</sup>



Earlier in this sermon, Walther had also affirmed the churchly character and divine authority of the calls that had been issued to these men:

We have here before us two faithful, highly respected men, both of whom have concerned themselves with the various aspects of human knowledge from their youth up in order that at last they might follow the Savior's bidding: "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." Their real goal was to save other souls for the Savior, since He had redeemed them, to tell sinners what great things God had done for them, and to comfort the believers with the same comfort that had reassured them: in short, their goal was to assume the office of preaching reconciliation, to call to the lost and condemned world: "Be ye reconciled to God," and to break the Bread of Life for the redeemed children of God. And yet the church has directed another call to them, has called them to work here as professors at one of her institutions of higher learning, and has committed to the one in the name of the Triune God the presidency of this institution and to the other the office of co-rector. Now the time has come for them to speak their solemn, public acceptance of the calls that have been directed to them in the name of the Triune God.<sup>134</sup>

Walther's position on the doctrine of the Ministry, in its totality, can perhaps be brought into sharper focus also in light of his Confessionally-based explanation of the meaning and application of the German word *Predigtamt*. In classic Lutheran theology this word is often used to refer to the public office, or position of responsibility, of those who are called to preach the Gospel. But perhaps more often, it is used to refer to the Gospel that is preached, or to the preached Gospel. On one occasion, when he was addressing J. A. A. Grabau's linguistic and theological misunderstandings, Walther quoted as follows from the (authoritative) German translation of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession: "We are not speaking of a fictional church that can nowhere be found; rather we say and know of a certainty that this church, in which holy people are living, is and remains truly on earth, namely, that there are some children of God here and there in all the world, in all kinds of kingdoms, islands, lands, and cities, from the rising of the sun to [its] setting, who have correctly known Christ and the Gospel; and we say that this same church has these outward signs: the preaching office [*Predigtamt*] or Gospel and the sacraments."<sup>135</sup> Walther then commented on the use of the term "preaching office" in this passage and elsewhere in the Confessions:

In this passage of the Apology...one can also recognize very clearly what those of old frequently understood by "preaching office," namely, [that] they often took "preaching office" as entirely synonymous with "Gospel." The Apology does not have Grabau's understanding, according to which "preaching office" is always equivalent to "parish pastor's office" [*Pfarramt*], so that therefore the words of the 28th article of the Augsburg Confession, "These gifts cannot be obtained except through the office of preaching" [XXVIII:9], are equivalent to saying that without the office of the pastor a person cannot obtain either faith or forgiveness of sins or salvation! No, when our old teachers ascribe such great things to the preaching office, they thereby mean nothing else than the service of the Word, in whatever way it may come to us [*den Dienst des Wortes, auf welche Weise derselbe auch immerhin an uns geschehen möge*].<sup>136</sup>

Walther, by the way, also recognized the churchly character of synods. He said, in a "First Sermon at the Opening of the Synod," that

The most important feature of a synodical fellowship is pure doctrine and understanding. A Synod, after all, is to be a part of God's church on earth. For that reason also its distinguishing mark is this, that in it "the Gospel is rightly taught and the sacraments are administered in accord with the Gospel" [Augsburg Confession VII:1]. Also [a Synod] is to be built on nothing but the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ as the cornerstone. Also [a Synod] is to be a flock of those holy believers and lambs who hear the voice of their Shepherd. Also [a Synod] has been given the assignment which the Savior, when He ascended to heaven, left behind for His church on earth, "Teach them to observe all things which I have commanded you" [Matthew 28:20]. Also its ultimate purpose is the salvation of sinners, which is achieved by nothing else than the pure Gospel.<sup>137</sup>

In the "Farewell Sermon" that Hoenecke preached to his congregation in 1891, upon his acceptance of a call to a full-time seminary professorship, he said this:

If a man is retiring from a demanding and responsible office after he has held it for a long time, and if he is also leaving this particular office in an honorable way, then in many instances this leaving counts as something which can be fully desired and welcomed by such a man. Therefore, to be sure, many might

think that a man who is leaving the office of preaching to a large congregation and *leaving the preaching office completely* would be entirely satisfied with that. To be sure, the preaching office in an especially large congregation is certainly difficult and demanding and grueling... It is also certain that the preaching office is an incredibly responsible office. It deals with the highest things of all: the honor of God and the salvation of man. He who has long held the preaching office conscientiously, with full recognition of his responsibility before God in a congregation with lots of people, has also worked honestly and uprightly, and has likely worn himself out. Nevertheless that preacher who has held his preaching office with fervor and love through long years, especially in one and the same congregation, certainly will not be entirely satisfied that he should leave the difficult and responsible preaching office. On the contrary, leaving will be exceedingly difficult for him even if weighty and irrefutable reasons have compelled him to do so. And so it is for me. And I think that it is proper at this time to say to you, dear congregation, in which for over 20 years I have held the holy, precious preaching office, that leaving is hard for me. ... It is certainly true that I am undertaking an office which has great importance. Indeed, I shall help both to prepare and equip young people whom Jesus may use some day as his servants and helpers. I also recognize this as a noble service. However, *I myself* will no longer be permitted to be at God's side in carrying out his gracious will as a servant in the same way as one who is in the preaching office. That makes my departure from the preaching office difficult for me. Now, the Lord of the church has ordained it in this way. I submit myself to his will...<sup>138</sup>

We believe that Hoenecke was mistaken in speaking in this way. In 2 Timothy 2:2, St. Paul indicates that one of the duties of public ministers of the Gospel is the training of *more* public ministers of the Gospel. The apostle writes to his young colleague Timothy: "...what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (ESV). In becoming a full-time teacher of theology in an ecclesiastical institution for the education of future pastors, Hoenecke was not, in fact, "leaving the preaching office completely," but he was entering *a specialized form of the preaching office*.

We would add, however, that Hoenecke does not speak in this way in the *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics* that he authored more than a decade later. In that work he does not address the ministerial character of a seminary professorship *per se*, but he does recognize the permissibility of the church's establishing of "grades of ministry"

as “a matter of freedom...according to the need and the advantage of the church.” He further acknowledges that such grades of ministry are “not offices alongside the preaching office,” but are “the very duties of the ministry of the Word and sacraments,” entrusted in specialized ways to certain individuals who thereby share in the fulfillment and performance of “the obligations and duties of one and the same ecclesiastical office or ministry of the Word.”<sup>139</sup>

And a seminary professorship, wherein a knowledgeable pastor is entrusted with the focused duty of instructing future pastors in the Word of God and Christian theology, is indeed to be seen as a special grade of ministry *within* the preaching office, and not as a completely separate and distinct office. In his description of the various “grades of ministers” in the church, Gerhard writes that, “beyond the ordinary shepherds of the churches, there are also teachers in the schools, to whom the specific care of a church has not been entrusted but who have the duty of interpreting Scripture, refuting corruptions, and handling heavenly doctrine methodically, so that those to whom this will one day be commanded might be formed for the ecclesiastical ministry and might be made ‘able both to exhort in sound doctrine and also to refute those who contradict it’ (Titus 1:9).”<sup>140</sup>

In defending the proposition that “the Office of the Public Ministry can be carried out in various forms,” Bjarne W. Teigen (of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod) begins with an affirmation of his own Confessional subscription – that he “accepts without equivocation the statement of the Apology, ‘The church has the command to appoint ministers; to this we must subscribe wholeheartedly, for we know that God approves this ministry and is present in it’ (Ap. XIII, 12).” He likewise affirms that “the Lord did set up an orderly way in which preaching and teaching was to take place. In other words, he set up the Office of the Public Ministry.” Teigen goes on to observe, however, that

there is nothing in Scripture to indicate that only the office of the local pastor is to be identified with the Office of the Public Ministry, and that other offices are merely “branchings off” from the local pastorate. It is, indeed, God’s will that Christians jointly use the Means of Grace, spread the Gospel, and exhort and help one another by admonition from the Law and exhortation from the Gospel (Col. 3:16; Luke 11:28; Heb. 10:25; Matt. 28:18-20), but there is no divine command for any visible or external form of the *ekklesia tou theou*. Generally the most common way of carrying out most of the functions of the public ministry is through what we call the local congregation and its pastor. But it is clear that the Office of the Public Ministry can be carried out in vari-

ous forms (Eph. 4:11f; I Cor. 12:28-30). There is the freedom here granted the church in I Corinthians 9:21-23. But this is not to say that freedom can be turned to license, or that other divine mandates of the Lord can be disregarded.<sup>141</sup>

In a parallel discussion of the doctrine of the Church, Teigen writes:

In the course of the history of Christianity, two theories regarding the church have developed; one we can conveniently call the macrocosmic theory and the other the microcosmic. The first is the Roman Catholic and Anglican way of thinking, which holds that the Holy Catholic Church is a visible society with an unbroken line of institutionalized officers, regulations, and powers. The other theory, which we could term "Congregational-Baptist," asserts that the church is the local and visible congregation, united by a voluntary covenant and completely autonomous. Thinking big, or macrocosmically, as also the general ecumenical movement seems to do, is to think of a great universal external church. Thinking small, or microcosmically, is to think of the church as a small external community, such as what we call a "local congregation." But neither one of these theories is open to Lutherans, and this for two reasons. First, every definition of the *ekklesia tou theou* in the Confessions declares that the church is comprised of those who have been grafted into Christ by faith but are hidden from man's sight and are known only to the Lord. Secondly, since the presence of the church can be known only by its pure marks, because the church is created only through the Gospel of God and not "any other gospel" (Gal. 1:18), it is recognized only by the "pure teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments in harmony with the Gospel of Christ" (Ap. VII, 2). God gathers His eternal church out of the human race through His Holy Word (SD II, 50). We can see where the church is only by the use of and adherence to the "pure marks," and such adherence occurs both in what we call local congregations and in larger ecclesiastical bodies. It is contrary to the Lutheran Confessions, therefore, to assert that a local congregation, or a regional church, or any other visible or external form, is the only divinely designated body or unit in the visible church.<sup>142</sup>

And Jacobs makes the following observations regarding the Ministry and polity of the Christian Church, both in the New Testament era, and in the centuries that have followed:

As in many other respects, so also in regard to the Christian Ministry, the New Testament lays down certain principles of universal and permanent validity, and refers the details of their application to the future determination of the Church, according to circumstances of time and place. Care must be taken to distinguish: *A.* between what is essential and what is accidental to the Ministry; and *B.* among accidentals, between those which are important and under certain circumstances, obligatory, and those which are unimportant and at all times free. The New Testament prescribes no completely established and fully developed form of Church organization, as the model and rule for all succeeding ages of the Church. The permanent functions of the Church are to preach the Gospel in its purity, and to administer the sacraments in accordance with their institution. The Church is charged with providing a ministry that, according to circumstances of time and place, shall, as its executive, discharge these functions. In the New Testament, we can trace the gradual development of Church institutions, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The chief passages in the New Testament bearing on the Ministry, are: *A. in general:* Matth. 10:40, 1 Cor. 4:1, Eph. 4:11, 1 Cor. 12:4,7,27,28; *B. Apostles:* Matth. 10, 1 Cor. 9:1, Acts 1:22, Rev. 21:14; *C. Bishops:* Acts 20:17,28, Phil. 1:1, 1 Tim. 3:1-7, Tit. 1:5-9 (cf. Rev. 2:1); *D. Elders:* Acts 14:23, 15:2-6,22,23, 16:4, 20:27, 1 Tim. 5:17, Tit. 1:5, James 5:14, 1 Pet. 10:1; *E. Rulers:* Rom. 12:8, 1 Thess. 5:12, 1 Tim. 5:17, Heb. 13:7; *F. Deacons:* Phil. 1:1, 1 Tim. 3:8-12; Rom. 16:1; *G. The Seven:* Acts 6:6. The continuance of this process of development in later periods of the Church is justified only insofar as it is characterized by fidelity to the pure preaching of the Word and the incorrupt administration of the sacraments. ... Advocates of various theories of Church Government in later periods of the Church are in error when they claim that they can find in the New Testament the completely developed form of government which they advocate. The New Testament always places unity in faith and doctrine above union in organization. The one faith and doctrine, extending throughout all time and intended for all men, reaches its end through a plasticity and flexibility of organization adapted to the varying circumstances, history and degrees of culture of those to whom it comes. Identity in form and regulations for the ministry, except as purity of Word and sacrament be affected, are secondary considerations.<sup>143</sup>

As we would expect, the Lutheran Confessions do not limit the ministry of a "spiritual father" in the Christian church to the office of a parish pastor. For example, the authors of the Formula of

Concord make this solemn declaration: "As far as our ministry is concerned, we will not look on passively or remain silent if anything contrary to this [Augsburg] confession is introduced into our churches and schools, in which the almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has placed us as teachers and shepherds."<sup>144</sup> One of the men who said this - David Chytraeus - was not, and never had been, the pastor of a congregation. The "ministry" into which God had "placed" him was a professorship of theology at the University of Rostock. But the Concordists collectively still considered Chytraeus to be an incumbent, by divine vocation, of the same basic office that was held by the other Concordists, who either had been, or still were, parish pastors.

It should not surprise us that they would have felt this way about Chytraeus's ministry and call, since this had also been Luther's conviction regarding his own ministry as a doctor of the church. Luther had identified his "doctor's degree" as his divine "call and commission" to undertake the reformatory work in which he was engaged. He added that "God and the whole world bears me testimony that I entered into this work publicly and by virtue of my office as teacher and preacher, and have carried it on hitherto by the grace and help of God."<sup>145</sup> In the context he was speaking specifically of his doctoral degree and theological professorship in the University of Wittenberg, and not of his congregational ministry in the parish of Wittenberg.

And let us also remember what the Augsburg Confession declares regarding the flexibility that is allowed to the church, in giving specific vocational shape to the ministry of a particular pastor or preacher, in accordance with the church's external needs and circumstances, and in accordance with the gifts and abilities of that pastor or preacher. Again, according to the Augustana, the power of the bishops is exercised "by teaching or preaching the gospel and by administering the sacraments *either to many or to individuals, depending on one's calling.*" And so, a minister of Word and Sacrament could be called to work with "many persons," as was the case with a typical parish pastor; or with "individuals," as was the case with someone like Luther's friend George Spalatin, who served as court chaplain for the Saxon Elector Frederick the Wise.

And even within a parish setting, at the time of the Reformation the "presiding" ministry of Word and Sacrament was often carried out by several different men, who were called to various external configurations of the office of spiritual oversight. In the Longer Preface to his Large Catechism, for example, Luther employs the technical terminology of the day when he speaks of both "pastors"

(parish rectors) and “preachers.” These terms are not synonymous. Rather, they refer to what we today might describe as senior pastors and associate pastors. Theodore G. Tappert explains that “Preachers (*Prediger*) were limited to preaching; pastors (*Pfarrherren*) exercised the full ministerial office.”<sup>146</sup>

“Deacons” in the Lutheran sense – or “chaplains,” as they were also called – occupied the “third tier” of pastoral ministry in a Reformation-era parish.<sup>147</sup> The term “deacon” was often used by the Lutherans to refer to what we would probably describe today as an “assistant pastor.” Such pastoral “deacons” were authorized to preach and administer the sacraments, under the direction of the parish rector or senior pastor. So, they were not the same as the “deacons” of the ancient church – as mentioned in the Treatise’s quotation from Jerome – who were *not* pastors, but who only *assisted* the pastors in carrying out, on a *limited* scale, certain liturgical and spiritual duties. It is therefore in the later *Lutheran* sense of the term “deacon” that the German version of the Apology says that the church has a divine mandate to appoint “preachers and deacons” for the administration of the Word and the Sacraments.<sup>148</sup> Walther also observes that

The so-called Deacons and Lay Elders of the apostles’ time were...in no way preachers and overseers of souls. They were rather only their helpers for functions of the preaching office which do not make up the essence of the office. Indeed, their functions too were commanded by God. But that these should be carried out only by particular people in an office is not based on God’s express command. Their office as a special and separate office from the preaching office was also not a divine order and institution but rather an office ordered by the church (*kirchlicher Ordnung*). ...A Deacon in the *biblical* sense is a man who only has a helping office to the ministry of the Word according to human arrangement. But a Deacon who is called to the preaching of the Word of God, as happens in the Lutheran Church, does not attend a helping office, but rather the highest office in Christendom. He is nothing else and nothing less than what the Scripture calls a pastor, Presbyter (elder), or Bishop. He has the same authority and rank of office and the same jurisdiction, and the deacons in the biblical sense are also their servants.<sup>149</sup>

We have already examined the Treatise’s discussion of bishops and presbyters in the ancient church. They were all pastors, who held the same essential office “by divine right,” even though the bishops alone, by *human* right, were entrusted with the special duty of ordaining new pastors and of exercising other supervisory responsi-



bilities among the other pastors.<sup>150</sup> This kind of specialized episcopal ministry was retained among the Lutherans in the sixteenth century and later. Those who served in such a capacity were usually called “superintendents,” but in some locations (especially in Scandinavia) they were still known by the traditional title, as “bishops.”

While on a speaking tour in Norway in 1867, Herman Amberg Preus gave this description of the office of president in his church body in America, the (old) Norwegian Synod:

The Synod’s president, *whose office is in essence that of a bishop*, is charged with carrying out annual visitations, ordaining pastors, presiding at meetings of the Synod, looking after matters prepared for deposition at these meetings, reporting to the Synod on his own activities and those of the Synod as well as on the state of the church body as a whole. Since as a rule the church council assembles only a few times a year, he must in many instances act on behalf of the church council, exercising supervision over the church body as a whole and seeking its welfare in every respect. Although ecclesiastical government so-called in our church body is substantially different from that here in Norway, there is a resemblance in the way it specifically distributes authority and offices.<sup>151</sup>

Preus himself held the office of president of the Norwegian Synod, by recurring election, from 1862 until his death in 1894. In regard to the “church council” that is mentioned in this quotation, Preus also wrote:

The church council, in which the president occupies the chair, is charged with seeing to the execution of the decisions of the Synod. In the interims between meetings it works to promote the Synod’s goals and the interests of the church body. To this end it stands watch over purity of doctrine and the development of the Christian life, it examines candidates, it mediates disputes, and as necessary it provisionally suspends pastors from the privileges of membership in the Synod.<sup>152</sup>

Sasse reminds us of the essentially pastoral character of the ministry of a Lutheran superintendent or bishop, when he explains that

A bishop may be entrusted with the task of seeing to the running of a great diocese. But the meaning of such an assignment can only consist in this, that he thereby gives room and support to the church’s ministry. *His actual office is the office of a pastor, also*

*when he is a pastor for pastors.* By human arrangement he may have the work of superintendency. By divine mandate he has solely the office of preaching the forgiveness and justification of sinners for Christ's sake.<sup>153</sup>

In the American Lutheran context, until the twentieth century, most presidents of synods (or of synodical districts) served simultaneously also as the pastor of a congregation, or in some other office that involved the regular preaching and teaching of God's Word to a gathering of Christians. Today, however, a synodical or district presidency is often a "stand alone" office, and not a part-time office appended to another office of pastoral ministry. But if the duties of such full-time presidents still include at least one of the defining duties of the divinely-given ministry of spiritual oversight, then such presidents are still to be thought of as pastors of the church, with a specialized and narrowly-focused pastoral vocation. And even when a bishop or synodical president is also a parish pastor, his responsibility to function as "a pastor for pastors" does not have its vocational basis in his parish call, since the brother pastors whom he serves in this way are not members of his congregation.

If a synodical president is authorized to supervise doctrine among the other pastors of his synod, he is thereby authorized to carry out a specialized form of *teaching* doctrine. Even if he deals with only one congregational pastor at a time – in encouraging a faithful pastor in sound teaching and practice, or in correcting a weak or erring pastor – the synodical president himself is thereby performing a distinctly pastoral duty in that encouragement or correction. In this respect we recall the way in which the Augsburg Confession acknowledges that the power of bishops or pastors, which is exercised in "teaching or preaching the gospel," can be exercised in regard "to many or to individuals, depending on one's calling."

We are reminded as well of the way in which the better Lutheran superintendents and bishops of the sixteenth century exercised their office among the parish pastors whose ministries they oversaw. Chemnitz's well-known *Enchiridion* was prepared as a guide for the examination, and pastoral instruction, of *pastors*. It was expected that such "examinations be held not only when someone is to be accepted and received into the church ministry, but that the superintendents twice a year examine the pastors assigned to their supervision, so that it might at one and the same time be an indoctrination and instruction regarding the basis and true meaning of the pure doctrine, and how less-learned pastors might arrange their studies, guard against false doctrine, and set the doctrine before their hearers in plain and simple terms, so that through such examinations

the whole church, both preachers and hearers, might be edified under divine blessing with great profit and benefit.”<sup>154</sup>

This also means, of course, that a synodical or district president today should conduct himself within his office in accordance with appropriate *pastoral* standards of behavior, and should not fulfill his duties in an exclusively *bureaucratic* fashion. To quote Sasse, he should indeed see himself to be functioning as “a pastor for pastors.” By human right, according to the administrative duties of his office, a synodical president may be above the other pastors. But by divine right, as a fellow servant of the church and as a fellow teacher of God’s Word, he is their equal: “In 1 Corinthians 3[:4-8, 21-22] Paul regards all ministers as equals and teaches that the church is superior to its ministers.”<sup>155</sup>

According to the Treatise, the ministry of spiritual oversight and spiritual fatherhood that God entrusts to those who have a presiding ministry in the church is defined by “the commission to proclaim the gospel, forgive sins, and administer the sacraments,” and by “the charge to excommunicate those whose crimes are public knowledge and to absolve those who repent.” Also according to the Treatise, “this power is shared *by divine right* by all who preside in the churches, whether they are called pastors, presbyters, or bishops.” If a man is called to carry out one or all of these essential duties of pastoral oversight among God’s people, that man is thereby called to be a “spiritual father” – regardless of the nomenclature that may be attached to his particular station or office, and regardless of the external configuration and unique specifications of his particular station or office.

Many of these men – such as parish rectors or senior pastors in a congregation – are called to a comprehensive and general form of pastoral ministry. Some of these men – such as theological professors – are called to a focused and specialized form of pastoral ministry. But *by divine right* they are all essentially serving in the same indispensable, God-given office – the office of governing and guiding the church by the Word of God. They are all counted among our “spiritual fathers” in the sense in which that term is used in the Large Catechism.

A statement on the doctrine of the Ministry that was adopted by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in 2005 affirms that

The church is free to divide the labors of the pastoral office among qualified men (1 Corinthians 1:17, 1 Corinthians 12:4-6). While every incumbent of this office must be qualified for a full use of the keys, not every incumbent must be responsible for full use of the keys. Missionary, assistant pastor, professor of the-

ology, synod president (who supervises doctrine in the church), and chaplain are some examples of this. We reject the teaching that the Public Ministry of the Word is limited to the ministry of a parish pastor.

The statement also notes that

The term “pastoral office” has been used historically according to a more restrictive meaning (referring only to those men who are called to the pastorate of a local congregation), and according to a less restrictive meaning (referring to all those men who are called to a ministry of pastoral oversight in local congregations, as well as in other specialized fields of labor). In this document the term is being used according to its less restrictive meaning.<sup>156</sup>

With this “less restrictive” definition of the “pastoral office” in mind, John A. Moldstad, in commenting on the synodical statement, acknowledges that “God has willed or commanded such an oversight office for the welfare of his church.” This is in contrast to those “limited” offices that the church, “in her freedom, may establish.” God “allows offices that have a limited public use of the Means of Grace,” but “God has *not* specifically *commanded* his church to employ limited-usage-of-the-keys offices.” God has “willed or commanded” the “use-of-the-Word” *duties* of such limited offices, but it is only “by human right that the church separates a limited portion of the office (Public Ministry) to one individual” in its *establishing* of such offices.<sup>157</sup> These explanations are very similar to the explanations of E. W. Kaehler, who said that, while “the offices of the rulers, elders, assistants to the poor, the school teachers, sacristans, and cantors in our congregations” do not “involve the conducting of the preaching office in the narrow sense,” they are nevertheless “to be considered as holy ecclesiastical offices,” since they “bear a part of the office of the church and stand at the side of the office of the church *κατ’ ἐξοχην*, the preaching office.”<sup>158</sup>

Returning to our discussion of the pastoral office, when a man is called to a specialized form of this office, and is authorized by human right to carry out only one of the defining duties of pastoral care, implicit in such a call is a recognition of a basic *competency* (and availability) to be called to exercise any or all of the other defining duties of pastoral care. And that is because all of these defining duties of the fatherly office, *by divine right*, stand together. Christ’s Word and Sacraments necessarily stand together as the interdependent “marks” of his New Testament ministry, even as they necessarily stand together as the interdependent “marks” of his New Testament

church.

Luther states in his treatise on “Infiltrating and Clandestine Preachers” that “to the pastor is committed the pulpit, baptism, the sacrament [of the altar], and he is charged with the care of souls.” Luther is accordingly very critical of self-appointed sneak-preachers who seek to alienate the people of a parish from their legitimate pastor, and who are therefore guilty of “robbing the pastor (indeed God himself) of his ministry, baptism, sacrament of the altar, the care of souls, and his parishioners. Thus they destroy and bring to naught the parish system (*ordained of God*).”<sup>159</sup> Luther elsewhere describes the organic unity and complementarity of the means of grace in the life of the church, and in the life of a Christian:

In the first place, we have Baptism itself, which is adorned with the most important and pleasing promise that we shall be saved if we believe. But because in this weakness of ours it is very easy for us to fall, there have been added to Baptism the Keys or the ministry of the Word – *for these must not be separated* – which in itself is also a visible sign of grace bound to the Word of the Gospel in accordance with Christ’s institution (Matt. 18:18): “Whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” When you take hold of this Word in faith, you will be restored to grace, and the life which was lost through sin is given back. The same thing takes place in the use of the Holy Eucharist, for the words (Matt. 26:26-27) “My body given for you, My blood shed for the remission of your sins” are certainly not without meaning; they admirably strengthen the hope of the remission of sins.<sup>160</sup>

Kaehler is very clear and systematic in his explanation of these matters. He writes:

Ordinarily the congregation, which has the right of calling, is not only bound to the preaching office until the Last Day, but also may not mutilate it; that is, she must establish all its essential parts together. ... The congregation can establish grades (*ταξίς ταγματά*) of the one office of the word; that is, they can arrange matters so that this person cares for one part of the office of the word and that person cares for another part. This is done, however, only *de iure humano*. If we hold fast to the principle...that all essential parts of the office must be established by the congregation, we are led to the question: Is the congregation duty bound to have all parts of the office administered together by one person? The answer...is no. ... If the congregation commits an essential part of the preaching office [to someone] they commit it in its entirety *virtualiter* [virtually], with the provision to care

only for the designated part. (The one called to a part of the ministry, however, does not have the right to take over the part of another without a further call.) ... In other words, preaching is the audible word; the holy sacraments are the visible word, that is, a visible preaching of the gospel; all church discipline, if we might say it this way, is the tangible word, that is, a manifest use of the law or gospel. All these parts that the preaching office administers differ neither in origin nor in use. They all flow from the word and have in mind the salvation of men. Therefore nothing else is possible than that the entire word belongs to each function of the office. What does the congregation commit to him who, for example, is only to baptize? Without doubt it is the keys to which baptism belongs. With these keys, which he administers according to divine order in the name of the congregation, he opens heaven and the treasures of God's grace to a particular part of the congregation. But he who only preaches does this same thing. ... Even though he is only bound to administer one part of this office, still *virtualiter* he is qualified for the administration of the other parts.<sup>161</sup>

In speaking of this Ecclesiastical Ministry – that is, the Ministry of spiritual oversight in Word and Sacrament – Sasse observes that

there is only *one ministerium ecclesiasticum*. To be sure, as the Augustana presupposes and the Apology expressly acknowledges [Ap XIV], there are levels in the church (*gradus in ecclesia*), grades [*Stufen*] of the office. There are pastors, superintendents, bishops, and archbishops. ... But these grades are not established by Christ. Wherever they have been set up they are always a human ordinance, by human right (*de jure humano*), not by divine right (*de jure divino*) as is the *ministerium ecclesiasticum* itself. For the sake of order the *ministerium* may be divided, but it always essentially remains one and the same office.<sup>162</sup>

Luther's statement in his treatise on "Infiltrating and clandestine Preachers" concerning "the parish system" being "ordained of God" should not be understood as advocating the notion that God has mandated for his church a certain divinely-instituted *external structure or polity* for the full ministry of Word and Sacrament. Rather, Luther is there referring to the divine institution of that full ministry of Word and Sacrament *itself*. Elsewhere, Luther explains that "the natural, real, true, and essential Christendom exists in the Spirit and not in any external thing." He acknowledges, of course, that very often "Christendom is called an assembly in a house, or in a parish, a bishopric, an archbishopric, or a papacy," and that "Canon and hu-

man laws do call such externals ‘church’ or ‘Christendom.’” But according to Luther,

There is not a single letter in Holy Scripture saying that such a church, where it is by itself, is instituted by God. ... Therefore, for the sake of better understanding and brevity, we shall call the two churches by two distinct names. The first, which is natural, basic, essential, and true, we shall call “spiritual, internal Christendom.” The second, which is man-made and external, we shall call “physical, external Christendom.” Not that we want to separate them from each other; rather, it is just as if I were talking about a man and called him “spiritual” according to his soul, and “physical” according to his body...<sup>163</sup>

In addressing this issue early in the twentieth century, Ulrik Vilhelm Koren of the (old) Norwegian Synod affirmed the universal Christian conviction that the church of Jesus Christ is indeed “God’s institution.” But he then added:

God has not, however, instituted the local congregation. That which God has instituted is that which stands in the Third Article [of the Creed], that we believe “one holy, universal Christian Church.” ... Now it is God’s will that all Christians should belong to a local congregation. That there are local congregations is because of circumstances, such as language, locality, and other factors. ... Concerning the external reality one confesses the local congregation as an *appearance* of the holy, universal Christian Church. ... *Where the Means of Grace are used so that the soul can be freed, that is an appearance of the holy, universal Christian Church.* That they who separate [from the Means of Grace] are condemned, that we see from God’s Word.<sup>164</sup>

In accordance with this kind of evangelical ecclesiology, Luther on other occasions makes statements such as these:

A church is a group or assembly of baptized and believers under one shepherd [*Pastor, Pfarher oder Bisschoff*], whether of one city, or of an entire country, or of the whole world.<sup>165</sup>

For the Word is preached and the sacraments administered everywhere; and wherever these are properly observed, whether it be in a ship on the sea, or in a house on land, there is God’s house, or the Church, and there God should be sought and found.<sup>166</sup>

This is the definition of the church in its essence: “The church is the place or the people where God dwells for the purpose of bringing us into the kingdom of heaven, for it is the gate of heaven.” ... This, then, is the complete definition of the church, which is the habitation of God on earth. Not that we should remain on earth, but the sacraments are administered and the Word is taught in order that we may be led into the kingdom of heaven and through the church may enter into heaven. ... The place of the church is in the temple, in the school, in the house, and in the bedchamber. Wherever two or three gather in the name of Christ, there God dwells (cf. Matt. 18:20).<sup>167</sup>

These statements obviously shed important light on what Luther meant, and did not mean, when he spoke of the divinely-ordained “parish system.”

Some have suggested that the Lord’s words in Matthew 18:17, “tell it to the church,” constitute a special divine institution specifically of the local congregation. But the Large Catechism’s exegesis of this passage does not reach such a conclusion. We read there that

the authorities, fathers and mothers, and even brothers and sisters and other good friends are under a mutual obligation to reprove evil wherever it is necessary and helpful. But the right way to deal with this matter would be to follow the rule laid down by the gospel, Matthew 18, where Christ says, “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone” [v. 15]. ... As Christ also says in the same passage: “If he listens to you, you have gained your brother” [v. 15]. There you will have done a great and excellent deed. For do you think that it is an insignificant thing to gain a brother? ... Christ teaches further: “But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses” [v. 16]. Thus the people involved are to be dealt with directly and not gossiped about behind their backs. If this does not help, *bring the matter publicly before the community* [v. 17], *either before the civil or the ecclesiastical court*. Here you are not standing alone, but you have those witnesses with you through whom you can prove the accused’s guilt and on whose testimony the judge can base the decision and pass sentence. This is the right and proper way of dealing with and improving a wicked person.<sup>168</sup>

Neither should we forget the Treatise’s admonition to “the most eminent members of the church, the kings and princes,” that since “*judgments of the councils [synods] are judgments of the church, not of the pon-*



tiffs, it is wholly appropriate that rulers restrain the wantonness of the pontiffs and ensure that the power to examine and to make judgments according to the Word of God is not snatched away from the church.”<sup>169</sup>

Sasse explains how the principles of Lutheran ecclesiology apply themselves to such questions, when he writes that

with the power of the keys (*potestas clavium*) the church is also given the right and the task to confer [*übertragen*] the “ministry of teaching the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments” (*ministerium docendi evangelii et porrigendi sacramenta* [AC V 1]), that is, to call men to the preaching office to carry out the task given it by Christ to proclaim the Gospel. By *church* is always meant here the one inseparable church which is the body of Christ. But this church never appears in our space-time world and in this sinful humanity in its totality, and never in full purity. We perceive its presence in faith in our historical, empirical churchdoms in the pure preaching of the Gospel and in the correct administration of the Sacraments. Wherever we may say in faith “Here is the church of Christ,” there we may also assert, “Here is the ecclesiastical authority which Christ has given his church – the right and duty to install pastors, for preaching and absolution, for administration of the Sacraments, for the orderly establishment of the Divine Service, and so on.” The church of Christ can be and is present where “two or three are gathered” in his name (Matt 18:20). It can manifest itself as the local congregation or in a group of congregations or even in a territorial church. It is completely false always to immediately apply what our confessions say of the congregation [*Gemeinde*], the *congregatio sanctorum*, to the local congregation. Those “called saints” in Rome [Rom 1:7] at the time of Paul apparently only very rarely came together all in one place. And the introduction to the Letters to the Corinthians testify that already at that time “all the saints throughout Achaia” belonged to the “church of God in Corinth” [2 Cor 1:1]. But in whichever form the church appears, where it really is present, there is ecclesiastical authority.<sup>170</sup>

Lutherans do nevertheless recognize the fundamental importance of local congregations. Armin W. Schuetze expresses this truth when he writes that

God does indeed command Christians to assemble. This is inherent in the command to teach and preach the gospel and to administer the sacraments. The early Christians recognized this (Acts 2:42). When some withdrew from their assemblies, they

were admonished: "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing" (Hebrews 10:25). Christians need the encouragement they can give one another. They need to "spur one another on toward love and good deeds" (v. 24). This requires first of all some kind of local gatherings. Christians must gather at some particular place where they will regularly hear God's Word and receive the sacraments; where they are encouraged, admonished, and edified; where church discipline can be carried out according to Matthew 18. We call these primary gatherings local congregations.<sup>171</sup>

Following through on these thoughts, we observe furthermore, with Jacobs, that

In Matt. 18:18-20, the Power of the Keys is said to exist wherever "two or three are gathered together in my name." Wherever, then, there is a Christian congregation, there is authority to communicate to penitent and believing individuals the Gospel promise of the gratuitous forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake. ... The authority delegated by Christ rests ultimately in any congregation of two or three believers. Such assembly, as the Spirit of Christ influences it, will act with reference to the interests of the entire Church, and according to a fixed order. But it is never to be forgotten, that all the power of the Church exists in its smallest congregation, and is not derived by the local assemblies, through larger Particular Churches, and by Particular Churches from the Church Universal, and by the Church Universal from Christ. The New Testament conception of Christ, dwelling in the heart of the believer, and making him a king and priest unto God, does not provide for a long and complicated series of agencies whereby we may reach Christ and Christ may reach us.<sup>172</sup>



## 8.

***“Teaching...to which every church member has access and which is meant for all”***

As we consider the various contexts in which God’s Word might come to us and impact us, we could say that the Word of God *in general* is very *fluid and flexible*, and applies itself in various ways to all aspects of the life of a Christian: in the home, in the larger society, and in the church. God’s Word may be taught to people in various settings, and at varying levels: by catechists in church-sponsored courses of instruction, by religion teachers in church-related schools, or by fathers and mothers in their family circle. Luther writes to Christian parents:

Every father of a family is a bishop in his house and the wife a bishopess. Therefore remember that you in your homes are to help us carry on the ministry [*Predigtamt*] as we do in the church. If we do this we shall have a gracious God, who will defend us from all evil and in all evil. In the Ps. [78:5-8] it is written: “He appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments; and that they should not be like their fathers.”<sup>173</sup>

It is not necessary that God’s Word be taught, always and at every level, only by the church’s pastors.

We would observe as well that while most sections of the New Testament are indeed addressed to all Christians without differentiation, some sections of the New Testament are explicitly addressed only to certain groups within the larger church, such as wives, husbands, children, fathers, slaves, and masters. (See, for example, Ephesians 5:22-6:9 and 1 Peter 2:18-3:7.) When God’s Word is taught under the auspices of a congregation, or within a congregation, it is not necessary, therefore, that it be taught only to the congregation *as a whole*, or only in ways that are intended to be heard by all categories of people within the church. As a supplement to the nor-

mal liturgical gatherings of the congregation, God's Word may be taught in specialized settings, or to specialized groups within the larger church, such as in classes or Bible studies that are designated for adults only, for children only, for men only, or for women only. In settings that are outside the context of public congregational worship, and that involve children or other women, Luther even says that

A woman can do this. Not preach in public, but console people and teach. A woman can do this just as much as a man. There are certainly women and girls who are able to comfort others and teach true words, that is, who can explain Scripture and teach or console other people so that they will be well. ... In the same way, a mother should teach her children and family, because she has been given the true words of the Holy Spirit and understands...<sup>174</sup>

Francis Pieper expresses himself in a similar way when he writes that

It is the clear teaching of Holy Scripture that Christian women should also teach God's Word. According to Titus 2,3,4 the aged women should teach the young women. St. Paul declares of Timothy that he knew the Holy Scriptures from childhood because his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois had faithfully instructed him, 2 Tim. 1,5. For this reason Luther demanded that Christian schools be taught not only by men, but also by women (St. L. Ed., X,477.459.). However, while all this is very true, Holy Scripture excludes Christian women from all public teaching in the presence of men. ... Even in our own circles the question has often been raised as to whether women and girls may teach in our Christian day-schools. Our answer is that they certainly may do so, provided they are to teach children; for woman dare not in any case be barred from instructing children. But if religious instruction is to be given to grown men or even to adolescents, she cannot be permitted to teach. ...we cannot countenance the objection that in many cases women are much more eloquent and more fluent talkers than men. We concede this; God, too, of course knows it; and yet He gave the unmistakable command: "Let your women keep silence in the churches," 1 Cor. 14,34, and again: "But I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve," 1 Tim. 2,12.13.<sup>175</sup>

The Wisconsin Synod's William Henkel concurs that

God does not want woman to hold the public office of teaching in the church. But perhaps another will object: If that is so, then we are already going contrary to the will of God. We permit women to teach in the school. We appoint, yes, train women teachers. ... If now women may teach in the school, why not also in the church? Whoever asks thus, first of all disregards that not all teaching, but only public teaching, is denied to women. But isn't teaching in school public? That is not worth arguing about. When I speak...about public teaching, I understand by this a teaching by the commission of the congregation, to which every church member has access and which is meant for all. Teaching in school is meant for only one class of church members, for the children. He who makes the above objection forgets the reasons why Paul forbids women to teach. Woman is not to teach publicly because one who teaches is recognized as a person of authority. The Bible says, Hebrews 13:17: "Obey them that have the rule over you (Luther: teachers), and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." Such teaching would give woman authority over man, whereas she is to be subject. But by teaching in school she does not exercise any authority over man but only over children. ... There religious instruction has to do primarily with imparting the facts of salvation and teaching the catechism and therefore is not to be thought of as independent, authoritative instruction.<sup>176</sup>

But these various ways of teaching the Word of God *in general*, in diverse settings and formats, are not to be equated with the administration of the sacraments *in particular*. The Word of God in general is indeed very fluid and flexible in its many applications and modes of presentation. But the sacraments in particular are *specific concretizations* of the Word of God, which apply themselves precisely to the church *as the church*.

The Large Catechism notes accordingly that through the sacrament of Baptism "we are initially received into the Christian community."<sup>177</sup> Even when it is administered in a private setting, Baptism always has the whole church in view, since the Holy Spirit, through this sacrament, unites the person being baptized to the "one body" of Christ: "For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and all were made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:13, ESV).

The Lord's Supper, too - in the words of the Smalcald Articles - is "the common sacrament of the church," which is not to be played with "apart from God's Word and outside the church community."<sup>178</sup> And this is why we confess in the Large Catechism that

“the whole gospel and the article of the Creed, ‘I believe in one holy Christian church...the forgiveness of sins,’ are embodied in this sacrament and offered to us through the Word”<sup>179</sup> – that is, through the instituting and consecrating Word of Christ. The Lord’s Supper is therefore also a sacrament of and for the “one body” of Christ: “Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread” (1 Corinthians 10:17, ESV). Whenever the Lord’s Supper is celebrated, it is *in principle* available to any and all prepared communicants of the Lord’s church – regardless of ethnicity, social status, or gender:

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:27-28, ESV)

Jesus did not institute a special Lord’s Supper for Jews and another one for Greeks; he did not institute a special Lord’s Supper for slaves and another one for those who are free; and he did not institute a special Lord’s Supper for males and another one for females. There is, rather, *only one Lord’s Supper*. And this one Lord’s Supper should be celebrated among God’s people in such a way that it could, in principle, be received by everyone for whom it is intended – that is, by any and all properly-prepared communicants.

The range of possible external settings within which the sacrament could conceivably be administered would, of course, include situations in which people of only one ethnicity, only one social status, or only one gender may be present on that particular occasion. But we are not speaking here of the external circumstances of the sacrament’s administration at a particular time and place. We are speaking of the ecclesial character of *the sacrament itself*, as Jesus instituted it for his baptized and instructed disciples of all times and places. We are speaking of what *the Lord’s Supper itself* actually is, whenever and wherever it is celebrated: whether for a congregation of several hundred people, or for one shut-in.

Luther has reminded us that, according to the unabrogated and unchanging “ordinance and creation of God,” a woman “shall be subject to man” in such churchly matters. This also means, of course, that a man shall *not* be subject to *woman* in such churchly matters. And so, for the Lord’s Supper to remain as a sacrament that is, in principle, available to *all* eligible communicants – both women *and* men – the officiant who presides at any given celebration of the sacrament, and who thereby exercises pastoral authority over those who commune, is, according to the divine order, to be “a competent and

chosen man.”

It would be contrary to the divine order also for a woman to be called to administer the Lord’s Supper in an *incidental* gathering of women only, in which no men happen to be present; or in a *contrived* gathering of women only, from which all men have been deliberately excluded or segregated out – even though a woman would not be exercising pastoral authority over male communicants in such a situation. To borrow some terminology from Henkel, this sort of thing would still be a disorderly arrangement, because the administration of the Lord’s Supper is a quintessentially “public” function of the church, carried out “by the commission of the congregation, to which every church member has access and which is meant for all.” It is, in its very nature, never “meant for only one class of church members.” Yet the very act of a woman celebrating the Lord’s Supper would, in itself, be an act of *denying* access to that celebration of the sacrament to all men, *simply because they are men*.

When the sacramental celebrant, by dominical mandate, chants or speaks the Words of Institution aloud, these words are, among other things, Christ’s invitation to any and all properly-prepared communicants to receive the body and blood of their Savior for the forgiveness of their sins.<sup>180</sup> But from the point of view of the order of creation, appointing a woman to be the celebrant would be incongruous with this evangelical truth. In some ways it would be like the Roman practice of withholding the cup from the laity. According to that practice the cup was withheld from lay communicants even though clergy communicants were permitted to receive it. The message was basically this: Sometimes the blood of Christ is for a communicant (when the communicant is a priest), but sometimes it is not (when the communicant is a layman). The Lutherans of the sixteenth century rightly rejected this distortion of Christ’s Supper. But a similar distortion would be imposed onto Christ’s Supper if women are, under certain circumstances, authorized to administer it. Then the message would basically be this: Sometimes the body and blood of Christ are for male communicants (when the celebrant is a man), but sometimes they are not (when the celebrant is a woman). The Lutherans of today should reject this distortion as well. Neither of these basic messages is in harmony with the Lord’s institution.

