

Pastors & Deacons Conference

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Origin, Authority and Duty of the Office of Holy Ministry

The cruciform pattern of our Lord's ministry also shapes his office of the holy ministry. As the pastor bears his cross for faithfully proclaiming the Lord's death until He comes, we have seen the further break-down of God's order in society. Oswald Bayer points out that the old concept of "station" and "order" ("Stand" in German) has been deteriorating since the middle of the nineteenth century. See Oswald Bayer's study "Nature and Institution: Luther's Doctrine of the Three Orders" in Lutheran Quarterly Volume XII (1998).

This paper will briefly and pastorally look at the Origin, Authority and Duty of the Office of Holy Ministry.

The legacy of the Son of God was not a book like the Quran¹ or a perfectly defined constitution with by-laws, but 12 men breathed upon and commanded to absolve, retain, baptize, teach and consecrate.² The Holy Spirit was received in the giving of breath. Our Lord did not use oil to consecrate his chosen ones as were the prophets of old, but He who was christened with the Holy Spirit in his baptism, now gives the Spirit in a unique way to bless His 12 and to put them into the office of apostle.

The bestowal of the apostolic office compelled them to bear witness to the Resurrection of the Son of God and to carry out his commands of forgiving and retaining sin, baptizing and celebrating the Lord's Supper.

As the Lord Christ was preparing them for his departure, the jockeying for the coveted pole position began with the Sons of Thunder wanting top spot. Matthew (20:20) records it came through a maternal request that represents every parent's wish to see their children succeed. Mark (10:35) records the ambitious brothers asking their departing Lord for a blank cheque ahead of time. "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." So much for asking the Lord for the desires of your heart!

¹ Office and Gospel Belong Together; The Office Exists To Give the Gospel, Herman Sasse, "The Lutheran Doctrine of the Office of the Ministry" The Lonely Way Vol.2 (Concordia Publishing House: Saint Louis) p. 124

² Since Christ chose 12 men to fill the apostolic office, He is setting the gender limits of qualified males only for his office of holy ministry after the apostolic period. Our Lord's order of male pastors only is not culturally conditioned, since the Lord himself is reflected in the office.

The 12 have to relearn that lording over others is the way the world works and has no place in the Lord's kingdom.

Lutheranism rejects any suggestion that differences in the way clergy are ordered in the Church is a divine mandate. Orders and ranks in the clergy are a matter of human arrangement, in Christian freedom, for the sake of good order in the Church. However, every pastor is equal in office when it comes to the essence of the ministry: proclaiming the Gospel, administering the Sacraments, and other duties. As the Gospel is one, so the ministry of the Gospel is one.³

The Lord sees everything through his cross and keeps his eyes on his cross until it is finished. He re-orientes his beloved 12 to a kingdom opened by His own suffering by describing it as drinking from a cup. His is a kingdom not of this world that measures greatness in terms of lowliness, where grace is given to the humble. James was the first of the 12 to drink the cup and receive a baptism of blood. His zeal for the kingdom was now divinely re-directed. Judas' cup doesn't count because it was self-appointed. God resists the proud.

As the apostles' continued to give witness to the Christ, one by one they too drank the bitter cup until the last one, John, caretaker of the Theotokos in Ephesus, received the Lord's Apocalypse and was told to write down what he experienced in heaven, the glorious coronation in the ascension of a little Lamb who appeared slain but now rules and reigns to all eternity in a kingdom without end.

I.

Something happened when the last apostle died. There was a dramatic shift from the visual to the auditory. The great Orthodox churches claim to be the only keepers of the apostolic oral traditions. But their understanding of Tradition is never plural, only singular. What the apostles handed down. It includes such writings as the Didache and most importantly the Holy Scriptures as were breathed out by the Holy Spirit and onto vellum and parchment.

As this shift from eye to ear was underway, a weaning of the church occurred. It is a weaning from miracles and from the office of prophet which was alive and well in the New Testament for a while. The Gift-giver gives as He pleases.