The body of Christ and the blood of Christ are always for both clergy and laity, and they are always for both men and women. In his First Epistle to the Corinthians,

Paul says that he had received of the Lord that he was to give the ordinance and command regarding the use of both kinds *not only to priests but to the whole church of God, men and women alike*, 1 Co

11:23. What is more, he wrote that epistle not only to the Corinthians, but to all that in every place call upon the name of the Lord, 1 Co 1:2. This is the true and sound explanation which Christ wants understood when He says: "All of you eat [and] drink of this."<sup>181</sup>

Luther writes that for potential communicants who are otherwise prepared to receive the sacrament of their Savior's body and blood, "the question of whether you are male or female, young or old, need not be argued."<sup>182</sup> If, however, the sacrament would sometimes be administered by a woman, then – from the point of view of the order of creation – potential communicants on such occasions would indeed need to be concerned about the question of whether they are "male or female."

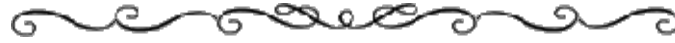
In a document entitled "Women in the Public Ministry," prepared in 2001 by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Doctrine Committee, it is noted that

Women participated in the work of the New Testament church (Romans 16). Some form of the deaconess office seems to be present already in the lifetime of St. Paul. Phoebe is called a *diakonos* in Romans 16:1. Concerning the "older women" who were probably teaching deaconesses, St. Paul writes, "The older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to wine, *teachers of good things*" (Titus 2:3). I Timothy 3:11 may also speak of the qualifications of such teaching deaconesses.

It is, however, also noted in this document that women

are not to be in the pastoral office, because here they would be in a teaching position in which they would have authority over men. Also, when St. Paul refers to the one who officiates at the Word and Sacrament liturgy, he speaks in male terms. He is to be the husband of one wife (I Timothy 3:2). Women will not read the lessons in the liturgy, preach the sermon in worship services, or distribute Communion, either publicly or privately, for these things are intimately related to the pastoral office (I Corinthians 14:34-35; I Timothy 2:11-15; I Timothy 3:1-2; LW 30:55; LW 40:390-391).<sup>183</sup>





## 9.

*“The order yields to the need...in an emergency”*

The Lutheran Church does teach that in the case of a pastoral *emergency*, when a necessary public ministration of the means of grace cannot be carried out by a regular public minister, the normal arrangement is temporarily suspended, and “the order yields to the need.” A conscience’s need for the hope and comfort of the Gospel is always paramount. Therefore, the ecclesiastical “order” of vocation, and (if need be) the “order” of creation, properly “yield” in a situation where an inflexible adherence to these divine orders would result in a harmful silencing and deprivation of that Gospel. With reference to examples from both the Old and New Testaments, Gerhard teaches:

Assuming that there is no regular minister of the Word, the administration of Baptism should still not be omitted, since for the essence of Baptism it is not at all required that he who administers this sacrament should be a minister of the church; therefore, in this case the order yields to the need. ... Circumcision was commanded to Abraham (Gen. 17:11), who was a prophet of the Lord (Gen. 20:7), and from this we conclude that very probably the administration of this sacrament, together with other functions of the ecclesiastical office, was later transferred to the Levitical priesthood. There can be no doubt that this sacrament ordinarily was administered by men. But since in an emergency more consideration was given there to the sacrament than to the order, the same must be observed regarding Baptism...

(The “emergency” circumcision that Gerhard has in mind is the circumcision that Moses’ wife Zipporah performed on their son, as described in Exodus 4:25.) According to Gerhard, this principle applies also to “absolution, which any layman may announce to a dying person from the Gospel, ...when no regular minister of the Word can be obtained.” And Gerhard similarly concedes that

Laymen act properly when they instruct or comfort a congregation that is without a regular shepherd, or sick people, or those who in any way are afflicted, as in times of a siege, pestilence,

persecution, etc. Here belong in a certain way also the examples of the prophetesses in the Old Testament, such as Deborah (Judg. 4), Huldah (2 Kings 22:14), Anna (Luke 2:36), as well as Priscilla, whom Paul calls his helper (Rom. 16:3), and who expounded to Apollos the way of God more perfectly (Acts 18:26), and Lois and Eunice, who taught their grandson and son Timothy from a child the Holy Scriptures (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15).<sup>184</sup>

Gerhard's position was in agreement with the teaching of earlier Lutheran theologians. Jacob Andreae had also stated that

in time of need, especially when a man is in his final struggle and lies near death and there is no servant of the church or other man present, then *a pious woman is allowed to comfort the dying man with the preaching of God's Word and the divine promises and to absolve him of all his sins* (For what is the preaching of the Gospel and the announcing of the promise of divine grace offered in Christ, other than an absolution from sin?). ... So in a similar way, in time of emergency, when a church servant or other man is not present, *a woman is allowed to baptize*.<sup>185</sup>

In regard to the possibility of an emergency administration of *the Sacrament of the Altar*, however – which could conceivably involve a woman celebrant – Walther observes, in his *American Lutheran Pastoral Theology*, that

The great majority of our theologians, Luther in the forefront, believe that the holy Supper should never be administered privately by one who is not in the public preaching office, by a layman. That is partly because no such necessity can occur with the holy Supper, as with Baptism and Absolution, that would justify a departure from God's ordinance (1 Cor. 4:1; Rom. 10:15; Heb. 5:4); partly because the holy Supper "is a public confession and so should have a public minister"; partly because schisms can easily be brought about by such private Communion.<sup>186</sup>

Walther nevertheless does make use of a quotation from the sixteenth-century Lutheran theologian Tilemann Heshusius, who taught that

In a case of necessity, since one cannot have regularly called servants of the church, there is no doubt that every Christian has the authority from God's Word and is authorized according to Christian love to carry out the service of the church with the proclamation of God's Word and the administration of the Sac-

raments. ... But here we are speaking of that case of necessity when one cannot have true Christian and upright servants of the church and what is then up to a Christian. As if some Christians are at a place where there are no called pastors [*Seelsorger*]; if some Christians were in prison for the sake of the truth or were in danger on the sea; or if some Christians were under the Turks or the Papacy where there were no correct pastors; if some Christians were under the Calvinists or Schwenkfeldians or Adiphorists or Majorists, from whom, as from false teachers, they must separate according to God's command; or if some Christians were under such pastors or such church servants who practiced public tyranny and horribly persecuted the correct confessors of the truth so that they [the former] would then also sufficiently reveal that they were not members of the true church, and that godly Christians were then obligated to withdraw from their fellowship in order not to strengthen their tyranny and help condemn the innocent Christians: in such and similar cases of necessity, which happen quite often, that one cannot have true servants of the church, whose doctrine and confession is upright and agrees with God's Word, it is permitted also for an individual private person and believing Christian to absolve the penitent sinner of sins, to comfort the weak with God's Word, to baptize babies, and to administer Christ's Supper.<sup>187</sup>

Walther also includes this statement from the "strict champion of Lutheran orthodoxy" Johannes Fecht, who took a somewhat more conservative approach:

If it happened that, in a case when a pastor could absolutely not be had, someone in the greatest danger of death, with the good intention of strengthening his faith, appealing to the fact that the Sacrament [of the Altar] was instituted to be added to the Word for confirmation in a case of weakness, would constantly ask for it from someone who was familiar with the administration of the Sacrament, and [the one in danger of death] would not be calmed by his exhortation, then I would not accuse such of disturbing good order. Since the Sacraments are fundamentally given to the church; and it is agreed that it [the church] in a case of necessity baptizes, teaches, and absolves through a layman; and although very rarely - more often with respect to other actions - a case of necessity arises; then I confess that I cannot judge otherwise than that it should be done, if the case is as just described.<sup>188</sup>

According to Hoenecke,

The administration...of the Lord's Supper is the responsibility of none but the ordained servants of the church. [1.] According to Scripture, in the regular course of events, the regularly called servants of the church are the administrators of the mysteries of God, and only in real emergency cases may the lay people also administer them. [2.] According to Scripture, there is no such emergency case in regard to the Lord's Supper as there is in regard to Baptism. Our dogmaticians, therefore, have decided that if a sick person desires the Lord's Supper and a pastor cannot be reached, we should convince him that spiritual partaking is enough for him and that more anxiety than comfort must come from a partaking of the Lord's Supper that departs from the order of God. More on this point is to be found in discussions of casuistry. There are also differing views among the Lutheran dogmaticians.<sup>189</sup>

Confessional Lutherans might sometimes come to different casuistic conclusions in regard to what Christians may or should do in *extraordinary* situations. But this does not alter our common Biblically-based understanding of God's will for the properly-ordered life of his church in all *ordinary* situations.

We have already noted that, according to the Treatise, the authority of those who "govern the church by the Word" includes "the command...to administer the sacraments." The administration of a sacrament is always a churchly act, always a public act,<sup>190</sup> and always a pastoral act – involving the exercise of spiritual care and oversight with regard to the sacramental recipient. This remains the case also in an emergency, when, for example, a layman, in the absence of a regularly-called pastor, temporarily steps into the pastoral office in order to administer Baptism to a person who is in mortal danger. Such an act is not a "lay baptism" strictly speaking, but is a baptism administered by an "emergency pastor." The Treatise accordingly states that "in an emergency even a layperson grants absolution and *becomes the minister or pastor of another*. So Augustine tells the story of two Christians in a boat, one of whom baptized the other (a catechumen) and then the latter, having been baptized, absolved the former."<sup>191</sup>

The Norwegian Synod "Theses on Lay Preaching," first adopted in 1862, are also pertinent to this discussion:

1. God has instituted the office of the public ministry for the public edification of Christians unto salvation through God's Word.
2. For the public edification of Christians God has not instituted any other order to be placed alongside of this.
3. When one

undertakes the leadership of the public edification of Christians through the Word, he undertakes and exercises the public ministry. 4. It is a sin when anyone without call or in the absence of an emergency undertakes this. 5. It is both a right and a duty in the case of an actual emergency for everyone who can to exercise in proper Christian order the office of the public ministry. 6. The only correct conception of an emergency involves the actual existence of a situation in which there is no pastor nor can there be one, or in which there is one who does not properly serve them or who propounds false doctrine or cannot serve them sufficiently but so inadequately that they cannot thereby be led to faith or preserved therein and protected against error so that the Christians would perish spiritually from lack of supervision. 7. When an emergency is at hand, efforts should be made to relieve it by definite and fitting arrangements as the circumstances permit.<sup>192</sup>

These theses emerged in the context of a controversy between the pastors of the Norwegian Synod and the pietistic followers of Elling Eielsen. Herman Amberg Preus elaborates on the doctrine of the Ministry to which the theses bear witness, and applies that doctrine to the ongoing dispute with the “Ellingians”:

With respect to the fourteenth article of the Augsburg Confession, the Ellingians maintained that every Christian by virtue of his spiritual priesthood has the power and authority to preach publicly and does not therefore require any external call whatsoever. “It is enough that he is called by God,” as it is usually said. In contradistinction to this we teach that all Christians have the right privately to admonish, teach, and pray, and indeed also in public assembly to teach, rebuke, and admonish one another. On the other hand, we believe that whenever a layman steps up in meetings organized for public edification and prays aloud, teaches, and admonishes, then he is, in fact, exercising the public office of the ministry, but according to God’s Word and the fourteenth article of the Augsburg Confession he has no right to this office. Only where an actual emergency prevails is it appropriate to breach this ordinance. Where, for example, there is no pastor, or he propounds false doctrine, or where he is so miserly in serving the congregation that Christians starve for lack of food and supervision, then there is an emergency and every Christian has the right and the duty to execute the pastor’s task in the public assembly. *He does not do this by virtue of his spiritual priesthood, but as the congregation’s temporary pastor who must breach God’s ordinance in time of need.*<sup>193</sup>



## 10.

### *“The Sacraments are to be distributed through a common public office”*

In the Preface to his Small Catechism, Luther gives this exhortation to “bishops” – that is, to “pastors” (parish rectors) and “preachers”:

I beg all of you for God’s sake to take up your office boldly, to have pity on your people who are entrusted to you, and to help us bring the catechism to the people, especially to the young. ... Those who do not want to learn these things – who must be told how they deny Christ and are not Christians – should also not be admitted to the sacrament, should not be sponsors for children at baptism, and should not exercise any aspect of Christian freedom...<sup>194</sup>

An examination of the faith of adult baptizands, or of the faith of the parents and sponsors of those who are baptized in infancy, is, in ordinary circumstances, an important and necessary preparation for the proper administration of Baptism – in view of the fact that Jesus links the administration of this sacrament with the duty to teach all that he has commanded (Matthew 28:19-20). This is an aspect of the spiritual care of souls, to which not everyone is called, and for which not everyone is qualified.

In regard to the Sacrament of the Altar – as it is administered according to the Lord’s institution by the church’s called ministers – the Formula of Concord quotes Luther’s statement that “it is not our work or speaking but the command and ordinance of Christ that make the bread the body and the wine the blood, beginning with the first Lord’s Supper and continuing to the end of the world, and it is administered daily *through our ministry or office*.”<sup>195</sup> A part of what it means for this sacrament to be administered “through our ministry or office” is touched on in the Large Catechism, where Luther speaks on behalf of all faithful Lutheran pastors in his solemn declaration that “we do not intend to admit to the sacrament, and administer it to, those who do not know what they seek or why they come.”<sup>196</sup>

The same standards are to be applied also in private settings,

when the Lord's Supper is administered by a pastor to people apart from the main public Divine Service. In addressing the Roman practice of priests celebrating private masses without communicants, Luther writes that

If the papists were to argue on behalf of the retention of their private Masses: that a priest might well communicate his own self or give himself communion, just as one communicates individuals who are sick in their homes, but then one must answer: First, it is not enough to speak thus or to undertake [such a thing], but they ought to have a clear Word and command of God, that this is proper and should be done; for without God's Word one ought not undertake anything in God's service and in the things of God. Secondly, it is a perversion of *the priestly office which God has instituted, for the Sacraments are to be distributed through a common public office in the stead of Christ and of Christendom* [so ist's ein Verkehrung des priesterlichen Ampts, das Gott eingesetzt hat; denn die Sacrament sollen durchs öffentlich gemein Ampt gereicht werden an Statt Christi und der Christenheit]. Now a single individual cannot have or exercise a common public office all by himself in opposition to Christendom. However, *when one gives the Sacrament to the sick, this comes from the instituted office* [das geschieht aus dem ordenlichen Ampt], just as if one took the Sacrament from the altar otherwise and brought it to someone in a corner or behind the church door; and so the office should remain unperverted here in its function [Werk].<sup>197</sup>

It is the same "common public office" – namely "the priestly office which God has instituted" – that is responsible for the administration of the Lord's Supper both in church and in the homes of the sick.

In ancient times, there was a practice according to which consecrated elements were taken from the liturgical assembly by deacons or deaconesses (and sometimes by others) to be distributed to those members who had not been able to be present in the worship service. The deacons distributed the sacrament in this way to men who had been absent, and the deaconesses distributed it to women. The blessed bread and wine that had been taken from the public liturgy for this purpose were not consecrated anew by the deacon or deaconess in the presence of the communicant. In light of the clarifications regarding the doctrine of the Lord's Supper and the doctrine of the Ministry that came about as a result of the Reformation, Chemnitz offers a critical evaluation of that early custom. He begins by establishing what the norm for such an evaluation should be, and reminds his reader that,

With respect to custom, no matter how ancient, Gratian furnishes us an answer from the sayings of the fathers, dist. 8: "Cyprian says that custom without truth is the antiquity of error." And Gregory quotes from Cyprian: "The Lord says in the Gospel, 'I am the truth.' He does not say, 'I am the custom.' Therefore all custom, no matter how universal, must always be esteemed less than the truth. And any custom which is contrary to the truth must be abolished."<sup>198</sup>

Chemnitz then describes the practice in question, and goes on to explain why it was a mistaken practice, and why Lutherans therefore do not follow it:

According to Justin the deacons give the bread and wine which have been consecrated by means of thanksgiving to all who are present, and the same elements are given to deacons to be carried to those who are absent. ...from the assembly of the church they carry it to those who are absent in order that they may commune. ...in the ancient church...it was given to boys to be carried away; according to Dionysius of Alexandria, to women... ..it is simplest, most correct, and safest that this whole matter should be examined according to the norm of the institution of Christ and that we should consider what comes closest to what is prescribed in the institution, agrees best with it, and serves for edification of the church. ... The matter is not obscure if we set before ourselves as norm and rule the description of the institution. For Christ first of all used His words, which He wanted to have come to the element in order that it might become a sacrament; He used them in the place and at the time where and when He was about to distribute Communion, and in the presence of those to whom He wanted to communicate His body and blood. Therefore it agrees better with the description of the institution and the example of Christ to recite the words of institution and by means of them to bless the Eucharist at the place and time of Communion, in the presence of those who are to be communed... For these reasons our men, in the Communion of the sick, recite the words of the Supper, which are in fact the consecration, in the presence of the sick person. Neither has anyone the right to reprove or to condemn us on account of this custom; for we are following both the prescription and the example of Christ, concerning whom the Father called out from heaven: "Hear Him." It is manifest that this custom agrees with the institution of Christ. And, according to Augustine, what decides in matters of faith is not: "This I say; that you say; that he says," but: "Thus says the Lord." And, speaking of the Supper, Cyprian says: "We ought



not to give heed to what someone before us thought should be done, but to what He, who is before all, did first." ... Yes, in a rural house where there was no special prayer chapel a presbyter celebrates the Eucharist, as reported by Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, Bk. 22, ch. 8.<sup>199</sup>

Proper and orderly soul-care for communicants is an especially important component of the public and private administration of the Lord's Supper, with which is associated an explicit apostolic warning of potential harmful consequences – spiritual and temporal – for those who partake of this sacrament in an unworthy manner (1 Corinthians 11:27-32). Admitting communicants to the altar, or declining to admit them, is a serious matter. It is an exercise of pastoral authority over those communicants. It is, in fact, a *quintessential* example of the exercise of pastoral authority and spiritual oversight among God's people. Brug reflects the classic Lutheran understanding and practice when he writes:

It is clear that the Lord's Supper should be administered by the pastor. It is not our practice to have a layman officiate at the Lord's Supper. Even when congregations were quite isolated and some did not have a pastor present every Sunday, the Lord's Supper was celebrated only when the pastor was present. Proper administration of the Lord's Supper involves more than being able to read the right words. It involves pastoral responsibility for the souls of those who attend.<sup>200</sup>

That classic Lutheran understanding and practice was articulated and described in the seventeenth century by Jesper Rasmussen Brochmand: "The only administrators of the Holy Communion are the ministers of the Word, who have been legitimately called, like Aaron, Heb. 5:4; also because those alone should administer this Sacrament who are able to examine the faith of the men using this Sacrament."<sup>201</sup>

The authoritative teaching and preaching of the Word of God, in the form and manner by which a "spiritual father" thereby governs and guides the church, is also a fundamental component of the ministry of pastoral oversight. The Apology observes:

Among the opponents there are many regions where no sermons are delivered during the entire year except during Lent. And yet the chief worship of God is to preach [teach<sup>202</sup>] the gospel.<sup>203</sup>

Where the Latin version of this confession (quoted here) says that "the chief worship of God is to preach [teach] the gospel," the Ger-

man version expands and elaborates on this in saying that “of all acts of worship, that is the greatest, most holy, most necessary, and highest, which God has required as the highest in the First and Second Commandment, namely to preach the Word of God. For the preaching office is the highest office in the church.”<sup>204</sup>

The Lutheran Church has always recognized the legitimacy of non-pastoral ecclesiastical offices that are established for the teaching of the rudiments of God’s Word to the church’s children – and sometimes to others – under pastoral supervision. And the Holy Spirit certainly works through such teaching, for the edification in faith of those who receive it. But St. Paul states in his First Epistle to Timothy that it is the *bishops* who are required to be “able to teach” in such a way as to be competent to “care for God’s church” with responsible pastoral oversight (1 Timothy 3:2,5, ESV). It is noteworthy that in his parallel description of the qualifications for deacons (1 Timothy 3:8ff.), St. Paul does *not* say that *deacons* must be “able to teach,” or that they are authorized to “care for God’s church.” The deacons in the apostolic era were public servants *of* the church, but they did not exercise a distinctly *pastoral* authority *over* and *within* the church.<sup>205</sup> In his Epistle to Titus, Paul adds that an elder or bishop, “as God’s steward,” must “hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it,” and so that he may be able to deal properly with those “who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers” (Titus 1:7, 9-10, ESV).

What a pastor or bishop does in his preaching and teaching ministry for the benefit of *the church as a whole*, is different in *degree and scope* from what a catechist or religion teacher does, for the benefit only of a certain limited segment of the church. We do not expect Christians in general – or parish school teachers and similar officeholders – to be able to rebuke the erring and refute falsehood in the way that a trained pastor would be expected to do. Exercising general spiritual oversight in the church involves preaching and teaching “the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27, ESV), and expounding and applying the Word of God in all of its articles. This obviously requires a level of theological knowledge and pastoral competence that is lacking in most Christians. St. James also warns that “Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness” (James 3:1, ESV).

For the same reasons, those who are not understood to be fit for the pastoral ministry in general should likewise not be authorized (in non-emergency circumstances) to baptize people, or to commune people. Brug writes:

Speaking of his stewardship of the gospel, Paul says, “Men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things [the mysteries] of God. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful” (1 Co 4:1,2). The mysteries of God are commonly understood to include the sacraments. The power of the sacraments is not dependent on ordination or on the person of the administrator, but the pastor is responsible for how the sacraments are administered. The administration of the Lord’s Supper involves spiritual judgment. Decisions commonly need to be made by the administrator about who is properly prepared to receive the Sacrament, both in public worship services and in the visitation of shut-ins. At times, there is a responsibility to exclude some from receiving the Sacrament. This requires a shepherd’s knowledge of the sheep, and it is definitely the work of spiritual oversight. This means that administration of the Lord’s Supper will normally remain with the pastor, even if others are trained to assist him with the distribution. The kind of disorder that arose in the Lord’s Supper at Corinth is most easily prevented if the administration is in the hands of properly prepared pastors. ... There is no doubt that laypeople can perform valid baptisms in cases of emergency. But since Baptism is the sacrament of initiation through which people enter the church, under normal circumstances it is administered by the called ministers of the church in the name of the church.<sup>206</sup>

When Brug states that the “administration of the Lord’s Supper will *normally* remain with the pastor,” he does envision the possibility of *abnormal* circumstances in which a layman might be called to serve as a “temporary pastor,” and to administer the Lord’s Supper to a gathering of Christians in the absence of a regular pastor. But according to Brug, the kind of exceptional cases in which such a thing might be contemplated, would be “Cases of war and extreme isolation,”<sup>207</sup> and similar times of extraordinary need. He is not talking about non-emergency situations such as when a pastor is away on vacation for a couple weeks; or when a congregation is vacant, but could easily be served periodically by a pastor from a neighboring community.

On one occasion, when commenting on the subject of “private Communion” in the homes of the sick, Luther opined that as long as a Christian has the opportunity to receive the sacrament at least three or four times per year in the usual manner – at church – he should not feel the need to make unusual arrangements with his pastor to receive it more often than that. Luther wrote:

With reference to your question concerning the communication of the sick, ...I wish and am of the opinion that private Communion should be abolished everywhere – namely, that the people should be told in sermons to receive Communion three or four times a year in order that, strengthened by the Word, they may afterward fall asleep, no matter what the cause of death may be. For private Communion will increasingly impose an intolerable and impossible burden, especially in time of pestilence. And it is not right that the Church should be required to peddle the Sacraments, particularly in the case of those who have despised them for a long time and who then expect the Church to be ready to be of service to them, although they never rendered it a service of any kind. However, since this practice has not yet been established, you must do what you can. Meanwhile, ...you should explain that you are doing this as a temporary expedient and that you will not continue to do this for them forever inasmuch as something will certainly be decided about this matter.<sup>208</sup>

Modern methods of transportation make it easier for a pastor to visit the sick and shut-in members of his church than was the case in Luther's time, in order to administer Holy Communion to them. We would therefore probably not consider Luther's advice about the frequency (or infrequency) of such pastoral calls to be applicable to a minister in the twenty-first century who owns an automobile.

But perhaps a case can be made that this practical advice might be adapted to contemporary circumstances in which lay Christians live in isolation – or in relative isolation – from an established congregation, so that a pastor is unavailable to them, or is available only infrequently. If such Christians are able to make arrangements for receiving the sacrament from the hand of a regularly-ordained orthodox pastor at least three or four times per year – either by traveling to visit such a pastor, or by having such a pastor travel to visit them – they should not consider devising any irregular method for receiving it more often.<sup>209</sup> If the situation in which such Christians find themselves is so difficult that the sacrament cannot be received from a pastor even *that* often, there is no *obligation* that something irregular or extraordinary *must* be done. Brug acknowledges that

Lutheran teachers have debated whether or not a layperson should ever consecrate and administer the Lord's Supper. Many orthodox dogmaticians said that even in the case of emergency, this should not be done. They felt that the need for the Lord's Supper was never a true emergency like the need for Baptism. As an example, [Johann Wilhelm] Baier is cited: "When there is a lack of ordinary ministers, and a faithful man anxiously desires

this sacrament, it is better for him to be persuaded that spiritual eating is sufficient and to show the danger of other temptations which could arise if the sacrament were administered by another without a legitimate call and therefore with a dubious mind and result."<sup>210</sup>

We would still acknowledge, however, that a community of confessing Christians which – through no fault of its own – is cut off from the normal channels of ecclesiastical oversight, does retain, *in itself*, the full ecclesiastical authority to call ministers in the name of Christ. And there may very well be circumstances in this world where that authority would be validly exercised in a way that is similar to Luther's well-known hypothetical scenario:

...suppose a group of earnest Christian laymen were taken prisoner and set down in a desert without an episcopally ordained priest among them. And suppose they were to come to a common mind there and then in the desert and elect one of their number, whether he were married or not, and charge him to baptize, say mass, pronounce absolution, and preach the Gospel. Such a man would be as truly a priest as though he had been ordained by all the bishops and popes in the world. That is why in cases of necessity anyone can baptize and give absolution.<sup>211</sup>



## 11.

### *“Rightfully did he come forth, the man whom the entire church elected”*

It has always been God’s will – and will remain God’s will until the end of time – that properly trained and properly called “spiritual fathers” publicly carry out among his people the weighty duties of spiritual oversight in Word and Sacrament, in his name and by his authority. St. Paul accordingly tells Titus that an ecclesial situation wherein such an arrangement is not yet in place is an “unfinished” situation. Luther notes that in Titus 1:5-7,

Paul says to his disciple Titus: “This is why I left you in Candia, that you might complete what I left unfinished, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you, men who are blameless, the husband of one wife, whose children are believers and not open to the charge of being profligate. For a bishop, as God’s steward, must be blameless,” etc. Whoever believes that here in Paul the Spirit of Christ is speaking and commanding will be sure to recognize this as a divine institution and ordinance, that in each city there should be several bishops, or at least one. It is also evident that Paul considers elders and bishops to be one and the same thing, for he says: Elders are to be appointed and installed in all cities, and that a bishop shall be blameless.<sup>212</sup>

According to the Apology, “priests” or presbyters in the Lutheran Church “are called to preach the gospel and to administer the sacraments to the people.” And the reason why this is done is because “the church has the mandate to appoint ministers, which ought to please us greatly because we know that God approves this ministry and is present in it.”<sup>213</sup> Chemnitz explains that

in His Word God has prescribed a certain form regarding the call, doctrine, and conduct, or life, of those to whom the functions of the church are to be entrusted. One should therefore first carefully test and examine them as to whether they are legitimately called, whether they rightly hold the fundamentals of salutary doctrine and reject fanatic opinions, whether they are endowed with the gifts necessary to teach others sound doctrine,

and whether they can prove their lives to be honorable, so that they can be examples to the flock; for this concern we have the very solemn precept of Paul. 1 Ti 5:22; 2 Ti 2:2.<sup>214</sup>

With a modest demonstration of the “skill in languages” with which he himself was endowed, Chytraeus elaborates:

...men who are particularly fitted for the task are to be chosen and called by general vote to carry out publicly – in the name of all who have the same right – the functions of teaching, binding and loosing, and administering the sacraments. For necessary to the public execution of the priestly office of instructing, consoling, exhorting, denouncing sins, judging controversies over doctrine, etc., is a thorough knowledge of Christian theology, a faculty for teaching, skill in languages, speaking ability, and other gifts, and these are not equally manifest in all whom the Holy Spirit has regenerated; therefore those who lack these talents rightly yield their privileges to others better endowed than themselves. For God is not the author of disorder and *ακαταστασια* [confusion] but of order and peace. Therefore, so that all things might be done *ευσχημονως* [decently] and in order and to prevent barbaric confusion and a Cyclopean *αγορα εν η ακουει ουδεις ουδεν ουδενος* [assembly where nobody heeds anybody in anything] from existing in the church, Paul himself established a particular order of vocation and commands that this ministry be committed to suitable and faithful men who should teach others. In Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Tim. 3:1-7, he sets forth at length the qualifications of the bishop or minister of the Gospel who has the duty of performing and administering sacerdotal functions in the public assemblies of the church.<sup>215</sup>

Chemnitz accordingly describes it as “slander” – at least as far as the Lutherans are concerned – when theologians of the Roman Church “shout loudly that those who do not approve the priesthood of the papalists take away all order out of the church, that with infinite confusion they prostitute the ministry to any one of the common people and (something which Tertullian ascribes to the heretics) make laymen out of priests and enjoin priestly functions to laymen, with the result that there is neither any authority nor dignity of the ministry, etc.”<sup>216</sup>

Lutherans confess in Article XIV of the Augustana – in the German version – that “Concerning church government it is taught that no one should publicly teach, preach, or administer the sacraments without a proper [public] call.”<sup>217</sup> The Latin version says that “no one should teach publicly in the church or administer the sacra-

ments unless properly called.”<sup>218</sup> The phrase “properly called” here translates the Latin phrase *rite vocatus*, which many today take to mean “called according to the rite” – that is, the rite of ordination with the laying on of hands, together with everything that properly precedes and accompanies that rite. But the actual meaning of *rite vocatus* is not that narrow:

*Rite vocatus* means called in a regular manner by a proper public authority. This is not a matter of “ritual.”<sup>219</sup>

Timothy J. Wengert makes the historical and theological observation that

one very important word in Article 14 is *public*. ... This emphasis contrasted directly to self-appointed, so-called radical preachers, who based their authority solely on themselves and their personal calls. Although the Roman authorities often accused Luther and the evangelicals of such usurpation of authority, in fact all the leaders of the evangelical movement were duly called pastors and preachers of the existing church. “The call,” Luther once said at table, “hurts the devil very much.” A...thing to note here is Melanchthon’s inclusion of the verb “to teach.” Philip Melanchthon himself was neither a pastor nor a preacher (two distinct offices in the churches of the late Middle Ages and Reformation). He was not ordained. Yet the largely mythical view of him as a “lay theologian” is completely anachronistic. He was called as a teacher at the University of Wittenberg... In this way, Melanchthon’s position also fell under this article. Article 14 applies as fully to teachers as to those who preach and preside in congregations. Thus, Article 14 describes the three central offices in the churches of the Reformation: teacher, preacher, and pastor. ... The reformers consistently linked the public call with certain offices – offices established by Christ, mirrored in the Old Testament, and fostered in the ancient and early medieval church. Thus, “pastor” and “bishop” (the terms are interchangeable in the usage of the New Testament, the ancient church, and the Reformation) find their origins in the New Testament and ancient church. “Preacher” hearkens back to Peter in Acts 2 and to the Hebrew prophets – anyone who publicly bears a direct word of God to the people. In the Reformation churches, it was an office distinct from that of pastor. Teachers find a place in the lists of Ephesians 4:11 and 1 Corinthians 12:28... The reformers are saying not that “anyone can be a pastor” but that “whoever does such things fulfills the very public office authorized by Christ and demanded by the Word.” In short, wherever the



church “goes public” with the gospel, one finds the public office of ministry.<sup>220</sup>

And as the Treatise explains, a proper public call in the Christian era is a call that God issues *mediately*, through the church of Jesus Christ on earth:

For wherever the church exists, there also is the right to administer the gospel. Therefore, it is necessary for the church to retain the right to call, choose, and ordain ministers. This right is a gift bestowed exclusively on the church, and no human authority can take it away from the church, as Paul testifies to the Ephesians [4:8,11,12] when he says: “When he ascended on high...he gave gifts to his people.” Among those gifts belonging to the church he lists pastors and teachers and adds that such are given for serving and building up the body of Christ. Therefore, where the true church is, there must also be the right of choosing and ordaining ministers... Pertinent here are the words of Christ that assert that the keys were given to the church, not just to particular persons: “For where two or three are gathered in my name...” [Matt. 18:20]. Finally this is also confirmed by Peter’s declaration [1 Peter 2:9]: “You are a...royal priesthood.” These words apply to the true church, which, since it alone possesses the priesthood, certainly has the right of choosing and ordaining ministers. The most common practice of the church also testifies to this, for in times past the people chose pastors and bishops. Then the bishop of either that church or a neighboring one came and confirmed the candidate by the laying on of hands. Ordination was nothing other than such confirmation.<sup>221</sup>

The church’s “public” Ministry is an official service that is exercised on behalf of “the people,” for the benefit of “the people,” and *with authority over* “the people.” Certain spiritual duties are inherently public *in themselves*, both when they are carried out with proper authorization or in an emergency, and when they are carried out by usurpers without proper authorization. And so, for example, a Christian father as such may not presume to baptize his own children “privately,” with the justification that he needs no public churchly call to do this, since it involves only his own family members. There is no such thing as a “private” baptism (in this sense of the term), since baptism *in its very nature* is always a public sacrament of the church. Apart from emergencies, an individual may not exercise such spiritual authority over another person without a proper “public” call.

The conviction that God calls men to the public Ministry of

his church *through the church itself* is not a distinctly “Lutheran” notion, invented by the Lutheran Reformers in the sixteenth century. The great fourth-century bishop of Milan, St. Ambrose, admonished the members of the church at Vercelli – who had delayed in choosing a new bishop – to follow the example of their fathers, who on the occasion of the previous episcopal vacancy had fulfilled their Christian responsibility in a proper way by electing, in God’s name, the now-deceased former bishop Eusebius:

I am in sorrow that the Church of the Lord among you is still without a bishop... Is this the training of a confessor, is this the line of those upright fathers who, although they did not know blessed Eusebius before, ...approved him as soon as they saw him? And so much more did they approve him when they observed him. *Rightfully did he come forth, the man whom the entire Church elected; rightfully was it believed that he, whom all had demanded, was elected by God’s judgment.* You, then, should follow the example of your parents, especially since you have been much better instructed by a saintly confessor than were your fathers inasmuch as a better teacher [Eusebius] has instructed and trained you, and you must give evidence of your moderation and accord by agreeing in your request for a bishop. We have our Lord’s saying that “when two agree upon anything on earth it will be done for them concerning whatever they ask,” as He says, “by my Father who is in heaven, for where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” [Matt. 18:19-20]. How much more true is it that *when the full congregation is gathered in the name of the Lord, and when the demand of all is one in accord, we may not in any way doubt that the Lord Jesus will there be the judge – the source of their will, the presiding officer of the ordination, the giver of grace!*<sup>222</sup>

We must here express our disagreement with the views of Wilhelm Loehe, when he teaches that the Ministry is essentially self-perpetuating. He writes:

Everywhere in the New Testament we see that the holy office begets the Churches, never that the office is merely a transfer of congregational rights and plenary powers, that the Churches confer the office. *The office stands in the midst of the Church like a fruitful tree that has its seed in itself.* ... As long as the examination and ordination remains in the hands of the Presbyterium (the pastors), it is right, and can be maintained that *it completes itself and propagates itself from person to person, from generation to generation. Those who hold it pass it along, and he to whom its incum-*

bents transfer it holds it as from God. ... The office is a stream of blessing that pours itself from the apostles upon their disciples, and from these onward into future times.<sup>223</sup>

Loeche actually admits that his position as here articulated is not supported by the Lutheran Confessions or the writings of Luther – and that the position of Walther and the Missouri Synod is! – when he states:

The sad experiences which the former Stephanites [the Missouri-ans] had with their hierarch, [Martin] Stephan, have made their hearts very receptive to the doctrine of the ministry held by Luther and subsequent theologians, a teaching also reflected in the Lutheran Symbols, especially since this doctrine not only commends itself highly to the Christian mind but also seems made to order for American circumstances. Conversely, some of us were led by experiences of an opposite and different nature to have an eye for a different conception of ministry and church, a conception which was present already at the time of the Reformation in the church of the Reformers and had been recommended particularly in some parts of southern Germany. Where it differs from the specific-Lutheran and Lutheran-theological course (*Richtung*), it seems to commend itself by virtue of a more artless attachment to Holy Scripture and antiquity and by greater truth in practice.<sup>224</sup>

The apostles were, of course, directly chosen and appointed to their office by Jesus alone, without the concurrence or approval of others. But when the apostles then began to oversee the appointment of elders or pastors in the various churches that had been founded through their ministry, those churches themselves were involved in that process. Chemnitz observes:

In Acts 14:23 Paul and Barnabas appoint elders in all churches to which they had preached the Gospel. However, they did not take the right and authority of choosing and calling to themselves alone. Luke uses the word *cheirotoneesantes*, which in 2 Cor. 8:19 is used of an election which is made by the voice or votes of the church, for it is taken from the Greek custom of voting with uplifted hands, and signifies to create or designate someone by vote or to show agreement. Therefore Paul and Barnabas did not force presbyters on unwilling people, without the consent of the church. And in Acts 15:22, when men had to be elected who were to be sent to the church at Antioch with commands, Luke says: “It seemed good to the apostles and the

elders, with the whole church, to choose...Barnabas and Silas." ...Titus was put in charge of guiding and moderating the election of presbyters on Crete, in order that it might be done rightly and that he might by means of ordination approve it and confirm the rightly performed election. For in Titus 1:5, in speaking of appointing elders, Paul uses the same word which is found in Acts 14:23, where likewise both *cheirotonia* and the appointing of elders are mentioned. And he instructs Titus that he should rebuke sharply those who are not sound in doctrine nor teach what they should, that is, as he says more clearly in 1 Tim. 5:12: "Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor partake in another man's sins," namely, by approving an election or call which was not rightly done.<sup>225</sup>

According to the Treatise, *ordination* is "nothing other than" the confirmation of a proper ecclesiastical call. Luther speaks to the theological underpinnings and essence of "ordination" in these statements:

To ordain is not to consecrate. Therefore, if we know a pious man, we pick him out from among the others and by virtue of the Word, which we possess, confer upon him the authority to preach the Word and to administer the sacrament. This is ordination.

Do not be in confusion just because the preachers have not been besmeared and shorn by the suffragan bishop... Whoever has been called is ordained and should preach to those who have called him; that is the ordination of our Lord God...<sup>226</sup>

Althaus explains that

Being called by a community was so decisive for Luther that he is not particularly interested in a special liturgical act of ordination – the expression he adopted from the medieval church. He clearly distinguishes it from the Roman ordination to the priesthood. "Ordination should and can basically be nothing else (if things are done in the right way) than a call or command to carry out the office of the ministry or of preaching" [WA 38, 228, 238]. Ordination as an ecclesiastical act thus is basically a form and also a public confirmation of the call. It does not have absolute character but is meaningful only in terms of the ordinand's service in a specific community. Luther uses the terms *call* and *ordain* synonymously. This is also indicated by the formula for ordination of 1535 [WA 38, 423 ff.; LW 53, 124 ff.]. It does not fol-

low the Roman rite for the ordination of priests but the New Testament example. Luther freely composed the formula for ordination which consists in the reading of Scripture, prayer, and the laying on of hands.<sup>227</sup>

Luther's emphasis on the necessity of a legitimate call for the public administration of the means of grace has sometimes been interpreted to mean that a person who (apart from an emergency) presumes to absolve, baptize, or commune others *without* such a call, *cannot* in fact administer these means of grace effectually; and that such unauthorized actions are merely "empty shells," with no inherent divine power to save or forgive. In his treatise on "Infiltrating and Clandestine Preachers," Luther does express grave skepticism in regard to the efficacy of the preaching of uncalled "infiltrators" who put themselves forward as teachers in violation of the divine order of vocation in the church. But this is linked to the *false content* of their preaching, and not just to their lack of a proper call from God to engage in such preaching. He writes that

God speaks of infiltrators of this kind in Jer. 23[:21]: "They run and I have not sent them. They preach, and I have not commanded them." There is worry and work enough to maintain the right kind of preaching and true doctrine in the case of those who have an undoubted call and commission from God himself or from those acting on his behalf. What then is preaching without the commandment of God, indeed against his will and prohibition, in consequence of the prodding and agitation of the devil? Such preaching can indeed be nothing but an inspiration of the evil one and be merely the teaching of the devil no matter how it glistens. Who has ever had a greater and more certain call than Aaron, the first high priest? Yet he fell into idolatry and permitted the Jews to make a golden calf [Exod. 32:1ff.]. Later the whole Levitical priesthood for the most part became guilty of idolatry, even persecuting the Word of God and the true prophets [Cf. I Sam. 2:12ff.]. King Solomon had a good enough call and confirmation of it, but in his old age he fell and committed much idolatry [Cf. I Kings 11:4ff.]. What a splendid call and commission the bishops and popes have had! Do they not sit in the chair of the apostles and in Christ's stead? Still, they are altogether the worst enemies of the gospel, unless they teach correctly and preserve the true worship and service of God. If then teachers who are called, ordained, and consecrated of God himself can be misled by the devil to engage in false teaching and persecute the truth, how shall he accomplish anything good through those whom he inspires and ordains, without and contrary to the bid-

ding of God? Will he not through them bring forth more truly devilish lies?<sup>228</sup>

On the question of whether the true body and blood of Christ are present in an observance of the Lord's Supper that is presided over by an uncalled person – or by a woman – Luther answers in the affirmative, as long as the external sacramental action commanded by Christ is carried out. In his treatise on “The Private Mass and the Consecration of Priests,” he writes:

*I do not want to say, as the papists do, that neither an angel nor Mary could effect conversion, etc.; but I do say that even if the devil himself came (if he would be so pious that he wanted to or could do so), and let us suppose that I found out afterward that the devil had inveigled his way into the office by stealth or, having assumed the form of a man, let himself be called to the office of the ministry, and publicly preached the gospel in the church, baptized, celebrated mass, absolved, and exercised and administered such offices and sacraments, as a pastor would, according to the command of Christ – then we would for all that have to admit that the sacraments were valid, that we had received a valid baptism, had heard the true gospel, obtained true absolution, and had participated in the true sacrament of the body and blood of Christ. For our faith and the sacrament must not be based on the person, whether he is godly or evil, consecrated or unconsecrated, called or an impostor, whether he is the devil or his mother, but upon Christ, upon his word, upon his office, upon his command and ordinance; where these are in force, there everything will be carried out properly, no matter who or what the person might happen to be.<sup>229</sup>*

This does not mean, however, that Luther would approve of an illicit and disorderly celebration of the sacrament by an uncalled layman or a woman. He compares this kind of presumptuous public administration of the means of grace to the conception of a child outside of wedlock. The unmarried parents of such a child have no divine call to procreate, as a married couple would have. But their illicit sexual activity still retains the inherent capacity to produce a child. In regard to procreation in general, Luther writes later in the same treatise that

man and woman in a natural way become one body, as God has commanded and created us. However, as a result of this same work there never will be fruit or a child but it will be as a result of the command and ordinance of God who says: “Be fruitful and multiply” [Genesis 1:28]. Now even if the devil brings man

and woman together, as happens in adultery or whoredom, nevertheless, God's ordinance is in force and fruit or a child results. When a knave, a bastard, or a thief falls heir to the ancestral estate of other people, all the property has as much value as if the rightful heir would possess it. The same rule also applies here as far as the sacraments are concerned: We join the water to the word, as he commands us to do; however, not this action of ours, but Christ's command and ordinance make it a baptism. According to his command we join bread and wine to the word of Christ; however, not this action of ours, but Christ's word and ordinance effect the change. Now if in this instance the devil or his follower would observe the ordinance of Christ and act according to it, it would nonetheless be the true baptism and sacrament; for Christ does not become a liar or deceiver of his church on account of the devil or of evil people, but baptizes persons and gives them his body and blood, no matter whose hand it is or what kind of a hand it is by which he does it.<sup>230</sup>

When an uncalled or improperly-called person officiates at the Lord's Supper, this in itself does not cause the Word and institution of Christ to become inefficacious, or cause the body and blood of Christ not to be present. It is, rather, a sinful *dishonoring* and *desecration* of the body and blood Christ when such a thing is done - apart from any legitimate extraordinary need. No pious Christian should receive the sacrament in such a circumstance, from such a person. But when a pious Christian *does* receive the sacrament from a properly-called orthodox pastor, his confidence that the body and blood of Christ are truly present would not be based on the fact that the pastor is properly called. This confidence would be based on the pastor's faithfulness in following "Christ's word and ordinance" in his celebration of the Lord's Supper.