The ecclesiastical weaning from apostolic supernatural signs and wonders should not be construed as the Holy Spirit's austerity measures. No, far from it! The abundant life which Jesus spoke of is now given through the Spirit who binds himself to the written word. The Holy Spirit was the Lord and Giver of Life long before the First Council of Constantinople in 381

³ McCain, P. T. (Ed.). (2005). Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions (p. 292). St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.

rounded out the final wording of the Nicene Creed, and was active in the successors of the apostles. The life of the church flowed from the apostles' doctrine. They were devoted to the apostles' teaching, which is didache (Acts 2:42 ff). They were devoted to koinonia.

These two words give us a peek into the life of the early church. One cannot study the holy ministry apart from ecclesiology. First let's start with koinonia. The sharing and partnership of the early church begins in the life of the Blessed Holy Trinity. The Holy Life-Giver reveals the mystery of the crucified Saviour for the life of the world. That life as all life, originates with God. Where his creatures live apart from Him, faith has flat-lined and there is nothing but misery and death. The church lived from the breaking of the bread and the prayers. Of this bread of the broken body of the Messiah, man can and does live alone! The prominent place of the altar of incense in heavenly throne room (Rev. 8:3) and the copious amounts of incense are mixed with the prayers of the faithful in the divine service whereby all the saints in heaven and earth are included.

Secondly, didache or apostolic teaching is life. Another translation of didache is instruction or doctrine. This is the life of the church. How then did we get to the point where doctrine and its sister dogma, are considered so offensive to pluralistic ears plugged from hearing God's One singular truth? How was doctrine stripped of life that originates in the Thrice Holy One?

Robert Preus of blessed memory understood doctrine, practice and worship to comprise a trinity which ought not to be divided. He queries in the CTQ 1990 (Vol. 54 Numbers 2-3, pages 100): "But first I feel compelled to address myself in a prefatory way to a very common, unclear, and bothersome theological distinction which has tended to obfuscate fruitful discussion on the aforementioned issues, the distinction between doctrine, or faith (*fides quae creditor*) and practice. Where did the distinction originate? It is not found in the Lutheran Confessions and is only adumbrated in Luther's writings. It originates in the seventeenth century when Lutherans debated Romanists and Reformed on the question whether theology was a theoretical discipline or a practical activity and aptitude (*habitus practicus*)."

The fission of doctrine from liturgy and life may have begun in the seventeenth century, but the atom was completely split in Berlin with the arrival of Friedrich Schleiermacher's *Brief Outline of Theology As a Field of Study: Translation of the 1811 and 1830 Editions*. He endeavoured to engage the modern world with theology, conceiving it to be a "positive science" for carrying out a practical task. This endeavour began already in his book *On Religion: Speeches to it Cultured Despisers* wherein a new concept arose as a distinct "mode of faith that is a distinct formation of God-consciousness". His book Brief Outline of Theology spells out three areas of theological study –philosophical theology, historical theology, and practical theology. For Schleiermacher, practical theology is the goal of all theology, for theology is done in service to the church.

The church has not recovered from the subjectivism introduced in the Enlightenment. Doctrine can never breathe with both lungs if it is reduced to a theory. It becomes weak and loses divine authority. If the goal of theology is to put doctrine into practice, it suffers from anemia. To divorce doctrine from practice is to break up the trinity that includes worship.

II.

After the devastating Thirty Years' War (1618 – 1648), the church was ripe for reform. Philip Jacob Spener (who was born in Ribeauville, Upper Alsace in 1635 and died in 1705 in Berlin) writes in *Pia Desideria*⁴ (N.B. the translator and editor of footnote three) that Luther pointed out:

That all Christians have been called to exercise spiritual functions (although not called to the public exercise of them, which requires appointment by a congregation with equal right) and that they are not only permitted but, if they wish to be Christians, are obligated to undertake them.