We are reminded of what Article XIV of the Augsburg Confession states: that "no one should teach publicly in the church or administer the sacraments unless properly called." The Augsburg Confession is hereby telling us what *should not* be done. It is not telling us what *cannot* be done.

Luther's enduring reputation as a correct expounder of the doctrine of the call, in the Church that bears his name, is testified to by Chemnitz, who writes that

Luther showed from the Word of God against the various sects of Anabaptists that no one, even if he were the most learned, ought to usurp the ministry of the Word and of the sacraments in the church without a special and legitimate call. And he earnestly admonished the church that she should not permit

those to exercise the ministry of the Word and of the sacraments who do not have proof of a legitimate call, because it is written: "How can men preach unless they are sent?" (Rom. 10:15) and "I did not send the prophets, yet they ran." (Jer. 23:21) ...Luther taught from the Word of God that Christ has given and committed the keys, that is, the ministry of the Word and of the sacraments, to the whole church, not however in such a way that everyone might usurp and appropriate this ministry to himself by his own will and personal rashness, without a legitimate call, but that, after the immediate calling ceased, God sends ministers of the Word and of the sacraments through the call and choosing of the church, if it is done according to the command of His Word, so that the highest power of the Word and of the sacraments is with God; then, that the ministry belongs to the church, so that God calls, chooses, and sends ministers through it. Thirdly, then, it is with those who are legitimately chosen and called by God through the church, therefore with the ministers to whom the use or administration of the ministry of the Word and the sacraments has been committed. With this distinction, which is true and plain, Luther meant to restrain the arrogance of the [papal] priests who were puffed up by the opinion that they alone possessed all power with respect to the Word and sacraments, so that the sacraments were valid on account of the imprinting on them of some kind of character from ordination. And lest the rest of the church should dare to say by so much as a silent sigh, "What are you doing?" they pretended that the rest of the church had no power whatever in matters of the Word and the sacraments. That Luther touched this sore spot and applied the knife from the Word of God, that is truly what gives the papalists a burning pain even today, after so many years, and it sits badly.<sup>231</sup>





## 12.

*“Ordination...certainly is necessary”*

It is still true, though, that “the call to the ministry of the Gospel ought to have the public testimony and the public attestation of the church, on account of those who run although they were not sent (Jer. 23:21).”<sup>232</sup> As a practical matter of ecclesiastical good order, and in view of the church’s legitimate need for a public certification and endorsement of a legitimate public ministry in its midst,

The case (1531) of John Sutel in Göttingen makes it clear that in the mind of the early Lutheran community the mere possession of a call without a public ordination through the laying on of hands did not authorize the recipient to preside over the Eucharistic assembly and pronounce the formula of consecration. Luther counsels Sutel to refrain from celebrating the Sacrament of the Altar until he “publicly before the altar with prayer and the laying on of hands receives from the other clergymen the evidence [of the legitimacy of his status] and authority to celebrate the Sacrament of the Altar.”<sup>233</sup>

In a similar case, as Kaehler recounts it,

Johann Freder, born in Cöslin and a student of Luther, functioned as a preacher in Hamburg, Stralsund, Rügen, and Wismar without being ordained. When the Greifswald theologian Dr. Knipstrov demanded that he subsequently allow himself to be ordained in order to correct the offense given, Freder would not yield to this. Rather he called ordination a snare to the conscience. For this reason he was deposed in 1551. In a Wittenberg faculty opinion given on this matter in 1553 among other things was said: Although ordination in and of itself is not necessary, it serves as a publication and approval of the call. To consider it a snare of conscience is nothing else than to say that anyone can take up the preaching office even when no examination or confirmation of the call has gone before. That is contrary to order and cannot be condoned.

Immediately before his recounting of this incident, Kaehler had written:

The call to the office of the word must have some public witness on account of those who run and are not sent (Jer 23:21), and ordination gives this witness. If this is the case – and no Lutheran will deny it – then it is also correct when we claim: He who should administer an essential part of the holy ministry should be ordained. If circumstances arise in which it is impossible to hold to the order of ordination, then we must at least demand some type of setting apart of the person called to the holy office, for Acts 13:2 says: “When they had served the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit spoke: ‘Set apart for me (αφορισατε) Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them’” (see Rom 1:1).<sup>234</sup>

In the Apology, the Lutheran Reformers are willing to concede – at least as a point of terminology – that

if ordination is understood with reference to the ministry of the Word, we have no objection to calling ordination a sacrament. For the ministry of the Word has the command of God and has magnificent promises like Romans 1[:16]: the gospel “is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith.” Likewise, Isaiah 55[:11], “...so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose. ...” If ordination is understood in this way, we will not object to calling the laying on of hands a sacrament. For the church has the mandate to appoint ministers, which ought to please us greatly because we know that God approves this ministry and is present in it. Indeed, it is worthwhile to extol the ministry of the Word with every possible kind of praise against fanatics who imagine that the Holy Spirit is not given through the Word but is given on account of certain preparations of their own...<sup>235</sup>

The focus of this concession is obviously on the Word of God that is to be administered by the ordained minister, and not on the rite of ordination itself, or on the attendant ceremonies of that rite. And this hypothetical concession would apply only if the word “sacrament” is defined more broadly than is usually the case. In commenting on this passage from the Apology, Chemnitz insists that

the rite of ordination must be distinguished from the ceremony of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, for ordination is not a sacra-

ment in the same way as Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The difference is plain. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are means or instruments through which God applies and seals the promise of reconciliation or forgiveness to individual believers who use Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Ordination is not such a means or instrument... It is also worthy of consideration that when the apostles wanted to apply some outward rite in ordination, they did not take the visible sign of breathing on the ordinand, which Christ had used [John 20:22] - lest people think that Christ had given a command about using the rite of breathing on them. Therefore they took another rite, one indifferent and free, namely, the rite of laying on of hands, for they did not want to impose something on the church as necessary concerning which they did not have a command of Christ.

Chemnitz immediately goes on to acknowledge that "the ministry of the Word and the sacraments has divine promises, ...but these promises are not to be tied to the rite of the imposition of hands, about which there is neither a command of Christ nor such a promise as there is about Baptism and the Lord's Supper."<sup>236</sup> Chemnitz nevertheless does recognize that "the outward rite of the laying on of hands" is "extraordinarily suited" to the practical and pastoral purpose of ordination. He gives five reasons why:

1. That the person in question might be publicly pointed out to the church and declared to be legitimately chosen and called. For by this rite Moses points out and declares to the people the calling of Joshua, his successor (Deut. 34:9).
2. That by means of this rite the one who had been called might be given full assurance about his legitimate and divine call and might at the same time be admonished to devote, give, and as it were vow himself to the service and worship of God. Thus hands were laid on sacrificial animals and in this way Joshua was confirmed in his call.
3. That it might as it were be a public and solemn declaration of the church before God that the model and rule prescribed by the Holy Spirit had been observed at the election and calling. Therefore Paul says (1 Tim. 5:22): "Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor participate in another man's sins."
4. That it might be signified by this visible rite that God approves the calling which is done by the voice of the church, for just as God chooses ministers by the voice of the church, so He also approves the calling by the attestation of the church. Thus the calling of the deacons was approved (Acts 6:6). And thus it comes about that God bestows grace through the laying on of hands.
5. During the prayers, when the name of God was especially invoked over a

certain person, it was customary to employ the imposition of hands, by which that person was as it were offered to God and set in His sight, with the request added that God would deign to shower His grace and blessing on him. Thus Jacob placed his hand on the lads whom he blessed (Gen. 48:14 ff.); thus the elders pray over the sick (James 5:14-15); thus Christ blessed little children, laying on His hands (Mark 10:13-16). Now the prayer of a righteous man avails much if it is *energoumenee*, that is, full of activity or earnestness. In order, therefore, that men may consider how necessary the special divine grace and blessing is in view of the usefulness and difficulty of this gift, in view also of the hindrances laid in its way by Satan, the world, and the flesh, and that thus the prayer of the church may come to its aid and be, according to James, rendered full of activity or earnestness, therefore the outward rite of the laying on of hands was employed. Fasting was also added to the prayer (Acts 13:2). And this earnest prayer at the ordination of ministers is not without effect, because it rests upon a divine command and promise. This is the meaning of Paul's words: "The gift...that is within you through the laying on of...hands."<sup>237</sup>

According to J. A. O. Preus, the apparent practice of Lutheranism in the sixteenth century

was that ordination was reserved for those who served a congregation in some capacity. Those, like Melanchthon and Chytraeus, who spent their entire lives in teaching as the doctors of the church, even though they might preach, were not ordained. Likewise Chemnitz, although he was engaged to serve on the Wittenberg faculty, was not ordained until he received and accepted the call to Braunschweig, which did involve the pastorate of Martin Church.<sup>238</sup>

This does not mean, however, that professors of theology were not in their own way publicly "set apart" for their ministry in the sixteenth century:

An opinion by the theological faculty of Rostock of 1564 on the question "Whether a *doctor theologiae* who himself has not been ordained may administer *sacramenta* and ordain others?" ...admits that "the power publicly to teach and preach the Word of God is the primary and highest part of the holy Ministry [*Predigtamt*]." Ordination, moreover, is "primarily a public witness" that the person to be ordained has been validly called and is qualified in every way, "which testimony" is in some places

given the called Ministers “even without the public ceremony of the imposition of hands.” However, “the public ceremony of the ordination with the imposition of hands is for highly important reasons customary in all churches of these lands, which also the Apostles have observed, Acts 6:13,18,19; I Tim. 4:5; 2 Tim. 1; Heb. 6; etc.” Therefore “it is useful for the maintenance of Christian order, for the unity of the church, and for the dignity of the holy Ministry, that the ordination be maintained uniformly with all persons who are in the ecclesiastical office.”<sup>239</sup>

When a doctorate in theology was formally conferred on a man in the Reformation era, this promotion ritual served as a “public witness” that he had been validly called to his teaching duties, and was qualified for them. It was understood that “the power publicly to teach and preach the Word of God” – which is the primary and highest part of the preaching office – had thereby been entrusted to him, even if “the public ceremony of the imposition of hands” had not been employed on that occasion. And so, according to the standard understanding of the Lutherans of the sixteenth century,

The words of Dr. Georg Major, repeated by Dr. Leonhard Hutter, are very true: that a doctorate is a special testimony of a call to the ministry; that doctoral promotions of theologians are nothing other than a public commendation of the evangelical ministry according to apostolic rite; that the promotion itself is a true, legitimate, and solemn ordination to the ministry. This is the opinion of Luther and of all genuine Lutherans.<sup>240</sup>

Yet it was not only in academic settings where one could find, in the sixteenth century and later, offices of spiritual oversight that did not require the traditional rite of ordination with the laying on of hands. In Leipzig, for example – in the heartland of the Reformation – the arrangement that obtained in the two parish churches of the city (St. Thomas and St. Nicholas) was as follows:

Each church had five clergymen, namely, “four priests, to wit, one pastor, one archdeacon, [and] two deacons, plus a Saturday preacher, who faithfully and tirelessly performed the work of the Lord in teaching, preaching, and administration of the holy sacraments according to Christ’s command and institution.” The “Saturday preachers,” as distinguished from the “four priests,” were unordained clergymen, who had been additionally appointed since 1569 in St. Thomas and 1606 in St. Nicholas, and whose duty it was to conduct Vespers on Saturdays.<sup>241</sup>

But also in the sixteenth century, no one was ordinarily permitted to carry out a ministry of Word *and Sacrament* in a congregational setting if he had not been publicly ordained to that ministry in the conventional way, with the laying on of hands – even if the minister in question had not (yet) completed his formal theological education. In Wittenberg and the Electorate of Saxony, until about 1535,

the early teaching of Luther was followed according to which ordination was nothing else than the confirmation of the call to the ministry in a particular congregation. When a minister had received a call, he was examined on his fitness for the office. Competent persons administered this examination: neighboring ministers; Visitation commissions; Superintendents; et cetera. If he was found to be qualified, he was elected, and then, with prayer and the laying on of hands, commended to the congregation in its presence. The laying on of hands was understood as a gesture of intercession on behalf of the minister. After 1535, ordination, still interpreted as *confirmatio vocationis*, ...was now an act of the church government, performed generally by the Superintendent, with prayer and the laying on of hands, in the presence of the congregation. No candidate for the ministry could be thus ordained, unless he had been called and elected and until he had passed an examination, the examiner being the Superintendent, later the Theological Faculty of the university. ... It took a long time to establish educational standards for the ministers and to enforce them. ... Until 1544, even the Theological Faculty at Wittenberg admitted poorly educated men, even mere artisans, to ordination. Many theological students did not finish the full course of study but were nevertheless assigned to parishes. At the middle of the sixteenth century, most churches of the Reformation had, in fact, a ministry of two ranks, one of trained and one of untrained men. The former, many of whom held the theological doctor's degree or a lower academic title, became parish ministers in the towns or court preachers. ... Many of the country preachers were poorly trained. For a long time, it was customary to examine those who wanted to qualify for service in rural parishes much less strictly than those who aspired toward ministerial positions in the towns. When a country parson wanted to be transferred to a town parish, he had to submit to a new examination.<sup>242</sup>

In the seventeenth century, when educational standards for pastoral ministry (and for ordination thereto) were adhered to more consistently, the Lutheran dogmatician Johann Conrad Dannhauer asked and answered this question:

Is ordination necessary for conscience's sake? It certainly is necessary, but not because of any necessity of purpose and means (as though the purpose in view could be accomplished only by this means)... Nevertheless, it is necessary according to the requirement of the necessity of an apostolic and positive (not moral) command: "Set apart [for Me Barnabas and Saul]" (Acts 13:2), and an ancient apostolic custom (1 Timothy 5:21). Similarly, according to the necessity, which is imposed from the resulting benefit, that *the examined and unexamined teachers of the church can be distinguished, so that a certain [man named] Besold may not rightfully complain that "the Lutherans often use as vicars certain scholars who are not yet ordained with the laying on of hands, permitting them to hear confession, feed the sick, and administer their [Lord's] Supper."* ... Who, then, is the opponent of order who superciliously despises this rite? He is neither peaceful, because he goes against the church [*Kirche*], nor conscientious, because he regards as worthless the means that serve to calm consciences; rather, he is headstrong.<sup>243</sup>

Kaehler admits that the seventeenth-century dogmatician Hieronymus Kromayer seems to contradict Dannhauer's position, when Kromayer reports (without objection) that "In some places, as in the region of Württemberg, as well as from time to time even here in Swabian churches, students of theology administer the sacraments."<sup>244</sup> Kaehler believes, however, that

This apparent contradiction with the earlier citation from Dannhauer is solved by the following text found in the Wittenberg Judgments: "In many Württemberg, Schwabish, Alsatian, and other highland churches of the Augsburg Confession, it is customary that such *actiones sacrae* (preaching, administering the sacraments, comforting the sick, burying) are committed to ordained students of theology who do not yet have a parish or place of their own as helpers of the regular clergy."<sup>245</sup>

A similar issue was raised among Lutherans in nineteenth-century America in regard to the "licensure" practice of some synods, whereby a not-yet-ordained man who had been studying for the Ministry was authorized on a probationary basis – generally for one year at a time – to preach and administer the sacraments within a certain parish, under the supervision of the synod. Referring to the high standards for the pastoral ministry that were set forth by Brochmand in the seventeenth century, Walther, of the Missouri Synod, strongly disagreed with this practice:

To the question: "Is he to be considered sufficiently equipped with the gifts necessary for the office who has learned something of the Latin language and can recite from memory sermons drawn from the writings of others?" the Danish theologian Brochmand answers: "By no means. For, *first*, the whole Word of God should be thoroughly known to a true servant of the divine Word (Mal. 2:7; Matt. 13:52; 2 Tim. 1:13; 3:14-15,17). *Second*, a servant of the divine Word should be so familiar with holy Scripture that he understands how to apply the same wisely to his listeners with respect to time, place, and various circumstances according to that statement of Paul in 2 Tim. 2:15: 'Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.' *Third*, he who is to be considered worthy of the holy office must have made such progress in God's Word that he can give account of that which he teaches when that is required of him and that he can stop the mouths of those who contradict, as Paul reminds in Titus 1:9." To the question: "Can those who, in the examination, are found not to be equipped with the knowledge of the articles of faith and of the holy Scripture which is necessary and sufficient for the holy office, nevertheless be ordained and admitted to the holy office, but with the condition that they make the sacred promise to be diligent and careful in learning?" the same [Brochmand] answers: "Not at all. For *first*, Paul does not permit someone to be entrusted with the holy office who is not qualified to teach and powerful to stop the mouths of those who contradict the truth (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9). *Second*, the Spirit of God explicitly reminds that one who could lay hands on an insufficiently qualified person would be making himself a participant in the sins of another (1 Tim. 5:22). *Third*, experience testifies only too abundantly that those who are admitted to the holy office without education remain in their uneducated condition even if they have promised diligence in learning. *Fourth*, how could we answer God if many of the listeners would be lost before the pastor learned what he should impress upon others? (Ezek. 33:1ff.)" (*System. Univers. Th.*, Loc. 30, c. 3, Tom. II, fol. 372, 375). From that it is to be seen how un-Biblical, how unscrupulous and soul-killing a thing is the so-called licensing system which is still practiced here in some synods. According to that system, those whom one does not dare to ordain to the office because they have not been proven or because they lack the fitness for the office, are given only a so-called license, on the basis of which they should work in a congregation on probation.<sup>246</sup>



In contrast, Jacobs defended the “licensure” practice – even though the Pennsylvania Ministerium, to which he belonged,<sup>247</sup> had by then already abandoned it. He saw the “licentiate” of earlier times as a permissible “grade” of the Ministry, in keeping with the teaching of Gerhard on that topic. Jacobs wrote:

There is no divine law designating a certain number of grades and perpetually imposing them upon the Church. Nevertheless the importance of order and organization is clearly taught, and this necessitates the subordination of equals to each other for the welfare of the entire spiritual body of believers. Some become *primi inter pares*. “1. Although in the ministry, there are diverse orders, nevertheless the power of the ministry in preaching the Word and administering the Sacraments, and the power of jurisdiction consisting in the use of the Keys, belongs equally to all ministers; and, therefore, the Word preached, the Sacraments administered and the absolution announced by one lawfully called to the ministry, even though he be of the lowest grade of the ministry, are just as valid and efficacious, as though preached, administered and announced by the highest bishop, prophet or apostle. For as the diversity of gifts, so also that of grades does not change the force or efficacy of the doctrine and Sacraments (1 Cor. 3:5,7; 2 Cor. 12:9; Gal. 2:8). 2. The diversity of grades depends indeed upon divine law, both ‘by reason of genus,’ so far as a distinction of grades is necessary for good order and tranquility in the Church; and ‘by reason of gifts,’ so far as by the variety and diversity of gifts, God declares that He wishes that there should be distinct grades among the ministers; and ‘by reason of certain grades in particular,’ in so far as He Himself distinguished and preferred the office of prophets and apostles to that of others. Nevertheless it cannot be said absolutely and generally concerning all grades of the ministry, that their institution and distinction depend upon divine institution, inasmuch as these grades, in a fixed and necessary number, have neither been prescribed by God, nor used by the apostles, in like manner as the Sacraments have been restricted to the number two by divine institution and Apostolic practice; but liberty has been left to the Church, with respect to circumstances, viz., of time and place, in any Church organization, to establish either more or fewer grades among ministers” (Gerhard, VI, 137, 138). For these reasons, the practice of licensing candidates for the ministry for several years prior to their ordination, which was long the custom in the Lutheran Church of America, was entirely legitimate and valid.<sup>248</sup>

We should add that even Walther conceded that it is permissible for unordained students of theology to deliver sermons in public worship services *under certain circumstances*, without thereby inviting upon themselves Dannhauer's "headstrong" malediction. Walther writes, "Regarding students and candidates who also occasionally preach," that

these men preach in order to maintain the order of the preaching office, not to overturn it. Their sermons are exercises, preparations, and examinations so that in the future, they may be placed into and established in the preaching office. They do this therefore not as laymen, but as Tertullian says, as "episcopi aut presbyteri aut diaconi discentes" (bishops or elders or deacons in the process of learning)... To that end it happens that their sermons are thoroughly evaluated.<sup>249</sup>

Most properly, a theological student's sermons are "thoroughly evaluated" not only *as* or *after* they are preached, but also *before* they are preached. In a certain sense, therefore, the student is not "preaching" a sermon as much as he is *delivering* a sermon that has been approved in advance by a pastor or professor. The ordained minister who reviews the manuscript of such a sermon, and who makes any necessary corrections or improvements in it before the student is allowed to deliver it, thereby validates the soundness of the sermon as an extension of his own teaching and preaching office. The student in such a case does not validate the soundness of his own sermon.

The occasional use of a "lay reader" - who in the absence of a pastor is authorized to deliver an approved sermon or a sermon written by a pastor in a Lutheran "Service of the Word" - is very similar to this kind of arrangement. Emergencies excepted, the service of a lay reader is supervised in a way that is very similar to how a theological student's service is supervised. The use of lay readers was more common than it is today, in the frontier conditions within which many Lutheran congregations struggled to survive and function in earlier periods of American history.<sup>250</sup> Times of persecution - such as occurred in the Hapsburg domains in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and in the Soviet Union in the twentieth century - have also been occasions when lay readers filled a necessary role in the very survival of the Lutheran Church.



## 13.

***“They offer the Word of Christ or the sacraments...  
in the stead and place of Christ”***

Those who have been solemnly called (and ordained) to the Lord’s service do not, in their public ministry, merely represent themselves, and their own human opinions and carnal whims. (Neither do they represent the opinions and whims of the members of the congregation or ecclesiastical agency through which they were called.) Rather, in the words of the Apology, they “represent the person of Christ on account of the call of the church and do not represent their own persons, as Christ himself testifies [Luke 10:16], ‘Whoever listens to you listens to me.’ When they offer the Word of Christ or the sacraments, they offer them *in the stead and place of Christ*.”<sup>251</sup> As “young people” in general are taught in the Large Catechism to “revere their parents as God’s representatives,”<sup>252</sup> so too should Christians in particular revere the “spiritual fathers” whom God has placed over and among them as his representatives. And as the Apology elsewhere teaches (on the basis of St. Paul’s First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians),

the one minister who consecrates gives the body and blood of the Lord to the rest of the people, just as a minister who preaches sets forth the gospel to the people, as Paul says [1 Cor. 4:1], “Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God’s mysteries [God’s sacraments],” that is, of the gospel and the sacraments. And 2 Corinthians 5:20, “So *we are ambassadors for Christ*, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you *on behalf of Christ*, be reconciled to God. ...”<sup>253</sup>

In the original Latin of the Apology as cited above, St. Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 4:1 appear as follows: *Sic nos existimet homo tamquam ministros Christi dispensatores sacramentorum Dei*.<sup>254</sup> This was Melanchthon’s own rendering from the Greek. He did not here employ the standard Vulgate translation of this verse. This suggests that he was not satisfied with the Vulgate translation: *sic nos existimet homo ut ministros Christi et dispensatores mysteriorum Dei*. The most noticeable difference between Melanchthon’s rendering and the Vulgate

rendering is that the Vulgate had simply transliterated the Greek term μυστηρίων [*mysteriōn*] or “mysteries,” while Melancthon *translated* that term, as *sacramentorum* or “sacraments.” In view of this deliberate added precision in translation, the Apology would seem to be presenting this verse to us as an inspired statement specifically concerning the administration of the New Testament means of grace, with the understanding that this is the definitive task that God entrusts to his called “stewards.”

According to the traditional, pre-Reformation interpretation, the word “mysteries,” as it is used in this passage, is indeed synonymous with the word “sacraments.” At the beginning of his treatise on “The Mysteries,” for example, St. Ambrose tells his catechumens that the time has come “to speak of the mysteries and to set forth the very purpose of the sacraments.”<sup>255</sup> The Apology does not reject this understanding, although it does add the important clarifying point that the “mysteries of God” are more fully to be understood as “the gospel and the sacraments” – that is, as the means of grace in general. And perhaps this will also help us to remember – and more faithfully to put into practice! – Lutheranism’s uniquely “sacramental” theology of preaching:

To the Lutheran the sermon, as the preached Word, is a means of grace. Through it the Holy Spirit calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth. It is a constant offer of pardon; a giving of life, as well as a nourishing and strengthening of life. In the Reformed churches the sermon is apt to be more hortatory and ethical. It partakes more of the sacrificial than of the sacramental character. The individuality of the preacher, the subjective choice of a text, the using of it merely for a motto, the discussion of secular subjects, the unrestrained platform style, lack of reverence, lack of dignity, and many other faults are common, and are not regarded as unbecoming the messenger of God in His temple. Where there is a properly trained Lutheran consciousness such things repel, shock, and are not tolerated.<sup>256</sup>

In a sermon from 1521, Luther himself had said, in regard to the “stewards” of 1 Corinthians 4:1, that “The reference is to all apostles and all heirs to the apostolic chair, whether Peter, Paul or any other.” More specifically, he had said that what St. Paul writes here “concerning apostles applies to bishops” in our own time. Luther then expanded on this by explaining that

The word “steward” here signifies one who has charge of his

lord's domestics... For "oekonomus" is Greek and signifies in [German] a steward, or one capable of providing for a house and ruling the domestics. ... Now, God's household is the Christian Church - ourselves. It includes pastors and bishops, overseers and stewards, whose office is to have charge of the household, to provide nourishment for it and to direct its members, but in a spiritual sense. ...the stewards of God...provide spiritual food and exercise control over souls. Paul calls the spiritual food "mysteries."<sup>257</sup>

Two years later, in expressing his opinion on the unsuitability of the title "priest" for the church's ministers of Word and Sacrament, Luther had also written that

we neither can nor ought to give the name *priest* to those who are in charge of Word and sacrament among the people. ... According to the New Testament Scriptures better names would be ministers, deacons, bishops, stewards, presbyters (a name often used and indicating the older members). For thus Paul writes in I Cor. 4[:1], "This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God."<sup>258</sup>

We would remember as well that in Titus 1:7, St. Paul says that a bishop or overseer is "God's steward." In lecturing on that passage, in 1527, Luther had said that

A bishop, that is a minister of the Word, ...is the steward to whom the Lord has entrusted everything. If a bishop thinks about his calling, he sees that he is a bishop by the rite, the oracle, and the command of God, and, secondly, that he has in his hand the possession and the property of Christ. What is that? *It is the Gospel and the sacraments*. He has been appointed a minister of the Word for this, that he should distribute these things...to his brethren, that is, that he should diligently preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments, instruct the ignorant, exhort the instructed, rebuke those who misbehave, moderating and tempering them by the Word and ministering to them with prayer and the sacraments.<sup>259</sup>

In contrast to this narrower Pauline usage of the term "steward," St. Peter - in his First Epistle - employs the term according to a *broader* meaning, as pertaining not only to pastors and bishops, but also to others in the church who have been entrusted by God with a "gift" or office of service. He writes: "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: who-

ever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies – in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ” (4:10-11b, ESV).

Luther does apply this text to public preachers in his “Lectures on Jonah,” where he states:

You who are to preach, impress these two points on your minds! Note them well! They are directed to you and the people; they enable you to instruct souls. Peter also emphasized these two facts (1 Peter 4:11): “Whoever speaks, as one who utters oracles of God; whoever renders service, as one who renders it by the strength which God supplies,” so that he may be sure that both the Word and the office are divine and commanded by God.<sup>260</sup>

Still, since this passage is not in the section of St. Peter’s epistle that is addressed specifically to “the elders among you” (1 Peter 5:1 ff.), the apostle’s comments about “stewards of God’s varied grace” would not seem to be *exclusively* applicable to public preachers, even if they might be *preeminently* applicable to them. Luther himself states, in his commentary on “Psalm 110,” that “the Christians, the people of the New Testament,” are the ones who are adorned with “the beautiful, divine, and various gifts of the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul (Eph. 4:11,12) and St. Peter (1 Peter 4:10) say, which were given to Christendom to advance the knowledge and the praise of God, a function which is carried out pre-eminently by the ministry of preaching the Gospel.”<sup>261</sup> And so, in this broader Petrine usage of the term “steward,” anyone who has been entrusted with an ecclesiastical office that involves in some way the “speaking” of God’s Word – including catechists and religion teachers in parochial schools – may be understood to be a “steward” of that office, and of the Word of God within that office.<sup>262</sup>

The Formula of Concord declares that those who are called by God to govern the church by the Word are obligated not only to feed and nurture the church, but also, “in a time when confession is necessary, as when the enemies of God’s Word want to suppress the pure teaching of the holy gospel, the entire community of God, indeed, every Christian, especially [the] servants [ministers] of the Word<sup>263</sup> as the leaders of the community of God, are obligated according to God’s Word to confess true teaching and everything that pertains to the whole of religion freely and publicly.”<sup>264</sup> The Latin version of the Formula is even more explicit regarding the authority of the church’s pastoral overseers. Where the German version of this confession (quoted above) says that “[the] servants [ministers] of the

Word as the leaders of the community of God" are obligated to confess true teaching, the Latin version says that "the ministry of the Word of God, as those whom the Lord appointed to *rule* his church," are obligated to confess true teaching.<sup>265</sup> Pastors *lead* the church by *ruling* the church. Christians are accordingly directed by Scripture to "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account" (Hebrews 13:17a, ESV). St. Paul similarly writes: "We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work" (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13a, ESV). But at the same time, all concerned must also remember that in the church

The power of spiritual government is *God's Word alone*, not a word backed by the sword of civil power but the Word which is the "sword of the Spirit" (Eph. 6:17). Since Christ comes among his people through the Word committed to the church and since the Holy Spirit is given to men through his Word, this Word is God's power and spiritual energy. Therefore the power of the church and its government... "is used and exercised only through the office of preaching" (A.C. XXVIII, 10), without external force.<sup>266</sup>

It is certainly not a worldly and carnal kind of "ruling" that is in view here (cf. Matthew 20:25-28).

Jacobs explains that, from one perspective,

the Ministry is *over* the Church, Heb. xiii. 7-17; 1 Thess. v. 12; 1 Tim. v. 17. For the Word which it ministers is over the Church. It exercises functions allowable to no members of the Church until they be called and recognized as ministers.

From another perspective, however, the Ministry "is *beneath* the Church, for it seeks through this ministration (diaconia), to serve the interests, not of the ministers, but of those entrusted to their care, and is dependent on their call, 2 Cor. 4:5; Matt. 20:25, etc." And from yet another perspective, the Ministry "is *co-ordinate and alongside* of the Church, as it co-operates in every good word and work, of all the members of the Church, and seeks their prayers, interest and co-operation in all its efforts to discharge the duties of the holy office. Ministry and people act and react on each other in all the work assigned to the Church by its Head."<sup>267</sup>

Carl Manthey-Zorn was an influential Missouri Synod pastor and writer in the early twentieth century. He recognized from Scrip-

ture that God providentially gives us spiritual fathers to govern and guide us by the Word of God, in a *multiplicity* of forms, grades, and manifestations of the office of spiritual oversight, for the good of his church. Manthey-Zorn offers some helpful exegetical and practical insights into the doctrine of the Ministry when he writes that

the words of the Apostle Paul, 2 Tim. 4,1-5, ...were originally addressed to Timothy, the faithful companion and assistant of the apostle. But as such, Timothy had the same duties as our pastors and teachers [1 Tim. 4,12-16], missionaries [Acts 19,22], visitors [1 Cor. 4,17], synodical presidents [1 Tim. 1,3], and professors [2 Tim 2,2]. Hence these words are addressed to *all* faithful and righteous servants of the Word, yes, to all *faithful and righteous* servants of the Word who would be like Timothy. ... All these – pastors, teachers, missionaries, visitors, synodical presidents, professors – are “servants of the *Word*.” They are to do their heaven-appointed work by means of the *Word of God*. They are “*stewards of God*” [Titus 1,7]. As stewards of God they are to administer that which God has graciously given His Church, the *Word of God*. Therefore we say: They are to do their work by means of the *Word of God*. According to Scripture their duties are the following: They are to teach the Word of God [1 Tim. 5,17], to feed the Church of God with the Word of God [Acts 20,28], and to take care of the Church with it [1 Tim. 3,5]. As teachers they are to speak the Word of God [Heb. 13,7], with it watch for the souls entrusted to their care [Heb. 13,17], exhort and rule them [Rom. 12,8], with it labor among them, be over them, and admonish them [1 Thess. 5,12], with it edify the “body of Christ” [Eph. 4,11-12]. Thus God, “according to His dispensation,” wants the stewardship administered [Col. 1, 25]. Then, and then alone, are they truly stewards of God: “ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God” [1 Cor. 4,1]. The servants of the Word are to do their work by means of the Word of God and nothing but the Word of God. The Word of God defines all their official duties, rights, and activities. God’s Word *limits* their office [Matt. 23,6-12]. It is of the greatest importance that this be borne in mind at all times. To arrogate to oneself more than the public administration of this office in the service of the Church of God is antichristian...<sup>268</sup>





#### 14.

#### *“The ministry strictly speaking, and the ministry in a wider sense”*

In the foregoing exposition and application of the Large Catechism’s teaching regarding the “spiritual fathers” of the church, we have been speaking of the Public Ministry of the Gospel, or the Ecclesiastical Ministry, in its strict or narrower sense. But when the church’s Public “Ministry” is considered according to a wider sense of the term, its meaning would be broadened to include also various “helping offices” or “limited offices” that assist in, or directly support, the public administration of the means of grace; or that carry out certain limited aspects of the public administration of the means of grace, not involving full pastoral oversight, and not requiring full pastoral competency. These other offices do not carry out a ministry of “spiritual fatherhood” as the Large Catechism would define it. Those who serve in such offices do not “govern and guide us by the Word of God” in the way that pastors and preachers do. But these other offices are nevertheless still to be regarded as churchly and spiritual offices.

Within the Synodical Conference tradition of American Lutheranism, Kaehler is the classic expositor of the distinction between the Public Ministry in the narrower sense and the Public Ministry in the wider sense. He writes:

The public preaching office is an office of the word. ... The rights given with the office of the word (in the narrower sense) are: the authority to preach the gospel, to administer the sacraments, and the authority of spiritual jurisdiction. ... When we use the phrase “in the narrow sense”...we want to indicate that there are essential and derived rights of the preaching office. The derived rights belong to the ministry of the word in the wider sense... All essential parts of the office of the word can be subsumed into the above mentioned powers (Mt 29:19-20; Jn 20:21-23; Jn 21:15-16; 1 Cor 4:1 ...). ... There are ministries that are indeed necessary to the governance of the church and therefore belong to the preaching office in the wider sense, which however do not necessarily involve the conducting of the office in the narrower sense. ...the

offices of the church of the higher order, as Scripture itself enumerates them, flow out of the apostles' ministry, the preaching office of today, and have their root in it. ... Evangelists, pastors, elders and deacons do not occupy offices that from time to time were newly instituted by God. Rather they were instituted at the same time in and with the apostles' office. Also the offices of the church of the lower order are the products of two factors, the office of apostle and the congregation. While these offices were offshoots of the apostolate so they were also necessary to the governance of the congregation. In the beginning the apostles oversaw all the offices of the congregation. The administration of the material goods of the congregation was entirely in their hands. Also the care of those in need, especially the widows, with bodily goods and other requirements of bodily support was their duty. ... Because of the continual growth of the congregation the twelve were not able to care for all the parts of the holy office in like fashion. They asked the congregation therefore to designate men who had good reputations and were full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom so that a part of the present load of the apostles' office could be committed to them. In accordance with this, the congregation chose seven deacons whose duty primarily was the care of the poor and administration of physical goods in the congregation. These ministers, whose moral qualifications are listed by St. Paul in 1 Timothy 3:8-13, whether they occupy the office of elder in the narrow sense (πρεσβυτεροι) or the ministry of ruling (προισταμενοι, ηγουμενοι) or the office of deacon (διακονοι) (Rom 12:8; Heb 13: 7,17,24 and similar verses), bear a part of the office of the church and stand at the side of the office of the church κατ' εξοχην, the preaching office. Therefore the offices of the rulers, elders, assistants to the poor, the school teachers, sacristans, and cantors in our congregations are likewise to be considered as holy ecclesiastical [*kirchlich*] offices. Still these offices in no way involve the conducting of the preaching office in the narrow sense. Already at the institution of the diaconate the apostles explicitly kept the office of the word for themselves (Acts 6:4). The deacons could "acquire a good rank for themselves" (1 Tim 3:13), and also become qualified for the preaching office in the narrow sense. Still herein it is stated that in and of themselves they in no way were already authorized for the conducting of the preaching office.<sup>269</sup>

Kaehler goes on to elaborate specifically on the character of the ecclesiastical office of "lay-elder" in such a way as to show that he considers this office to be a "helping office" (which performs "helping ministries" in the church), even though he previously had said that it

was an office to which “a part of the office of the church” had been entrusted. He writes: “When it is clear that the ministry of the word κατ’ ἐξοχὴν includes everything that is necessary for the ruling of the congregation, but on the other hand the so-called office of elder in no way involves the conducting of the preaching office *sensu strictiori*, then the office of elder must be comprised of helping ministries [*Hilfsdienste*] which can be administered by those who thereby do not become preachers and who do not have the authorization to administer the office of the word and sacraments.”<sup>270</sup>

Kaehler was strongly influenced by the theology of Walther, although he did introduce some additional clarifications in his teaching – such as the narrower sense / wider sense distinction explicitly stated and developed; and the distinction between “essential” and “derived” rights or functions of the ministry of the Word – that had not previously been featured in Walther’s writings. Walther had said that

with the apostolate the Lord has established in the Church only one office, which embraces all offices of the Church, and by which the congregation of God is to be provided for in every respect. The highest office is the ministry of preaching, with which all other offices are simultaneously conferred. Therefore every other public office in the Church is merely a part of the office of the ministry [*Predigtamt*], or an auxiliary office, which is attached to the ministry of preaching [*Predigtamt*] whether it be the eldership of such as do not labor in the Word and doctrine, 1 Tim. 1: 15, or that of rulers [*Vorsteher*], Rom. 12:8, or the diaconate (ministry of service in the narrower sense) or the administration of whatever office in the Church may be assigned to particular persons. Accordingly, the office of schoolteachers who have to teach the Word of God in their schools, of almoners, of sextons, of precentors in public worship, etc., are all to be regarded as sacred offices of the Church, which exercise a part of the one office of the church and are aids to the ministry of preaching.<sup>271</sup>

Walther writes elsewhere that “When Christ separated the holy apostles unto their office...he established the church office (*Kirchenamt*) or ministry of the Word or office of soul care (*Seelsorgeramt*) above all.”<sup>272</sup> This shows us that, in Walther’s usage, “church office” and “ministry of the Word” are essentially synonymous in meaning. Any genuinely *ecclesiastical* office is an office that in some way carries out the administration of *God’s Word* to others, or that at least in some way *directly facilitates and supports* the administration of *God’s Word* to others (as would be the case with certain diaconal offices). When

Walther says, therefore, that “every other public office in the Church is merely a part of the office of the ministry [*Predigtamt*], or an auxiliary office, which is attached to the ministry of preaching [*Predigtamt*],” he is *not* thereby laying out two categories of church office beyond the (comprehensive) preaching office: offices that have only “a part of the office of the ministry,” rather than the *whole* office of the ministry; and “auxiliary” offices that do not have the “ministry” in whole *or* in part. Instead, he is describing the *one* category of non-pastoral ecclesiastical offices *from two different perspectives*. These evangelical offices are “auxiliary” to the preaching office in the narrow sense, because that aspect of the “ministry of the Word” that they are authorized to carry out represents only a limited “part” of the ministry that preachers are authorized to carry out *fully*.<sup>273</sup>

If an office is not responsible for at least some small “part” of the “ministry of the Word,” then it is not an *ecclesiastical* office at all! For example, when a congregation hires someone to perform strictly secular work – such as a groundskeeper to mow the lawn and trim the shrubbery, or a carpenter or mason to build an addition onto the church building – it is not thereby establishing an ecclesiastical “auxiliary” office. If the duties of a position of responsibility are not in some way “marked” by the marks of the church, then that position of responsibility is not a churchly office. It is not a part of the “Ministry” of the church in *any* sense of the term.

More recently, Marquart has endorsed the use of this narrower sense / wider sense distinction, and Kaehler’s way of explaining these matters in particular. He writes that Kaehler’s treatment of the doctrine is “Very illuminating and significant.” He is especially impressed by Kaehler’s distinction “between ‘essential’ and ‘derived’ functions of the ministry (*Predigtamt*), and therefore between the ministry strictly speaking, and the ministry in a wider sense, the latter including non-teaching deacons, lay elders, and school-teachers.”<sup>274</sup> Elsewhere Marquart reiterates his belief that, “applied to the ministry, ...the ‘wide/narrow’ dichotomy can make very good sense.”<sup>275</sup>

The ELS statement on the doctrine of the Ministry is structured according to a distinction between the Public Ministry of the Word “in a narrower sense” and the Public Ministry of the Word “in a wider sense.” In its explication of the *narrower* sense or meaning of “Public Ministry of the Word” – which pertains to the spiritual work of “The Pastoral Office in its Various Manifestations” – the statement says that

The church is commanded to appoint ministers who will preside over the churches (2 Timothy 2:2, Titus 1:5, Ap XIII, 12), who must have the scriptural qualifications for a full use of the keys...

(Treatise 60-61). God commands that properly called men publicly preach, teach, administer the sacraments, forgive and retain sins, and have oversight of doctrine in the name of Christ and the church (1 Timothy 2:11-12). Therefore a presiding office, whether it is called that of pastor, shepherd, bishop, presbyter, elder or by any other name, is indispensable for the church (Luke 10:16, 1 Corinthians 12:27-31, Matthew 28:18-20, Hebrews 13:17, Acts 20:28, Ephesians 4:11-12, 1 Peter 5:1-2). We reject any teaching that denies the exercise of spiritual oversight by the pastoral office.

In its explication of the *wider* sense or meaning of “Public Ministry of the Word” – which pertains to the spiritual work of the pastoral office as well as to the spiritual work of those “limited offices” that “the church, in her freedom, may establish” – the statement says that

Authorization to exercise a limited part of the Public Ministry of the Word does not imply authorization to exercise all or other parts of it. ... We reject any teaching that makes the office of the Lutheran elementary school teacher, Sunday school teacher or any other limited office in the church equivalent to the pastoral office.