Note well how he uses the “call” in referring to all Christians exercising spiritual functions while a milder term “appointment” refers to the public exercise of them. Appointment by a congregation does not carry the full load of AC XIV’s *rite vocatus* (which will be investigated later in this paper). Tragically, the Christian is now defined by the obligation of exercising spiritual functions rather than one to whom Christ gives his gifts.

Spener later redefines the ministry as suffering from weakness and in need of the universal priesthood (p. 94 f):

No damage will be done to the ministry by a proper use of this priesthood. In fact, one of the principal reasons why the ministry cannot accomplish all that it ought is that it is too weak without the help of the universal priesthood. One man is incapable of doing all that is necessary for the edification of the many persons who are generally entrusted to this pastoral care. However if the priests do their duty, the minister, as director and oldest brother, has splendid assistance in the performance of his duties and his public and private acts, and thus his burden will not be too heavy.

Spener points out an intrinsic weakness of the ministry because it is incapable of doing it all, and that it relies on the universal priesthood to help carry the burden of both public and private acts. The duties of the ministry are now shared with the universal priesthood. Spener sees the minister as “director” of the Christians. He further elaborates the minister’s place in the church as “oldest brother” a term that is favoured in congregationalism.⁵

⁴ Fortress Press: translated, edited and with an introduction by Theodore G. Tappert, p.94

⁵ Spener’s godson was Nicholas Zinzendorf who founded the Moravian Church.

Pietism was more than a willing dance partner with Schleiermacher's rational subjectivism, thus producing Revivalism.

Revivalism in America reacted to a perceived overemphasis on ritual and cultural accommodation, and secondly to doctrinal correctness at the expense of personal religious experience. Four specific periods of intense religious revival were:

the Great Awakening (c. 1720), in which Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield played major roles;

the Second Great Awakening and its aftermath (c. 1787 - 1860);

the period of Dwight L Moody, the Holiness Movement, and the reaction to liberalism (c. 1870 - 1926);

and the renewal of mass evangelism in the 1950s, characterized by Billy Graham.

This had dramatic effects on the preaching office. As long as itinerant preachers could attract the masses and spur them on to accept forgiveness, commit themselves to spiritual self-discipline and religious exercises such as prayer, Bible reading, and church support, theological credentials were immaterial. The number of committed hands in the air after an intense emotional appeal, was the verifiable measure of the success of the ministry.

Dwight L Moody was not ordained but was a lay pastor and evangelist. Any revival preacher can claim that God sent them, but the most important question for anyone in the holy ministry: "Who sent you", is quickly silenced by the trump card of revivalism: the number of converts. The larger the number the quicker the answer becomes obsolete and inconsequential.

The church experienced a shift of its axis of the duties and office of the ministry. Yes, she still rotated around Jesus but she was leaning in a different direction. She now leaned away from the importance of office and ordination and toward a greater emphasis of an inner spiritual "calling" and mobilization of the laity to do the work of the church. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the changes of Vatican II (1962 - 1965) and its implications, yet the shift of emphasis is witnessed by the term "lay apostolate" and the call to it.

THE VOCATION OF THE LAITY TO THE APOSTOLATE

Chapter I.

2. The Church was founded for the purpose of spreading the kingdom of Christ throughout the earth for the glory of God the Father, to enable all men to share in His saving redemption,(1) and that through them the whole world might enter into a relationship with Christ. All activity of the Mystical Body directed to the attainment of this goal is called the apostolate, which the Church carries on in various ways through all her members. For the Christian vocation by its very nature is also a vocation to the apostolate. No part of the structure of a living body is merely passive but has a share in

the functions as well as life of the body: so, too, in the body of Christ, which is the Church, "the whole body . . . in keeping with the proper activity of each part, derives its increase from its own internal development" (Eph. 4:16).⁶

The Church of Rome sought to battle increasing secularism that does not tolerate any public Christian witness. For this it is to be commended. The method to accomplish this was a beefed up lay witness by virtue of the lay apostolate. Now each member of the body of Christ was given the office of lay apostle and sent into the world to spread the kingdom of God. In the movie the "Kingdom of Heaven" (2005) Balian de Ibelin played by Orlando Bloom is defending Jerusalem against the legendary Muslim leader Saladin. In one final stand to save the city, Balian knights every last soldier, whether deserving or not, in order to make them fight harder and with courage. Perhaps Rome adopted a similar strategy in promoting the lay apostolate.