Examples of such non-pastoral “limited offices” are “vicars, principals, Lutheran elementary school teachers and other teachers.”<sup>276</sup>



## 15.

***“The deacons are...a part of the officials of the church, taking a share in the ministry”***

As we noted earlier, the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope teaches that the distinction between presbyters and bishops is by human right. However, the Treatise significantly does *not* teach that the distinction between presbyters/bishops and *deacons* is by human right. In the time of St. Jerome – that is, in the fourth and fifth centuries – the deacons (and archdeacons) served as liturgical assistants to the pastors (the bishops and presbyters), and were authorized to carry out certain limited aspects of the work of the ministry. But they were not themselves pastors – on the same footing as bishops and presbyters as ministers of Word and Sacrament in the strict sense. Chemnitz explains that at this time in history,

The bishop taught the Word of God and had charge of the church’s discipline. The presbyters taught and administered the sacraments. The deacons were in charge of the treasuries of the church, in order from them to provide sustenance for the poor and in particular for the ministers of the church. Afterward the deacons also began to be employed for assisting with a certain part of the ministry of the bishop and the presbyters, as also Jerome testifies, *ad Rusticum*, such as for reading something publicly from the Scriptures, for teaching, exhorting, etc., admonishing the people to be attentive, to turn their hearts to the Lord, to proclaim peace, to prepare the things which belong to the administration of the sacraments, distribute the sacraments to the people, take those who are to be ordained to the bishop, to remind bishops about matters which pertain to discipline, etc.<sup>277</sup>

Even though such deacons did perform certain spiritual and churchly duties, and sometimes *assisted* the bishops and presbyters in the performance of *their* pastoral duties, these deacons did not *themselves* perform essentially pastoral duties on their own. For example, while they might assist in the *distribution* of the Lord’s Supper, they did not *officiate* at celebrations of the sacrament. They did not consecrate the elements, and were not in charge of making pastoral judgments

about who should or should not be admitted to the sacrament:

Chrysostom says that the priest stands daily at the altar, inviting some to Communion and keeping others away. And it is apparent from the ancient canons that one person celebrated the Mass, from whom the rest of the presbyters and deacons received the body of Christ. For the words of the Nicene canon read: "Let the deacons receive Holy Communion in order after the presbyters from the bishop or from a presbyter."<sup>278</sup>

The deacons of the early church are therefore not included in the Treatise among those who, *by divine right*, "preside" over or in the churches - that is, who serve as "spiritual fathers" in the church, and who "govern and guide" the church by the Word of God. This special and necessary role is filled by the church's "pastors, presbyters, or bishops."

Krauth demonstrates a good grasp of the history of the Christian Diaconate when he notes that the "deacons" of the apostolic and patristic age are not themselves pastors or "ministers of the Word" in the narrow sense of the term, but exercise instead a

diaconate of aid, which is meant to relieve the diaconate of the Word, from the collateral burdens and distractions, which interfere with its great distinctive duties. (Acts vi. 1-4.) The deacons received power and entered on duties originally held and exercised by the Apostles as pastors of the Church at Jerusalem. The office was created by a separation of certain powers and duties of the ministry, and devolving them on a new class of officials. The deacons are...a part of the officials of the Church, taking a share in the ministry and being in that broader sense ministers; aiding the pastoral ministry in its work by taking upon them, in conformity with the instructions of the Church, such collateral portions of the work as do not require the most important and special powers of the pastor and teacher. (Acts vi. 1-6; Phil. i. 1; 1 Tim. iii. 8-12.) The true original conception of the deacon is that of the pastor's executive aid. ... Deacons were not originally appointed to preach the Gospel, or to administer the Sacraments, or to bear official part in the government of the Church. They are in their proper intent executive aids of the ministry, in its collateral labors, or in the incidental, not essential, parts of its proper work. ... Deacons are not ministers in the specific or stricter sense, nor are they essential to the organization of every congregation. ... So far as is not inconsistent in any manner or degree with the sole direct Divine authority of the ministry of the Word to teach publicly in the Church and to administer the Sacra-

ments, nor with the rights and duties inseparably connected therewith, the Church has liberty to enlarge the functions of the diaconate in keeping with its original generic idea, so as to make it, in accordance with her increasing needs, a more efficient executive aid to her ministers. In the Ancient Church, enlarging in her liberty the functions of the deacons, as executive aids to the ministry of the Word in the service of the Church, the deacons took care of the sacred utensils employed in the sacraments; they received the contributions of the people, and conveyed them to the pastor; they took part in reading the Scriptures in public worship; at the request of the pastor they might take part in the *distribution* (not in the consecration) of the elements; they helped to preserve order and decorum in the service of the sanctuary; they furnished to the pastor information that would be useful to him in his labors – they were his almoners – in short, they were the executive aids of the minister of the Word, in the closest relations of official reverence, and of faithful service to him...

Krauth contrasts this ancient understanding – which was the understanding of St. Jerome – with the “modern usage in the Lutheran Church of Germany,” according to which “the deacons are ordained, assistant, pastors, conjoined under various limitations with the chief pastor.”<sup>279</sup>

In explaining the historic origins of what we now often describe as ecclesiastical “helping offices” or “limited offices” – such as the office of a deacon in the early church – Chemnitz observes in Part II of his *Examination of the Council of Trent* that

in the beginning the apostles took care of the ministry of the Word and the sacraments and at the same time also of the distribution and dispensation of alms. Afterward, however, as the number of disciples increased, they entrusted that part of the ministry which has to do with alms to others, whom they called deacons. They also state the reason why they do this – that they might be able to devote themselves more diligently to the ministry of the Word and to prayer, without diversions. (Acts 6:1-4) This first origin of ranks or orders of ministry in the apostolic church shows what ought to be the cause, what the reason, purpose, and use of such ranks or orders – that for the welfare of the assembly of the church the individual duties which belong to the ministry might be attended to more conveniently, rightly, diligently, and orderly, with a measure of dignity and for edification. And because the apostles afterward accepted into the ministry of teaching those from among the deacons who were approved, as Stephen and Philip, we gather that this also is a use of



these ranks or orders, that men are first prepared or tested in minor duties so that afterward heavier duties may more safely and profitably be entrusted to them.<sup>280</sup>

The concept of “ranks or orders of ministry” in Lutheran usage actually has a twofold application. More narrowly, it refers to *specializations within* the office of spiritual “fatherhood” or pastoral oversight. More broadly, it refers not only to these pastoral specializations, but also to other *distinct offices*, which have been “branched off” or *extracted from* the more fundamental office of spiritual oversight, for the focused performance of certain limited or supplemental ministerial duties.

Chytraeus observes that, in the New Testament, “Paul calls the ministers of the church – those in charge of preaching the Word and administering the sacraments – ... ‘ministers,’ ‘pastors,’ ‘bishops,’ ‘deacons,’ ‘elders,’ ‘stewards,’ ‘servants,’ etc.” He also observes that “Paul does not differentiate bishops, presbyters, and pastors; he assigns precisely equal dignity of rank and the same office to presbyters and to bishops – and it is in fact clear that there were many such in individual towns.” Later, however,

by human authority, ranks were established among the ministers and bishops, and within the presbyterate there appeared the ostiary, the psalmist, the lector, the exorcist, the acolyte, the subdeacon, the deacon, and the priest. One bishop – or overseer, or superintendent – was placed in charge of many presbyters or pastors of individual churches. An archbishop, or metropolitan, came to exercise authority over the bishops.

Chytraeus does not consider these historical developments in themselves to be corruptions of the Ministry. He states, rather, that “This episcopal order and the ranks connected with it...should not be disparaged when they serve to uphold the unity and harmony of the church in true evangelical doctrine and the preservation of Christian discipline and peace; when they maintain and spread right doctrine and reverent worship of God; when they do not claim that they possess the illicit power to interpret Scripture arbitrarily, to establish new articles of faith, to legislate in matters of doctrine and worship; and when they do not assume tyrannical authority over the other members of the church; etc.”<sup>281</sup>

In his own discussion of the various “ranks or orders of ministry” that existed in the apostolic and ancient church, Chemnitz describes positions of responsibility to which the “heavier duties” of pastoral care were entrusted, and positions of responsibility to which

only “minor duties” were entrusted. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, bishops, presbyters, teachers, confessors, deacons, subdeacons, catechists, lectors, psalmists, cantors, doorkeepers, acolytes, and exorcists are mentioned.<sup>282</sup> Chemnitz notes that

such orders were free at the time of the apostles and were observed for the sake of good order, decorum, and edification, except that at that time certain special gifts, such as tongues, prophecies, apostolate, and miracles, were bestowed on certain persons by God. These ranks...were not something beside and beyond the ministry of the Word and sacraments, but the real and true duties of the ministry were distributed among certain ranks... This example of the apostles the primitive church imitated... This distribution of ranks in the more populous churches was useful for the sake of order, for decorum, and for edification by reason of the duties which belong to the ministry. In the smaller or less populous churches such a distribution of ranks was not judged necessary, and also in the more populous churches a like or identical distribution of these ranks was not everywhere observed. *For this reason, for this use, and with this freedom many of these ranks of the ancient church are preserved also among us.*<sup>283</sup>

Walther provides a more recent testimony to the fact that the Lutheran Church does indeed preserve “many of these ranks.” He begins by describing the *divine* establishment of the comprehensive “office of soul care”:

When Christ separated the holy apostles unto their office (Matt. 10:1 ff.; Mk. 6:7 ff.; Luke 9:1 ff.) he established the church office (*Kirchenamt*) or ministry of the Word or office of soul care (*Seelsorgeramt*) above all. Therefore in the Smalcald Articles it says: “We have a certain teaching, that the ministry of the Word comes from the general call of the apostles.” (See Tractate 10.) The office he thereby established has many different functions (*Verrichtungen*): to preach God’s Word, to administer the holy Sacraments, to loose and bind, to watch over discipline and order, to care for the poor, sick, widows, orphans, to care for souls in the congregation etc. Yet, all these many functions are the responsibilities of the one office which Christ established. Therefore when the Papists speak of seven and the Episcopalians of three, and the Presbyterians of two special offices established in the church, they have no ground for it in the holy Scriptures but rather it is purely human imagination.

Walther goes on to describe the *ecclesial* establishment of new and

distinct “branch or helping offices”:

Although God established only one office in the church, still he did not command that all the functions which belong to this office must be carried out by one person alone. Therefore it stands in the freedom of the church to take from the preacher certain functions of the preaching office, which do not belong to the essence of the office but rather are necessary only on account of the essential parts, and assign them to other people. These people are then helpers of the preacher and thereby branch and helping offices are established. The church used this freedom already in the time of the holy apostles. At first, for example, the apostles carried out even the bodily care of the poor in the Christian congregation in Jerusalem on account of their office. When however the growth of the congregation made it impossible for them to do this any longer without skipping over this or that person, they suggested that the congregation should elect certain men for performing this function. And thus the apostolic office of deacon (*Diakonen*) or servant (*Diener*) in the narrow sense originated, namely, the office of caring for alms, as a branch and helping office of the one church office (*Kirchenamtes*). In the same or similar fashion the office of such elders who do not labor in word and doctrine but rather give attention to the care of discipline and order in the congregation may have originated in apostolic times (1 Tim 5:17). Later these were called Lay Elders or Seniors of the people.

And Walther then finally describes the various kinds of pastoral specializations *within* the “office of soul care” that have emerged in the history of the church:

It was an entirely different circumstance however when in a congregation more than one were installed who in every way (*allerseits*) had the office of the Word. In this instance they all had the same divine office established by Christ, the same spiritual and ecclesiastical authority. It was only a matter of human order (*Ordnung*), when they either divided certain functions of the office or the care for certain parts of the people among themselves. Likewise when they chose one from among themselves to whom the others submit themselves freely and according to human right or also when a whole group of ministers of the church (*Kirchendiener*) labor in the word in one congregation and continuously submit themselves one to another. The so-called system of bishops originally rested on this view of things in the times when the pure teaching still reigned in the church. It was recog-

nized that a Bishop set over the other ministers of the church was really nothing other than a presbyter (Elder), a pastor, who only for the sake of church order was set over the other ministers of the church and who had the additional authority given to him merely by human right. Therefore it says in the Smalcald Articles: "...Jerome teaches that such a distinction of bishops and pastors (*Pfarrherrn*) is only from a human ordering" (Treatise 63). This also applies then to the distinction between a pastor and a Senior of Ministers, a president, a Superintendent, a Dean, a head pastor (*Oberpfarrer*), or whatever they may be called who are set over one or more preachers. ... But...there is no distinction between such offices according to divine right...<sup>284</sup>

Elsewhere in Part II of the *Examination*, Chemnitz provides a comprehensive listing of the duties of the Christian Ministry "which God both instituted and preserves in the church," as he explains that

This ministry does indeed have power, divinely bestowed (2 Cor. 10:4-6; 13:2-4), but circumscribed with certain duties and limitations, namely, to preach the Word of God, teach the erring, reprove those who sin, admonish the dilatory, comfort the troubled, strengthen the weak, resist those who speak against the truth, reproach and condemn false teaching, censure evil customs, dispense the divinely instituted sacraments, remit and retain sins, be an example to the flock, pray for the church privately and lead the church in public prayers, *be in charge of care for the poor*, publicly excommunicate the stubborn and again receive those who repent and reconcile them with the church, appoint pastors to the church according to the instruction of Paul, with consent of the church institute rites that serve the ministry and do not militate against the Word of God nor burden consciences but serve good order, dignity, decorum, tranquility, edification, etc.<sup>285</sup>

Walther also speaks to this breadth of ministerial responsibility in the church, in his "Sermon on the Office of the Ministry":

Behold, how great, how broad, how all encompassing the task of a preacher is! He is to teach those entrusted to him what they should know for their salvation. He is to admonish them regarding what they are to do. If they have not done it, he is to rebuke them. When they suffer earthly need, he shall assist them in their need. He shall be concerned that the entire congregation and every individual be maintained in holy discipline and order. Where consolation and help are needed, he shall be the Good

Samaritan of the congregation, ready with mercy. Thus the great task of his office is to see to it that no one in his entire congregation is abandoned and suffers need without assistance, whether it be in external [physical] or internal [spiritual/psychological] matters, in bodily matters or spiritual matters. He sees to it that everyone who belongs to the holy brotherhood of Christ is well cared for. He shall receive the whole as much as the individual, the child as much as the elderly, the uneducated as much as the educated, the weak as much as the strong, the fallen as much as those who stand, those joyful in God as much as the deeply troubled, the poor as much as the rich, the sick as much as the well, the fortunate as much as the unfortunate, outcast, and persecuted, the dying as the living – indeed, the very dead themselves, that they like Christ would be brought to rest in burial. All this shall be the concern of his heart. And this shall be his concern at opportune or inopportune times, in evil or good days, in times of rich earthly blessing as much as in times of hunger and pestilence, in war and in peace, publicly and privately. What a task this is! Who is capable of it? Who has enough wisdom, faith, love, patience, zeal, faithfulness, strength? ... The holy apostles themselves experienced this. At first they themselves administered the office of care for the poor [*Almosenpfleger- oder Gebe-Amt*]. But under their very careful administration, widows in Jerusalem were being overlooked in the daily distribution, as Luke reports in the sixth chapter of Acts. So what did the apostles do? They set up the office of care for the poor [*Almosenpflegeramt*] as a particular office and allowed seven men to be elected from among those in the Jerusalem congregation who were full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. The apostles could then, all the less hindered, attend to the chief office and work [*Hauptamt und Werk*], the office of the Word and prayer. So also already at the time of the apostles were established the offices of manager or elder [*Regierer or Vorsteher*], and that of the teacher of children and catechumens who were being prepared for Baptism, and the office of caring for the sick and the dead. All such offices were nothing other than helping offices and branches of the one public preaching or church office. But since in the Church the Word shall govern and rule over all, so is this nonetheless the case with the preaching office. This office is the office of the Word and is inseparable from it. The office has the high, serious duty to see to it that all branches and helping offices in the congregation are administered according to God's Word.<sup>286</sup>

There are certainly many external similarities between the “human care” aspect of the work of Christian deacons or almoners,

and the work of certain non-religious humanitarian organizations. But as Jacobs observes, "The qualifications of deacons required by 1 Tim. 3:8-13, show that their duties were not purely secular."<sup>287</sup> Such servants of the church would not visit a materially disadvantaged Christian merely for the purpose of mechanically dispensing food or clothing, without at the same time taking an interest in that person's spiritual state, and without offering suitable Christian encouragement in regard to his or her life of faith. Even if such deacons are not responsible for the explicit *preaching* of the Gospel, their work is uniquely *inspired by* the Gospel and *imbued with* the Gospel, and serves as a tangible *testimony* to the Gospel.

In a rebuke of corrupt papal bishops of the Reformation era who were keeping church offerings and benefices for their personal use, the Treatise states that such bishops "cannot possess these alms with a good conscience," since in so doing "they are defrauding the church, which has need of these resources to support ministers, education, and poor relief and to establish courts, especially for marital cases."<sup>288</sup> It is true, of course, that the church *as the church* does not have *exclusive* responsibility for everything that takes place within these realms of work and service - which in varying degrees involve functions that are included also among the God-given responsibilities of the domestic and civil estates. But in the fulfillment of its own God-given mission to preach, teach, and apply the Word of God to people in all conditions of life, the church *as the church*, and the *ministers* of the church, do indeed *enter into* these realms of work and service. In regard to things like the education of its children, or the material relief of its poor, certain aspects of the spiritual work of the church *intersect and overlap* with certain aspects of the domestic and secular work of the other estates.



## 16.

***“A chaplain, schoolmaster, or other minister of the church”***

In Luther’s 1520 “Treatise on Good Works,” parish and monastery school teachers are not included among the “spiritual authorities” or “spiritual fathers.” According to that treatise, the “spiritual authorities” are to arrange for the establishment and organization of Christian educational institutions, and for the appointment of teachers in such institutions. These teachers are then to be *supervised* by the “spiritual authorities” or “spiritual fathers.” But these teachers are not *themselves* “spiritual authorities” or “spiritual fathers” – at least not in the sense in which Luther is using these terms in this treatise, and, by extension, in the Large Catechism.

Luther did elsewhere include parish schoolmasters among the church’s “ministers” – in the wider sense of the term. In a letter to Leonhard Beier dated July 24, 1536 – also signed by Johannes Bugenhagen and George Spalatin – he gives this admonition:

Inasmuch as our evangelical teaching most emphatically insists that these two governments, the secular and the spiritual, must be kept well apart and in no wise confounded, ...therefore we pray and admonish you to firmly urge that this order be observed. ... No peace or unity can remain where a chaplain, schoolmaster, or other minister of the church knows that he may be in the office of the church without the knowledge and will of the pastor and thereby can boast and comfort himself that he was chosen by the city council. Since such action is seen all the time against the pastors, you should not admit or strengthen this example such that they accept or suffer a chaplain, schoolmaster, or other minister of the church without your previous knowledge and will.<sup>289</sup>

A similar usage appears in the Preface to the Book of Concord, where schoolmasters and their assistants are described as school “ministers.” The Lutheran princes declare there that

some of us have had this book [the Formula of Concord] read aloud to each and every theologian and *minister of church or*

*school* in our lands and territories and have had them reminded and exhorted to consider diligently and earnestly the doctrine contained therein. When they had found that the explanation of the dissensions which had arisen conformed to and agreed with first of all the Word of God and then with the Augsburg Confession as well, the above-mentioned persons to whom it had been presented, freely and with due consideration, accepted, approved, and subscribed to this Book of Concord (with great joy and heartfelt thanks to God Almighty) as the correct, Christian understanding of the Augsburg Confession, and they publicly attested to the same with hearts and hands and voices. For this reason this Christian accord is called and also is the unanimous and concordant confession not only of a few of our theologians but generally of each and every one of our *ministers of church and school* in our lands and territories.<sup>290</sup>

The original German for “ministers of church and school” is *Kirchen= und Schuldiener*.<sup>291</sup> In the (unpaginated) addendum to the 1580 edition of the Book of Concord that lists the names of the original subscribers, the *Schuldiener* are further identified as “schoolmasters and assistants in the schools.” We know that the Preface is not, in its use of this term, referring to professors in advanced university-level “schools,” since such office-holders are separately designated by the princes as the “theologians” of their lands and territories. The 1580 addendum further identifies the “theologians” as “professors of Holy Scripture” and “professors of theology” in the universities.

But again, even though parish schoolmasters are included among the church’s “ministers” in the *wider* sense of the term, they are *not* understood to be “ministers” of the church in the *narrower* sense of the term. We know from the context of Luther’s remarks in the Large Catechism that he definitely did not intend the category of “spiritual fathers” to be broadened in definition so as to include offices such as that of the schoolmaster. A few paragraphs earlier in his explanation of the Fourth Commandment, Luther had already included the “schoolmaster” in the section of his commentary that deals with the office of a literal housefather, and with those “fatherly” offices that stem directly from it: “Where a father is unable by himself to bring up his child, he calls upon a schoolmaster to teach him...”<sup>292</sup>

In Lutheran theology, the parish schoolmaster’s office has generally been seen as a “bridge” office of sorts: partly in the domestic estate, as a servant of the family; and partly in the spiritual estate, as a “minister” of the church. We read in the Smalcald Articles that “foundations and monasteries, established in former times with



good intentions for the education of learned people<sup>293</sup> and decent women, should be returned to such use so that we may have pastors [parish rectors], preachers, and other servants [ministers] of the church,<sup>294</sup> as well as other people necessary for earthly government in cities and states, and also well-trained young women to head households and manage them.”<sup>295</sup> Luther had spoken in a similar way in the personal confession of faith that he appended to his 1528 “Confession Concerning Christ’s Supper”: “It would be a good thing if monasteries and religious foundations were kept for the purpose of teaching young people God’s Word, the Scriptures, and Christian morals, so that we might train and prepare fine, capable men to become bishops, pastors, and other servants of the church, as well as competent, learned people for civil government, and fine, respectable, learned women capable of keeping house and rearing children in a Christian way.”<sup>296</sup> In his 1520 open letter “To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate,” Luther had similarly written that in earlier times

convents and monasteries were all open to everyone to stay in them as long as he pleased. What else were the convents and monasteries but Christian schools where Scripture and the Christian life were taught, and where people were trained to rule and to preach? Thus we read that St. Agnes went to school, and we still see the same practice in some of the convents, like that at Quedlinburg and elsewhere.<sup>297</sup>

Monasteries – which are ecclesiastical institutions – should be used for the education of the children and youth of the church. At the same time, as we have already noted, the Large Catechism indicates that the education of children and youth is a *domestic* responsibility. The responsibility of the church for the Christian education of its younger members, and the responsibility of Christian parents for the education of their children, are overlapping and complementary responsibilities. In this spirit, Luther writes elsewhere in the Large Catechism:

Let this serve as an exhortation, then, not only for us who are old and advanced in years, but also for the young people who must be brought up in Christian teaching and in a right understanding of it. With such training we may more easily instill the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord’s Prayer into the young so that they will receive them with joy and earnestness, practice them from their youth, and become accustomed to them. ... We cannot perpetuate these and other teachings unless we train the

people who come after us and succeed us in our office and work, so that they in turn may bring up their children successfully. In this way God's Word and a Christian community will be preserved. Therefore let all heads of a household remember that it is their duty, by God's injunction and command, to teach their children or have them taught the things they ought to know. Because they have been baptized and received into the people of Christ, they should also enjoy this fellowship of the sacrament so that they may serve us and be useful. For they must all help us to believe, to love, to pray, and to fight against the devil.<sup>298</sup>

In the explanation of the Fourth Commandment, and in accordance with the intended scope and purpose of Luther's discourse there on the "spiritual fathers" who "govern and guide us by the Word of God," it is only the "ministers" of the church in the narrower sense of the term who are in view as the holders of this fatherly spiritual office. Teachers in monastery and parish schools do carry out important spiritual duties among the children of the church, as they teach the rudiments of Christian doctrine and the basic message of Holy Scripture to them. But such teachers are usually not trained or authorized to use God's Word in governing and guiding the church *as a whole*. In other words, they are generally not qualified to be, and are generally not called to be, the kind of "spiritual fathers" about whom Luther is speaking in the Large Catechism. Luther does not intend all ecclesiastical office-holders to be thought of as "spiritual fathers." As he explicitly indicates, this specialized appellation pertains to the church's "preachers."



## 17.

***“The sextons...teach the children the catechism and Christian hymns”***

In “A Sermon on Keeping Children in School,” Luther comprehensively develops the *concept* of the Ecclesiastical Ministry in its wider sense, even though that exact terminology is not used. He treats as synonymous the collective idea of “the spiritual estate” that “has been established and instituted by God,” and the unitary idea of “this office of preaching, baptizing, loosing, binding, giving the Sacrament, comforting, warning, and exhorting with God’s Word.” We read in this sermon that

the spiritual estate has been established and instituted by God, not with gold or silver but with the precious blood and bitter death of his only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ [I Pet. 1:18-19]. From his wounds indeed flow the sacraments [John 19:34]... He paid dearly that men might everywhere have this office of preaching, baptizing, loosing, binding, giving the Sacrament, comforting, warning, and exhorting with God’s Word, and whatever else belongs to the pastoral office [*Amt der Seelsorger*]. For this office not only helps to further and sustain this temporal life and all the worldly estates, but it also gives eternal life and delivers from sin and death, which is its proper and chief work. ... I am not thinking, however, of the spiritual estate as we know it today in the monastic houses and the foundations... They give no heed to God’s Word and the office of preaching – and where the Word is not in use the clergy must be bad. The estate I am thinking of is rather one which has the office of preaching and the service of the Word and sacraments and which imparts the Spirit and salvation, blessings that cannot be attained by any amount of pomp and pageantry. It includes the work of pastors, teachers, preachers, lectors, priests (whom men call chaplains), sacristans, schoolmasters, and whatever other work belongs to these offices and persons. This estate the Scriptures highly exalt and praise. [*Sondern den Stand meyne ich, der das Predigtamt und Dienst des Worts und der Sacramente hat, welches gibt den Geist und alle Seligkeit, die man mit keinem Gesänge noch Gepränge erlangen kann, als da ist, das Pfarramt, Lehrer, Prediger, Leser, Priester, (wie man Kaplan*

nennet), Küster, Schulmeister, und was zu solchen Ämtern und Personen mehr gehöret, welchen Stand die Schrift, wahrlich, hoch rühmet und lobet.] St. Paul calls them God's stewards and servants [I Cor. 4:1]; bishops [Acts 20:28]; doctors, prophets [I Cor. 12:28]; also God's ambassadors to reconcile the world to God, II Corinthians 5[20]. Joel calls them saviors. In Psalm 68 David calls them kings and princes. Haggai [1:13] calls them angels, and Malachi [2:7] says, "The lips of the priest keep the law, for he is an angel of the Lord of hosts." Christ himself gives them the same name, not only in Matthew 11[:10] where he calls John the Baptist an angel, but also throughout the entire book of the Revelation to John.<sup>299</sup>

With reference specifically to this section of this "Sermon," as well as to other pertinent writings of Luther, Wilhelm Maurer writes:

In its loving service in the world, the office of the Word takes on various forms, depending on practical needs and possibilities. The orders that it sets up do not constitute this office; they just provide its historically conditioned characteristics. ... For the honor that God confers upon the service of the Word and sacraments applies not only to the pastoral office but to the entire spiritual estate, together with all that pertains to it. ... Pastors need helpers for pastoral care in the larger congregations, for education of the youth, and for care of the needy. The office of proclaiming the Word branches out. In addition to *rite vocatus* [CA 14] in its proper sense - pastors and preachers belong together in this category - there are congregational members who combine a civil office with particular ecclesiastical tasks and who are called to that service.<sup>300</sup>

This "Sermon" may also be the inspiration behind the development of the term "helping office" or "auxiliary office" (*Hilfsamt*), used so often by Walther and those in his theological tradition. Luther also says in the "Sermon":

I do not mean to insist that every man must train his child for this office, for it is not necessary that all boys become pastors, preachers, and schoolmasters. ...the common people...keep their children out of school, regardless of whether the children have the ability and talent for these offices and could serve God in them without privation or hindrance. Boys of such ability ought to be kept at their studies... In addition, though, other boys as well ought to study, even those of lesser ability. They ought at least to read, write, and understand Latin, for we need not only highly learned doctors and masters of Holy Scripture but also

ordinary pastors who will teach the gospel and the catechism to the young and ignorant, and baptize and administer the sacrament. That they may be incapable of doing battle with heretics is unimportant. For a good building we need not only hewn facings but also backing stone. In like manner we must also have sacristans and other persons *who serve and help in relation to the office of preaching and the word of God*. Even though a boy who has studied Latin should afterward learn a trade and become a craftsman, he still stands as a ready reserve in case he should be needed as a pastor or in some other service of the word.<sup>301</sup>

*Sacristans* or *sextons* (*Küster*) are included in Luther's list of offices of the spiritual estate because their work did often include the performance of specifically spiritual duties. For example, the "Saxon General Articles" of 1580 make the following provision for the catechizing of children: "If in the outlying villages or otherwise there are too many people in a parish for the pastor to administer the examination in the catechism, they should commend it to the sacristan or church officer (but this should not happen before they are previously examined in earnest by the consistory and known to be capable of this work)."<sup>302</sup> And we read in the 1557 "General Articles for the Visitation in Electoral Saxony" that

In the villages, the sextons shall be obligated on all Sunday afternoons and on a certain day during the week to diligently and clearly teach the children the catechism and Christian hymns in German. Afterwards they shall ask questions and examine the children about the articles of the catechism that have been recited or read aloud. And where one or more branches belong to the parish, the sacristan shall teach in all places, alternating between them according to the advice of the pastor, so that the youth in all of the villages are instructed as is necessary and will not be neglected. The sacristans should especially take pains to read the prayers aloud to the children and their elders, very slowly and clearly, distinctly reciting word for word as it is printed in the Small Catechism. And they shall not be so wanton, bold, or careless as to change, increase, decrease, or mix up the words in any way other than as they are designated in the printed copy. For in so doing, the young people will be poorly instructed and will afterwards learn to pray incorrectly from one another.

Sacristans or sextons were not pastors, but their office was sometimes a "stepping stone" to an office of pastoral ministry. The 1557 "General Articles" go on to say that

No sexton who has not been examined and ordained shall be allowed to preach. But those who have been examined, appointed, and carefully called to the office of deacon shall not only preach but also be permitted to perform other church duties such as hearing confession and administering the sacrament.<sup>303</sup>

Also in the sixteenth century,

The path to the pastoral office (*Pfarramt*) often took a circuitous route through the office of schoolmaster. Young men who had come from theological studies and viewed the school as a temporary position met here with tradesmen and people lacking a higher education, who likewise taught the youth and often also had a secondary (or primary?) vocation as sexton, additionally sometimes as clerk and civil servant. In Brandenburg, instead of taking clergy from outside the electorate when there were applicants for a pastorate (*Pfarrstelle*), Elector Johann Georg even valued giving preference in case of doubt to Brandenburg schoolmasters and teaching assistants who lacked a higher education, since they were familiar with the local church customs.<sup>304</sup>

Johann Georg's "visitation and consistorial order of 1573" indicates that "parsons, chaplains, schoolmasters, and assistants should be called primarily from our university in Frankfurt an der Oder or, in the event of a shortage there, from other universities, schools, and churches that are beyond suspicion. If there also be any schoolmasters or teaching assistants in cities of our electorate who would let themselves be used for such offices, they should be considered and taken for this before others, in view of the fact that they know the church customs of our land..."<sup>305</sup> This latter provision demonstrates "that the education of clergy at a university had by no means prevailed as an indispensable prerequisite" to ordination at this time in history.<sup>306</sup>

A variation on the office of sacristan or sexton in the (old) Norwegian Synod in nineteenth-century America – with precedent in Norway – was the office of *klokker*. The duties of this office included ringing the church bell, reading appointed prayers at the beginning and conclusion of the service, leading the congregation in the singing of hymns, and (ceremonially) helping the pastor to vest for the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Jacob Aall Ottesen Stub mentions the *klokker* (whom he describes in English as a "deacon" or "verger") in his reminiscences of the experiences of his early childhood in services of Holy Communion conducted by his grandfather, who was a well-known Norwegian Synod pastor:

My sainted grandfather, Jacob Aall Ottesen, always celebrated the Communion, robed in the colorful, and, as it seemed to me, beautiful vestments of the Lutheran Church. ...he wore the narrow-sleeved cassock, with its long satin stole, and the white "ruff," or collar. ...he also wore the white surplice or cotta. As he stood reverentially before the altar with its lighted candles and gleaming silver, the old deacon, or verger, placed over his shoulders the scarlet, gold embroidered, silk chasuble. This ancient Communion vestment was shaped somewhat like a shield. As it was double, one side covered his back and the other his chest. Upon the side, which faced the congregation when he turned to the altar, was a large cross in gold embroidery; upon the other was a chalice of similar materials. As a child I instinctively knew that the most sacred of all observances of the church was about to be witnessed. As grandfather turned to the altar and intoned the Lord's Prayer and the words of consecration, with the elevation of the host and the chalice, I felt as if God was near. The congregation standing reverentially about those kneeling before the altar, made me think of Him who, though unseen, was in our midst. I forgot the old, cold church, with its bare walls, its homemade pews, and its plain glass windows. I early came to know some words of that service, such as: "This is the true body, the true blood of Christ"; "Forgiveness of sins"; "Eternal life." I venture that all who, like me, early received such impressions of the Lord's Supper, will approach the altar or the Communion with a reverence that time will but slowly efface.<sup>307</sup>

Such an office, with such duties, was common in the age of Lutheran Orthodoxy. Rudolf Rocholl describes the liturgical functions of a "sacristan" or *Cüster* - together with the liturgical functions of a "pastor," "elder," "deacon," "reader," and "vicar" - as he gives us an intriguing glimpse into the classic ecclesiastical piety of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century German Lutheranism, before that piety was largely eclipsed under the destructive influence of Calvinism, Pietism, and especially Rationalism:

According to the Brunswick Agenda of Duke Augustus, 1657, the pastors went to the altar clad in alb, chasuble, and mass vestments. Sacristans and elders held a fair cloth before the altar during the administration, that no particle of the consecrated Elements should fall to the ground. The altar was adorned with costly stuffs, with lights and fresh flowers. ... Until the nineteenth century the ministers at St. Sebald in Nuremberg wore chasubles at the administration of the Holy Supper. The alb was generally worn over the Talar, even in the sermon. ... The alb

was worn also in the Westphalian cities. At Closter-Lüne in 1608 the minister wore a garment of yellow gauze, and over it a chasuble on which was worked in needlework a "Passion." ... In 1619 all the churches in the Archbishopric of Magdeburg were strictly charged to pray the Litany. In Magdeburg itself there were in 1692 four *Readers*, two for the Epistle, two for the Gospel. The Nicene Creed was intoned by a Deacon in Latin. Then the sermon and general prayer having been said, the Deacon with two Readers and two Vicars, clad in Mass garment and gowns, went in procession to the altar, bearing the Cup, the Bread, and what pertained to the preparation for the Holy Supper, and the *Cüster* took a silver censer with glowing coals and incense, and incensed them, while another (the *Citharmeister*?) clothed and arranged the altar, lit two wax candles, and placed on it two books bound in red velvet and silver containing the Latin Epistles and Gospels set to notes, and on festivals set on the altar also a silver or golden crucifix, according to the order of George of Anhalt in 1542. The *Preface* and *Sanctus* were in Latin. After the Preface the communicants were summoned into the choir by a bell hanging there. The Nuremberg *Officium Sacrum* (1664) bids all the ministers be present in their stalls, in white *Chorrocken*, standing or sitting, to sing after the *Frühmesse* [Morning Mass], "Lord, Keep Us Steadfast." The minister said his prayer kneeling with his face to the altar, with a deacon kneeling on either side. He arranged the wafers on the paten in piles of ten, like the shew-bread, while the *Introit* and *Kyrie* were sung. The responses by the choir were in Latin. Up to 1690 the Latin service was still said at St. Sebald's and St. Lawrence's [in Nuremberg]. Throughout this (eighteenth) century we find daily Matins and Vespers, with the singing of German psalms. There were sermons on weekdays. There were no churches in which they did not kneel in confession and at the Consecration of the Elements.<sup>308</sup>





## 18.

***“A skilled woman...as schoolmistress should instruct the daughters”***

Luther’s list of positions of responsibility within the spiritual estate includes the office of the (male) *schoolmaster*. But the Lutherans of the sixteenth century believed that

It is also good that one arranges for the young daughters a skilled woman who as *schoolmistress* should instruct the daughters for two hours a day in discipline, writing, and reading. As the Apostle Paul teaches in Titus 1 [2:3-5], that the old women [*weyber*] should be good teachers [*lererin*] that they instruct the young daughters [*tochter*] or women [*weyber*] in discipline. The Scriptures belong not only to men, they belong also to women [*weybern*], who with men likewise are awaiting heaven and eternal life.<sup>309</sup>

According to a broader sense of the term “preacher,” Friedrich Rhote goes so far as to say – with allusions to the Fourth Commandment – that

Under the name father and mother are included all those who rule others below them such as ... 6. The spiritual fathers, faithful teachers and preachers, school masters and mistresses. 7. After these lords and mistresses, the father and mother of the house. ... Who are the people who are responsible to help teach the catechism? First the preachers in the churches are those who should diligently teach the catechism. *The schoolmasters and schoolmistresses in the boys and girls schools are also preachers.* ... In the third place parents and house-fathers and house-mothers should help. For what the preachers are in the church, that is what father and mother are at home in the house, as Augustine says.<sup>310</sup>

In general, however, the Lutheran parishes of the sixteenth century did not pay as much attention to the education of their girls as they did to the education of their boys. In its prescriptions for the type of religious instruction that is to be offered by the female schoolteachers to their female pupils, the *Braunschweigsche Kirchenordnung* of 1528

(prepared by Bugenhagen) indicates that “young women need only to read, learn, and hear some meanings out of the Ten Commandments of God, the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, what Baptism and the Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ are, and learn outward recitation of some passages of the New Testament concerning faith, love, patience, the cross, of some saints, the history of serving virgins or stories for the training of their memory. In this manner they are to teach the Gospel of Christ and Christian songs.”<sup>311</sup>

In the “Fraternal Agreement on the Common Chest of the Entire Assembly of Leisnig,” written under Luther’s influence and published in 1523 with his endorsement and recommendation, the following provisions are made for the parish schools:

The ten designated directors, in the name of our general parish assembly, shall have the authority and duty, with the advice and approval of our elected pastor and preacher and others learned in the divine Scriptures, to call, appoint and dismiss a schoolmaster for young boys, whereby a pious, irreproachable, and learned man may be made responsible for *the honorable and upright Christian training and instruction of the youth*, a most essential function. This schoolmaster shall be required to train, teach, govern, and live at all times in conformity with and hold unswervingly to the mandate of the aforementioned ordinance for the pastoral office of our congregation which is deposited in the coffers of our common chest. In accordance with a determination of the general assembly, the ten directors shall give the schoolmaster as compensation for his services a specified annual salary plus certain stores in quarterly instalments out of the common chest. ... Our pastor, preacher, and the ten directors shall maintain a constant and faithful supervision over this office of teaching school and governing the youth; every Sunday as need may arise they shall consider this matter, take action, and implement it with the utmost seriousness. Likewise the ten directors shall grant to an upright, fully seasoned, irreproachable woman an annual stipend and certain stores out of our common chest for instructing young girls under twelve in *true Christian discipline, honor, and virtue* and, in accordance with the ordinance for our pastoral office, teaching them to read and write German... The ten directors shall also diligently supervise the training and governing of such German schools and young girls, so that Christian discipline, honor, and virtue may be maintained inviolate.<sup>312</sup>

There was precedent in the apostolic and ancient church for the establishment of properly-ordered ecclesiastical offices to be held by women, for the focused teaching of God’s Word, and for the su-

pervised provision of spiritual care, to children and/or other women. Krauth reminds us that

In some Churches, especially among the Gentile converts, there were Deaconesses, Christian women, largely selected from the widows known as faithful and holy. They were occupied with the care of the sick and of the poor, and with the externals of the Church's work. They were in the one diaconate with its official character, as an executive aid of the ministry unchanged, and with its specific characteristics determined by the special gifts and facilities pertaining to Christian women. In the Ancient Church they gave instruction to the female catechumens, rendered the necessary aid at their Baptism, were guardians of the private life of Christian women, gave useful information to the pastors and such assistance as the pastors desired. They tenderly cared for the martyrs, confessors, travelers, sick and needy persons, especially though not exclusively of their own sex, and preserved order among the women in public worship. They were highly prized in the Christian Church until the union of Church and State, the growth of monasticism, the corruption of the order itself and other causes led to the setting of them aside.<sup>313</sup>

During the Reformation era there were few if any opportunities for the reintroduction of a formally-organized female diaconate. The City of Constance (which had joined three other south German cities in submitting the Tetrapolitan Confession to the Diet of Augsburg in 1530) did, however, have an *informal* female "diaconate" of sorts in the person and work of Margaretha Blarer, the unmarried sister of the chief reformer of the city, Ambrosius Blarer. She cared for the poor of the city, and for victims of the plague, and was (unofficially) referred to by her brother as the "Archdeaconess of our church." But there were limits to how far Ambrosius would allow his sister to defy sixteenth-century social and ecclesiastical conventions. When family friend Martin Bucer (in Strasbourg) encouraged Margaretha to learn Greek, Ambrosius replied:

I ask you not to encourage her, for she already pays too much attention to Latin. You know the ingenuity of women. They need to be reined in more than spurred on, so that they don't throw themselves into learning and neglect their more appropriate and worthy tasks.<sup>314</sup>

A similar figure in Reformation-era history was Katharina Schütz Zell, the wife of Strasbourg Lutheran Pastor Matthäus Zell, who was known for her gracious and liberal hospitality. She was also a com-

petent lay theologian in her own right, and described herself as a “church mother.” On one occasion, after her husband had died, she was accused by a Lutheran minister of being a “disturber of the peace.” She replied:

A disturber of the peace am I? Yes indeed, of my own peace. Do you call this disturbing the peace that instead of spending my time in frivolous amusements I have visited the plague-infested and carried out the dead? I have visited those in prison and under sentence of death. Often for three days and three nights I have neither eaten nor slept. I have never mounted the pulpit, but I have done more than any minister in visiting those in misery. Is this disturbing the peace of the church?<sup>315</sup>

Prompted in large measure by the changing social needs of the newly industrialized societies in which the Lutheran Church was seeking to fulfill its mission in the nineteenth century, an organized female diaconate was finally established in Lutheran circles at that time in history. Deaconesses remain active today, especially in the more conservative and Confessional Lutheran churches, where women are not admitted to the pastoral ministry, but where the diaconal work of women is highly regarded.<sup>316</sup>

Deaconesses and similar female office-holders are obviously not to be counted among the “spiritual *fathers*” who “govern and guide us by the Word of God.” They are not incumbents of the Public Ministry of the church in the narrower sense. But if their work does involve teaching God’s Word to others, or counseling and serving others on the basis of God’s Word, then their work can be understood to be a part of the Public Ministry of the church in the *wider* sense. Marquart explains that

the “public ministry” in the narrow sense is the preach-and-sacraments office (*Predigtamt*) itself, and in the wide sense it is that Gospel-ministry plus auxiliary offices like that of deacon/deaconess (Acts 6:2-4; Rom. 16:1). Deacons, parish school teachers, and the like, certainly belong to the church’s “public ministry,” in that they are not simply private volunteers; but they do not by virtue of their office have the right and duty to preach and administer the holy sacraments.<sup>317</sup>

This distinction between the *public* ministry in the narrower sense and the *public* ministry in the wider sense should not be confused with a similar distinction that is sometimes made by Lutheran theologians, between the *ministry* in the narrower sense and the *min-*

*istry* in the wider sense. According to this latter distinction – as used, for example, by Francis Pieper – the *narrower* meaning of the term “ministry” (or “preaching office”) would refer to the *public* ministry; while the *wider* meaning of the term “ministry” (or “preaching office”) would refer to “every form of preaching the Gospel or administering the means of grace, whether by Christians in general, ...or by chosen public servants.”<sup>318</sup>



## 19.

***“A school teacher...honors and obeys God when he carries out and testifies to his call”***

According to C. A. T. Selle (of the Missouri Synod), the principles that are enunciated in Article XIV of the Augsburg Confession – regarding the necessity of an orderly call for those who “publicly teach, preach, or administer the sacraments” – apply also to those who are authorized to teach God’s Word and Christian doctrine to the children of the church, in parish schools. He writes that

A congregational schoolteacher holds a part of the pastoral office [*einen Teil des Pfarramtes*], indeed a very important part, because he also teaches the Word of God for the benefit of the community. For this reason, the stipulation of the 14th Article also applies to him, that no one should publicly teach and preach without a regular call, nor may his call be terminated except by a godly procedure. According to ecclesiastical usage, the schoolteacher indeed does not receive ordination, which is in and of itself unimportant; but the features necessary for the call, namely nomination and election to the office, are just as indispensable in his case as in the pastor’s, because the aforementioned testing [of a candidate’s qualifications] cannot be left undone in his case without thereby committing grievous sin.<sup>319</sup>

In another work, Selle expands and develops his argument as follows:

When someone is given the instruction of the children in God’s Word, he has a teaching office and therefore teaches publicly and administers herein a part of the public preaching office. ... The public teaching of the word of God is a matter of the preaching office in the narrow sense (the pastor’s office); the teaching of the word of God on the part of a school teacher is public since it is part of his office. It also belongs to the preaching office. It is a part of it. ... The spiritual priesthood has the duty to use the word mainly in the home and otherwise privately where someone asks concerning the reason for the hope that is in us or where perhaps the circumstances in addition require it. Emer-

gencies excepted, the general call of Christians extends no further. Everything which goes beyond this and immediately when one discusses a teaching of the word for the congregation, the matter belongs to the public preaching office which is called public because it is an office, a conferred public service. ... According to the general priesthood no Christian has duty, call, or right to teach the word of God to the children of other people let alone the children of many people all together, regularly and at appointed times. That Christian who does this must have a call, right, and duty in addition. If he is to have the right and duty in addition he must expressly be given a call, and the office, the public service of the word – whether it is the office in totality or only as a special branch of the public preaching office – must be conferred on him. The teacher of Christian schools as such has such a call, the office. In this usage he administers a part of the public preaching office... In the Lutheran Church of the 16th century and following the Schoolmaster was therefore, insofar as he taught the children God's word and performed ecclesiastical functions and also administered a separated part of the public preaching office, considered as belonging to the so-called clergy. ...he is placed under the oversight of the preacher. This has always occurred in our church because it has rightly been recognized that the school teacher administers a branch office of the holy preaching office.<sup>320</sup>

In the (old) Norwegian Synod it was likewise taken for granted that a teacher in a parish school would be formally "called" to his office – in view of the spiritual duties that he was therein authorized to perform among the church's children – even while it was also clearly understood that he was *not* "called" to a ministry of pastoral oversight among God's people as a whole. Herman Amberg Preus states accordingly that "When a school teacher in the circle of his children begins or ends instruction with a free prayer, gives an exhortation or explains a passage of Scripture for the children, he is by no means sinning against God's command, even if some others are present and are edified by it, because he is called precisely to do that, and he honors and obeys God when he carries out and testifies to his call, but also [let it be so] that he is preserved in humility and remains in his call, and in view of that, he ought always remember that it is really for the children, not for the congregation, that he is appointed as teacher."<sup>321</sup>

We also recall the directive of the "Fraternal Agreement on the Common Chest of the Entire Assembly of Leisnig," that those who act officially "in the name of our general parish assembly, shall have the authority and duty...to call, appoint and dismiss a school-

master for young boys..." In his Preface to the printed edition of the "Fraternal Agreement," which he addressed to "all Christians in the congregation of Leisnig," Luther wrote:

Since the Father of all mercies has called you as well as others to the fellowship of the gospel, and has caused his Son Jesus Christ to shine into your hearts; and since this richness of the knowledge of Christ is so active and powerful among you that you have set up a new order of service, and a common fund after the example of the apostles [Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35], I have seen fit to have this ordinance of yours printed, in the hope that God will so add his gracious blessing that it may become a public example to be followed by many other congregations, so that we, too, may boast of you, as St. Paul boasted of the Corinthians that their effort stirred up many others [II Cor. 9:2]. ... We cherish the hope that this example of yours will come to be generally followed...<sup>322</sup>

The Lutheran principle mentioned by Selle - that a minister's call may not be terminated "except by a godly procedure" - is explained in more detail by Chemnitz:

Just as God properly claims for Himself the right to call, also mediately, and it is accordingly necessary for it to be done according to divine instruction, so also has God properly reserved to Himself alone this power of removing someone from the ministry. 1 Sm 2:30, 32; Hos 4:6. But since that dismissal takes place mediately, it is therefore necessary that it not take place except by instruction and divine direction. Therefore as long as God lets in the ministry His minister who teaches rightly and lives blamelessly, the church does not have the power, without divine command to remove an unwanted man, namely [if he is] a servant of God. But when he does not build up the church by either doctrine or life, but rather destroys [it], God Himself removes him, 1 Sm 2:30; Hos 4:6. And then the church not only properly can but by all means should remove such a one from the ministry. For just as God calls ministers of the church, so He also removes them through legitimate means. But as the procedure of a call is to follow the instruction of the Lord of the harvest, so also if one is to be removed from the ministry, the church must show that that also is done by the command and will of the Lord.<sup>323</sup>

And in the age of Lutheran Orthodoxy, it was indeed expected that "calls" to parish school offices, and "calls" to offices of pastoral care



in the church, would be issued and treated with the same degree of honor and respect:

An Opinion of the Wittenberg Faculty in respect of a school-cantor, from the year 1638, reads: "The calls to *church and school services*, in which one is to give the other a quarter year's notice [of dismissal] without any other weighty cause, are entirely disapproved in our Lutheran churches."<sup>324</sup>

In orthodox Lutheran history, the *terminology* of the "divine call" has fairly consistently been applied to the placing into office of pastors, but has not always been applied to the placing into office of teachers of religion in church-sponsored schools (or to the placing into office of the incumbents of other auxiliary offices in the church). But even if the term "divine call" is not used, those who officially assist in the administration of the means of grace within a congregation or church-related agency should never be thought of callously as employees who are "hired and fired" at will. In the fear of God, and with prayers for divine blessing upon their labors, they are instead to be "set apart" in some suitable and solemn way for their work - with a recognition that their work is *God's* work, and that God will be working through them for the building up of his kingdom.