Jobst Schöne notes in The Christological Character of the Office of the Ministry and the Royal Priesthood⁷ that the apostolate of the laity also appeared in the ecumenical movement of the World Council of Churches. He describes the development of understanding of the royal priesthood since Luther's death.

- Pietism internalized and individualized it into true believers, who confess their faith and give proof of their faith by living a holy life.
- 19th century changes resulted in a democratic expression where the priesthood was viewed as a check and balance to the power of the office of the ministry.

The subtle shift from office to laity is witnessed in the English bible versions omission of a comma in Ephesians 4:11,12 thus rendering the burden of the work of the ministry to the saints and changing the duties of the incumbents of the office of holy ministry to one of "equippers".

Compare the KJV version which has the office in mind:

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ

with almost any English version after the American Standard Version (1901). Here is the English Standard Version:

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.

Although commas together with most punctuation are not divinely breathed by the Spirit, their purpose is to clarify meaning. In order to do that, the scholars who punctuate the text, have

⁶ DECREE ON THE APOSTOLATE OF THE LAITY, APOSTOLICAM ACTUOSITATEM, SOLEMNLY PROMULGATED BY HIS HOLINESS, POPE PAUL VI ON NOVEMBER 18, 1965

⁷ Plymouth, MN: Logia Books, 1996 p. 15

already digested and interpreted it. The omission of a coma in modern versions introduces a theological understanding which has promoted the understanding of “everyone a minister” and devalued the office of holy ministry to “equipper” and “facilitator”.

The pastor can become responsible to keep the institutional machinery well-greased. It may well lead to becoming what Eugene Peterson deems is *The Busy Pastor*. (*The Contemplative Pastor* Carol Stream, IL: Word Publishing, 1989 pp. 27 – 29)

The one piece of mail certain to go unread into my wastebasket is the letter addressed to the “busy pastor”. Not that the phrase doesn’t describe me at times, but I refuse to give my attention to someone who encourages what is worst in me.

I’m not arguing the accuracy of the adjective; I am, though contesting the way it’s used to flatter and express sympathy.

“The poor man”, we say. “He’s so devoted to his flock; the work is endless, and he sacrifices himself so unstintingly.” But the word busy is the symptom not of commitment but of betrayal. It is not devotion but defection. The adjective busy set as a modifier to pastor should sound to our ears like adulterous to characterize a wife or embezzling to describe a banker. It is an outrageous scandal, a blasphemous affront.

Hiliary of Tours diagnosed our pastoral busyness as irreligiosa soicitudo pro Deo, a blasphemous anxiety to do God’s work for him.

I (and most pastors, I believe) become busy for two reasons; both are ignoble.

I am busy because I am vain. I want to appear important. Significant. What better way than to be busy? The incredible hours, the crowded schedule, and the heavy demands on my time are proof to myself – and to all who will notice – that I am important. If I go into a doctor’s office and find there’s no one waiting, and I see through a half-open door the doctor reading a book, I wonder if he’s any good. A good doctor will have people lined up waiting to see him; a good doctor will not have time to read a book. Although I grumble about waiting my turn in a busy doctor’s office, I am also impressed with his importance.

Such experiences affect me. I live in a society in which crowded schedules and harassed conditions are evidence of importance, so I develop a crowded schedule and harassed conditions. When others notice, they acknowledge my significance, and my vanity is fed.

I am busy because I am lazy. I indolently let others decide what I will do instead of resolutely deciding myself. I let people who do not understand the work of pastor write the agenda for my day’s work because I am too slipshod to write it myself. The pastor is a shadow figure in these people’s minds, a marginal person vaguely connected with matters of God and good will. Anything remotely religious or somehow well-intentioned can be properly assigned to the pastor.

Because these assignments to pastoral service are made sincerely, I go along with them. It takes effort to refuse, and besides, there's always the danger that the refusal will be interpreted as a rebuff, a betrayal of religion, and a calloused disregard for people in need.

It was a favourite theme of C.S. Lewis that only lazy people work hard. By lazily abdicating the essential work of deciding and directing, establishing values and setting goals, other people do it for us; then we find ourselves frantically, at the last minute, trying to satisfy a half dozen different demands on our time, none of which is essential to our vocation, to stave off the disaster of disappointing someone.

But if I vainly crowd my day with conspicuous activity or let others fill my day with imperious demands, I don't have time to do my proper work, the work to which I have been called. How can I lead people into the quiet place beside the still waters if I am in perpetual motion? How can I persuade a person to live by faith and not by works if I have to juggle my schedule constantly to make everything fit into place?

Article XI – Augsburg Confession

Our churches teach that private Absolution should be retained in the churches, although listing all sins is not necessary for Confession. For according to the Psalm, it is impossible. "Who can discern his errors?" (Psalm 19:12)

Can we still confess this article? How far has the sacred duty of holy ministry fallen from offering God's gift of private Absolution to burdened consciences? We have turned our pastors into busy bureaucrats, legal beagles and vested cheerleaders equipping the laity to do ministry.

There is a place for counselling in the pastor's study but it is not the primary duty of the ministry.⁸ Some counselling may well lead to private confession & absolution and in fact is most glorious when it does, however it is tragic when a pastor's primary work is reduced to counselling rather than to serve God's flock as a father confessor, Beichtvater.

To pronounce holy absolution to the lamb that has lost its way, is best done when the shepherd has a father confessor himself. Like the Roman centurion (Matthew 8: 5 – 13) who interceded for his sick servant, together with the called and ordained pastor confesses: I too am a man under authority.

First he believes that Jesus has authority over sickness and sin. Then he relies simply on the dominical word to relieve his ailing servant at home. The pastor like the centurion, intercedes on behalf of his servant who is now treated more as a brother and friend. A pastor

⁸ YOUR PASTOR IS NOT YOUR THERAPIST-PRIVATE CONFESSION: THE MINISTRY OF REPENTANCE AND FAITH
Seventh Annual Symposium on Catechesis Sussex, Wisconsin 15 June 2000

functions as priest through intercessory prayer for the congregation. No pastor is worth his salt if he doesn't pray for his people.

The centurion comes to Jesus looking for a healing word for his servant. He is given a kingdom. St. John Chrysostom comments on the same eternal gift: "Though having such great faith, he still accounted himself to be unworthy. Christ however, signifying that he was worthy to have Him enter into his house, did much greater things, marvelling at him, and proclaiming him, and giving more than he had asked. For he came indeed seeking for his servant health of body, but went away, having received a kingdom" (NPNF 1 10:180).

Staying with the centurion and relying on the word of the Lord for healing, the pastor's prayer for self-communication at the Lord's table from Wilhelm Löhe's Liturgy for Christian Congregations is as follows:

Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my soul shall be healed. I will take the bread of heaven, and call upon the name of the Lord. The Body of Christ preserve me unto everlasting life.

All authority was gifted by the Father to the Son. This includes all political as well as spiritual. Authority is there for the giving away. Power on the other hand is for the taking. Grasping for power is the way of this world not of the kingdom of mercy and grace. Jesus gives authority to the 12 to make disciples by baptizing and teaching. He still gives authority to pastors to stand before the congregation and absolve. What was once done privately in the pastor's study as registration for Holy Communion on a day prior to the Divine Service, has now been replaced by a General Absolution before the Entrance Hymn/ Introit.

It is an awesome thing for a pastor to overturn the power of the law to convict and condemn to hell by giving the Lord's forgiveness and opening the kingdom of heaven on the spot! What right does he have to do so? Who does he think he is, Jesus? I don't need him, I can go directly to the Lord?