In the personal confession of faith that he appended to his 1528 "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," Luther declares that

the holy orders and true religious institutions established by God are these three: the office of priest [*Priestersamt*], the estate of marriage, the civil government. All who are engaged in the clerical office or ministry of the Word [*Pfarramt oder Dienst des Worts*] are in a holy, proper, good, and God-pleasing order and estate, such as those who preach, administer sacraments, supervise the common chest, sextons and messengers or servants who serve such persons. These are engaged in works which are altogether holy in God's sight. Again, all fathers and mothers who regulate their household wisely and bring up their children to the service of God are engaged in pure holiness, in a holy work and a holy order. Similarly, when children and servants show obedience to their elders and masters, here too is pure holiness, and whoever is thus engaged is a living saint on earth. Moreover, princes and lords, judges, civil officers, state officials, notaries, male and female servants and all who serve such persons, and further, all their obedient subjects - all are engaged in pure holiness and leading a holy life before God. For these three religious institutions or orders are found in God's Word and commandment; and whatever is contained in God's Word must be

holy, for God's Word is holy and sanctifies everything connected with it and involved in it.<sup>325</sup>

This is the general framework within which Luther says in the Smalcald Articles, "Concerning the Marriage of Priests," that the pope and his bishops "had neither the authority nor the right to forbid marriage and burden *the divine estate of priests* with perpetual celibacy."<sup>326</sup>

The Augsburg Confession mentions a divine vocation to "the office of pastor or preacher" in the context of a brief discussion of the doctrine of vocation in general. It reports that those in the past who had exaggerated the benefits of monasticism had "said that one could obtain more merit through the monastic life than through all other walks of life, which had been ordered by God, such as the office of pastor or preacher, the office of ruler, prince, lord, and the like. (These all serve in their vocations according to God's command, Word, and mandate without any contrived spiritual status)."<sup>327</sup> Luther speaks in a similar way when he gives this admonition in his "Lectures on Genesis":

This life is profitably divided into three orders: (1) life in the home; (2) life in the state; (3) life in the church. To whatever order you belong - whether you are a husband, an officer of the state, or a teacher of the church - look about you, and see whether you have done full justice to your calling and there is no need of asking to be pardoned for negligence, dissatisfaction, or impatience.<sup>328</sup>

Later in these same lectures, Luther comments on how and why the church ceremonially recognizes the divinely-established estates, and the foundational stations in life or offices of those estates:

It is not for nothing...that special rites are employed in the church to unite men and women in matrimony, likewise for ordaining ministers of the Word. For we bless the bridegroom and the bride; we recite the words of the divine ordinance; we call upon God to be pleased to protect this estate. We lay hands on the ministers and at the same time pour forth prayers to God, for the sole reason that we may testify that there is a divine ordinance both in these and in all other estates of the church, of the state, and of the household.<sup>329</sup>

Werner Elert explains that

The pastor's calling is exactly analogous to worldly callings, as Luther sets forth in his exposition of Ps. 32 (WA 31 I, 189-218;

1530). Every performance of what a calling requires is a service to God. But only when it is actually done because of "a call and a command." Such a call and command - apart from the extraordinary instances in which God steps in directly, as in the case of the Old Testament prophets - is always given to us through men and is therefore bound up with life in a community made up of men, and is designed for the purpose of preserving and shaping this community. In such a call - one that takes place through men - we may and should see a *divine* call if those who extend the call are authorized by God to do so. These are, for example, the persons to whom we owe obedience according to the Fourth Commandment, therefore parents, the government, the worldly "lords." But God has also conferred on the church of Christ such authorization to extend a call.<sup>330</sup>



20.

***“If the difference is only a matter of terminology...,  
the difference should be tolerated”***

There is a postmodern tendency in the Christendom of our day to confuse and blur together a Christian’s obligation to believe and confess the whole truth of God, and a Christian’s obligation to be loving toward others. But this is not a new problem. Luther, too, had to address this confusion in his ongoing battle with the Sacramentarians. His disentangling of these related but distinct obligations, on the basis of God’s Word, can still be of great help to us:

...we reply [to the sectarians] with Paul: “A little yeast leavens the whole lump” [1 Cor. 5:6]. In philosophy a tiny error in the beginning is very great at the end. Thus in theology *a tiny error overthrows the whole teaching*. ... Doctrine belongs to God, not to us; and we are called only as its ministers. Therefore we cannot give up or change even one dot of it (Matt. 5:18). ... On this score we cannot yield even a hairbreadth. *For doctrine...cannot be divided; that is, it cannot stand either subtraction or addition*. ... We are surely prepared to observe peace and love with all men, provided that they leave the doctrine of faith perfect and sound for us. If we cannot obtain this, it is useless for them to demand love from us. A curse on a love that is observed at the expense of the doctrine of faith, to which everything must yield... If they believed that it is the Word of God..., they would treat it with the utmost respect; they would put their faith in it without any disputing or doubting; and they would know *that one Word of God is all and that all are one, that one doctrine is all doctrines and all are one, so that when one is lost all are eventually lost, because they belong together and are held together by a common bond*. ... It belongs to love to bear everything and to yield to everyone. On the other hand, it belongs to faith to bear nothing whatever and to yield to no one. Love yields freely, believes, condones, and tolerates everything. Therefore it is often deceived. ... In the issue of salvation, on the other hand, when fanatics teach lies and errors under the guise of truth and make an impression on many, there love is certainly not to be exercised, and error is not to be approved. For what is lost here is not merely a good deed done for

someone who is unthankful, but the Word, faith, Christ, and eternal life. *Therefore if you deny God in one article of faith, you have denied Him in all; for God is not divided into many articles of faith, but He is everything in each article and He is one in all the articles of faith. ... With the utmost rigor we demand that all the articles of Christian doctrine, both large and small – although we do not regard any of them as small – be kept pure and certain.* This is supremely necessary. For this doctrine is our only light, which illumines and directs us and shows the way to heaven; if it is overthrown in one point, it must be overthrown completely. ...we shall be happy to observe love and concord toward those who faithfully agree with us on all the articles of Christian doctrine. ... “One dot” of doctrine is worth more than “heaven and earth” (Matt. 5:18); therefore we do not permit the slightest offense against it. ...by the grace of God our doctrine is pure; we have all the articles of faith solidly established in Sacred Scripture.<sup>331</sup>

A Scripturally-based requirement for complete unity in faith and confession is not, however, a requirement for *absolute sameness* in every single respect. The same terminology or modes of conceptualization need not be slavishly followed by everyone within an ecclesial fellowship. Differences in emphasis or in logical presentation can be tolerated among people who still recognize among themselves the kind of unity that God requires. A comparison between the epistles of St. Paul and the epistles of St. John or of St. Peter – not to mention the epistle of St. James! – will quickly reveal many examples of these sorts of variations even in the inspired Scriptures. Indeed,

Complete uniformity in the use of doctrinal terminology is not necessary for church fellowship. We should not battle about mere words (2 Timothy 2:14-26). ... It, therefore, would not be right to deny fellowship to someone who had the same teaching that we have, but who used different words to express it.<sup>332</sup>

Luther, too – with all of his insistence that every Biblically-revealed article of faith must be believed and confessed – also embraced this evangelical approach. In 1536 he and his Wittenberg colleagues were involved in doctrinal discussions with representatives of the Church of England. Based on how well these discussions seemed to have gone, there was a genuine hope on the part of many that a God-pleasing agreement could be reached, and church fellowship established. A tentative document, known as the “Wittenberg Articles,” had been prepared, largely under Luther’s influence, as a part of these discussions. After the English delegation had returned to England, where those articles were now under review, and where

King Henry VIII was now also examining them, Luther penned a letter concerning this document – and this whole process – to Francis Burchart (the Vice-Chancellor of Electoral Saxony). Luther was very balanced and even-handed in the approach that he took in this letter. It reflected both his unswerving commitment to the revealed truth of God’s Word – to which the “Wittenberg Articles” had testified – and his humble recognition of the fact that there may very well be more than one acceptable (or tolerable) way of expressing that truth. He wrote:

Since my Most Gracious Lord [the Elector] has requested an answer to the question of how far one could go in making concessions to the King of England regarding the articles, it is my judgment, dear Mr. Vice-Chancellor, that in this matter we are unable to concede anything beyond what has been already conceded. If one wishes to talk about the issues or to formulate the results in different words it suits me fine (so that we do not appear to be contemptuous of the ability of other people). Yet it is impossible that the articles and the central points be believed or taught differently. ... Of course it is true that one must patiently realize that in England not everything can be abruptly put into practice according to the teaching (just as among us it also did not go swiftly). Nevertheless the central points must not be changed or abandoned.<sup>333</sup>

A commitment to unity in all revealed articles of faith does not require undue contentiousness regarding specific human formulations of Biblical doctrine, as long as “the articles and the central points be believed or taught” accurately – in some way, shape, or fashion. And when there is a perceived incompleteness on the part of certain brethren in fully grasping, fully expressing, or fully implementing some aspect of a doctrinal point, patient efforts will be undertaken to guide them into a more comprehensive understanding of the Scriptures.

In keeping with these principles, Walther wisely observes that “The church militant must indeed aim at and strive for complete unity of faith and doctrine, but it never will attain a higher degree of unity than a fundamental one.”<sup>334</sup> John P. Meyer (of the Wisconsin Synod) elaborates on Walther’s sentiment when he writes that

Those are in fundamental agreement who, without any reservation, submit to the Word of God. When the Word of God has spoken in any matter, that matter is settled. There may be things that some men have not yet found in their study of the Bible; there may be matters with reference to which they have accus-

tomed themselves to an inadequate mode of expression; yet, no matter what their deficiency may be, they are determined to accept the Bible doctrine. Where such is the case, there is fundamental agreement. ... A fundamental agreement is all the church can ever hope to attain here on earth. We are not all equally gifted; one has a much clearer and a much more comprehensive insight into God's doctrines than another. We all strive to grow daily in understanding. Besides, when once we have accustomed ourselves to a faulty or an inadequate expression, it is not only difficult to unlearn the particular phrase and to acquire a proper one, but the inadequate term may tend also to warp our views on other points. Yet, in spite of all such differences, where there is an unconditional willingness to hear what God has to say in his Word, there is fundamental agreement.<sup>335</sup>

The Confessional Lutheran belief in the necessity of fundamental agreement in all revealed articles of faith (on the basis of passages such as Matthew 28:18-20, Romans 15:5-6, and 1 Corinthians 1:9-10) should not be confused with the unionistic belief in the necessity of agreement only in the so-called fundamental articles of faith. "Fundamental agreement" is not the same as "agreement in fundamentals."

According to the Augsburg Confession,

it is enough for the true unity of the church to agree concerning the teaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments. It is not necessary that human traditions, rites, or ceremonies instituted by human beings be alike everywhere. As Paul says [Eph. 4:5,6]: "One faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all..."<sup>336</sup>

The point of comparison here is between a pure and orthodox teaching of the gospel and a right administration of the evangelical sacraments, on the one hand; and human traditions and ceremonies on the other. The point of comparison is *not* between the gospel minimally defined and the sacraments on the one hand, and other less important articles of faith on the other - as ecumenically-minded Lutherans often maintain. Such attempts to smuggle into the Book of Concord a demand for unity only in fundamental doctrines, rather than a demand for fundamental unity in all doctrines, are both misguided and anachronistic. This is made clear by the Formula of Concord's elaborations and clarifications on this matter, when it says that "the churches are not to condemn one another because of differences in ceremonies when in Christian freedom one has fewer or more than the other, as long as these churches are otherwise united *in teaching*

*and in all the articles of the faith as well as in the proper use of the holy sacraments.*"<sup>337</sup>

Nass fraternally contemplates the possible applicability of these principles to the endemic "Missouri-Wisconsin" dispute regarding the Ministry:

It is likely that the way church life operates in everyday practice according to the "Wisconsin" view is probably not much different in most cases than according to the "Missouri" view. Pastors are called for general spiritual oversight. Other offices may or may not exist to help with the work in the congregation. These other forms work under the leadership of the pastor. To a certain extent one may even conclude that the differences between the "Wisconsin" view and "Missouri" view are a matter of terminology. Certainly the term "public ministry" has to a degree been understood differently. This term, of course, is not found in the Bible, and it therefore necessarily receives ecclesiastical definition. ... If the difference is only a matter of terminology without a difference in substance, the difference should be tolerated.<sup>338</sup>

If the present treatise is addressed to any particular segment of Christendom, it is addressed to those Lutherans who conscientiously embrace a "Bible-believing and confessionally faithful theology." Sasse speaks precisely to such people in his encouragement of dialogues between Lutherans of different "theological traditions," for the purpose of resolving the real and perceived differences in doctrine and practice that exist among them, and that have resulted in tragic ecclesial divisions among Confessional Lutherans in this world. He writes, in a spirit of gentle admonition, that

in the moment we set up a doctrine which the Scripture does not actually proclaim we have crossed the dividing line between theology and philosophy, and have left the *sola Scriptura* (the Scripture alone). That is the danger which all Bible-believing and confessionally faithful theology must again and again guard against. And for that reason we must always again and again inspect the trains of thought of also such theologians of whose orthodoxy we have no doubt. ... We all suffer from the fact that we cannot devote more time to this important task. For success depends after all on this, that we on all sides think these problems through anew and not just repeat the old formulae and slogans. ... We must all try to read the statements of the Scripture, on which we must make our decisions, afresh, and not always only in the pattern of our theological traditions. It is naturally easiest



and the most comfortable thing to do: to stay with what we have always said and wait until the other party says the same thing. But that can be the correct method only if we actually are championing only God's Word and not, in addition, our own theological tradition's opinion. *Our generation has a great responsibility...*<sup>339</sup>

Indeed it does.



***Excursus:***

***“The keys are...given to the church”***

The Biblical basis for the Christian church’s many discourses and debates over the centuries, concerning the power or office of the “keys,” is in St. Matthew’s Gospel, where Jesus employs the “keys” metaphor in addressing St. Peter as follows:

“And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (Matthew 16:18-19, ESV)

There are at least two additional passages of Scripture that are generally seen to be addressing the same basic theme as this “keys” passage, from elsewhere in St. Matthew and from St. John, where the Lord is again speaking:

“Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.” (Matthew 18:18-20, ESV)

“Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven; if you withhold forgiveness from anyone, it is withheld.” (John 20:22b-23, ESV)

In Lutheran theology, the idea of the power of the “keys” is sometimes connected comprehensively to all aspects of the proclamation and application of law and Gospel, and of the full ministry of Word and Sacrament in the church. The Augsburg Confession declares, for example, that “According to the gospel the power of the keys or of the bishops is a power and command of God to preach the gospel, to forgive or retain sin, and to administer and distribute the sacraments.”<sup>340</sup> Most of the time, however, the concept of the power of the “keys” is connected more narrowly to the oral pronouncement

of the forgiving or retaining of sin, as would be implemented chiefly in the context of confession and absolution. This is the usage of Martin Luther's Smalcald Articles, where we read that

the gospel...gives guidance and help against sin in more than one way, because God is extravagantly rich in his grace: first, through the spoken word, in which the forgiveness of sins is preached to the whole world (which is the proper function [office] of the gospel); second, through baptism; third, through the holy Sacrament of the Altar; fourth, through the power of the keys and also through the mutual conversation and consolation of brothers... Matthew 18[20]: "Where two or three are gathered..."<sup>341</sup>

There are four items on Luther's list of the ways in which the Gospel gives guidance and help against sin: "the spoken word" or preaching; Baptism; the Sacrament of the Altar; and "the power of the keys." The last item, in turn, includes what might be described as a subcategory or corollary point, on the "mutual conversation and consolation of brothers." Luther's intent can perhaps be paraphrased in this fashion: "fourth, through the power of the keys - and that also includes what happens through the mutual conversation and consolation of brothers." An alternative paraphrase could be: "fourth, through the power of the keys as exercised publicly (by the pastor), and also as exercised privately through the mutual conversation and consolation of brothers."<sup>342</sup> But in any case, this "mutual conversation and consolation" is not an additional fifth "way" of the Gospel *unto itself*. It is best seen as an elaboration, or a special application, of the *fourth* way; or as one of two modes (public and private) by which this fourth way of the Gospel brings the Word of God and the forgiveness of sins to people.

The translation of this section of the Smalcald Articles that appears in the Tappert edition of the Book of Concord has probably misled many into thinking otherwise. The Tappert version says: "...fourth, through the power of the keys; and finally, through the mutual conversation and consolation of brethren."<sup>343</sup> But there is nothing in the original text to support the insertion of the word "finally" at this point. This unwarranted insertion creates the appearance of a separation and cleavage between "the power of the keys" and "the mutual conversation and consolation of brethren" that is not in harmony with Luther's actual wording: "...zum vierten durch die Kraft der Schlüssel und auch per mutuum colloquium et consolationem fratrum..."<sup>344</sup> Such a separation or cleavage is also not in harmony with what Luther explicitly says elsewhere concerning the way in which

the power of the keys does in fact pertain to the informal sharing of the Gospel among Christians. We will return to that subject later.

Usually, when the power of the keys is discussed in the Lutheran Confessions, it is in the context of describing what pastors or bishops do, when they speak a *locking* or “binding” word of divine judgment to the impenitent, or an *unlocking* or “loosing” word of forgiveness in Christ to the penitent. Those who are called to the ministry of spiritual oversight in the church publicly exercise the keys in these ways as a part of the soul-care that they offer to their congregants (and occasionally to others), and in conjunction with the performance of their other pastoral duties. For example, in regard to the pastoral preparation of communicants for their reception of the Lord’s Supper, the Augsburg Confession states that

Confession has not been abolished by the preachers on our side. For the custom has been retained among us of not administering the sacrament to those who have not previously been examined and absolved. At the same time, the people are diligently instructed how comforting the word of absolution is and how highly and dearly absolution is to be esteemed. For it is not the voice or word of the person speaking it, but it is the Word of God, who forgives sin. For it is spoken in God’s stead and by God’s command. Great diligence is used to teach about this command and power of the keys, and how comforting and necessary it is for terrified consciences. It is also taught how God requires us to believe this absolution as much as if it were God’s voice resounding from heaven and that we should joyfully find comfort in the absolution, knowing that through such faith we obtain forgiveness of sin.<sup>345</sup>

We also read this, in the Smalcald Articles:

Because absolution or the power of the keys is also a comfort and help against sin and a bad conscience and was instituted by Christ in the gospel, confession, or absolution, should by no means be allowed to fall into disuse in the church – especially for the sake of weak consciences and for the wild young people, so that they may be examined and instructed in Christian teaching.<sup>346</sup>

The Confessions do emphasize that the power to condemn, and to bind sin to an impenitent conscience, inheres in the law of God itself, and not in the office or person of the one who speaks that law – even as the power to pardon and to save from sin inheres in the message of the Gospel that is spoken, and not in the office or person of

the speaker. The Formula of Concord, in the context of its teaching that God's law "threatens those who transgress it with God's wrath and temporal and eternal punishments,"<sup>347</sup> quotes Luther as saying that

Everything that proclaims something about our sin and God's wrath is the proclamation of the law, *however and whenever it may take place*. On the other hand, the gospel is the kind of proclamation that points to and bestows nothing else than grace and forgiveness in Christ...<sup>348</sup>

The authority to speak and apply God's inherently efficacious law and Gospel to others is not something that is entrusted only to the ordained clergy *as such*. Rather, as we read in Luther's Smalcald Articles, "The keys are an office and authority given to *the church* by Christ to bind and loose sins."<sup>349</sup> In the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, Philip Melancthon explains and defends the Lutheran conviction that the keys are "given to the church" in this way:

For Christ did not question Peter only but asked, "Who do you (plural) say that I am?" [Matt. 16:15]. What is said here in the singular - "I will give you [singular] the keys" and "Whatever you [singular] bind..." - is said elsewhere in the plural: "Whatever you (plural) bind..." [Matt. 18:18] and, in John [20:23], "if you (plural) forgive the sins of any..." These words show that the keys were entrusted equally to all the apostles and that all the apostles were commissioned in like manner. Moreover, it must be acknowledged that the keys do not belong to one particular person but *to the church*, as many clear and irrefutable arguments show. For having spoken of the keys in Matthew 18[:18], Christ goes on to say: "Wherever two or three agree on earth..." [Matt. 18:19-20]. Thus, he grants the power of the keys principally and without mediation *to the church*, and for the same reason the church has primary possession of the right to call ministers.<sup>350</sup>

Some have taken all this to mean that, while the keys are indeed "given to the church," they are nevertheless not to be *used* by the church, but are, as it were, to be *held in trust for*, and *passed on to*, the church's ordained ministers - who alone are to *use* them. According to this scheme, every baptized member of the church may be said to have a share in the *possession* and *authority* of the keys, but only the clergy have a share in the *use* of the keys. There is perhaps some measure of truth to this interpretation, especially in regard to the *public* and *pastoral* use of the keys. But this is not the full extent of how Luther and the Confessions interpret and apply the maxim that the

keys are “given to the church.”

In the Confessions, the meaning of this maxim, and of Luther’s “however and whenever” terminology, is fleshed out in more detail in the “Brief Exhortation to Confession” that Luther appended to his Large Catechism. Here Luther articulates this fundamental ecclesiological principle: “Thus by divine ordinance Christ himself has placed absolution in the mouths of his Christian community and commanded us to absolve one another from sins.”<sup>351</sup> Luther then goes on to explain that there is more than one form and manner of implementing this “divine ordinance” among Christians.

There are, according to Luther, three “kinds” of confession. The first kind is “confessing to God alone.” The second kind is the confession “which all Christians make toward their neighbor,” whereby “We are to confess our guilt before one another and forgive one another” – either “publicly in everyone’s presence,” when we acknowledge “the sum total of our sin”; or individually, “when a person has provoked someone else to anger and needs to ask for pardon” specifically from the offended party. The third kind – which is the main focus of Luther’s Exhortation – is “the secret confession that takes place privately before a single brother,” which “comes into play when some particular issue weighs on us or attacks us, eating away at us until we can have no peace nor find ourselves sufficiently strong in faith. Then we may at any time and as often as we wish lay our troubles before a brother..., seeking advice, comfort, and strength.”<sup>352</sup>

It has been suggested that even in his description of this third kind of confession, Luther is still talking about something that takes place between laymen, and that he does not have in mind the kind of confession that is ordinarily made before the pastor. But in the context, as he discusses the proper motivation for going to confession, Luther criticizes the coercive techniques of which “the pope’s preachers” are guilty, and he contrasts this with the evangelical invitations to confession that “we” offer:

...if anyone does not hear and heed our preaching and warning, we shall have nothing to do with such a person who ought not have any part of the gospel. If you are a Christian, you should be glad to run more than a hundred miles for confession, not under compulsion but rather coming and compelling us to offer it. For here the compulsion must be reversed; we are the ones who must come under the command and you must come in freedom. We compel no one, but allow ourselves to be compelled, just as we are compelled to preach and administer the sacrament.<sup>353</sup>

Luther is obviously talking about “we” evangelical *pastors* – who otherwise “preach and administer the sacrament” – as the designated “brothers” to whom Christians are to go for “secret confession.” It is significant, then, that when the Exhortation discusses the third kind of confession (which is the kind of confession that is made “secretly” before the pastor), it does not describe the pastor or confessor according to his public office and calling, but describes him instead simply as a Christian “brother” – almost as if he is just “one among many.”

To be sure, the office and vocation of those who forgive and retain sin as a part of their public ministry of spiritual oversight is emphasized *elsewhere* in the Book of Concord, when the topic under discussion is the divine order whereby properly-trained and properly-called bishops and pastors exercise the keys in this way. The Augsburg Confession states, for example, that “according to divine right it is the office of the bishop to preach the gospel, to forgive sin, to judge doctrine and reject doctrine that is contrary to the gospel, and to exclude from the Christian community the ungodly whose ungodly life is manifest.”<sup>354</sup> In the Large Catechism Exhortation, however, the emphasis is on the inherent efficacy of the word of absolution *itself*, which does not depend on the office and calling of the absolver. On this point, Oswald Bayer writes that

the shortest definition of Luther’s understanding of the church reads as follows: *Ubi est Verbum, ibi est ecclesia* – “Where the Word is, there is the church” [*Promotionsdisputation von Johannes Macchabaus Scotus*, 1542]. ... Everything that Luther otherwise has to say about the church...is nothing but an unfolding of this basic axiom. With classic conciseness, ...Augsburg Confession, article 5, says everything necessary about the office of the Word as that which establishes the church – fully in the sense of Luther’s theology: “In order to obtain such [justifying] faith, God established the preaching office, provided Word and sacrament. ...” Against one’s first impression – which the use of the word “preaching office” seems to imply at this point – this does not speak just about the office of pastor, as an office that is limited to those who are ordained; that topic receives attention first in article 14, which says “that no one in the church should teach publicly or preach or administer the sacraments without a regular call.” Article 5 does not deal specifically with the office of the pastor, but rather with the *ministerium evangelii* in its most basic sense, which means it is about the office of the Word, as it has been entrusted to everyone who is baptized. According to 1 Peter 2:9, everyone who has been baptized is empowered and obligated to proclaim the act of deliverance that God accomplished through Jesus Christ. *The Word does not depend on the*

*office; instead, the office depends on the Word that issues its call – just as every office in the church depends on the Word that issues its call.*<sup>355</sup>

This understanding of the ministry of the Gospel “in its most basic sense” is also reflected in the Formula of Concord’s affirmation that “the church’s ministry – *the Word as it is proclaimed and heard* – is...a means through which God the Holy Spirit teaches human beings the saving knowledge of Christ and effects conversion, repentance, faith, and new obedience in them.”<sup>356</sup>

A parishioner is nevertheless to be directed to his or her regular pastor for the kind of confidential spiritual care that we have been discussing, when it is needed, for a whole host of reasons. One of these is that the proper response of a minister, who has heard a confession of sin from another Christian, would involve not only a mechanical recitation of the formula of absolution, but also the offering of individualized instruction and encouragement. This instruction and encouragement would be carried out with care and sensitivity to the conscience of the individual, and would be focused on the specific issues with which that particular Christian is struggling. The Small Catechism points out that “A confessor, by using additional passages of Scripture, will in fact be able to comfort and encourage to faith those whose consciences are heavily burdened or who are distressed and under attack.”<sup>357</sup>

A layman, by definition, lacks a divine call to carry out the very weighty duty of hearing and responding to such confessions, and of absolving and counseling penitent sinners in this manner. A layman also in most cases lacks the skill and finesse that would be required fully to carry out this delicate spiritual task. Regular pastors, by comparison, are trained to do this, and are experienced in doing this. They should accordingly be the ones from whom this ministry is sought.

But again, in view of the point that the Exhortation seeks to make about the inherent efficacy of God’s Word, the pastor to whom a penitent sinner would go for absolution – and for “advice, comfort, and strength” – is described there simply as “a brother.” In cases of necessity, therefore, when a regular pastor is not available, but when this kind of spiritual care is needed by someone with a troubled conscience, it can in principle be sought from, and administered effectually by, *any* Christian “brother” – or by a Christian sister, if no capable man is available. Luther actually teaches that not only a woman, but also a *boy*, could, in an emergency, administer absolution in the way that a pastor would otherwise administer it – and that he could in such a circumstance even employ the distinctly pastoral ges-



ture of laying his hands on the head of the penitent while declaring to him the words of divine forgiveness. Speaking as a Christian pastor himself, Luther says in a sermon from 1544 that

whatever Christian pastors like me do in office, they do in the name of all. Therefore, we are the kind of kings that rule over sin, death, and everything else. We do it, however, in a spiritual manner... But I am such a lord for your sake when, (acting in your stead,) I place my hands on the head of a poor sinner and say, "I absolve you from your sins." I thus pronounce a judgment that makes the devil shake and tremble. ... Oh, how grateful we should be, for God gives me the power that He Himself has, so that when I lay my hands [on a sinner and pronounce Absolution], it is the same as if God Himself had done it – likewise, *when a boy or a woman pronounces Absolution*, because both are members of Christ and have His power. We are not on this account to disparage the public office [of the ministry], which God wants to be free of contempt. But *in an emergency*, when no one else is available, a boy speaks (the Absolution and lays his hand on my head, and it is just as powerful). So richly has our Lord God bestowed His great favor on us, saying that whatever we do at His command He wishes (to have done Himself). Thus He pours Himself out, so that our hands and mouths are the instruments of His will.<sup>358</sup>

All of this is possible because "Christ himself has placed absolution in the mouths of *his Christian community*," and not only in the mouths of a certain elite class within, or isolated segment of, that community.

An ordinary lay Christian does not have God's authorization to exercise pastoral authority over others, or to take charge of the direction of the spiritual life of others. But any Christian layman, by virtue of his baptism, nevertheless always has the fundamental *capacity* to do this. And when a churchly call, or the requirements of an emergency situation, would serve to *unleash* or *activate* that capacity, the word of divine forgiveness that needs to be spoken is already "there," as it were, in the mouth of the confessing Christian, who now does in fact absolve in the name and stead of Christ, as a "pastor" to the person who needs the absolution.

The Treatise teaches that "in an emergency even a layperson grants absolution and *becomes the minister or pastor of another*."<sup>359</sup> The kind of formal absolution that is being spoken of here is a public pastoral act. Hence when a layman in an emergency performs such an act, he thereby temporarily steps into the office of pastor for the duration of the time of need, and "becomes" the pastor. The administra-

tion of this kind of pastoral absolution is in the same category as the administration of Baptism and the administration of the Lord's Supper, which likewise are inherently public acts. In the old catholic provision for the administration of Baptism to be "allowed in cases of necessity even to ordinary women," Luther sees an implicit acknowledgment "that all Christians, and they alone, even women, are priests..." He then goes on to say: "So when women baptize, they exercise the function of priesthood legitimately, and do it not as a private act, but *as a part of the public ministry of the church* which belongs only to the priesthood."<sup>360</sup>

In its *form and manner*, this churchly and pastoral absolution – whether administered by a *regular* pastor or by an *emergency* pastor – is different from the interpersonal assurances of divine forgiveness that Christian laymen share with each other on an ongoing basis. Yet in its *essence and power* it is *fundamentally the same*.

And that is why the Smalcald Articles' fourth "way" of the Gospel is not limited to the form and manner of exercising the keys that is carried out by pastors. Also included is the "mutual conversation and consolation of brothers," by which God's forgiveness is bestowed upon Christians in and through their own informal speaking of the Gospel to one another.

In the "Longer Preface" of the Large Catechism, Luther expands on how this mutual conversation and consolation would normally be fleshed out in the personal and private interactions of Christians. In speaking of the catechism – which is, of course, a basic summary of God's Word – he states that for Christians

it is highly profitable and fruitful to read it daily and to make it the subject of meditation *and conversation*. In such reading, conversation, and meditation the Holy Spirit is present and bestows ever new and greater light and devotion, so that it tastes better and better and is digested, as Christ also promises in Matthew 18[:20], "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." Nothing is so powerfully effective against the devil, the world, the flesh, and all evil thoughts as to occupy one's self with God's Word, to *speak about it* and meditate upon it, in the way that Psalm 1[:2] calls those blessed who "meditate on God's law day and night." Without doubt, you will offer up no more powerful incense or savor against the devil than to occupy yourself with God's commandments and words and to speak, sing, or think about them.<sup>361</sup>

Further on in this Preface, he writes:

Let all Christians drill themselves in the catechism daily, and constantly put it into practice... Let them constantly read *and teach*, learn and meditate and ponder.<sup>362</sup>

It is interesting to see that Luther uses the word “teach” here, in his description of what is going on when Christians share the Word of God with one another. Luther would certainly not have disagreed with the position of the Augsburg Confession (which was prepared in the same year as the writing of this Preface), “that no one should teach publicly in the church or administer the sacraments unless properly called.”<sup>363</sup> He knew that Christians in general do not hold a public *office* of teaching, whereby they would have the right and duty to set themselves *over* others, and give authoritative religious instruction to others. But it is still a form of “teaching,” *more broadly defined*, that is taking place when Christians – in interactive and fraternal settings – encourage each other with the message of the Gospel.

Jakob Aall Ottesen of the (old) Norwegian Synod speaks of an “essential unity” in the official teaching of the church’s called ministers and in the unofficial teaching of its members in general:

When the pastor exercises his teaching responsibility, and exhorts or teaches rightly according to the Word of God, be it away or at home, in house or church, in secret or openly, in discussion form or in public speech (sermon), then he certainly comes only with the same word in the same Lord’s name, as when lay people mutually teach and exhort one another. And in this sense there is an essential unity in both kinds of teaching responsibility. Therefore it can also be said that they both can have essentially the same fruit and work (except always that the Word in every case is taught rightly) for the blessing to those who open their hearts to it, and for judgment and punishment for those who oppose.<sup>364</sup>

Luther speaks in a similar way in his lectures on “Psalm 110,” where he says:

Even though not everybody has the public office and calling, every Christian has the right and the duty to teach, instruct, admonish, comfort, and rebuke his neighbor with the Word of God at every opportunity and whenever necessary. For example, father and mother should do this for their children and household; a brother, neighbor, citizen, or peasant for the other. Certainly one Christian may instruct and admonish another ignorant or weak Christian concerning the Ten Commandments, the

Creed, or the Lord's Prayer. And he who receives such instruction is also under obligation to accept it as God's Word and publicly to confess it.<sup>365</sup>

As Luther indicates here, the "mutual conversation and consolation of brothers" would indeed also involve a fraternal application of the *law*, if and when this would be necessary. In the Large Catechism, Luther notes that "the authorities, fathers and mothers, and even *brothers and sisters and other good friends* are under a mutual obligation to reprove evil wherever it is necessary and helpful."<sup>366</sup>

We know from Luther's private writings that he does indeed consider it to be a use of the "keys" when Christians, in their ordinary, unofficial capacity as baptized believers, rebuke and comfort each other with the message of law and Gospel. He offers this commentary in his 1523 treatise "Concerning the Ministry":

Christ gives both the power *and the use* of the keys to *each Christian*, when he says, "Let him be to you as a Gentile" [Matt. 18:17]. For who is this "you" to whom Christ refers when he says, "Let him be to you"? ... Indeed, he refers to each and every Christian. And in saying, "Let him be to you," he gives not only the authority, but also commands its use and exercise. For what else does the phrase, "Let him be to you as a Gentile," mean than to have nothing to do with him, to have no fellowship with him. This truly is to excommunicate, to bind, and to close the door of heaven. This is confirmed by what follows: "Whatever you bind... shall be bound" [v. 18]. Who are those addressed? Are they not all Christians? Is it not the church? ... The keys belong to the whole church and *to each of its members*, both as regards their authority *and their various uses*. Otherwise we do violence to the words of Christ, in which he speaks to all without qualification or limitation: "Let him be to you," and "You will have gained your brother" [v. 15], and "Whatever you," etc. And the words which were spoken alone to Peter, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven" [Matt. 16:19], here find their confirmation. This word also, "If two of you agree on earth," and "Where two are gathered in my name there am I in the midst of them" [Matt. 18:19,20]. In all of these declarations we find established the fullest authority and the most immediate exercise of the right to bind and to absolve.<sup>367</sup>

In a sermon from the earlier years of his ministry, Luther likewise explains that the power to bind and loose is not limited to the public ministrations of a pastor, but that

the keys are used in *everything* I employ to help my neighbor in order to share comfort, to lead him unto public and private confession, to absolution and anything else involved in these matters. ... If I preach [that] you are of the devil as you walk and want to remain in your ways, then heaven is closed to that kind of person. But when that same person falls down and confesses his sins, then I say, believe in Christ for your sins are forgiven you. That is opening heaven. ... So we Christians also all have the authority to bind and to loose.<sup>368</sup>

And in a sermon that he preached in his more mature years, he declares that in the statement that the Lord makes in Matthew 18:20, “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them” (ESV),

Jesus is saying that he does not only want [the condemnation of sin and proclamation of the forgiveness of sins] to take place in the church, but he also gives this right and freedom where two or three are gathered together, so that among them the comfort and the forgiveness of sins may be proclaimed and pronounced. He pours out [his forgiveness] even more richly and places the forgiveness of sins for them in every corner, so that they not only find the forgiveness of sins in the congregation but also at home in their houses, in the fields and gardens, wherever one of them comes to another in search of comfort and deliverance. It shall be at my disposal when I am troubled and sorry, in tribulation and vulnerable, when I need something, at whatever hour and time it may be. There is not always a sermon being given publicly in the church, so when my brother or neighbor comes to me, I am to lay my troubles before my neighbor and ask for comfort. What that person then gives and promises to me as regards comfort is to be affirmed by God in Heaven as well. On the other hand, I should also comfort and say to another person: dear friend, dear brother, why do you not let go of your affliction? It is certainly not God’s will that you experience a single bit of suffering. God allowed his Son to die for you, so that you need not mourn but that you can be joyful. Therefore be of good courage and be comforted; you will do a service and that which is pleasing to God, and you ought to kneel down with one another and pray the Lord’s Prayer, which is certainly heard in heaven, for Christ promises: “I am in your midst” [Matt. 18:20].<sup>369</sup>

This is exactly the sort of thing that Luther is talking about in the Smalcald Articles, when he includes “the mutual conversation and consolation of brothers” as a part of the fourth “way” of the Gospel –

the way of “the power of the keys” – by which *God’s* forgiveness, and not only an individual’s *personal* forgiveness, is conveyed.

And Luther is not alone in this understanding among the Confessors of the Lutheran Church. Martin Chemnitz also recognizes a use of the “keys” that takes place among the Christian laity, not only when they might function on occasion as “emergency pastors,” but also when they are functioning *as laity*, in their ordinary life together in the fellowship of the church. In his *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Chemnitz quotes with approval the eleventh- and twelfth-century Eastern bishop Theophylact of Ohrid, as follows:

If when you have been sinned against you hold him who sinned against you, after a threefold admonition, as a publican, he will be such also in heaven; if, however, you loose him, that is, forgive him when he confesses and asks for it, he will be acquitted also in heaven. For it is not only the sins the priest looses which are loosed, but also those will be bound or loosed whom we, when we have been wronged, either bind or loose. Under this confession there is included also this, when a brother is moved and led by fraternal reproof to acknowledge and confess some sin, *even if it was not committed against us*. For so, says Christ, you have gained your brother. And James says that this confession is useful on account of the prayer for one another: Pray for one another, that you may be saved!<sup>370</sup>

Later in the *Examination*, with reference to this statement by Theophylact, Chemnitz describes the various ways in which the “keys” are used in the church – publicly by the regularly-called ministers of Word and Sacrament; publicly also by “emergency pastors” in cases of necessity; and privately by individual Christians in their ordinary fraternal interactions with each other:

For although the keys were given to the church itself, as the ancients correctly teach, we nevertheless by no means hold that any and every Christian without distinction should or can take to himself or exercise the ministry of the Word and sacraments without a legitimate call. As however the ancients say that in case of necessity any Christian lay person can administer the sacrament of Baptism, so Luther says the same thing about absolution in case of necessity, where no priest is present. He says nothing different from what Lombard...and Gratian...say on the basis of the opinion of the ancients. Earlier we have also noted the opinion of Theophylact, that *whatever is either loosed or bound in fraternal reproof and reconciliation is loosed and bound in heaven itself*. Moreover, there is no doubt that *when the Word of the Gospel*

*is proclaimed, God works efficaciously, no matter by whom it is proclaimed.*<sup>371</sup>

The form and manner of their use differ in each circumstance, but it is indeed *the keys that Christ gave to the church*, with their authority to bind and loose, that are being used in each circumstance.

A layman *as such* does not *formally* declare God's forgiveness to his fellow layman "as a called and ordained servant of the Word," or "by the authority of God and of my holy office,"<sup>372</sup> since he is not in fact called and ordained, and holds no such office. A layman is neither trained nor authorized to exercise pastoral care and oversight among other Christians, either as a prelude to, or as a follow-up to, the pronouncing of such *pastoral* absolution.

But when any Christian articulates to another person the basic message of law and Gospel, he is, in his own way, also using the "keys" with that other person. When a Christian privately says to someone who is impenitent, "You are not forgiven," this simple and straightforward statement does indeed serve to bind that impenitent person's sins to him. This message, in itself, is a powerful and efficacious word of divine judgment against sin. When a Christian privately says to someone who is penitent, "God forgives you for the sake of Christ," this simple and straightforward statement does indeed serve to loose that penitent person's sins from him. This message, in itself, is a powerful and efficacious word of divine grace and comfort.

Among more recent Lutheran theologians, Kurt E. Marquart's helpful distinction between formal/official/public/ministerial uses of the keys, and informal/unofficial/private/priestly uses of the keys, accurately reflects the totality of the teaching of the Scriptures, of the Lutheran Confessions, and of the Lutheran Reformers, on this matter. We cannot think of any better way to conclude, than with Marquart's well-chosen words:

The ministry's public proclamation is supported by and in turn supports that ceaseless "publishing" (εξαγγελιητε) of God's "virtues," which is the priestly duty and delight of all who live in and by "His wondrous light" (I Pet. 2:9). The ways in which this happens are as manifold as life's providential opportunities and responsibilities (Mt. 5:6; Acts 8:4; 18:26; Eph. 5:19; 6:4; II Tim. 1:5; 3:15; I Pet. 2:12-15; 3:1.15). Every house-father and house-mother is to be bishop and bishopess "that you help us exercise the preaching office [*Predigtamt*] in [your] houses, as we do in the church" [Luther, Sermon on the First Commandment (1528)]. Indeed, the Gospel as the power of salvation makes of believers not only priests but also kings and victors over Satan. In this

sense – the context illustrates the unselfconscious interplay of formal and informal, priestly and ministerial teaching – Luther even calls the teaching Christian [*Christianus docens*] “the true God on the face of the earth” [Commentary on 1 John (1527)]. This easy interplay between official and unofficial, public and private proclamation of the Gospel is not due to looseness of thought or language. It is rooted in the twofold communication of the Keys of the Kingdom to the whole church (Mt. 18:18; cf. II Cor. 2:10, Tr. 24) and to the public ministry (Jn. 20:23, cf. Mt. 16:19, Tr. 60,61). But this twofoldness is not symmetrical. The priesthood and the ministry possess the Keys, that is, the liberating, life-giving Gospel, in different modes and respects. The priesthood is the church, the bride of Christ, who as “house-mother of Christendom” possesses all the salvific treasures lavished upon her by her Bridegroom – especially the ministry of the Gospel (Eph. 4:7-13; I Cor. 3:21,22; Tr 69). The ministry, in turn, administers and distributes the common treasures of God and of the church (Mt. 18:20; Rom. 8:17,32; 10:6-15; I Cor. 4:1; II Cor. 2:14-5:21), and this clearly not in the sense of a pragmatic human arrangement, but by divine mandate, institution, and appointment (AC XXVIII:5-6). ... The holy church of Christ is not at the mercy of the arbitrary fantasies of her ministers, nor are the latter subject to the tyranny of those they must serve. Both ministers and people are strictly accountable to Christ, and in Him to each other, in mutual submission to His alone-saving Word (Rom. 14:4,7-14; I Pet. 5:2-4). ... So then the church, having the priesthood, has the Keys, directly or immediately, and through her Christ commits their public exercise to His and her public ministry, to which in that sense she is subject.<sup>373</sup>



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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Smalcald Articles II, II:15, in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, edited by Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), p. 304.

<sup>2</sup>Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration II:8, Kolb/Wengert p. 545.

<sup>3</sup>Formula of Concord, Epitome, Rule & Norm: 1, Kolb/Wengert p. 486.

<sup>4</sup>Lyle W. Lange, in *Our Great Heritage*, edited by Lange (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1991), Vol. 1, p. 326. See also David Jay Webber, "Are the Lutheran Confessions a Practical Document Today?," *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (September 1999), pp. 244-78.

<sup>5</sup>James F. Korthals, "Publication of the Book of Concord - 425th Anniversary," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. 102, No. 3 (Summer 2005), pp. 227-28.

<sup>6</sup>Joseph A. Seiss, "Our Confessions in English," *Lutheran Church Review*, Vol. I, Whole No. 3 (July 1882), p. 215. Emphases in original.

<sup>7</sup>Charles Porterfield Krauth, *The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology* (Philadelphia: General Council Publication Board, 1899), p. 186.

<sup>8</sup>Joseph A. Seiss, "Our Confessions in English," p. 216.

<sup>9</sup>Martin Luther, "Opinion on the Recess of the Imperial Diet"; quoted in C. F. W. Walther, *The True Visible Church* (translated by John Theodore Mueller) (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1961), p. 44.

<sup>10</sup>Hermann Sasse, *This is my body* (revised edition) (Adelaide, South Australia: Lutheran Publishing House, 1977), p. 253.

<sup>11</sup>Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration VII:33, Kolb/Wengert p. 598.

<sup>12</sup>Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration VII:34, Kolb/Wengert p. 598.

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<sup>13</sup>Jakob Aall Ottesen and Nils O. Brandt, "Indberetning fra Pastorerne Ottesen og Brandt om deres Reise til St. Louis, Missouri; Columbus, Ohio; og Buffalo, New York" (1857); in Carl S. Meyer, *Pioneers Find Friends* (Decorah, Iowa: Luther College Press, 1963), p. 69. Emphasis added.

<sup>14</sup>Robert D. Preus, *Getting into the Theology of Concord: A Study of the Book of Concord* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1977), p. 22. Emphasis added by Preus.

<sup>15</sup>A more literal rendering of this phrase would be "fathers in blood, and fathers in office to whom belong the care of the household and the country." The original German reads: *Also haben wir zweierlei Väter in diesem Gebot vorgestellt, des Geblüts und des Amts oder der Sorge im Hause und im Lande* (*Concordia Triglotta* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921], p. 626).

<sup>16</sup>The German word is *Amt*.

<sup>17</sup>Large Catechism I:158-63, Kolb/Wengert p. 408. Emphases added.

<sup>18</sup>Martin Luther, "Ten Sermons on the Catechism," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 51 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), pp. 149-50.

<sup>19</sup>Martin Luther, "Treatise on Good Works," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 44 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), pp. 80, 82, 87-88. Emphases added.

<sup>20</sup>In other contexts, when he was not expounding on the Fourth Commandment's ecclesial ramifications, Martin Luther did sometimes apply the concepts of spiritual fatherhood and motherhood more broadly – even as he in those other settings applied the concept of the ministry of the church more broadly as well. For example, in his 1535 "Lectures on Galatians," as he was commenting on St. Paul's allegory in Galatians 4:24 ff., he stated: "Therefore Sarah, or Jerusalem, our free mother, is the church, the bride of Christ who gives birth to all. She goes on giving birth to children without interruption until the end of the world, as long as she exercises the ministry of the Word, that is, as long as she preaches and propagates the Gospel; for this is what it means for her to give birth. ... Therefore this allegory teaches in a beautiful way that the church should not do anything but preach the Gospel correctly and purely and thus give birth to children. *In this way we are all fathers and children to one another, for we are born of one another.* I was born of others through the

Gospel, and now I am a father to still others, who will be fathers to still others; and so this giving birth will endure until the end of the world. ... Therefore just as Isaac has the inheritance from his father solely on the basis of the promise and of his birth, without the Law or works, so we are born as heirs by Sarah, the free woman, that is, by the church. She teaches, cherishes, and carries us in her womb, her bosom, and her arms; she shapes and perfects us to the form of Christ, until we grow into perfect manhood (Eph. 4:13). Thus everything happens through the ministry of the Word" (*Luther's Works*, Vol. 26 [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963], p. 441. Emphasis added).

<sup>21</sup>Large Catechism II:42, Kolb/Wengert p. 436.

<sup>22</sup>Martin Luther, "Infiltrating and Clandestine Preachers," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 40 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958), pp. 390-91.

<sup>23</sup>J. L. Neve, "Shall Women Preach in the Congregation?: An Exegetical Treatise," *The Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 3 (July 1903), pp. 412-13.

<sup>24</sup>Martin Luther, "Sermons on the First Epistle of St. Peter," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 30 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1967), p. 55.

<sup>25</sup>Martin Luther, "Sermons on Genesis"; quoted in *Luther on Women: A Sourcebook* (edited by Susan C. Karant-Nunn and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 24-25.

Contrary to the allegorical speculations of some of the early church Fathers, Luther accepted without question the veracity of a straightforward reading of the Genesis account of creation in general, and of the Genesis account of the creation of the first humans in particular. He said: "That Adam was created on the sixth day, that the animals were brought to him, that he heard the Lord giving him a command regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, that the Lord sent a sleep upon him - all these facts clearly refer to time and physical life. Therefore it is necessary to understand these days as actual days, contrary to the opinion of the holy fathers. Whenever we see that the opinions of the fathers are not in agreement with Scripture, we respectfully bear with them and acknowledge them as our forefathers; but we do not on their account give up the authority of Scripture" ("Lectures on Genesis," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 1 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1958), p. 122).

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<sup>26</sup>Martin Luther, "The Misuse of the Mass," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 36 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), pp. 151-52.

<sup>27</sup>Martin Luther, "Lectures on 1 Timothy," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 28 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1973), pp. 276-77.

<sup>28</sup>Matthias Loy, *Essay on the Ministerial Office* (Columbus, Ohio: Schulze & Gassmann, 1870), pp. 40-41.

<sup>29</sup>Todd Nichol, "Ministry and Oversight in American Lutheranism," in *Called and Ordained: Lutheran Perspectives on the Office of the Ministry* (edited by Nichol and Marc Kolden) (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), p. 100.

<sup>30</sup>Martin Luther, "Dr. Luther's Retraction of the Error Forced Upon Him by the Most Highly Learned Priest of God, Sir Jerome Emser, Vicar in Meissen," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 39 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), p. 234.

<sup>31</sup>Martin Luther, "Dr. Luther's Retraction of the Error Forced Upon Him by the Most Highly Learned Priest of God, Sir Jerome Emser, Vicar in Meissen," p. 233.

<sup>32</sup>Martin Luther, "Dr. Luther's Retraction of the Error Forced Upon Him by the Most Highly Learned Priest of God, Sir Jerome Emser, Vicar in Meissen," p. 237.

<sup>33</sup>Ruth A. Tucker and Walter L. Liefeld, *Daughters of the Church: Women and Ministry from New Testament Times to the Present* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1987), p. 194.

<sup>34</sup>Susan C. Karant-Nunn, "Continuity and Change: Some Effects of the Reformation on the Women of Zwickau," *Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. XII, No. 2 (Summer 1982), p. 38.

<sup>35</sup>Susan C. Karant-Nunn, "Continuity and Change: Some Effects of the Reformation on the Women of Zwickau," pp. 39-40.

<sup>36</sup>Small Catechism, Table of Duties: 1-2, Kolb/Wengert p. 365. Emphasis added.

<sup>37</sup>Martin Luther, "On the Councils and the Church," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 41 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), pp. 154-55. Emphases added.

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<sup>38</sup>Henry Eyster Jacobs, *A Summary of the Christian Faith* (Philadelphia: The United Lutheran Publication House, 1905), p. 445.

Jacobs' understanding of this passage is shared by David E. Aune, who writes: "In the middle of the discussion of the ethical requirements of a deacon in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 we find this statement: 'The women likewise must be serious, no slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things.' This suggests that there were women who functioned as deacons, a point made by this translation of 1 Timothy 3:11: 'Women in this office must likewise be dignified, not scandal-mongers, but sober, and trustworthy in every way'" ("The Pastoral Letters," in *The Blackwell Companion to the New Testament* [edited by Aune] [Chichester, West Sussex, United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010], p. 558). The second rendering of 1 Timothy 3:11 quoted by Aune is from the *Revised English Bible*.

<sup>39</sup>Henry Eyster Jacobs, *A Summary of the Christian Faith*, p. 445.

<sup>40</sup>C. H. Little, *Disputed Doctrines: A Study in Biblical and Dogmatic Theology* (Burlington, Iowa: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1933), pp. 69-72.

<sup>41</sup>In this same year (1970) the American Lutheran Church also approved the ordination of women pastors. In 1987 the Lutheran Church in America merged with the ALC and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (a Missouri Synod breakaway) to form the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. In Canada (where C. H. Little had served as a seminary professor), the LCA-Canada Section and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada (formerly the ALC Canada District) had already merged in 1985 to form the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. Both of these merged churches, from their inceptions, have unreservedly allowed and encouraged the ordination of women pastors. Two recently-formed ELCA breakaway bodies - Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (organized in 2001) and the North American Lutheran Church (organized in 2010) - likewise approve of women's ordination. Most other Lutheran church bodies in North America - including the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, the Lutheran Church-Canada, the American Association of Lutheran Churches, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, the Church of the Lutheran Confession, the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, and the Church of the Lutheran Brethren of America - do not allow women to serve as pastors.

<sup>42</sup>Walter Obare Omwanza, "Choose Life!", *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, Vol. 69, Nos. 3-4 (July/October 2005), p. 310. Emphases added.

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For a comprehensive collection of contemporary essays that defend and expound the Scriptural and catholic teaching of a male-only pastoral ministry in the church, see *Women Pastors?: The Ordination of Women in Biblical Lutheran Perspective* (third edition) (edited by Matthew C. Harrison and John T. Pless) (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2012). For a book-length treatment, see Fritz Zerbst, *The Office of Woman in the Church: A Study in Practical Theology* (translated by Albert G. Merkens) (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955).

<sup>43</sup>John H. P. Reumann, *Ministries Examined: Laity, Clergy, Women, and Bishops in a Time of Change* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1987), p. 98.

<sup>44</sup>E. H. Klotsche, *Christian Symbolics* (revised edition) (Des Moines, Iowa: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1929), pp. 293-94.

<sup>45</sup>Bo Giertz, *Christ's Church: Her Biblical Roots, Her Dramatic History, Her Saving Presence, Her Glorious Future* (translated by Hans Andrae) (Eugene, Oregon: Resource Publications, 2010), pp. 163-64. Emphasis in original.

<sup>46</sup>John R. Stephenson, *Eschatology* (Fort Wayne, Indiana: The Luther Academy, 1993), p. 5.

<sup>47</sup>Martin Luther, WA 48, 31 (1541); quoted in *What Luther Says* (edited by Ewald M. Plass) (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), p. 71.

<sup>48</sup>Martin Luther, WA 2, 618; quoted in Willem Jan Kooiman, *Luther and the Bible* (translated by John Schmidt) (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961), p. 78.

<sup>49</sup>Martin Luther, "Defense and Explanation of All the Articles," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 32 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958), pp. 11-12.

<sup>50</sup>Martin Luther, "The Misuse of the Mass," p. 137.

<sup>51</sup>Martin Luther, "Psalm 45," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 12 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955), p. 242.

<sup>52</sup>Martin Luther, "Lectures on Genesis," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 1, p. 122.

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<sup>53</sup>Kurt E. Marquart, *Anatomy of an Explosion: A Theological Analysis of the Missouri Synod Conflict* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1978), p. 50. Emphases added.

Marquart elaborates elsewhere that “the analogy between the Incarnation and Inspiration...supports...the orthodox, Biblical position: the human side of Scripture implies error as little as the human nature of Christ implies sin! The analogy is violated precisely by those who smuggle in errors under the guise of Scripture’s humanity! And it is just the adherents of the strict, orthodox doctrine of the Bible who see Inspiration as of a piece with the Incarnation; for they oppose the idealistic flight to some ‘spiritual meaning’ or ‘depth dimension’ above, beyond or behind the concrete particularity of the Biblical text! Analogy, however, implies similarity, not identity. Like parables, analogies may therefore not be pressed unto blood. Thus not everything that can and must be said about the Incarnation, can be applied also to Inspiration. It is very misleading, for instance, to speak of a ‘Chalcedonian relationship’ between the human and the divine aspects of Scripture. Not all of the four adverbs applied by the Council of Chalcedon to the Personal Union of the Natures of Christ, can be transferred to inspiration...” (“Truth and/or Consequences,” *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, Vol. VIII, No. 2 [Winter 1967-68], p. 55).

Many conservative Lutheran theologians have picked up on the analogy between the divine-human Christ and the divine-human Scripture as a way of illustrating and explaining the doctrines of Biblical inspiration, Biblical inerrancy, and Biblical infallibility. Some additional examples can be given here:

“The word of God is perfectly divine in its contents; but except where the divine form is as necessary as the divine fact, no book is more perfectly human in its form. It is inspired, for it comes from God; it is human, for it comes through man. But remember, we do not say that the human is without the divine. The Spirit is incarnate in the Word, as the Son was incarnate in Christ. There is deep significance in the fact, that the title of ‘the Word’ is given both to Christ, the Revealer, and to the Bible, the revelation of God, so that in some passages great critics differ as to which is meant. As Christ without confusion of natures is truly human as well as divine, so is this Word. As the human in Christ, though distinct from the divine, was never separate from it, and his human acts were never those of a merely human being – his toils, his merits and his blood were those of God – so is the written word, though most human of books – as Christ, ‘the Son of Man,’ was most human of men – truly divine. Its humanities are no accidents; they are divinely planned. It is essential to God’s conception of his Book, that it shall be written by these men and in this way. He created, reared, made and chose these men, and

inspired them to do this thing in their way, because their way was his way" (Charles Porterfield Krauth, *The Bible a Perfect Book* [Gettysburg, Pennsylvania: Henry C. Neinstedt, 1857], p. 10. Punctuation slightly revised.).

"When it is stated that Scripture contains a human element as well as a divine element, this statement may be so understood as to be right; for in the Scriptures the divine truths are clothed in human language, in human forms. But this statement is not understood aright if thereby is meant that in the Scriptures the divine truths are blended with human errors. Christ was God and man in one person. In the Holy Scriptures there is also a certain union of the divine and the human element. Christ was like us in all things, but He was altogether without sin. The Holy Scriptures resemble human writings in many respects, but they are without the human liability to err. The human nature of Christ was permeated by His divine nature. The whole of the Holy Scripture, which is indeed not without its human element, is given by inspiration of God and is the Word of God" (Elling Hove, *Christian Doctrine* [Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1930], pp. 18-19).

"...there is a close analogy between Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word, and the Scriptures, the Written Word. Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word, was absolutely without sin. The Holy Scriptures, the Written Word, must likewise be absolutely without error; for sin and error are closely allied. This we see from the Lord's own words, for when He encountered the Jews with the challenge, 'Which of you convinceth me of sin?' He immediately added, 'And if I speak the truth, why do ye not believe me?' [John 8:46]" (C. H. Little, *Disputed Doctrines*, p. 28).

"...it is not surprising that men who 10 years ago were saying that the Bible cannot be perfect because it is a human book, today are ready to assert that the Lord Jesus too, since He was a true human being, was mistaken in many things. It is only another demonstration of the truth that, when men lose the Scriptures, they must eventually also lose Christ. For just as Christ is human and divine, so the Scriptures, too, are both human and divine. The words are human words spoken and written by men, but they are also divine words spoken and written by God through human agency. The holy writers were His scribes, His penmen, whom He used to produce the sacred Scriptures, just as the king of Assyria was the rod of His anger which He used to punish recalcitrant Israel. There is no warrant, therefore, for any attempt to separate the divine words from the human words, or to distinguish the divine message from the human assertions in this book" (Siegbert W. Becker, "The Inspiration of Scripture," *This Steadfast Word* [Lutheran Free Conference Publications, 1965], p. 40).

"A well-known Lutheran magazine some years ago...in an article dealing with the Inspiration of the Bible...stated that since the Bible is



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human, 'it must contain mistakes, inaccuracies, and contradictions.' The lack of cogency in this argument is recognized when we remember that while it is perfectly correct to say that to err is human, it is not true that to be human is to err. The Lutheran Confessions cut the ground out from under this argument when they demonstrate on the basis of Scripture that human nature and original sin are not one and the same thing. To be human does not mean to be sinful or necessarily to be subject to error. The Lord Jesus stands as a living proof of that fact. Though He was a true human being, He was not subject to error, even though some modern Lutherans have also committed the blasphemy of saying that the Son of God was mistaken in some of the opinions which He held. It is therefore a manifest error to claim that since human beings are subject to error, and the Bible is written by men, the Bible too must contain mistakes" (Siegbert W. Becker, *The Scriptures: Inspired of God* [Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1971], pp. 40-41).

"The Bible does not teach that God laid aside the personality, character, human gifts, etc., of the men whom He used in writing the books of Scripture. They were no mechanical amanuenses. Rather, He used them as they were, sanctifying, enlightening and guiding them in such a manner that the outcome was the Bible, which is true in its every part. Both in Roman Catholic and Protestant theology parallelism or correspondence has been seen between, on the one hand, the *divine and human 'natures' of Christ* and, on the other hand, the *divine and human 'natures' of the Bible*. As the Second Person of the Trinity became true man in Christ, who was true God and true man in one person, so the Bible also is at the same time truly divine and truly human, God's word and man's word in one Book. Liberal critics have claimed that the true humanity of the Bible implies its erroneousness, since *to err is human* (Lat. *errare humanum est*). They have charged the biblical-conservatives with a *docetic-monophysitic* error when they hold that Scripture is inerrant. The monophysitic errorists of the ancient Church taught that Christ's divine nature 'swallowed' His human nature so that He actually was all divine. His human nature was merely apparent; He seemed (Gr. *dokein* = to seem, appear) to be a true man, but this was mere illusion. The liberals say that the biblical-conservatives regard the Bible as so fully divine that its human side becomes merely apparent. In this allegation the liberals have ignored or deliberately misinterpreted the christology of the Council of *Chalcedon* (451 A.D.): in emphasizing that Christ is true God and true man in one person this council did *not include fallibility in Christ's true humanity*. In alleging that in the case of the Bible its *true humanity includes fallibility*, the liberals deny true parallelism between the true human natures of Christ and of the Bible: As Christ's true humanity did not include fallibility, neither does the true humanity of the Bible imply erroneousness. The liberal critics who hold that Christ, to be sure, was inerrant as to His divine nature but in His human nature, as man, was

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erring as men are, have fallen into a *Nestorian* heresy: They deny the true unity of His person as God-Man, claiming that His human nature acted and spoke in relative independence of His divine nature. In his encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu* (1943), Pope Pius XII (1939-58) employed this parallelism correctly: The Bible uses truly human modes of expression (*dicendi genus*) in reporting the words and acts of God; but this does not deny its divine truth or inerrancy. As the Word, the Second Person of the Trinity, being of the same essence with God, became true man in Jesus, but without sin, so also God's word in Scripture is truly human in its various forms of speech, with the exception of errors and mistakes (*quoad omnia humani sermoni assimilia facta sunt, excepto errore*)" (Uuras Saarnivaara, *Can the Bible Be Trusted?: Old and New Testament Introduction and Interpretation* [Minneapolis: Osterhus Publishing House, 1983], pp. 38-39. Emphases in original.).

<sup>54</sup>E. Thestrup Pedersen, *Luther som Skriftfortolker* (Copenhagen: Nyt Nordisk Forlag Arnold Busck, 1959), pp. 455, 459-60; quoted in Kurt E. Marquart, "Truth and/or Consequences," pp. 10-12. Emphases in original.

For further discussions of these matters, see J. Michael Reu, *Luther and the Scriptures* (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1944); John Warwick Montgomery, "Lessons from Luther on the Inerrancy of Holy Writ," in *God's Inerrant Word: An International Symposium on the Trustworthiness of Scripture* (edited by Montgomery) (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1974), pp. 63-94; and John R. Stephenson, "'Inerrancy': The 'ὁμοουσιον' of Our Time," *Logia*, Vol. II, No. 4 (Reformation/October 1993), pp. 4-8.

<sup>55</sup>Treatise 30-31, Kolb/Wengert p. 335. Emphasis added.

<sup>56</sup>Martin Luther, "Against the Roman Papacy, an Institution of the Devil," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 41, pp. 358-59. Emphases added.

<sup>57</sup>Apology XXIV:34, Kolb/Wengert pp. 264-65.

<sup>58</sup>Apology XXII:17, Kolb/Wengert p. 247.

<sup>59</sup>Apology XIII:9, Kolb/Wengert p. 220.

<sup>60</sup>Treatise 26, Kolb/Wengert p. 334.

<sup>61</sup>Johann Gerhard, *Loci theologici* 24, 212; quoted in Matthias Loy, *Essay on the Ministerial Office*, pp. 25-26. Emphasis added.

<sup>62</sup>Smalcald Articles III, VIII:10-13, Kolb/Wengert p. 323.

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<sup>63</sup>Johann Gerhard, *On the Ecclesiastical Ministry, Part One* (translated by Richard J. Dinda) (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2011), p. 68.

<sup>64</sup>Treatise 60-65, Kolb/Wengert p. 340.

<sup>65</sup>Treatise 7, Kolb/Wengert p. 331. Emphasis added.

<sup>66</sup>Treatise 8-11, Kolb/Wengert pp. 331-32.

<sup>67</sup>See also Apology IV:5, where “in the gospel” in the Latin version (Kolb/Wengert p. 121) becomes “in the New Testament” in the German version (*Concordia Triglotta*, p. 121).

<sup>68</sup>Augsburg Confession V:1 (Latin), Kolb/Wengert p. 41.

<sup>69</sup>Martin Luther, “Sermon for the Sunday after Easter” (Third Sermon) (1540), *Complete Sermons of Martin Luther* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2000), Vol. 1.2, pp. 388-89. Emphases added.

<sup>70</sup>Augsburg Confession V:1-2,4 (German), Kolb/Wengert p. 40.

<sup>71</sup>“The Confutation of the Augsburg Confession” (1530), in *Sources and Contexts of The Book of Concord* (edited by Robert Kolb and James A. Nestingen) (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), p. 109.

<sup>72</sup>“The Schwabach Articles” (1529), in *Sources and Contexts of The Book of Concord*, pp. 85-86.

<sup>73</sup>Matthias Loy, *The Augsburg Confession: An Introduction to Its Study and an Exposition of Its Contents* (Columbus, Ohio: Lutheran Book Concern, 1908), p. 503.

<sup>74</sup>See also Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration II:50-57, Kolb/Wengert pp. 553-55.

<sup>75</sup>Large Catechism I:86, Kolb/Wengert p. 398.

<sup>76</sup>See the German text in *Concordia Triglotta*, p. 604.

<sup>77</sup>The German word is *Übung*.

<sup>78</sup>Large Catechism I:91-92, 94, Kolb/Wengert p. 399.

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<sup>79</sup>Large Catechism I:141, Kolb/Wengert p. 405.

<sup>80</sup>Large Catechism I:180-81, Kolb/Wengert p. 410. Emphases added.

<sup>81</sup>Martin Chemnitz, *Ministry, Word, and Sacraments: An Enchiridion* (translated by Luther Poellot) (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981), p. 29.

<sup>82</sup>Martin Luther, Letter to Wolfgang Brauer, 1536; Halle 10:2736-39; quoted in C. F. W. Walther, *The Church & the Office of the Ministry* (translated by John Theodore Mueller; edited by Matthew C. Harrison) (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2012), pp. 163-64. Emphases added by Walther.

On one occasion, in later years, "The faculty in Leipzig was asked the following question: If a pastor faints while he is consecrating the bread, can the sacristan or some other Christian consecrate the chalice and commune the congregation? The faculty answers that since Luther was of the opinion that the head of a household cannot celebrate the Sacrament in his home, it would be improper for a layman to do the same in this case, since he has neither the call nor the command to do so. According to the Holy Scriptures, in *First Corinthians*, chapter four, verse one, and also in chapter three, verse nine, the administration of the Sacraments is assigned to pastors. Furthermore, one cannot use the excuse that this is an emergency, since the Sacrament of the Altar is not an absolute necessity in the sense that Baptism is. Therefore, the congregation should either wait until the pastor has been revived and can continue the consecration, or should call in a neighboring pastor [Dedekennus, *Appendix*, p. 408]" (Edward Frederick Peters, *The Origin and meaning of the Axiom: "Nothing Has the Character of a Sacrament Outside of the Use," in Sixteenth-Century and Seventeenth-Century Lutheran Theology* [Fort Wayne, Indiana: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 1993], pp. 531-32).

<sup>83</sup>Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. III (translated by Walter W. F. Albrecht) (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), pp. 444-45.

<sup>84</sup>Gottfried Herrmann, "The Path of the Evangelisch-Lutherischen Freikirche (ELFK) into the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC) and the Doctrine of Church and Ministry" (translated by Michael Seifert) (2000).

<sup>85</sup>Gottfried Herrmann, "The Theological Development of the WELS With Particular Reference to Its Doctrine of the Ministry," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. 96, No. 2 (Spring 1999), p. 113 (translated by Wilbert R. Gawrisch).

<sup>86</sup>John Philip Koehler, *Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1917), p. 659; quoted in Peter M. Prange, "The Wauwatosa Gospel and the Synodical Conference: A Generation of Pelting Rain" (unedited version). Emphasis added.

<sup>87</sup>"Theses on the Church and Ministry" (Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod) (1969), II.D.5.

<sup>88</sup>John F. Brug, Review of *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics*, Volume IV, by Adolf Hoenecke, in *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. 97, No. 4 (Fall 2000), p. 316.

<sup>89</sup>Augsburg Confession XXVIII:5-8,21 (Latin), Kolb/Wengert pp. 93,95.

<sup>90</sup>Francis Pieper, "The Laymen's Movement in the Light of God's Word," *What Is Christianity? And Other Essays* (translated by John Theodore Mueller) (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1933), pp. 156-57.

<sup>91</sup>Beth Kreitzer, *Reforming Mary: Changing Images of the Virgin Mary in Lutheran Sermons of the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 75.

<sup>92</sup>Adolf Hoenecke, *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics*, Vol. IV (translated by Joel Fredrich, Paul Prange, and Bill Tackmier) (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1999), p. 192.

<sup>93</sup>Charles Porterfield Krauth, "Church Polity," Part I, *Lutheran Church Review*, Vol. II, Whole No. 8 (October 1883), pp. 316-17. Emphasis added.

<sup>94</sup>Martin Luther, "On the Councils and the Church," pp. 154-55.

<sup>95</sup>Martin Luther, "On the Councils and the Church," p. 164.

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<sup>96</sup>Kurt E. Marquart, *The Church and Her Fellowship, Ministry, and Governance* (corrected edition) (Fort Wayne, Indiana: The International Foundation for Lutheran Confessional Research, 1995), pp. 120-23.

<sup>97</sup>Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther* (translated by Robert C. Schultz) (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), pp. 323-24.

In regard to the first derivation of the Public Ministry (“from below”), Charles Porterfield Krauth states that “In the true Christian minister, the priesthood, which he holds in common with all believers, intensifies itself by his representative character. He is a priest, whose lips keep knowledge, at whose mouth they should seek the law, for he is the ‘messenger of the Lord of hosts’” (*The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology*, p. 177). In regard to the second derivation (“from above”), Krauth states: “To the end that God may be glorified in the salvation of men, our Lord Jesus Christ, in his Divine Unity with the Father and the Holy Ghost, has instituted the ministry; to teach the pure Gospel, and to administer the Sacraments rightly in the Church. (Acts xiii. 26, xvi. 17; Rom. i. 16; 2 Cor. v. 18; Eph. i. 13.) ... This divinely instituted ministry is a sacred public office, conferred by legitimate vocation, on suitable men. (Rom. xii. 7; 2 Cor. iv. 1; Eph. iv. 12; Col. iv. 17; 1 Tim. i. 12; 2 Tim. iv. 5.) ... The ministry is necessary as the ordinary instrumental medium ordained of God, whereby the Word and Sacraments, which are the only means of grace in the strict and proper sense, are to be brought to men. (Phil. i. 24; Heb. v. 12; 2 Cor. v. 19; Eph. i. 13; 1 Thess. ii. 13.) ... Though God is the perpetuator of the ministry, as he is its author, He continues it on Earth, by means of his Church; through which He exercises his power of appointing teachers of the word. (Acts i. 23, 24; Titus i. 5; Acts xiv. 23, xx. 28; 1 Tim. iv. 14, v. 22; 2 Tim. i. 6; 1 Cor. xii. 28.)” (“Thetical Statement of the Doctrine Concerning the Ministry of the Gospel” [First Article], *Lutheran and Missionary*, Vol. XIV, No. 12 (December 31, 1874), p. 1. Emphases in original.).

<sup>98</sup>Martin Luther, “That a Christian Assembly or Congregation Has the Right and the Power to Judge All Teaching and to Call, Appoint, and Dismiss Teachers, Established and Proven by Scripture,” *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 39 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), pp. 310-11.

<sup>99</sup>Martin Luther, “Infiltrating and Clandestine Preachers,” pp. 391-93.

<sup>100</sup>C. F. W. Walther, “On Luther and Lay Preachers: A Letter to Pastor J. A. Ottesen,” in Matthew C. Harrison, *At Home in the House of My Fathers* (Fort Wayne, Indiana: Lutheran Legacy, 2009), pp. 138-39.

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<sup>101</sup>C. F. W. Walther, "On Luther and Lay Preachers: A Letter to Pastor J. A. Ottesen," p. 140.

<sup>102</sup>Martin Luther, "Lectures on Galatians" (1535), *Luther's Works*, Vol. 26, p. 20.

<sup>103</sup>Ordination Certificate signed at Wicaco, Pennsylvania, on November 25, 1703, by Andreas Rudman, Ericus Björk (Erik Björk), and Andreas Sandel (translated by Mary Margaret Ruth); in Kim-Eric Williams, *The Journey of Justus Falckner* (Delhi, New York: ALPB Books, 2003), pp. 43-45. Translation slightly revised.

It is axiomatic among Confessional Lutherans that "matters of church government belong to the *adiaphora*, to the 'rites and ceremonies, instituted by men' (Augsburg Confession VII), concerning which there may and must be freedom in the church. Christ is not the legislator of a human religious fellowship, and the Gospel has in it no law which prescribes the only right way of organization and polity for the church" (Hermann Sasse, "Ministry and Congregation," *We Confess the Church* [translated by Norman Nagel] [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986], p. 70). This evangelical truth was illustrated very vividly in the 1703 ordination of Justus Falckner for service among the Dutch Lutherans of New York colony. The officiant at Falckner's ordination was Pastor Andreas Rudman, a minister of the Church of Sweden. The ordination was conducted with the assistance and concurrence of Pastors Erik Björk and Andreas Sandel. They were also clergymen of the Church of Sweden, serving Swedish Lutheran congregations in the Delaware colony. Conrad Bergendoff recounts some of the fascinating details of this interesting story: "By what authority did Rudman ordain Falckner? ...Swedish church law explicitly limited ordination to a bishop [or superintendent], who ordinarily ordains only for his own see. ...it is probably most correct to assume that...the ordination of Falckner followed the custom of the Amsterdam church under which the New York church functioned. The constitution of the Amsterdam church provided for nomination and election of a candidate for ordination by the officers of the local congregation. Ordination was by pastors of three neighboring congregations and a pastor of the Amsterdam church. Falckner was called by the New York church, and when we find three Swedish pastors from the Delaware officiating, we conclude [that] the provisions of the Dutch Lutheran church were [thereby] satisfied (though none could be present from Amsterdam). Pastors Rudman, Björck, and Sandel ordained Falckner in accordance with the regulations of not their, but Falckner's, church" (*The Doctrine of the Church in American Lutheranism* [Philadelphia:

Board of Publication of the United Lutheran Church in America, 1956], pp. 20-21).

Rudman had previously written to Falckner that “Episcopal authority for consecrating churches, ordaining, etc., has been granted to me unreservedly by the [Arch]bishop, especially with reference to a contingency such as this. ... Beside, you know that in Holland, Lutherans have no bishop and are, therefore, inducted into the ministry by the vote of the presbyters” (quoted in Kim-Eric Williams, *The Journey of Justus Falckner*, pp. 25-26). A “contingency” that the bishop in Sweden likely had in mind, in giving Rudman this extraordinary authority, was the possibility of a request by the Lutherans in New York for the ordination of a new pastor according to their own Dutch Lutheran polity. Rudman himself had actually been serving the Dutch Lutherans there as their pastor, on a temporary basis for a little over a year, until poor health had forced him to step down. It is therefore very plausible that he had corresponded with his ecclesiastical superior in Sweden regarding the permissibility of what he did in fact then do, in the *presbyterial* ordination of Falckner. In accordance with the norms of the *episcopal* polity of the Swedish church, Rudman was eventually appointed by the King of Sweden as “Superintendent” over the affairs of the Swedish congregations in America, on January 22, 1704 (p. 27). But this was *after* the ordination of Falckner, which therefore could not have been performed under the authority of that later commission. The ordination of Falckner serves, therefore, as an important historical illustration of unfettered mutual recognition and respect among Lutherans with an episcopal polity, and Lutherans with a congregational/presbyterial polity.

<sup>104</sup>Charles Porterfield Krauth, “Thetical Statement of the Doctrine Concerning the Ministry of the Gospel” (First Article), p. 1. Emphasis in original.

<sup>105</sup>Olavus Petri; quoted in Conrad Bergendoff, *The Doctrine of the Church in American Lutheranism*, p. 33.

<sup>106</sup>Hermann Sasse, “The Crisis of the Christian Ministry,” *The Lonely Way*, Vol. II (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2002), pp. 357-58. Emphasis added.

<sup>107</sup>Hermann Sasse, “Ministry and Congregation,” p. 78.

<sup>108</sup>Charles Porterfield Krauth, *The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology*, pp. 152-53.

<sup>109</sup>Apology XIV:1-3,5, Kolb/Wengert pp. 222-23.



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<sup>110</sup>Gustaf Wingren, *Gospel and Church* (translated by Ross MacKenzie) (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1964), p. 124.

<sup>111</sup>Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent, Part II* (translated by Fred Kramer) (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978), pp. 701-03. See also Johann Gerhard, *On the Ecclesiastical Ministry, Part Two* (translated by Richard J. Dinda) (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2012), pp. 52-53.

<sup>112</sup>Smalcald Articles II, IV:1,7,9, Kolb/Wengert pp. 307-08.

<sup>113</sup>Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent, Part II*, p. 302.

<sup>114</sup>Martin Luther, "Lectures on Galatians" (1535), *Luther's Works*, Vol. 27 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), p. 41. Emphases added.

<sup>115</sup>Canon XXXIII of the Synod of Laodicea, *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series*, Vol. XIV (The Seven Ecumenical Councils) (Reprint: Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), p. 149.

<sup>116</sup>"Fellowship in Its Necessary Context of the Doctrine of the Church," *Proceedings of the Recessed Forty-sixth Convention of the Lutheran Synodical Conference*, 1961, pp. 11-12.

The "Overseas Brethren" sent a delegation to the United States in April 1961, to meet with committees that had been appointed by the member churches of the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America, which were then embroiled in a serious dispute over the doctrine and practice of church fellowship. Theodore A. Aaberg informs us that "The ELS Committee was favorably impressed with the presentation on church fellowship by the Overseas Brethren. In a preliminary evaluation, the Committee stated: 'As especially pertinent we throughout all of the theses note the emphasis placed on the *notae ecclesiae* [marks of the church, i.e. Word and sacraments] as bestowing faith, bringing the Church into existence, and as being the standard by which all the doctrine and practice in the church are to be regulated. Equally important is the attempt in these theses to eliminate the subjective element for recognizing the presence of the true Church and for setting up principles for Church Fellowship... We also find it particularly gratifying to note the importance of making the actual confession of a church (i.e., what is taught, written, practiced, or officially resolved by it) the basis upon which church fellowship can be established and maintained.'" Aaberg

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reports that the ELS committee also noted that in this presentation – “as amplified by verbal explanations on the part of the Overseas Brethren” – “the same requirements are laid down for Prayer Fellowship as for Pulpit and Altar Fellowship” (*A City Set on a Hill: A History of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (Norwegian Synod) 1918-1968* [Mankato, Minnesota: Board of Publications, Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 1968], pp. 232-33).

The Synodical Conference existed from 1872 to 1967. At various times in its history, its member churches and affiliates included the Missouri Synod, the Wisconsin Synod, the Ohio Synod, the Slovak Synod, the (old) Norwegian Synod, and later the (little) Norwegian Synod – which understood itself to be the successor of the (old) Norwegian Synod. The (little) Norwegian Synod changed its name to the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in 1958.

<sup>117</sup>Martin Luther, “Lectures on Genesis,” *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 2 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1960), p. 333. Emphasis added.

It is, of course, important always to remember that “The principles of church fellowship set forth in the Scriptures...are not legalistic rules but loving directives of the Lord for the good of his church. They must be applied in the spirit of the gracious Savior who loved us so much that he gave his life for us. There will be times when prayer together with other Lutheran Christians or even with Christians of other denominations may be proper, such as when it is apparent that their membership in the false church body is the result of a weak faith which does not fully understand the error of the church body, or it is clear that they actually do not share in the error at all. In such situations one must consider more than the confession of their church membership. There will be times when it will be necessary to attend the worship services of an erring church, such as at the wedding or funeral of a loved one. Here care must be taken so that such attendance is not understood as agreement with the doctrine of the erring church. The highly individualistic spirit of the times and the abandonment in practice of formal confessions of faith by many church bodies have resulted in many individuals being put in a state of flux regarding their religious convictions and confessions. They do not necessarily hold to the teaching of the church body to which they belong. They may indeed be open to instruction from the Word and may be seeking direction. When such individuals come to us, we cannot always deal with them solely on the basis of their formal confession of faith which they make by their formal church membership. One has to also consider their informal confession of faith. However, this informal confession too must be considered on the basis of the true marks of the church” (Gaylin R. Schmeling, “The Theology of Church

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Fellowship," *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 2 [June 1993], pp. 46-47).

Also in this spirit is a *Gutachten* that was prepared jointly by officials of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod in 1976: "Do we hold that the exercise of church fellowship, especially prayer and altar fellowship, can be decided in every instance solely on the basis of formal church membership, that is, on whether or not the person belongs to a congregation or synod in affiliation with us? No. Ordinarily this is the basis on which such a question is decided since church fellowship is exercised on the basis of one's confession to the pure marks of the church, and ordinarily we express our confession by our church membership. There may be cases in the exercise of church fellowship where a person's informal confession of faith must also be considered. This is especially true regarding the weak. But whether one is guided by a person's formal or informal confession of faith, in either instance it must in principle be a confession to the full truth of God's Word. In addition, special care must be exercised so as not to cause offense to others or to interfere with another man's ministry. Further, we are not to judge harshly concerning the manner in which a brother pastor after much agonizing handles such difficult cases" ("A reply of the WELS Commission on Inter-Church Relations and of the ELS Board of Theology and Church Relations based on their synods' public confession on the doctrine of church fellowship to a question regarding church fellowship raised by pastors from the Conference of Authentic Lutherans," *Lutheran Sentinel*, Vol. 59, No. 14 [July 22, 1976], pp. 220-21). The kind of pastoral discretion in special situations that is recognized as legitimate in this *Gutachten* - concerning the admission to Communion of someone who is not formally affiliated with the church where he wishes to commune, but who nevertheless personally confesses the faith of that church - was also permitted and encouraged by Luther: "In one case Luther is known to have issued a letter of recommendation for an Ethiopian deacon Michael. The intention is apparently to make it possible for Michael to receive the sacrament; the similarity between the outward forms of the Lutheran and Ethiopian eucharistic liturgy being stressed. Michael was said to have accepted all our articles of faith, 'omnibus nostris articulis'" (Tom G. A. Hardt, "The Confessional Principle: Church Fellowship in the Ancient and in the Lutheran Church," *Logia*, Vol. VIII, No. 2 [Eastertide 1999], p. 27).