How frustrating is it for the pastor at the moment when heaven and earth intersect and the voice of the Chief Shepherd is heard on earth as the "penitent" are looking around with hands in pocket, yawning with heavy eyelids from Saturday night's festivities and thinking about what restaurant will be a good choice after service?

On the other hand, some pastors are afraid to speak the full terror of the Law's condemning work for fear that the congregation may dock their pay, or else flee to the arms of more compassionate empathetic pastors who truly understand. Untold damage is done to the Body of Christ through the expedient transfer of disgruntled members who covet the green pastures while oblivious and despising the means of grace in front of them.

Office of Holy Ministry proceeds from the Apostolic Office

Treatise 10 IV. Galatians 2:7–10. St. Paul clearly affirms that he was neither ordained nor confirmed by Peter. Nor does he acknowledge Peter to be one from whom confirmation should be sought. He plainly maintains on this point that his call does not depend upon Peter’s authority. If Peter were superior by divine right, he should have acknowledged Peter as a superior. Paul says that he had preached the Gospel without consulting Peter [Galatians 1:10–12]. Also, “from those who seemed to be influential (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality).” And, “Those, I say, who seemed influential added nothing to me” [2:6]. Paul clearly testifies that he did not even wish to seek the confirmation of Peter to preach, even when Paul had come to him. He teaches that the authority of the ministry depends upon God’s Word, and that Peter was not superior to the other apostles. Ordination or confirmation was not to be sought from this one individual, Peter <[Paul teaches] that the office of the ministry proceeds from the general call of the apostles and that it is not necessary for all to have the call or confirmation of this one person, Peter, alone>.⁹

The Lutheran Confessions are clear throughout that the Lord himself speaks through the apostles. The Lord’s institution of the office from John 20: 21 – 23 are found in AC XXVIII, 6-7; Tr 9, 23, 31. Then the end Matthew’s Gospel 28: 19 -20 is foundational for Tr 31. Because of the abuse of this passage by the Roman Catholics Luke 10:16 is also referenced (AC XXVIII, 18; Ap VII/VIII, 28, 47. Matthew 16: 18 – 19 is referenced in Tr 22, 25. John 21:17 in Tr 30.¹⁰

The Confessions teach that Jesus himself speaks through the apostles as found in Luke 10:16, absolves (John 20: 21 – 23; Matthew 16: 19 -20), teaches and baptizes (Matthew 28: 16 - 20; Mark 16: 15 – 16). Jesus is not only gives the ministry but is active in it (Matthew 20:28; Luke 22:27). The men put into the Predigtamt are instruments of Jesus who were sent for his use (2 Cor 5: 17 – 21; AP VII/VIII, 28. As the Holy Spirit brings Christ to the sinners, he binds himself to the means of grace and serves in the Predigtamt.

Article V – Augsburg Confession

1 So that we may obtain this faith, the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted. 2 Through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Spirit is given [John 20:22]. He works faith, when and where it pleases God [John 3:8], in those who hear the good news that God justifies those who believe that they are received into grace for Christ’s sake. 3 This happens not through our own merits, but for Christ’s sake.

⁹ McCain, P. T. (Ed.). (2005). Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions (p. 295). St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.

¹⁰ Call and Ordination, Naomichi Masaki, Logia Reformation 2014 Volume XXIII, Number 4, p. 27

4 Our churches condemn the Anabaptists and others who think that through their own preparations and works the Holy Spirit comes to them without the external Word.¹¹

The Tappert edition remains haunted by footnote 4 in referring to the title Vom Predigtamt. “This title would be misleading if it were not observed (as the text of the article makes clear) that the Reformers thought of “the office of the ministry” in other than clerical terms.” The footnote ignores the intent of the German title Vom Predigtamt (On the Preaching Office.)

Much ink has been spilled in understanding what this article really means. Does it refer to a general ministry of Word and Sacrament in the church through which God conveys what was intended in AC IV viz. the forgiveness of sins and *favor Dei propter Christum*?

Or was it understood by those confessing at Augsburg that it referred to the person called into the preaching office, as Christ’s representative, to deliver the faith which justifies the sinner?

What difference does it make? Is the holy ministry established as a ministry in which anyone may assume simply by speaking the Gospel? This would include any member of the universal priesthood.

Eugene Klug¹² cites Holsten Fagerberg as favouring the *activity* of ministering the Word as opposed to the *office* of ministry. Fagerberg in his book A New Look at the Lutheran Confessions 1529 – 1537¹³ cites Gustav Wingren and P.E. Persson who arrive at this understanding by tracing the word *ministerium* through the Greek word diakonia, which is used in either way. Fagerberg makes a weak case in concluding that the Confessions favour the broad understanding of ministry. Klug references AC XXVII and the Apology XXVII, 22 as support of this interpretation.

*It is believable that in some places there are also currently good men, engaged in the ministry of the Word, who use these exercises without wicked opinions.*¹⁴

This argument is unconvincing because it separates the office from the office-holder or incumbent.

¹¹ McCain, P. T. (Ed.). (2005). Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions (p. 33). St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.

¹² Augsburg V: Intent and Meaning of the Confessors on “Ministry” Concordia Journal January 1991 Vo. 17. Number 1, pp. 30ff.

¹³ St. Louis: Concordia, 1972, p. 226

¹⁴ McCain, P. T. (Ed.). (2005). Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions (p. 241). St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.

"To be effective, the gospel must actually be preached and the sacraments must be administered."¹⁵ Otherwise the Means of Grace are simply an abstraction.

What good would the apostolic office or any office for that matter, have been if instituted in a general way and left unoccupied without the eyes of flesh and blood which saw the Resurrected Christ and the hands of flesh and blood that wrote what the Spirit breathed into them?

Norman Nagel writes:

What is confessed in Article 4 is confessed as given out by the ministry of preaching (Predigtamt). When Gospel and Sacraments are given out they are the means by which the Holy Spirit works faith in those who hear the Gospel. This faith is the "such faith" at the beginning of the Article, faith given the gifts confessed in Article 4, the forgiveness of sins and righteousness before God for Christ's sake. The faith that receives the gifts as the gifts they are is worked by the Holy Spirit. The way, means, instruments He uses are the Means of Grace, the preaching/teaching of the Gospel and the giving out of the Sacraments, whose instrumentality is the ministry (Predigtamt) instituted by God. Article V is concerned with the gifts and their being delivered. This happens by way of the means of grace, and so that they might be going on, God has instituted the ministry (Predigtamt).¹⁶

The objective nature of the external word of the Gospel, *extra nos* is the reason why the Enthusiasts/ Anabaptists are condemned. The gospel of Christ must come to us from outside ourselves and so the Lord of the church has not only his ministry to deliver the goods but gives the gifts of pastors to be his voice and his hands for such faith.

Article XIV – Augsburg Confession

Vom Kirchenregiment wird gelehrt, dass niemand in der Kirchen öffentlich lehren oder predigen oder Sakrament reichen soll ohn ordentlichen Beruf.

De ordine ecclesiastico docent quod nemo debeat in ecclesia publice docere aut sacramenta administrare nisi rite vocatus.

Concerning church order they teach that no one should teach publically in the church or administer the sacraments unless properly called.¹⁷

¹⁵ Arthur Carl Piepkorn, "The Sacred Ministry and Holy Ordination in the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church", in *Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue IV: Eucharist and Ministry* (U.S.A National Committee of the LWF and the Bishop's Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, 1970) p. 104

¹⁶ Norman E. Nagel, "The Office of the Holy Ministry in the Confessions", *Concordia Journal* (July 1988). p. 289

¹⁷ Latin text from Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, tr. Charles Arand, et al (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 47

Naomichi Masaki wrote on the history and interpretation of this article¹⁸ in light of several questions on the Holy Ministry raised at the 2005 LCMS Nebraska District Theological Conference. A few of them are listed that pertain more to LC-C. (The following argument comes from the same article)