Specifically in regard to the topic of joint prayer, or prayer fellowship, Armin W. Schuetze observes that "Joint prayer, praying with someone, is always an act of Christian fellowship even as it is always an act of Christian fellowship to go to Holy Communion together at the same altar. Of a handshake I may say: This handshake as you are installed as pastor is an expression of our unity of faith and is an act of

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Christian fellowship. Another handshake may be a mere friendly greeting with no religious fellowship implications. When we pray together, however, we cannot say: This prayer is nothing more than an act of friendship. The fact is that joint prayer always has religious implications, simply because prayer always is, or should be, a religious action" ("Joining Together in Prayer and the Lord's Supper: The Scriptural Principles of Fellowship Applied to Prayer and Holy Communion," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. 93, No. 2 [Spring 1996], p. 123). Still, distinctions between what may or should be done in private settings, and what may or should be done in public settings, can legitimately be made, since "In public actions the matter of offense more readily becomes a factor. This may not be present in private situations. In public we must carefully guard lest our prayer practices give the impression of indifference to doctrine, or even of agreement with false doctrine, either of which may be harmful to someone's faith. In private situations the personal confession of the individual may be expressed in such a way that calls for recognition. Not to acknowledge it could prove harmful to that person's faith. Particularly weakness in faith and understanding may in private situations call for action that may not be possible in public" (p. 127). Schuetze goes on to provide some practical examples of actions that would be proper in certain private settings: "We may visit a sick relative or friend who is not of our fellowship. What do I do? Must I avoid any religious discussion and prayer? This may be a fruitful opportunity for Christian witness, to strengthen the sick person's faith, to proclaim the Lord's forgiveness, mercy, power to help, and faithfulness. But what about prayer? A simple confession of faith in the Lord Jesus as Savior from sin and the only hope for salvation may be the only confession I need to join this sick person in approaching the throne of grace in prayer. This confession may well show that a person's membership in a heterodox church is a weakness, that in this private situation his personal confession supersedes anything else I may know. When a confession is lacking I can still pray for the person, also in his presence. This is a time to build and strengthen faith. We may come upon a person who is seriously hurt, a total stranger. What if that person should request that I pray with him? If there is no possibility for any kind of confession, I can speak a prayer to the Lord Jesus in his behalf. This may well comfort and meet the needs of someone who has faith in the Lord Jesus. If the person was a pious pagan, the Christian message in the prayer is the Holy Spirit's means that may prove effective. On the other hand, if there is opportunity for a gospel witness and a response of faith, under these circumstances this is the only confession I need to join this person in prayer in his desperate need" (p. 128). John F. Brug adds these thoughts about prayer in a home where spouses (or other family members) may belong to different churches: "If one spouse is a non-Christian, the Christian

partner may pray for and in the presence of the non-Christian husband or wife. Obviously, they cannot pray together. If the other spouse is a member of a heterodox church and ridicules or rejects the beliefs of our member, joint prayer is hardly possible. If the other spouse's membership in a heterodox church is seen as a matter of weakness in understanding, joint prayer may be possible in the privacy of the home" (*Church Fellowship: Working Together for the Truth* [Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1996], p. 149).

For a helpful study of how the principles of ecclesial fellowship were understood and applied among Confessional Lutherans in nineteenth-century America, see Brug, "Walther and Fellowship," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. 109, No. 1 (Winter 2012), pp. 7-37.

<sup>118</sup>John Philip Koehler, *Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte*, p. 712; quoted in Thomas P. Nass, "What is 'divinely instituted' and what is 'necessary' in regard to the public ministry?" (2003).

<sup>119</sup>Francis Pieper, oral statement made to John Philip Koehler (1917); quoted in Koehler, *Reminiscences* (1930); quoted in turn in Peter M. Prange, "The Wauwatosa Gospel and the Synodical Conference: A Generation of Pelting Rain" (edited version), *Logia*, Vol. XII, No. 2 (Easter 2003), p. 42.

<sup>120</sup>Charles A. Hay, "Article V: The Office of the Ministry," in *Lectures on the Augsburg Confession* (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1888), p. 154. Emphasis in original.

<sup>121</sup>Ralph F. Smith, *Luther, Ministry, and Ordination Rites in the Early Reformation Church* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), p. 3. Emphasis added.

<sup>122</sup>C. F. W. Walther, "Duties of an Evangelical Lutheran Synod," *Essays for the Church* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), Vol. II, pp. 58-59. Emphases in original.

<sup>123</sup>August Pieper, "Are There Legal Regulations in the New Testament?," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. 86, No. 1 (Winter 1989), pp. 42-43 (translated by Carl J. Lawrenz). Emphases added. This article was originally published (in German) in *Theologische Quartalschrift*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (July 1916), pp. 157-82.

<sup>124</sup>August Pieper, "Are There Legal Regulations in the New Testament?," p. 49. Punctuation slightly revised.

<sup>125</sup>Erling T. Teigen, "The Universal Priesthood in the Lutheran Confessions," *Logia*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Reformation/October 1992), pp. 13-14.

<sup>126</sup>Concordia Seminary faculty, Letter of August 3, 1916; in "Basic Documents in Church and Ministry Discussions," *Faithful Word*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (February 1970), p. 25.

<sup>127</sup>Thomas P. Nass, "The Revised *This We Believe* of the WELS on the Ministry," *Logia*, Vol. X, No. 3 (Holy Trinity 2001), pp. 32-33.

<sup>128</sup>Henry Eyster Jacobs, *A Summary of the Christian Faith*, p. 431.

<sup>129</sup>Kurt E. Marquart, *The Church and Her Fellowship, Ministry, and Governance*, p. 222. The quotations are from *Lehre und Wehre*, Vol. 9, p. 179; and from *Lehre und Wehre*, Vol. 71, No. 12 (December 1925), p. 425.

<sup>130</sup>John Buenger, "An Attempt at Reaching Full Understanding in the Controversy on the Doctrine of the Church and the Ministry," *Clergy Bulletin*, Vol. X, No. 12 (August 1951), p. 134.

<sup>131</sup>C. H. Little, *Disputed Doctrines: A Study in Biblical and Dogmatic Theology*, p. 58.

<sup>132</sup>Paul E. Kretzmann, Review of *Disputed Doctrines* by C. H. Little, in *Concordia Theological Monthly*, Vol. IV, No. 12 (December 1933), p. 957.

In contrast to Kretzmann's rejection of the ecclesial character of a synod, and of the right of a synod to issue divine calls, Kurt E. Marquart (a professor at the Missouri Synod's Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne for 31 years) said in the present writer's hearing - on more than one occasion - that "churches do not stop being 'church' when they work together."

<sup>133</sup>C. F. W. Walther, "Rede bei Einfuhrung zweier Gymnasial-lehrer," *Lutherische Brosamen* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1897), pp. 346 ff.; quoted in Carl J. Lawrenz, "An Evaluation of Walther's Theses on the Church and Ministry," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. 79, No. 2 (Spring 1982), pp. 128-30. The professors in question were Adolph Friedrich Theodor Biewend, the new Rector or President of the "Classical Department" or Gymnasium that was attached to Concordia Seminary in Saint Louis; and Georg Schick, the new Co-rector of that department. The sermon was originally published in *Der Lutheraner* (edited by Walther), Vol. XII (June 3, 1856), p. 164.

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<sup>134</sup>C. F. W. Walther, "Sermon at the Installation of Two College Professors," *Lutheran Sentinel*, Vol. 32, No. 6 (March 28, 1949), pp. 83-84 (translated by John W. Klotz).

<sup>135</sup>Apology VII/VIII:20; cf. *Concordia Triglotta*, p. 232.

<sup>136</sup>C. F. W. Walther, "The True Visible Church," *Essays for the Church*, Vol. I, p. 102. Translation slightly revised.

For a detailed discussion of the meaning of terms like *Amt* and *Predigtamt* in early Lutheran usage – which confirms Walther's understanding – see Mark D. Nispel, "Office and Offices," *Logia*, Vol. VI, No. 3 (Holy Trinity 1997), pp. 5-11.

<sup>137</sup>C. F. W. Walther, "Erste Predigt zur Erössnung der Synode," *Lutherische Brosamen* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1897), p. 391.

In his essay on "The Right Principles of Church Government," Ulrik Vilhelm Koren provides elaborate descriptions of how and why individual congregations come into existence, and of how and why – in the normal course of events – such congregations unite themselves into cooperative synodical organizations. We here include two lengthy excerpts:

"The Church is established by the word of God in accordance with the command of Christ: 'Go and make disciples of all nations,' etc. For that which makes us Christians is faith, and faith comes by the word of God. Therefore the Lutheran Church confesses in the Augsburg Confession, Article 5, as follows: 'That we may obtain this faith, the office of teaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments was instituted. For, through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Ghost is given, who worketh faith where and when it pleaseth God in them that hear the Gospel.' There is no reference in this article to the work of the public ministry, by which the office of the word is to be performed in the congregation by certain persons who have been called to it. That is discussed later in the 14th Article. Here the reference is to the essence, power, and effectual working of the means of grace. What is this effectual working? It is that which we confess in our Sunday Collect, when we give thanks that God 'has given us His holy and blessed word,' and then add: 'by which Thou dost also among us gather Thy Christian Church.' For the Church, the kingdom of Christ, is 'not of this world' (John 18, 36). It is a kingdom of the Spirit; it consists of people who are indeed 'in' the world but who are not 'of' the world, all of whom have the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8, 9), and are born again of water and of the Spirit. It is a kingdom which owns spiritual treasures. It is a real kingdom, just as real as the external kingdom whose citizens we are in

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this world; but it is a spiritual and invisible kingdom and cannot be seen or observed (Luke 17, 20-21), as we also confess in the Third Article when we say that we *believe* the holy Christian Church. If we could see it, it would not be an object of *faith*. ... But...we can still, according to the word of God, know where this holy Church is to be found. Concerning this we confess in the 7th Article of the Augsburg Confession, that the Church is there where 'the Gospel is rightly taught and the sacraments rightly administered.' So, as the word and the sacraments are things which can be heard and seen, and around which a larger or smaller group of people gather, an assembly is produced thereby, which is also called 'church,' namely, the so-called visible church, to which all those belong who confess the word that is preached, whether they are truly believers or not. Before God, however, only the believers are true members of the Church... They cannot live isolated, separated from one another; for they love one another, and they know that it is the will of God that they shall be one in Christ (John 17, 20-23). Nor shall this love be so hidden in the heart that it does not manifest itself; for Jesus says (John 13, 35): 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.' Therefore the believers did not stand each one alone by himself at the Pentecost festival. There was a congregation at once, and we read about this congregation that 'the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul'; and that 'they continued daily with one accord in the temple.' About what were they gathered? About the word and sacraments, the Lord's institutions, and they knew that He himself had promised to be in the midst of them with His powerful though invisible presence. And thus it is still wherever there are souls that have received 'the same precious faith' 'which was once delivered unto the saints.' They must and they will join together and precisely about the word and sacraments. How do they do this? By establishing the office of the word in their midst and calling a minister of the word. But could they not dispense with that? If the Christians are a people of 'kings and priests' and have the spiritual priesthood, why should it then be necessary to establish the preaching office and call pastors? Is it not, at least, a matter of liberty which they can arrange for themselves as they please? No, it is not a human ordinance. God wants it to be so. ... Nobody is the lord of the congregation except Christ. But Christ governs by His word, and the public preaching of the word is carried out by the congregation in accordance with Christ's ordinance through the office of preaching. Those who are in this office shall be guides by declaring the word of God. So long as they do this, the congregation obeys Christ in that it obeys its guides. Where the word of God speaks, there it is not the pastor who commands, but God Himself. Where the word of God does not speak, there the pastor has nothing to command; for he shall only declare what God has said" (in *Faith of Our*



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*Fathers*, edited by George O. Lillegard [Mankato, Minnesota: Lutheran Synod Book Company, 1953], pp. 117-19, 123-24, 126-27. Emphases in original.)

“But how about a whole church body, composed of many congregations? Is such a body instituted by God? Not directly. Wherever the apostles came and gathered souls by the word and sacraments, there a congregation was thus formed, the office of the word was established, and there was a church... The fact that all believers in the various regions did not manifest themselves as a single church or congregation was due, not to the nature or essence of the Church, but to the external circumstances: that they lived in different places, spoke different languages, etc. According to its essence the Church is one. ... But since Christ, in accordance with His promise, is Himself present in every place where He by His word has gathered a congregation and is in their midst with His gifts, therefore each local congregation possesses everything that it needs, and it does not have to look anywhere else for help in that respect. It is self-existent. But the inner unity between such a congregation and other congregations which have the same faith is not broken thereby, for this follows from the nature of faith. Therefore we see also that there was such intimate union in faith and love between the apostolic congregations. Not any external compulsion, but the inner need, brought about their union. It follows from the circumstances in which the Church exists here in this world that this inner need, in the course of time, will necessarily manifest itself through planned cooperation between the individual congregations. For if God’s commands concerning the preservation of the word, concerning the maintenance of the pastoral office, and concerning the qualifications of those who are to be put into this office are to be followed; if the instruction of the children and Christian discipline are to be promoted; if the command Christ has given concerning the preaching of the Gospel to all nations is to be carried out; if the need that love feels to help other suffering Christians, poor congregations, orphaned children, and lonely old people is to be filled; then it is self-evident that the individual congregation would not be able to carry it all out, and that the congregations which are in a position to do so should join together and help each other in all these things. How would things go, if this duty were not recognized? And what could be the reason for a congregation’s unwillingness to be along in such a union except this, that it had not recognized those duties and the demands of love? But if it, then, is a necessary consequence of faith and love that the inner unity of the Church manifests itself in external cooperation, how can this be done in a proper and God-pleasing way? Plainly only by joining together into one body and by adopting certain rules for cooperation. ... If we hold fast to what we have taught above, from the word of God, about the essence of the Church and the independence of each congregation, it will not be

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difficult to understand how a body of free congregations must be governed. Such a church body cannot have any government 'by divine right.' But that there must be some government follows from the fact that all things shall be done decently and in order, which is what God demands; but the government itself can belong only to the congregations, and it can be carried out only by the men who are sent and empowered by the different congregations for that very purpose. ... The Synod, then, dare not have any authority over the individual congregation. It cannot impose anything upon it, cannot demand anything of it which God has not demanded, cannot levy taxes upon it. Since the basis on which the union into one body has been built is unity in the faith, the first point in the agreement must be that the individual congregation will not let its confession or its rules conflict with the word of God or Christ's will. This is not a power that the Synod assumes. It is God's demand and not men's, and this demand receives no more authority by the fact that the church body, the Synod, expresses it than if an individual presented it, although the common testimony might be a source of strengthening for one in need of it. In order to preserve unity in faith and to make progress in Christian life, a body of orthodox congregations will, indeed, find it necessary to establish a special overseer's office for the pastors and congregations, such as has been the case from the earliest periods in the church. But at the same time the church body must take care to learn, from church history, how necessary it is that the execution of this office does not conflict with the principles given above. The bishops were not elected to rule. The Lutheran Church testifies to this in the Augsburg Confession, in the Apology, and in the Smalcald Articles. We elect these overseers or presidents, as we call them, not to rule but to remind us of our Savior's rule and His royal word, and, by supervision, admonition, encouragement, and advice to help us use and obey the word of God. They have no other power than that of the word. To reach all the common goals that have been named - schools and educational institutions, distribution of books, missions, charitable institutions, and everything that can serve the kingdom of God - it is necessary that men and women who have the necessary qualifications are chosen and commissioned, and that the required funds are gathered and managed. Here we will be reminded of the words of the apostle Paul, when he in I Cor. 12 speaks about the different members of the body of Christ, and how one member needs the other, how the eye, the ear, the hand, the foot all have mutual need of each others' help, and that there must be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. Since the Church has been given no other rules with regard to all those things than that all things be done decently and in order, it becomes the task of the church body to learn how all such matters can best be arranged. And since there is no authority established by God to command in such mat-

ters, it follows that the church body cannot command or force anything upon the congregation either. ... Love will, indeed, render it necessary for the individual congregation not to reject such resolutions, if they do not conflict with the conscience, but it must be a free matter, since love is free. No compulsory commandment can be given" (pp. 129-31, 134-36).

<sup>138</sup>Adolf Hoenecke, "Farewell Sermon" (preached at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in Milwaukee on December 7, 1891) (2008) (translated by Peter Metzger and Jeffrey Grundmeier). First emphasis added. Second emphasis in original.

<sup>139</sup>Adolf Hoenecke, *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics*, Vol. IV, pp. 215-16.

<sup>140</sup>Johann Gerhard, *On the Ecclesiastical Ministry*, Part Two, p. 44.

<sup>141</sup>Bjarne W. Teigen, "The Church in the New Testament, Luther, and the Lutheran Confessions," *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (October 1978), pp. 392-94.

<sup>142</sup>Bjarne W. Teigen, "The Church in the New Testament, Luther, and the Lutheran Confessions," pp. 390-91.

<sup>143</sup>Henry Eyster Jacobs, "Theses on the Ministry and Ordination," *Lutheran Church Review*, Vol. XXVII, No. 1 (January 1908), pp. 91-92.

<sup>144</sup>Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration XII:6, Kolb/Wengert p. 656.

<sup>145</sup>Martin Luther, "Infiltrating and Clandestine Preachers," pp. 387-88.

<sup>146</sup>An editorial notation pertaining to Large Catechism, Longer Preface: 1, in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, edited by Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), p. 358.

<sup>147</sup>For a helpful listing and description of early Lutheran "Clergy Titles," and of "Titles of Other Church Officials," see Joseph Herl, *Worship Wars in Early Lutheranism: Choir, Congregation, and Three Centuries of Conflict* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 41-43. A similarly helpful listing and description of the various "ministers of the church or church workers" who could be found in the Lutheran churches of the sixteenth century, is provided in Kevin G. Walker's "Translator's Pref-

ace" in Ernst Walter Zeeden, *Faith and Act: The Survival of Medieval Ceremonies in the Lutheran Reformation* (translated by Walker) (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2012), pp. xi-xvi. In this preface, after mentioning the various categories of ordained clergy that existed in the church at that time, Walker writes: "All of the above could be called ministers of the church or church workers (*ministri ecclesiae / Kirchendiener*) in the narrow sense, while others under the parson's authority could also be called this in the wide sense: sacristan/sexton (*Küster/Mesner/Kirchner*), bell-ringer (*Glöckner*), Schoolmaster (*Schulmeister*), teaching assistant (*Schulgeselle*), cantor, and organist" (p. xiv).

<sup>148</sup>Apology XIII:12; see *Concordia Triglotta*, p. 310.

<sup>149</sup>C. F. W. Walther, "Comments on the Expulsion of a Lutheran 'Deacon,'" *Der Lutheraner*, Vol. 23, No. 9 (January 1, 1867), pp. 65 ff. (translated by Mark D. Nispel). Emphasis in original.

<sup>150</sup>See Treatise 60-65, Kolb/Wengert p. 340.

Sometimes, according to the polity and procedures of a particular Lutheran jurisdiction, certain supervisory duties of a bishop (or superintendent or president) can also be carried out by "visitors" or other episcopal assistants, who work under the direction of the bishop (or superintendent or president).

<sup>151</sup>Herman Amberg Preus, *Vivacious Daughter: Seven Lectures on the Religious Situation Among Norwegians in America* (translated by Todd W. Nichol) (Northfield, Minnesota: The Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1990), p. 51. Emphasis added.

<sup>152</sup>Herman Amberg Preus, *Vivacious Daughter: Seven Lectures on the Religious Situation Among Norwegians in America*, p. 51.

<sup>153</sup>Hermann Sasse, "Ministry and Congregation," pp. 71-72. Emphasis added.

<sup>154</sup>Martin Chemnitz, *Ministry, Word, and Sacraments: An Enchiridion*, p. 16.

<sup>155</sup>Treatise 11, Kolb/Wengert p. 331.

In regard to the Treatise's statement that "the church is superior to its ministers," E. H. Klotsche notes: "by 'Church' is, of course, not meant the individual local congregation, but the congregation of all believers" (*Christian Symbolics*, p. 181).

<sup>156</sup>“The Public Ministry of the Word” (2005); appended to John A. Moldstad, “Public Ministry: ELS Perspective,” *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, Vol. 51, Nos. 2-3 (June/September 2011), pp. 179-80.

<sup>157</sup>John A. Moldstad, “Reminder of what is stated in the PMW” (2008), appended to “Public Ministry: ELS Perspective,” pp. 194-95. Emphases in original.

<sup>158</sup>E. W. Kaehler, “Does a Congregation Ordinarily Have the Right Temporarily to Commit an Essential Part of the Holy Preaching Office to a Layman?,” *Logia*, Vol. VI, No. 3 (Holy Trinity 1997), p. 43 (translated by Mark D. Nispel). Kaehler was a member of the Ohio Synod when this essay was first written and delivered. It was originally published (in three parts) in *Lehre und Wehre* (edited by C. F. W. Walther), Vol. 20, Nos. 9, 11, and 12 (September, November, and December 1874). Walther’s high opinion of Kaehler and of Kaehler’s theological competence is reflected in the fact that Kaehler later served as Walther’s secretary and editorial assistant (Carl S. Meyer, *From Log Cabin to Luther Tower* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965], p. 66).

<sup>159</sup>Martin Luther, “Infiltrating and Clandestine Preachers,” pp. 384-85. Emphasis added.

<sup>160</sup>Martin Luther, “Lectures on Genesis,” *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 3 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1961), p. 124. Emphasis added.

<sup>161</sup>E. W. Kaehler, “Does a Congregation Ordinarily Have the Right Temporarily to Commit an Essential Part of the Holy Preaching Office to a Layman?,” pp. 39-41.

<sup>162</sup>Hermann Sasse, “The Lutheran Doctrine of the Office of the Ministry” (translated by Matthew C. Harrison), *The Lonely Way*, Vol. II, p. 128. Emphasis in original.

<sup>163</sup>Martin Luther, “On the Papacy in Rome Against the Most Celebrated Romanist in Leipzig,” *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 39, p. 69.

Luther also said this about the “invisible” and “visible” aspects of the church: “The circle of the believers is not visible; the church is the circle of believers; therefore the church is invisible. ... For the sake of confession the circle of the church is visible... By confession the church is recognized [*Propter confessionem coetus ecclesiae est visibilis... Ex confessione cognoscitur ecclesia*], according to the word of Paul: ‘For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is

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made unto salvation' [Rom. 10:10]" (a university disputation of 1542, WA 39II, 161; quoted in Lewis W. Spitz, "Discord, Dialogue, and Concord: The Lutheran Reformation's Formula of Concord," *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, Vol. 43, No. 1 [June 1979], p. 191).

<sup>164</sup>Ulrik Vilhelm Koren; quoted in *Norwegian Synod Report, Minnesota District*, 1904, p. 41 (translated by Charles J. Evanson). Emphases added.

<sup>165</sup>Martin Luther, *Propositiones adversus totam synagogam Sathanæ et universas portas inferorum* [Propositions Against the Whole Synagogue of Satan and All the Gates of Hell] (St. Louis XIX:958; WA 30:II:413-427); quoted in Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. III, p. 431.

<sup>166</sup>Martin Luther, On Matt. xxi., 12 sq. (Erlangen 44, 253); quoted in Henry Eyster Jacobs, *Martin Luther: The Hero of the Reformation* (Philadelphia: General Council Publication House, 1898), p. 379.

<sup>167</sup>Martin Luther, "Lectures on Genesis," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 5 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), pp. 250-51.

<sup>168</sup>Large Catechism I:275-76,278-80, Kolb/Wengert p. 423. Emphasis added.

<sup>169</sup>Treatise 54,56, Kolb/Wengert p. 339. Emphasis added.

<sup>170</sup>Hermann Sasse, "Church Government and Secular Authority" (translated by Matthew C. Harrison), *The Lonely Way*, Vol. I (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2001), p. 223.

<sup>171</sup>Armin W. Schuetze, *Church-Mission-Ministry: The Family of God* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1995), p. 27.

<sup>172</sup>Henry Eyster Jacobs, *A Summary of the Christian Faith*, pp. 403-04.

<sup>173</sup> Martin Luther, "Ten Sermons on the Catechism," pp. 137-38.

Luther had expressed himself in a similar way in his 1522 sermon on "The Estate of Marriage," where he said that "the greatest good in married life...is that God grants offspring and commands that they be brought up to worship and serve him. In all the world this is the noblest and most precious work, because to God there can be nothing dearer than the salvation of souls. ... Most certainly father and mother are apostles, bishops, and priests to their children, for it is they who make them acquainted with the gospel. In short, there is no greater or

nobler authority on earth than that of parents over their children, for this authority is both spiritual and temporal. Whoever teaches the gospel to another is truly his apostle and bishop. Mitre and staff and great estates indeed produce idols, but teaching the gospel produces apostles and bishops. See therefore how good and great is God's work and ordinance!" (*Luther's Works*, Vol. 45 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1962], p. 46).

<sup>174</sup>Martin Luther, "Sermon on Joel 2:28"; quoted in *Luther on Women: A Sourcebook*, p. 61. Luther prefaces these remarks with the observation (from Acts 21:9) that "The four daughters of Philip were prophetesses," and he accordingly justifies such teaching and consoling by women and girls with the explanation that "This all counts as prophesying, not preaching" (p. 61).

<sup>175</sup>Francis Pieper, "The Laymen's Movement in the Light of God's Word," pp. 154-57.

<sup>176</sup>William Henkel, "The Status of Woman in the Public Life of the Congregation," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. 58, No. 3 (July 1961), pp. 221-22.

<sup>177</sup>Large Catechism IV:2, Kolb/Wengert p. 456.

<sup>178</sup>Smalcald Articles II, II:9, Kolb/Wengert p. 303.

<sup>179</sup>Large Catechism V:32, Kolb/Wengert p. 470.

<sup>180</sup>See Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration VII:79-82, Kolb/Wengert p. 607.

<sup>181</sup>Martin Chemnitz, *Ministry, Word, and Sacraments: An Enchiridion*, p. 122. Emphasis added.

<sup>182</sup>Martin Luther, "On the Councils and the Church," p. 152.

<sup>183</sup>"Women in the Public Ministry" (Evangelical Lutheran Synod Doctrine Committee) (2001). Emphasis in original.

<sup>184</sup>Johann Gerhard, *Loci theologici*, "De baptismo," 34, 36; quoted in C. F. W. Walther, *Church and Ministry* (translated by John Theodore Mueller) (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987), pp. 285-86.

<sup>185</sup>Jacob Andreae; quoted in *Acta colloquii Montis Bellisgartensis*; quoted in turn in Mark D. Tranvik, "Jacob Andreae's Defense of the

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Lutheran Doctrine of Baptism at Montbeliard," *Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. VI (new series), No. 4 (Winter 1992), pp. 432,436. Emphases added.

<sup>186</sup>C. F. W. Walther, *American Lutheran Pastoral Theology* (translated by John M. Drickamer) (New Haven, Missouri: Lutheran News, Inc., 1995), p. 134.

<sup>187</sup>Tilemann Heshusius, in *Bidembachii consil. Decad. 3*, pp. 135-40; quoted in C. F. W. Walther, *American Lutheran Pastoral Theology*, pp. 137-38.

<sup>188</sup>Johannes Fecht, *Instruct. Pastoral. e. 14.*, sec. 3, p. 157 sq.; quoted in C. F. W. Walther, *American Lutheran Pastoral Theology*, p. 138.

<sup>189</sup>Adolf Hoenecke, *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics*, Vol. IV, pp. 140-41.

<sup>190</sup>See John F. Brug, *The Ministry of the Word* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2009), p. 216.

<sup>191</sup>Treatise 67, Kolb/Wengert p. 341. Emphasis added.

<sup>192</sup>"Theses on Lay Preaching," in Herman Amberg Preus, *Vivacious Daughter: Seven Lectures on the Religious Situation Among Norwegians in America*, p. 131. These theses are still considered to be an official doctrinal statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of today.

<sup>193</sup>Herman Amberg Preus, *Vivacious Daughter: Seven Lectures on the Religious Situation Among Norwegians in America*, p. 125. Emphasis added.

<sup>194</sup>Small Catechism, Preface: 4,6,11, Kolb/Wengert p. 348.

<sup>195</sup>Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration VII:77, Kolb/Wengert p. 607. Emphasis added. The Martin Luther citation is from "The Private Mass and the Consecration of Priests," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 38 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), p. 199.

Within the text of the Solid Declaration, just prior to the place where this quotation from Luther appears, the following quotation from St. John Chrysostom is also included: "Christ prepares this table himself and blesses it; for no human being makes the bread and wine, which are set before us, the body and blood of Christ. Rather Christ himself, who was crucified for us, does that. *The words are spoken by the mouth of the priest*, but when he says, 'This is my body,' the elements that have been presented in the Supper are consecrated by God's power and grace



through the Word. Just as the saying 'be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth' [Gen. 1:28] was said only once and yet is continually effective in nature, causing it to grow and multiply, so these words were said once. But they are powerful and do their work in our day and until his return, so that in the Supper as celebrated in the church his true body and blood are present" (VII:76, p. 606. Emphasis added. The citation is from *De proditione Iudae* 1, 6).

Elsewhere in "The Private Mass and the Consecration of Priests," in the context of his description of the evangelical mass as conducted among the Lutherans, Luther explicates the distinction, and the relationship, between the public pastoral office and the common priesthood of the baptized. He writes that "in our churches we can show a Christian a true Christian mass according to the ordinance and institution of Christ, as well as according to the true intention of Christ and the church. There our pastor, bishop, or minister in the pastoral office, rightly and honorably and publicly called, having been previously consecrated, anointed, and born in baptism as a priest of Christ, ...goes before the altar. Publicly and plainly he sings what Christ has ordained and instituted in the Lord's Supper. He takes the bread and wine, gives thanks, distributes and gives them to the rest of us who are there and want to receive them, on the strength of the words of Christ: 'This is my body, this is my blood. Do this,' etc. Particularly we who want to receive the sacrament kneel beside, behind, and around him, man, woman, young, old, master, servant, wife, maid, parents, and children, even as God brings us together there, all of us true, holy priests, sanctified by Christ's blood, anointed by the Holy Spirit, and consecrated in baptism. On the basis of this our inborn, hereditary priestly honor and attire we are present...; and we let our pastor say what Christ has ordained, not for himself as though it were for his person, but he is the mouth for all of us and we all speak the words with him from the heart and in faith, directed to the Lamb of God who is present for us and among us, and who according to his ordinance nourishes us with his body and blood. This is our mass..." (pp. 208-09).

<sup>196</sup>Large Catechism V:2, Kolb/Wengert p. 467. Punctuation slightly revised.

<sup>197</sup>Martin Luther, Letter to George Spalatin, July 27, 1530 (WA Br. V, 504); quoted in Edward Frederick Peters, *The Origin and Meaning of the Axiom: "Nothing Has the Character of a Sacrament Outside of the Use,"* in *Sixteenth-Century and Seventeenth-Century Lutheran Theology*, p. 184. Emphases added.

<sup>198</sup>Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part II, pp. 293-94.

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<sup>199</sup>Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent, Part II*, pp. 301, 303, 311-13.

<sup>200</sup>John F. Brug, *The Ministry of the Word*, p. 221.

Except for those occasions when there was no pastor present, the standard communion practice of the Lutheran Church in the Reformation era is reflected in the Apology's declaration that "Among us the Mass is celebrated *every Lord's day and on other festivals*, when the sacrament is made available to those who wish to partake of it, after they have been examined and absolved" (XXIV:1, Kolb/Wengert p. 258. Emphasis added). This was fully in keeping with the apostolic practice, as testified to in the New Testament: "There is a great deal of evidence from the history of the church that supports an every-Sunday communion in addition to an every-Sunday sermon. That the early Christians received the supper whenever they gathered on the Lord's day is obvious as one reads in the Acts and 1 Corinthians" (*Christian Worship: Handbook* [edited by Gary Baumler and Kermit Moldenhauer] [Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1993], p. 44).

Martin Luther speaks in more detail about these matters in a Letter to Lazarus Spengler, in Nürnberg: "Should anyone request my counsel in this way, then I would give this advice: ... that you should celebrate one or two Masses in the two parish churches on Sundays or holy days, depending on whether there are few or many communicants. Should it be regarded as needful or good, you might do the same in the hospital too. ...you might celebrate Mass during the week on whichever days it would be needful, that is, if any communicants would be present and would ask for and request the Sacrament. This way we should compel no one to receive the Sacrament, and yet everyone would be adequately served in an orderly manner. If the Ministers of the Church would fall to griping at this point, maintaining that they were being placed under duress or complaining that they are unfitted to face such demands, then I would demonstrate to them that no merely human compulsion is at work here, but on the contrary they are being compelled by God Himself through His Call. For because they have the Office, they are already, in virtue of their Call and Office, obliged and compelled to administer the Sacrament whenever people request it of them, so that their excuses amount to nothing; just as they are under obligation to preach, comfort, absolve, help the poor, and visit the sick as often as people need or ask for these services" (August 15, 1528; quoted in John R. Stephenson, "The Holy Eucharist: At the Center or Periphery of the Church's Life in Luther's Thinking?", in *A Lively Legacy: Essays in Honor of Robert Preus* [edited by Kurt E. Marquart, Stephenson, and Bjarne W.

Teigen] [Fort Wayne, Indiana: Concordia Theological Seminary, 1985], pp. 161-62).

According to the evangelical and pastoral principles of the Reformers, the Lord's Supper should be *celebrated* and *offered* on every Sunday and festival – and in some cases even more frequently – if there are properly-prepared communicants who wish to receive it; but individual communicants should not feel compelled to *receive* the sacrament every time it is available. We know, for example, that Luther did not commune every Sunday, but that “it was Luther's practice always that he generally went to the sacrament every 14 days or at least every 3 weeks and desired absolution beforehand...” (Veit Dietrich, *Trostsprüche* [1548] [quoted in *D. Martin Luthers Werke* (Weimarer Ausgabe) 48:326] [translated by Mark DeGarmeaux]). And in the Lutheran Church of the seventeenth century, “some desired Holy Communion on certain Sundays in the year, others desired it daily” (Friedrich Kalb, *Theology of Worship in 17th-Century Lutheranism* [translated by Henry P. A. Hamann] [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965], p. 123, referring to Abraham Calov, *Systema locorum theologicorum* [Wittenberg, 1655-57], Vol. IX, p. 407).

Martin Chemnitz writes that “the rule about when and how often one should go to Communion must be taken: I. From the teaching about the fruit and power of the Eucharist, namely, when and as often as we recognize that we have need of this power; II. From the teaching about self-examination, lest we receive it unworthily. On this basis people are to be taught, admonished, and exhorted to more diligent and frequent use of the Eucharist. For because Christ says: ‘As often as you do this,’ it is wholly His will that those who are His disciples should do this frequently. Therefore those are not true and faithful ministers of Christ who in any manner whatever lead or frighten people away from more frequent use and reception of the Eucharist. There are beautiful examples of frequent use of the Eucharist from the true antiquity. Some had the custom of receiving the Eucharist daily, some twice a week, some on the Lord's day, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, some only on the Lord's Day” (*Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part II, pp. 330-31). Elsewhere, Chemnitz elaborates: “Therefore, you ask, how often would be enough to have been a guest of this Supper? It is not for any man to give a specific answer to this, either with a number or with a certain measure, other than as often as a troubled conscience feels and recognizes that it needs those benefits that are offered in the Supper for comfort and strengthening. Consciences are therefore not to be forced but aroused to frequent use of this Supper by earnest admonition and by consideration of how necessary [and] likewise how salutary and profitable the use of this Supper is for us” (*Ministry, Word, and Sacraments: An Enchiridion*, p. 128). And in the words of Johann Gerhard, “How often this sacrament

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should be taken every year, cannot be prescribed definitely and by some general rule, but must be left free for the approval of each one's conscience and for his piety" (*Loci theologici*, edited by Edward Preuss [1863], Vol. V, p. 243; quoted in Kalb, *Theology of Worship in 17th-Century Lutheranism*, p. 123).

Luther D. Reed recounts that at the time of the Reformation, "The Lutheran Church restored the 'primitive synthesis' of the early church by including in balanced proportion the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacrament in the principal service of the day. This service was held in its entirety on appointed Sundays and all great festivals. Some orders recognized that on certain days in towns and villages there might be no communicants. Permission was given in this event to conclude the Service with appropriate prayers and the Benediction. This exceptional provision later became the regular use. In the beginning, however, it was part of a plan to maintain the historic order of the Mass and to encourage the faithful to communicate. ... This was the Service as Luther and the conservative Reformers knew it. ... Luther and his associates never would have approved of the 'half-mass' commonly found among us today as the normal Sunday worship of our congregations. For two hundred years..., the normal Sunday service in Lutheran lands was the purified Mass, or *Hauptgottesdienst*, with its twin peaks of Sermon and Sacrament. There were weekly celebrations and the people in general received the Sacrament much more frequently than before. The ravages of war, the example of Calvinism, the later subjective practices of Pietistic groups in a domestic type of worship, and the unbelief of rationalism, however, finally broke the genuine Lutheran tradition" (*The Lutheran Liturgy* [revised edition] [Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1947], pp. 244). Reed also remarks: "The custom which became general in Lutheran churches...of reducing the Sunday morning service to a preaching service and only infrequently celebrating Holy Communion, as in the Zwinglian and Calvinistic churches, must not be laid at Luther's door. He would be stirred to indignation by the infrequent observance of the Sacrament in many Lutheran churches today" (p. 80). We concur in Paul Zeller Strodach's opinion that "The infrequent use of this holy privilege is not only to be deplored, but an effort should be made to correct it, since it is [a] part of the congregation's life which needs a 'reformation.' But this must be done in one way only, by creating a fervent desire for it, and not by compulsion or legislation. The practice of the Early Church was to gather for Holy Communion: that and the hearing of the Word were their prime objectives. This practice continued in every land and age where the Gospel was carried and disciples were made. Neither the Reformers nor the Reformation Movement attacked or objected to its use every Lord's Day, but only to the superstitions and abominations of the

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Mass practices" (*A Manual on Worship* [revised edition] [Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1946], p. 232).

Many Lutheran congregations arbitrarily schedule the celebration of the Lord's Supper to be held only on the first Sunday of the month, or only on the second and fourth Sundays of the month, or according to some other pre-planned monthly or semimonthly arrangement. But a Lutheran worshiper *should* ordinarily be able to receive the sacrament from his pastor whenever he in his conscience senses a need for it, regardless of which Sunday of the month it may be: "To be sure, God's grace comes equally in both sermon and communion, not to mention baptism, absolution, counseling. This our confessions make quite clear. Concerning Word and sacrament, they say, 'The effect of both is the same.' Still, if a worshiper who has moved through the stages of worship - confession and absolution, praise and thanksgiving, instruction and admonition, prayer and offering - is then dismissed without an opportunity to receive the assurance of God's presence in the form instituted by the Savior, isn't something wrong? One who feels this matter keenly cannot help but know frustration. To be sure he may not wish to commune every Sunday, but shouldn't the opportunity be there?" (Edgar S. Brown, Jr., *Living the Liturgy* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1961), p. 95).

<sup>201</sup>Jesper Rasmussen Brochmand; quoted in "Lay Celebration of the Sacrament of the Altar," *Logia*, Vol. II, No. 1 (Epiphany/January 1993), p. 55.

<sup>202</sup>The Latin word is *docere*.

<sup>203</sup>Apology XV:42, Kolb/Wengert p. 229.

<sup>204</sup>*Concordia Triglotta*, p. 327.

Martin Luther writes that "the word of God is the greatest, most necessary, and most sublime part in Christendom (for the sacraments cannot exist without the word, but indeed the word can exist without the sacraments, and in an emergency one could be saved without the sacraments - as for example, those who die before receiving the desired baptism - but not without the word)..." ("The Private Mass and the Consecration of Priests," p. 189).

<sup>205</sup>In describing the character of the deacons of the apostolic era, Martin Luther states: "We read in Acts 6:1-6 that they chose seven men in the church to be in charge of providing for the poor and the widows. Those deacons also at times preached, as did Stephen, and they were admitted to other duties of the church, although their principal responsibility was to care for the poor and the widows." Luther goes on to

observe that, in 1 Timothy 3:8ff., St. Paul “imposes neither the office of teaching nor the qualifications of the bishop on deacons. Instead he gives them the responsibilities for supplies or financing.” In comparison to bishops, these “deacons belong to a lower order” (“Lectures on 1 Timothy,” pp. 295, 298, 300). Indeed, “the question as to whether ‘the seven’ of Acts 6:3 are the same as the deacons elsewhere mentioned in the New Testament, is one on which there is not unanimity among Bible students” (Henry Eyster Jacobs, *A Summary of the Christian Faith*, p. 444).

<sup>206</sup>John F. Brug, *The Ministry of the Word*, pp. 118-19.

When lay elders or others do assist in the distribution of the Lord’s Supper, it is most proper for them to be responsible for administering the cup, and for the officiating pastor to retain for himself the responsibility of administering the host. Sequentially, the distribution and reception of the body of Christ is a communicant’s “gateway” or “point of entrance” into the sacrament, whereas the distribution and reception of the blood of Christ comes as a follow-up to this. The act of giving the body of Christ to someone is the decisive act of *admitting* that person to the Supper, while the act of giving the blood of Christ to someone is an act of *continuing and concluding* the communing process for someone who has already been admitted to the Supper. See also *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice* (edited by Fred L. Precht) (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1993), p. 432.

<sup>207</sup>John F. Brug, *The Ministry of the Word*, p. 119.

<sup>208</sup>Martin Luther, Letter to Anthony Lauterbach (November 26, 1539), *Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel* (translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert) (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), p. 305.

<sup>209</sup>The Internet provides the church of our time with some new ways of bringing the Word of God to people at a distance. But as the present writer has stated elsewhere, “from the perspective of our Biblical, Lutheran theology, there are some things that simply cannot be done over the Internet. For example, the kind of personal pastoral oversight that is required for the proper celebration of the Lord’s Supper cannot really be exercised over the Internet, with a webcast that is (or could be) going out to people and places all over the world. The *Formula of Concord* also confesses, on the basis of Scripture, that the Lord’s institution requires that ‘his words are *spoken over* the bread and cup,’ and that ‘the *consecrated* bread and cup are distributed’ (emphases added). The lack of physical ‘connectedness’ between pastor, elements, and communicants that is inherent in electronic communication makes this impossible. So,

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while the Internet may be used for church activities that are the equivalent of what Jesus did when He preached publicly to anyone who was there to listen, it may not be used for the equivalent of what Jesus did when He gathered with the closed circle of His disciples in the upper room, to give them – bodily, by His own hand – the Sacrament of His body and blood” (David Jay Webber, “Using Technology to Spread the Gospel,” *Lutheran Sentinel*, Vol. 95, No. 6 [September 2012], p. 8. The Formula of Concord quotations are from Solid Declaration VII:75, Kolb/Wengert p. 606.).

Some Lutherans may still think that the Words of Institution can be brought efficaciously to sacramental elements via an online connection – even though those elements are not in the physical presence of the pastor and under his control; and even though the pastor is not personally present with the communicants to supervise the distribution of the sacrament. But such Lutherans would need to consider that it is faithfulness to the Word *and institution* of Christ that allows us to be confident that our Savior’s Holy Supper is indeed being celebrated among us. They would need to remember that the divinely-instituted sacramental action (as the Formula of Concord describes it) involves not merely the speaking of Christ’s Words and the distribution of bread and wine, but that it involves the speaking of Christ’s Words *over* bread and wine, and the distribution of that *consecrated* bread and wine. And they would need to face up to the “open communion” monstrosity that would be set in motion by such a practice (if it were valid), whereby in all places in the world where an Internet connection is available, whenever people unbeknownst to the online “celebrant” might decide to place bread and wine in front of their computer screens while logged on to his webcast, he could become responsible for an untold number of unworthy receptions of the body and blood of Christ, by an untold number of people he has never met.

If it would be suggested, as a remedy to this problem, that a pastor’s speaking of the Words of Institution over the Internet is not sacramentally effective when he does not intend it to be (such as with a public and unrestricted webcast of a Communion service at his church), but that it *is* sacramentally effective when he *does* intend it to be (such as with a private video conference that involves only one household), we would point out that the idea that priestly “intention” contributes to the validity of a sacrament is a Tridentine Catholic concept, and not an orthodox Lutheran concept. Martin Chemnitz writes in Part II of his *Examination of the Council of Trent*: “...when in the action or administration of the sacraments the institution itself is changed, mutilated, or corrupted, it is certain that then it is not a true sacrament. For it is the word of institution, coming to the element, which makes a sacrament. This opinion is simple, true, and certain, offering to consciences useful, firm, and necessary comfort which we shall not allow to be taken away from us, and it serves the

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glory of God that *His truth should not be measured by the intention of a human minister*, which can neither be known to us nor certain, and that faith should not depend on the human minister but should rest on the truth and power of God, who instituted the sacrament and gave the promise” (p. 106. Emphases added.).

We are not denying the inherent efficacy of God’s Word in general. But we are expressing grave doubts concerning the sacramental effectiveness of the Words of Institution in particular, when those Words are spoken in a setting and context that differ from what the Lord has prescribed for the celebration of his Holy Supper. This question is similar to the Reformation-era question of whether a private mass celebrated without communicants – in which the priest alone communes – is actually the sacrament that Jesus instituted. Even though the priest in such a case would recite the Words of Christ over bread and wine, the Reformers still rejected the legitimacy of this practice. The Smalcald Articles state that if a priest “really desires to commune, he can do so most fittingly and properly in the sacrament administered according to Christ’s institution.” A priest who celebrates mass privately, without communicants, “does not know what he is doing because he follows a false human opinion and imagination without the sanction of God’s Word” (II, II:8, in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, edited by Theodore G. Tappert, p. 294).

It is a departure from the institution of Christ to presume to hold a “Communion Service” without communicants being physically present, to receive what is supposed to be blessed and offered to them by the celebrant. It is also a departure from the institution of Christ to presume to hold a “Communion Service” without a celebrant being physically present, to bless and offer to the communicants what is supposed to be received by them. Lutherans confess in the Formula of Concord that in any proper celebration of the Lord’s Supper, “Christ’s command, ‘Do this,’ must be observed *without division or confusion*. For it includes the entire action or administration of this sacrament: that in a Christian assembly bread and wine are taken, consecrated, distributed, received, eaten, and drunk...” (Solid Declaration VII:84, Kolb/Wengert p. 607. Emphasis added.).

<sup>210</sup>John F. Brug, *The Ministry of the Word*, p. 118.

<sup>211</sup>Martin Luther, “To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate,” *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 44, p. 128.

<sup>212</sup>Martin Luther, “The Misuse of the Mass,” p. 155.

The present writer has elsewhere observed that “St. Paul says in



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his Epistle to Titus that Christian gatherings without proper pastoral care are in an 'unfinished' situation, and that Titus should therefore see to it that properly-qualified 'elders' or 'overseers' are appointed in such churches (cf. Titus 1:5-9). The apostle's directive is not simply addressing a temporary need of the first century. It is God's will that his people in all times and places be under the care of spiritual shepherds who will faithfully preach the gospel and administer the sacraments to them. As far as the Christian church is concerned, Jesus himself got this whole process going when he trained and sent his apostles to proclaim his Word, in his name and by his authority: 'He appointed twelve - designating them apostles - that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons' (Mark 3:14-15). And this vocational process, by which God raises up qualified men to tend and oversee the church on earth with the means of grace, continues. It continues through the voice of the church, which is Christ's body, and which calls and acts by his authority. St. Peter encourages his fellow pastors with these words: 'To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers... And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away' (1 Peter 5:1, 4). Similarly, St. Paul has this to say to the elders of Ephesus: 'You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus. ... For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God. Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard!' (Acts 20:20-21,27-31)" (David Jay Webber, "The Confessional and Biblical Worldview - Part 2," in *Here We Stand: A Confessional Christian Study of Worldviews* [edited by Curtis A. Jahn] [Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2010], pp. 53-54).

<sup>213</sup>Apology XIII:9,12, Kolb/Wengert p. 220.

<sup>214</sup>Martin Chemnitz, *Ministry, Word, and Sacraments: An Enchiridion*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>215</sup>David Chytraeus, *On Sacrifice* (translated by John Warwick Montgomery) (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), pp. 98-99.

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<sup>216</sup>Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part II, p. 677.

<sup>217</sup>Augsburg Confession XIV (German), Kolb/Wengert p. 46.

Robert D. Preus points out that “The call in AC XIV is to both office (*status, officium, Amt*) and function (*officium, munus, opus, Amt*)” (“The Doctrine of the Call,” in *Church and Ministry Today: Three Confessional Lutheran Essays* [edited by John A. Maxfield] [Saint Louis: The Luther Academy, 2001], p. 20).

<sup>218</sup>Augsburg Confession XIV (Latin), Kolb/Wengert p. 47.

<sup>219</sup>An editorial notation pertaining to Augsburg Confession XIV (Latin), in Kolb/Wengert, p. 47.

<sup>220</sup>Timothy J. Wengert, *Priesthood, Pastors, Bishops: Public Ministry for the Reformation and Today* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), pp. 42-43. Emphasis in original.

<sup>221</sup>Treatise 67-70, Kolb/Wengert pp. 340-41.

The Lutheran theologian Joseph Stump writes that “The ministry is an office to which men must be called, and which they must not otherwise undertake to exercise. ... Being an office in which the incumbent is God’s representative and spokesman, it must be filled in accordance with the divine will. In the past this will has sometimes been expressed directly to the individual, as in the case of Moses, the prophets and the apostles. The call which came thus directly from God was an immediate one. ... The call which comes through the Church, and which is now the only kind that is given, is a mediate call. There is no inner call to the ministry, but only the external call of the Church. There is, however, an inner conviction of the individual that he ought to become a minister, which is wrought by the Holy Ghost through the Word and which is sometimes spoken of as an inner call. But this is a mistaken use of the word ‘call,’ and is calculated to lead to confusion. An inner call in the true sense of the word would have to be an immediate one; and no immediate calls are any longer given. Men have sometimes imagined that they had an ‘inner call’ when it was painfully evident to everyone else that they had neither the requisite natural gifts nor the proper training for the office. It is the duty of the Church carefully to select and train men for the holy office of the ministry, and she should not set men apart for it without due consideration of their physical, mental and spiritual qualifications. She is to lay hands suddenly on no man (1 Tim. 5:22), but is to see to it that only those are admitted to the office who have the requisite natural gifts, common sense, and Christian faith and piety; and

who have received the necessary academic and theological training" (*The Christian Faith: A System of Christian Dogmatics* [New York: The Macmillan Company, 1932], pp. 379-80).

<sup>222</sup>Saint Ambrose, Letter 63, *The Fathers of the Church*, Vol. 26 (Washington: The Catholic University of America, 1954), pp. 321-22. Emphases added.

The present writer has said elsewhere: "As Jesus continues to send the Holy Spirit to us through the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments (see Acts 2:38-42), He also gives to the church the servants who administer these Means of Grace for our forgiveness and salvation. When the church issues a call to a minister of the Word, it is not merely 'hiring' an 'employee.' Rather, it is functioning as the voice and instrument of Christ in authorizing a servant of Christ to bring the saving message of Christ to Christ's people. When a congregation *calls* a pastor in Jesus' name, it is actually *receiving* a pastor from Jesus. St. Paul explains this in his Epistle to the Ephesians, where he also describes the reasons why Jesus gives such public servants to His church. Paul writes that Christ is the one who 'ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things,' and that 'he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ' (Ephesians 4:10-12)" (David Jay Webber, "What Gifts Does the Ascended Jesus Send Us?," *Lutheran Sentinel*, Vol. 95, No. 4 [May/June 2012], p. 3. Emphases in original.).

<sup>223</sup>Wilhelm Loehe, *Aphorismen über die neutestamentlichen Ämter* (Nuremberg, 1849), pp. 71-72; quoted in Charles A. Hay, "Article V: The Office of the Ministry," pp. 172-73. Emphases added. For a more modern translation see Wilhelm Loehe, *Aphorisms on the New Testament Offices and their Relationship to the Congregations* (translated by John R. Stephenson) (Malone, Texas: Repristination Press, 2008), p. 55.

<sup>224</sup>Wilhelm Loehe, *Kirchliche Nachrichten aus und über Nord-Amerika*, No. 8 (1859); quoted in C. F. W. Walther, "Do We Draw the Lines of Fellowship Too Narrowly?," *Editorials From "Lehre und Wehre"* (translated by Herbert J. A. Bouman) (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981), pp. 75-76.

<sup>225</sup>Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part II, p. 207.

<sup>226</sup>Martin Luther, Sermon of October 16, 1524, WA 15, p. 720; Letter of September 12, 1535, WA Br. 7:2242; both quoted in Susan C. Karant-Nunn, *Luther's Pastors: The Reformation in the Ernestine Countryside*

(Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1979), p. 56.

David Chytraeus echoes some of Luther's thoughts when he states: "It should be known that those who have been called and chosen by the voice of the church and who administer the office even without the laying on of hands are true ministers of the church and may teach and administer the Sacraments. For by this rite a special character is not imprinted on the ordained, nor does the authority of the church or the right to teach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments depend on this rite, nor does this rite render the office of the ordained efficacious, for the office is efficacious and a power for salvation for everyone who believes because of its divine institution. The custom of the laying on of hands is added as a public declaration of the called persons in order to make [ordination] more solemn and to bring to remembrance certain duties" (Comments on Exodus 29; quoted in Johann Gerhard, *Loci theologici, De minist.*, § 139; quoted in turn in C. F. W. Walther, *The Church & the Office of the Ministry*, p. 258).

<sup>227</sup>Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, p. 332. Emphases in original.

<sup>228</sup>Martin Luther, "Infiltrating and Clandestine Preachers," p. 387.

<sup>229</sup>Martin Luther, "The Private Mass and the Consecration of Priests," pp. 200-01. Emphases added.

<sup>230</sup>Martin Luther, "The Private Mass and the Consecration of Priests," pp. 202-03.

It is a different issue when the "Lord's Supper" is celebrated in a context where the genuine meaning of Christ's Words of Institution is denied by a false public confession, and when a false meaning is thereby publicly imposed upon the sacramental words. In such a case - whether the celebrant is a self-appointed layman, or a called minister of a heterodox Protestant church - "Christ's word and ordinance" are not actually present, and therefore Christ's true body and blood are not present either. The Formula of Concord quotes these words from Martin Luther's 1528 "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper": "... I also say and confess that in the Sacrament of the Altar the true body and blood of Christ are orally eaten and drunk in the bread and wine, even if the priests who distribute them or those who receive them do not believe or otherwise misuse the sacrament. It does not rest on human belief or unbelief but on the Word and ordinance of God - unless they first change God's Word and ordinance and misinterpret them, as the enemies of the sacrament do at the present time. They, indeed, have only bread and wine, for they do not also have the words and instituted ordinance of God but have

perverted and changed it according to their own imagination" (Solid Declaration VII:32, Kolb/Wengert p. 598). In "A Letter of Dr. Martin Luther concerning his Book on the Private Mass," the Reformer writes "that where mass *is* celebrated according to Christ's ordinance, be it among us Lutherans or under the papacy or in Greece or in India, ...under the form of bread, the true body of Christ, given for us on the cross, [and] under the form of wine, the true blood of Christ, shed for us, are present... ..God's word and work cannot be hindered or altered at all by our abuse or sin, if only his ordinance is kept. But where his ordinance is altered, that is of course a different matter" (*Luther's Works*, Vol. 38 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971], pp. 224-25. Emphasis added.). Unlike Protestant churches in the Zwinglian/Calvinist tradition (which do alter the Lord's ordinance in this respect), the Roman Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Church, and other historic churches of the East publicly confess that "This is my body" really does mean "This is my body." The true body and blood of Christ are therefore present, distributed, and received in the sacramental celebrations of these churches, when the Lord's Supper is administered within them according to Christ's institution.

<sup>231</sup>Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part II, pp. 96-97.

<sup>232</sup>Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part II, p. 693.

<sup>233</sup>Arthur Carl Piepkorn, "The Sacred Ministry and Holy Ordination in the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, Vol. XL, No. 8 (September 1969), p. 555. The Martin Luther citation is from WA Br. 6, 43-44.

<sup>234</sup>E. W. Kaehler, "Does a Congregation Ordinarily Have the Right Temporarily to Commit an Essential Part of the Holy Preaching Office to a Layman?," p. 45.

<sup>235</sup>Apology XIII:11-13, Kolb/Wengert p. 220.

<sup>236</sup>Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part II, pp. 694-95.

<sup>237</sup>Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part II, pp. 693-94.

<sup>238</sup>J. A. O. Preus, *The Second Martin: The Life and Theology of Martin Chemnitz* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1994), pp. 364-65.

<sup>239</sup>Kurt E. Marquart, *Ministry and Ordination: Confessional Perspectives* (Fort Wayne, Indiana: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 1983), p. 20.

<sup>240</sup>Johann Affelmann, *De sanctor. Invocat.*, ch. 2, th. 23; quoted in Johann Gerhard, *On the Ecclesiastical Ministry*, Part One, p. 207.

Gerhard quotes Affelmann as a spokesman for a position with which he personally disagrees. Representing a viewpoint that became more prominent in the seventeenth century, Gerhard himself writes: "Is the doctoral promotion a call *and ordination* to the ministry such that those adorned with the degree of doctor have, without another call and ordination, the power to teach in the church and, in fact, to ordain others to the ministry? Some say yes... But the negative is proved to those who think more correctly" (p. 207. Emphasis added.). Gerhard does believe that the office of doctor of theology is among the "grades of ministers" of the church (*On the Ecclesiastical Ministry*, Part Two, p. 44). But he also believes that if such a teacher is going to be called upon to function as a minister within a wider sphere of ecclesiastical service – beyond the confines of his theological professorship – then he should be ordained with the laying on of hands.

<sup>241</sup>Günther Stiller, *Johann Sebastian Bach and Liturgical Life in Leipzig* (translated by Herbert J. A. Bouman, Daniel F. Poellot, and Hilton C. Oswald) (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1984), p. 66. The internal quotation is from Anton Weiz, *Verbessertes Leipzig: oder vornehmsten Dinge, so von Anno 1698 an bis hieher bey der Stadt Leipzig verbessert worden, mit Inscriptiõibus erleutert* (Leipzig, 1728), p. 7.

<sup>242</sup>Wilhelm Pauck, *The Heritage of the Reformation* (revised and enlarged edition) (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press of Glencoe, Inc., 1961), pp. 135, 139-40.

<sup>243</sup>Johann Conrad Dannhauer, *Liber conscientiae apertus, sive theologiae conscientiae*, pp. 1005-06; quoted in C. F. W. Walther, *The Church & the Office of the Ministry*, pp. 259-60. Emphasis added.

<sup>244</sup>Hieronymus Kromayer, *Theologia positive-polemica*, p. 1059; quoted in E. W. Kaehler, "Does a Congregation Ordinarily Have the Right Temporarily to Commit an Essential Part of the Holy Preaching Office to a Layman?," p. 45.

<sup>245</sup>E. W. Kaehler, "Does a Congregation Ordinarily Have the Right Temporarily to Commit an Essential Part of the Holy Preaching Office to a Layman?," p. 45.

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<sup>246</sup>C. F. W. Walther, *American Lutheran Pastoral Theology*, pp. 46-47.

<sup>247</sup>Henry Eyster Jacobs served as a professor at Pennsylvania College in Gettysburg, and later as professor and president of the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. During his ministry Jacobs had opportunities – which he declined – to serve in such institutions also in the Wisconsin and Norwegian Synods. Among the entries for 1871 in his *Memoirs*, Jacobs wrote: “Shortly after I received through Rev. R[einhold]. Adelberg, a formal call to a Professorship of English in North Western University – the college of the Wisconsin Synod at Watertown, Wis. To accept this call would have brought me into affiliation with the Missouri Synod.” And among his entries for 1876, Jacobs penned these lines: “I am not absolutely sure of the time – it may have been a year later – I took from the Post Office a communication in a large envelope. On opening it, the first words read were: ‘In the Name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’ There followed a call, signed by the officers of the old Norwegian Synod, to the English Professorship in ‘Luther College,’ Decorah, Iowa. My name had been submitted to their congregations, and they had elected me. A letter explained that this was the first step toward the founding of a theological department in their college. Prof. F[riedrich]. A. Schmidt was then a colleague of Dr. Walther at St. Louis. All their students were sent there. If I would accept, the plan was to bring Prof. Schmidt to Decorah, and then for the two professors to attend the theological department. I was deeply touched. Dr. [Edmund J.] Wolf was with me as I opened it. ‘That should set a man to thinking,’ he remarked. The whole matter was so remote and the situation so strange that I could not respond to it. Dr. Krauth was very emphatic when I reported the matter to him. He could not see that they had any claim on me” (*Memoirs of Henry Eyster Jacobs* [edited by Henry E. Horn], Volume II [1938], pp. 147, 179).

<sup>248</sup>Henry Eyster Jacobs, *A Summary of the Christian Faith*, pp. 435-37.

<sup>249</sup>C. F. W. Walther, “On Luther and Lay Preachers: A Letter to Pastor J. A. Ottesen,” in Matthew C. Harrison, *At Home in the House of My Fathers*, pp. 139-40.

<sup>250</sup>See David Jay Webber, “Church and State, Congregation and Synod: ... With Special Reference to the Church Polity of the Lutheran Church in the Netherlands in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, Vol. 43, No. 4 (December 2003), pp. 392-94.

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<sup>251</sup>Apology VII/VIII:28, Kolb/Wengert p. 178. Emphasis added.

<sup>252</sup>Large Catechism I:108, Kolb/Wengert p. 401.

<sup>253</sup>Apology XXIV:80, Kolb/Wengert p. 272. Emphases added.

<sup>254</sup>*Concordia Triglotta*, p. 410.

<sup>255</sup>Saint Ambrose, "The Mysteries," *The Fathers of the Church*, Vol. 44 (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1963), p. 5.

<sup>256</sup>George Henry Gerberding, *The Lutheran Pastor* (seventh edition) (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1915), pp. 277-78.

<sup>257</sup>Martin Luther, "Sermon for the Third Sunday in Advent," *Complete Sermons of Martin Luther*, Vol. 3.2, pp. 65, 69-70.

<sup>258</sup>Martin Luther, "Concerning the Ministry," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 40, p. 5.

<sup>259</sup>Martin Luther, "Lectures on Titus," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 29 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), pp. 22-23. Emphasis added.

<sup>260</sup>Martin Luther, "Lectures on Jonah," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 19 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1974), p. 83.

<sup>261</sup>Martin Luther, "Psalm 110," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 13 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1956), pp. 294-95.

<sup>262</sup>See also Martin Luther, "A Sermon on Keeping Children in School," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 46 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), pp. 219-21.

<sup>263</sup>The German phrase is *die Diener des Worts*.

<sup>264</sup>Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration X:10, Kolb/Wengert p. 637.

<sup>265</sup>Emphasis added. Cf. *Concordia Triglotta*, p. 1054.



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<sup>266</sup>Edmund Schlink, *Theology of the Lutheran Confessions* (translated by Paul F. Koehneke and Herbert J. A. Bouman) (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1961), p. 229. Emphasis added.

<sup>267</sup>Henry Eyster Jacobs, "Theses on the Ministry and Ordination," pp. 94-95. Emphases added.

<sup>268</sup>Carl Manthey-Zorn, *A Last Apostolic Word To All Faithful and Righteous Servants of the Word* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1925), pp. 7-9. Emphases in original.

<sup>269</sup>E. W. Kaehler, "Does a Congregation Ordinarily Have the Right Temporarily to Commit an Essential Part of the Holy Preaching Office to a Layman?," pp. 37-38, 42-43.

<sup>270</sup>E. W. Kaehler, "Does a Congregation Ordinarily Have the Right Temporarily to Commit an Essential Part of the Holy Preaching Office to a Layman?," p. 43.

<sup>271</sup>C. F. W. Walther, "The Voice of Our Church Concerning the Question of the Church and the Ministry" (translated by W. H. T. Dau), *Walther and the Church* (edited by William Dallmann, Dau, and Theodore Engelder) (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1938), pp. 78-79.

<sup>272</sup>C. F. W. Walther, "Comments on the Expulsion of a Lutheran 'Deacon,'" pp. 65 ff.

<sup>273</sup>See also C. F. W. Walther's "Sermon on the Office of the Ministry," where he mentions the ancient ecclesiastical office of "manager or elder," the ancient ecclesiastical office of "the teacher of children and catechumens," and the ancient ecclesiastical office of "caring for the sick and the dead." He then says that "All such offices were nothing other than helping offices and branches of *the one public preaching or church office*" (in Matthew C. Harrison, *At Home in the House of My Fathers*, p. 153. Emphasis added.).

<sup>274</sup>Kurt E. Marquart, *The Church and Her Fellowship, Ministry, and Governance*, p. 144.

<sup>275</sup>Kurt E. Marquart, "The Ministry, Confessionally Speaking," in *The Office of the Holy Ministry* (edited by John R. Fehrmann and Daniel Preus) (Crestwood, Missouri: The Luther Academy, 1996), pp. 18-19.

Additional examples of comprehensive expositions of the doctrine of the Ministry according to the narrower sense / wider sense categories would include Charles Porterfield Krauth, "Thetical Statement of the Doctrine Concerning the Ministry of the Gospel" (First Article) (already referenced); "Thetical Statement of the Doctrine of the Ministry (Second Article)," *Lutheran and Missionary*, Vol. XIV, No. 13 (January 7, 1875), p. 1; "The Doctrine of the Ministry Thetically Stated (Third Article)," *Lutheran and Missionary*, Vol. XIV, No. 15 (January 21, 1875), p. 1; "The Doctrine of the Ministry Thetically Stated (Fourth Article)," *Lutheran and Missionary*, Vol. XIV, No. 19 (February 18, 1875), p. 1; and Henry Eyster Jacobs, *A Summary of the Christian Faith*, pp. 419-46.

At the very beginning of his chapter on "The Ministry," Jacobs writes: "Through what instrumentality does the Church chiefly administer the Means of Grace? Through the Christian Ministry. What is the Ministry? An office entrusted to certain persons, specially prepared and set apart for its duties. In the wide sense, every office in the Church, is a ministry, and the distinction between ministers and laymen is one between the office-bearers and the non-official members of the Church. In a narrower sense, the term belongs only to those commissioned by the Church to preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments" (pp. 419-20).

<sup>276</sup>"The Public Ministry of the Word" (2005), pp. 179-81.

<sup>277</sup> Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part II, p. 687.

Johann Gerhard describes the development of the office of deacon in the early church in this way: "At first, of course, in the church at Jerusalem deacons were established especially for this purpose, that they have the care of tables, that is, that in that sharing of goods they pay attention to an equal distribution of foods. But later, with the passing of time, in other churches they were also placed in charge of giving sermons to the people, according to Jerome (Letter *ad Rusticum diaconum*)" (*On the Ecclesiastical Ministry*, Part Two, p. 47).

<sup>278</sup>Augsburg Confession XXIV:36-38 (Latin), Kolb/Wengert p. 71.

<sup>279</sup>Charles Porterfield Krauth, "Thetical Statement of the Doctrine Concerning the Ministry of the Gospel" (First Article), p. 1. Emphasis in original.

<sup>280</sup>Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part II, p. 683.

<sup>281</sup>David Chytraeus, *On Sacrifice*, pp. 97-102.

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<sup>282</sup>Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part II, pp. 683-87.

<sup>283</sup>Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part II, pp. 685, 687-88. Emphasis added.

<sup>284</sup>C. F. W. Walther, "Comments on the Expulsion of a Lutheran 'Deacon,'" pp. 65 ff.

<sup>285</sup>Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part II, pp. 678-79. Emphasis added.

<sup>286</sup>C. F. W. Walther, "Sermon on the Office of the Ministry," pp. 152-53. See also Martin Luther, "Sermon for the Feast of Saint Stephen, the Holy Martyr," *Festival Sermons of Martin Luther* (The Church Postils) (Dearborn, Michigan: Mark V Publications, 2005), Winter Section, pp. 150-53.

<sup>287</sup>Henry Eyster Jacobs, *A Summary of the Christian Faith*, p. 445.

<sup>288</sup>Treatise 80, Kolb/Wengert p. 343. The Treatise does also say – in regard to the bishops' jurisdiction in "the administration of justice in those cases that, according to canon law, belong to what they call ecclesiastical courts, especially marital cases" – that "This jurisdiction the bishops...possess by human right"; and that "they have not had it very long, for it appears from the *Codex* and *Novellae* of Justinian that formerly the adjudication of marital matters belonged to the magistrates" (77, p. 342).

<sup>289</sup>Martin Luther et al., "Exposition of the Distinction that Must Be Made between Spiritual and Secular Government," St. Louis Edition X:264-65; quoted in part in W. H. T. Dau, "Material for the Catechist," Eighth Outline, *Theological Quarterly*, Vol. XXIII, No. 1 (January 1919), pp. 24-25; and in part in C. A. T. Selle, "Das Amt des Pastors als Schulaufseher" [The Office of a Pastor as School Overseer], *Evang.-Luth. Schulblatt*, Vol. 4, No. 5 (January 1869) (translated by Mark D. Nispel).

<sup>290</sup>Preface 14,16, Kolb/Wengert p. 9. Emphases added.

<sup>291</sup>*Concordia Triglotta*, p. 14.

<sup>292</sup>Large Catechism I:141, Kolb/Wengert p. 405.

<sup>293</sup>The German word is *Leute*.

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<sup>294</sup>The German phrase is *Pfarrherren, Prediger und andere Kirchendiener*.

<sup>295</sup>Smalcald Articles II, III:1, Kolb/Wengert p. 306.

<sup>296</sup>Martin Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper" (1528), *Luther's Works*, Vol. 37 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1961), p. 364.

<sup>297</sup>Martin Luther, "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate," p. 174.

The Quedlinburg convent, to which Luther refers, has an interesting Reformation-era history. It was one of three imperial free abbeys – the other two being the convents at Gandersheim and Gerrode – that were brought over to Lutheranism in the sixteenth century. "Free imperial abbeys were institutions whose only overlord was the emperor; the abbess had jurisdiction not only over the abbey itself, but also over the land and villages belonging to it, which made her a *Landesherr* (territorial ruler). These three abbeys were not convents in the technical sense inasmuch as their residents had never taken formal vows or been strictly cloistered. They were generally termed secular endowments (*weltliche Stifte*), and the residents could leave if they chose or if family circumstances required it" (Merry E. Wiesner, *Gender, Church, and State in Early Modern Germany* [New York: Addison Wesley Longman Inc., 1998], pp. 48-49). The abbey at Gandersheim initially resisted the Reformation, and acquiesced to its "Lutheranization" only after several decades of pressure from the dukes of Brunswick, whose territory surrounded the abbey lands. But in Gernrode and Quedlinburg, "the abbesses themselves accepted the new theology and energetically introduced it into their territories" (p. 55). Elisabeth of Weide and Wildenfels, the abbess of Gernrode until her death in 1564, was the first imperial abbess to open her abbey and its lands to Lutheran teachings. In 1526 she began to reform her abbey's territory according to a Lutheran model, appointing Lutheran pastors to the villages that were under her rule. Luther would no doubt have considered this arrangement – in which a woman exercised such authority over churches and pastors – to have been an anomaly. We know that at least one of his former students – Pastor Stephan Mollitor – expressed serious misgivings about it (pp. 47-48). Still, the ministry of Word and Sacrament and the pastoral care that were provided for the convent residents, were always carried out by male pastors. A female "pastor" or chaplain was never appointed to minister to the women in those ways. Anna von Stolberg was the abbess of Quedlinburg until 1574. As abbess, she controlled nine churches, a hospital, and even two male monasteries. She accepted the Reformation in the 1540s, at which time she required all clergy in her territory to subscribe to the Augsburg

Confession. Also, "Despite vehement objections from the order, she turned her Franciscan monastery into a city school for both girls and boys" (p. 56).

<sup>298</sup>Large Catechism V:85-87, Kolb/Wengert pp. 475-76.

<sup>299</sup>Martin Luther, "A Sermon on Keeping Children in School," pp. 219-21.

<sup>300</sup>Wilhelm Maurer, *Historical Commentary on the Augsburg Confession* (translated by H. George Anderson) (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), pp. 195, 197.

<sup>301</sup>Martin Luther, "A Sermon on Keeping Children in School," p. 231.

<sup>302</sup>*Juris ecclesiastici Saxonici* (Dresden, 1773), p. 22; quoted in C. A. T. Selle, "Das Amt des Pastors als Schulaufseher" [The Office of a Pastor as School Overseer].

<sup>303</sup>*Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des sechszehnten Jahrhunderts* (edited by Aemilius L. Richter) (Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1967), Vol. 2, pp. 186-87; quoted in Eric Lund, *Documents from the History of Lutheranism 1517-1750* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), p. 149.

<sup>304</sup>Ernst Walter Zeeden, *Faith and Act: The Survival of Medieval Ceremonies in the Lutheran Reformation*, pp. 95-96.

<sup>305</sup>*Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des XVI. Jahrhunderts* (edited by Emil Sehling), Vol. 3 (Leipzig, 1909), p. 107; quoted in Ernst Walter Zeeden, *Faith and Act: The Survival of Medieval Ceremonies in the Lutheran Reformation*, p. 96.

<sup>306</sup>Ernst Walter Zeeden, *Faith and Act: The Survival of Medieval Ceremonies in the Lutheran Reformation*, p. 96.

<sup>307</sup>Jacob Aall Ottesen Stub, *Vestments and Liturgies* (n.d.), pp. 3-4.

<sup>308</sup>Rudolf Rocholl, *Geschichte der evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland* (Leipzig: A. Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Nachfolge [G. Böhme], 1897), pp. 300-02; quoted in Edward T. Horn, "Ceremonies in the Lutheran Church," in *Lutheran Cyclopaedia* (edited by Henry Eyster Jacobs and John A. W. Haas) (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899), p. 83.

<sup>309</sup>*Hallische Kirchenordnung* (1526) (prepared by Johannes Brenz); in *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des sechszehnten Jahrhunderts* (edited by Aemilius L. Richter), Vol. 1, p. 49; quoted in “Was sagen die Alten lutherischen Kirchen- und Schulordnungen des 16 Jahrhunderts ueber Anstellung von Lehrerinnen,” *Ev. Luth. Schulblatt*, Vol. 31 (1896), p. 329; quoted in turn in Gaylin R. Schmeling, *Bread of Life From Heaven: The Theology of the Means of Grace, the Public Ministry, and Church Fellowship* (Mankato, Minnesota: Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary Press, 2009), p. 260. Emphasis added.

<sup>310</sup>Friedrich Rhoté, *Der kleine Catechismus des Mannes Gottes Dr. M. Lutheri* (Leipzig, 1599), 6, Cap. 2; quoted in C. A. T. Selle, “Das Amt des Pastors als Schulaufseher” [The Office of a Pastor as School Overseer]. Emphasis added. Rhoté was a superintendent and pastor in Arnstadt, Thuringia.

<sup>311</sup>*Braunschweigsche Kirchenordnung* (1528), *Die evangelischen Schulordnungen des sechszehnten Jahrhunderts* (edited by Reinhold Vormbaum), Vol. I; quoted in “Was sagen die Alten lutherischen Kirchen- und Schulordnungen des 16 Jahrhunderts ueber Anstellung von Lehrerinnen,” pp. 329-32; quoted in turn in Gaylin R. Schmeling, *Bread of Life From Heaven: The Theology of the Means of Grace, the Public Ministry, and Church Fellowship*, p. 260.

<sup>312</sup>“Fraternal Agreement on the Common Chest of the Entire Assembly of Leisnig” (1523), *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 45, pp. 188-89. Emphases added.

A previous section of this “Fraternal Agreement” had dealt with “the pastoral office” as follows: “To the pastor or priest called and elected by our congregation, and to a preacher similarly called by us and appointed to assist the pastor (though the pastor himself should be able and qualified to preach God’s word and perform the other duties of his pastoral office), and also to a chaplain if the need for one arises, the ten directors, on the unified resolution of the entire assembly, are to furnish annually each year a specified sum of money, together with certain consumable stores and lands and properties subject to usufruct, to support them and adequately meet their needs... In this respect and in the administration of the pastoral office of the congregation, their conduct shall be in accordance with the ordinance and instructions of the men learned in the divine Scriptures, which ordinance shall be kept in our common chest, and be considered and implemented by the ten directors every Sunday, so that no harm may come to the pastoral office” (pp. 186-87).

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<sup>313</sup>Charles Porterfield Krauth, "Thetical Statement of the Doctrine Concerning the Ministry of the Gospel" (First Article), p. 1.

<sup>314</sup>Ambrosius Blarer, Letter to Martin Bucer; quoted in Merry E. Wiesner, "Luther and Women: The Death of Two Marys," in *Feminist Theology: A Reader* (edited by Ann Loades) (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990), p. 127.

<sup>315</sup>Katharina Schütz Zell; quoted in Ruth A. Tucker and Walter L. Liefeld, *Daughters of the Church: Women and Ministry from New Testament Times to the Present*, pp. 183-84.

<sup>316</sup>For a detailed historical study of the Christian diaconate, see Jeanine E. Olson, *Deacons and Deaconesses Through the Centuries* (revised edition) (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992).

<sup>317</sup>Kurt E. Marquart, "The Ministry, Confessionally Speaking," p. 19.

<sup>318</sup>Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. III, p. 439.

<sup>319</sup>C. A. T. Selle, *Die Augsburgische Konfession: Das Grundbekenntnis der christlichen Kirche* (translated by Roger Kovaciny).

<sup>320</sup>C. A. T. Selle, "Das Amt des Pastors als Schulaufseher" [The Office of a Pastor as School Overseer]. In regard to this essay, C. F. W. Walther wrote: "We consider this lecture to be a work of truly reformatory character. No preacher, no schoolteacher, no elder of a congregation and above all no congregational member who has an interest for the right form of our church in America should leave this lecture unread and untested. We are convinced that only when the principles presented here concerning the mutual relationship of school and church, of the school teacher and the preacher, come into play, will school and church remain here in indissoluble association and bring the first of the other gifts which this association should bring according to God's will and order" (*Der Lutheraner*, Vol. 25, No. 11 [February 1, 1869] [translated by Mark D. Nispel]).

<sup>321</sup>Herman Amberg Preus, *Kirkelig Maanedstidende*, Vol. IV, No. 10 (October 1859), p. 154; quoted in Erling T. Teigen, "The Legacy of Jakob Aall Ottesen," *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (March 2004), p. 105.

<sup>322</sup>“Fraternal Agreement on the Common Chest of the Entire Assembly of Leisnig,” p. 169.

<sup>323</sup>Martin Chemnitz, *Ministry, Word, and Sacraments: An Enchiridion*, p. 37.

<sup>324</sup>*Consil. theol. Witeb.* III, 55; quoted in J. P. Beyer, “Vom Beruf zum Amt der Kirchendiener,” *Missouri Synod Eastern District Proceedings* (1889), pp. 36-37; quoted in turn in Walter Lehenbauer and Kurt E. Marquart, “Theology and Practice of ‘The Divine Call’: A Minority Opinion” (2003). Emphasis added.

Joseph Herl states that “all large and medium-sized cities in Saxony had Latin schools, headed by a *rector* (*Rektor*). Where he was the only teacher, he taught all subjects, including music, and led the singing of the boys’ choir in the church. If the school was large enough, it had a second teacher, the *cantor* (*Kantor*). The title (from the Latin *cantus*, song) shows that the cantor was particularly responsible for the singing in the church and in the school, in which he taught the principles of music and singing and often other subjects as well” (*Worship Wars in Early Lutheranism: Choir, Congregation, and Three Centuries of Conflict*, p. 43).

<sup>325</sup>Martin Luther, “Confession Concerning Christ’s Supper” (1528), pp. 364-65.

<sup>326</sup>Smalcald Articles III, XI:1, Kolb/Wengert p. 324. Emphasis added.

<sup>327</sup>Augsburg Confession XXVII:13 (German), Kolb/Wengert p. 82.

<sup>328</sup>Martin Luther, “Lectures on Genesis,” *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 3, p. 217.

<sup>329</sup>Martin Luther, “Lectures on Genesis,” *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), pp. 146-47.

<sup>330</sup>Werner Elert, *The Structure of Lutheranism* (translated by Walter A. Hansen) (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), p. 348. Emphasis in original.

<sup>331</sup>Martin Luther, “Lectures on Galatians,” *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 27, pp. 37-39, 41-42. Emphases added.

On the subject of love and forbearance in the church, St. Paul writes in Colossians 3:12-14: “Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy



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and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony" (ESV). According to the Apology, Paul is here "speaking about community in the church. For he says that love is a bond or unbroken chain in order to show that he is talking about linking and binding together the many members of the church with one another. In all families and communities harmony needs to be nurtured by mutual responsibilities, and it is not possible to preserve tranquillity unless people overlook and forgive certain mistakes among themselves. In the same way, Paul urges that there be love in the church to preserve harmony, to bear with (if need be) the crude behavior of the brothers..., and to overlook certain minor offenses, lest the church disintegrate into various schisms and lest enmities, factions, and heresies arise from such schisms. For harmony will inevitably dissolve whenever bishops impose excessive burdens upon the people or have no regard for their weakness. Dissensions also arise when the people judge the conduct of their teachers too severely or scorn them on account of some lesser faults, going on to seek other kinds of doctrine and other teachers. On the contrary, perfection (that is, the integrity of the church) is preserved when the strong bear with the weak, when people put the best construction on the faults of their teachers, and when the bishops make some allowances for the weakness of their people" (IV:232-34, Kolb/Wengert pp. 155-56).

<sup>332</sup>John F. Brug, *Church Fellowship: Working Together for the Truth*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>333</sup>Martin Luther, Letter to Francis Burchart, April 20, 1536, *Luther's Works*, Vol. 50 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), pp. 140-41.

<sup>334</sup>C. F. W. Walther, "Theses on Open Questions" (1868), Thesis V.

<sup>335</sup>John P. Meyer, "Unionism," in *Essays on Church Fellowship* (edited by Curtis A. Jahn) (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1996), pp. 63-64.

<sup>336</sup>Augsburg Confession VII:3-4 (Latin), Kolb/Wengert p. 43.

For a discussion of how the need for fundamental doctrinal agreement in the church applies to the issue of diversity in orders of worship and in liturgical ceremonies within Lutheranism, see David Jay Webber, "'Walking Together' in Faith and Worship: Exploring the Relationship Between Doctrinal Unity and Liturgical Unity in the Lutheran

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Church," *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, Vol. 52, Nos. 2-3 (June/September 2012), pp. 195-248.

<sup>337</sup>Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration X:31, Kolb/Wengert p. 640. Emphasis added.

<sup>338</sup>Thomas P. Nass, "The Revised *This We Believe* of the WELS on the Ministry," pp. 37-38.

David J. Valleskey (of the Wisconsin Synod) writes that "the pastoral office involves oversight of the congregation's entire ministry. A congregation needs a spiritual shepherd or shepherds. Whether the title 'pastor' is given to the one called to exercise spiritual oversight over the congregation or some other title is given, is not the critical issue. The critical issue is that the congregation has a shepherd, who with the gospel in Word and Sacrament feeds and leads and guards and protects the flock" ("Public Ministry," *Forward in Christ*, Vol. 90, No. 5 [May 2003], p. 15).

<sup>339</sup>Hermann Sasse, Letter to Frederick Noack, November 1, 1951, in *Scripture and the Church: Selected Essays of Hermann Sasse* (edited by Jeffrey J. Kloha and Ronald F. Feuerhahn) (Saint Louis: Concordia Seminary, 1995), pp. 172-73. Emphasis added.

<sup>340</sup>Augsburg Confession XXVIII:5 (German), Kolb/Wengert p. 92.

<sup>341</sup>Smalcald Articles III, IV, Kolb/Wengert p. 319.

<sup>342</sup>This paraphrase is based on a suggestion offered by the Lutheran historical linguist Mark D. Nispel, in personal correspondence with the present writer, February 13, 2011.

<sup>343</sup>*The Book of Concord*, Tappert, p. 310.

<sup>344</sup>*Concordia Triglotta*, p. 490.

<sup>345</sup>Augsburg Confession XXV:1-4 (German), Kolb/Wengert p. 72.

<sup>346</sup>Smalcald Articles III, VIII:1, Kolb/Wengert p. 321.

<sup>347</sup>Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration V:17, Kolb/Wengert p. 584.

<sup>348</sup>Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration V:12, Kolb/Wengert p. 583. Emphasis added. The quotation is from a 1524 letter from Luther to Wolf von Salhausen.

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<sup>349</sup>Smalcald Articles III, VII:1, Kolb/Wengert p. 321. Emphasis added.

<sup>350</sup>Treatise 23-24, Kolb/Wengert p. 334. Emphases added.

<sup>351</sup>Large Catechism, Confession: 14, Kolb/Wengert p. 477.

<sup>352</sup>Large Catechism, Confession: 8,10-11,13, Kolb/Wengert p. 477.

<sup>353</sup>Large Catechism, Confession: 25, 30-31, Kolb/Wengert p. 479.

<sup>354</sup>Augsburg Confession XXVIII:21 (German), Kolb/Wengert p. 94.

<sup>355</sup>Oswald Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology* (translated by Thomas H. Trapp) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), pp. 257-58. Emphasis added.

<sup>356</sup>Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration XII:30, Kolb/Wengert p. 659. Emphasis added.

<sup>357</sup>Small Catechism V:29, Kolb/Wengert p. 362.

<sup>358</sup>Martin Luther, "Sermon for the First Sunday after Epiphany," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 58 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2010), pp. 74-75. Emphases added.

<sup>359</sup>Treatise 67, Kolb/Wengert p. 341. Emphasis added.

<sup>360</sup>Martin Luther, "Concerning the Ministry," p. 23. Emphasis added.

<sup>361</sup>Large Catechism, Longer Preface: 9-10, Kolb/Wengert p. 381. Emphases added.

<sup>362</sup>Large Catechism, Longer Preface: 19, Kolb/Wengert pp. 382-83. Emphasis added.

<sup>363</sup>Augsburg Confession XIV (Latin), Kolb/Wengert p. 47.

<sup>364</sup>Jakob Aall Ottesen, *Kirkelig Maanedstidende*, Vol. IV, No. 6 (June 1859), p. 84.

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<sup>365</sup>Martin Luther, "Psalm 110," p. 333.

<sup>366</sup>Large Catechism I:275, Kolb/Wengert p. 423. Emphasis added.

<sup>367</sup>Martin Luther, "Concerning the Ministry," pp. 26-27. Emphases added.

<sup>368</sup>Martin Luther, "The Feast of Saints Peter and Paul," *Festival Sermons of Martin Luther* (The Church Postils), Summer Section, p. 95. Emphases added.

<sup>369</sup>Martin Luther, "Sermons on Matthew 18-24, 1539-1540" (WA 47:297.36-298.19); quoted in part in Robert Kolb and Charles P. Arand, *The Genius of Luther's Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2008), p. 187; and in part in Oswald Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology*, pp. 277-78.

<sup>370</sup>Theophylact of Ohrid; quoted in Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part II, p. 595. Emphasis added.

<sup>371</sup>Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part II, p. 621. Emphases added.

<sup>372</sup>These formulations are found in two of the options for the pronouncement of pastoral absolution in the hymnal of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* (Saint Louis: MorningStar Music Publishers, Inc., 1996), pp. 61, 43.

<sup>373</sup>Kurt E. Marquart, *The Church and Her Fellowship, Ministry, and Governance*, pp. 108-10.