- Is every man a minister?
- What is the relationship of vocation with regard to both the priesthood of all believers and the office of the ministry? How are they the same? Different?
- Is God's word efficacious when spoken by a lay person? Or is it only effective when spoken by a pastor?
- As members of the priesthood of all believers all Christians are supposed to bear witness to Christ. So why do I have to go to the seminary to be a pastor?
- Is a layperson preaching or administering the sacraments contrary to the Scriptures? CA XIV?
- Are all Christians to witness and share their faith verbally or is verbal sharing only for clergy?
- If a pastor is pastor to the entire church how can some DELTO (Distance Education Leading to Ordination. Substitute PATS – in LC-C) vicars/ pastors be limited to a specific congregation?
- If a District President 'authorizes' a DELTO student to do all the functions of the pastoral office in a vacant congregation needing pastoral care, is this *rite vocatus*?

What does the *ordo* mean in article XIV? Is it simply that like God's attribute of orderliness, good order should be maintained in the church to prevent chaos? Now we return to Luther's teaching on the three orders or stations (Stand): *ordo ecclesiasticus*, *politicus*, and *oeconomicus*. Church, government and household as also found in the Small Catechism's Table of Duties. Luther explains the order in the church as the "Pfarampt oder dienst des worts" (pastoral office or the ministry of the word) that preaches and administers the sacraments.¹⁹

The *ordo* here refers to the Office of Preaching and not to a rank within the church. It is the regular service that incorporates the office bearer. The Ascended Lord who founded His preaching office also gives the gifts of pastors to deliver forgiveness of sins. The entire person of the pastor is involved in his vocation. There are no part-time pastors because the entire ministry of the Word is given by God. One is never half in.

Rite Vocatus

¹⁸ Concordia Theological Quarterly Vol.70 No. 2 April 2006

¹⁹ WA 26: 504, 30 -35; LW 37: 364

The call into the Lord's ministry cannot be part-time nor is it temporary. C.F. Walther taught of the danger of a time limited call, nor is it arbitrary. *Das Predigtamt ist kein willkürliches Amt in Theses II of Kirche und Amt.* It all depends on the Lord of the church who will not die nor change his mind in binding together the church with this *ordentlicher Weise*.

An *ordentlichen Beruf* does not simply mean *orderly*, as opposed to chaotically but refers to the order of the church by which a man is examined, called and placed into office through a liturgy of ordination. Ordination brings the whole process to completion.²⁰

Here is helpful to consult the Roman Confutation to see how they interpreted AC XIV. John Eck, who worked with John Faber, Conrad Wimpina, and John Cochlaeus, led the Roman theologians charged with the preparation of the Confutation. They were ordered to be moderate in their response.²¹

When, in the fourteenth article, they confess that no one ought to administer in the Church the Word of God and the sacraments unless he be rightly called, it ought to be understood that he is rightly called who is called in accordance with the form of law and the ecclesiastical ordinances and decrees hitherto observed everywhere in the Christian world, and not according to a Jeroboitic (cf. 1 Kings 12:20) call, or a tumult or any other irregular intrusion of the people. Aaron was not thus called. Therefore in this sense the Confession is received; nevertheless, they should be admonished to persevere therein, and to admit in their realms no one either as pastor or as preacher unless he be rightly called.

They understood *AC XIV rite vocatus* “in accordance with the form of law and the ecclesiastical ordinances and decrees”. This would naturally include the sacrament of ordination which only a Roman bishop is allowed to ordain. The issue was not over whether ordination is necessary but whose hands did it.

When people ask in the church: Who's in charge here? When the conversation concerning the office of the ministry is peppered with words of “power”, “gifts and abilities”, “right and privilege”, “function”, “necessity” and “leadership”, it tends to separate the office from its functions. When we begin where Jesus does, with His words, the people receive the precious gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation.

Löhe has the final word here on letting the pastor be content with what has been given to him to say and do by the Lord of the church.

[The church] does not consider it an insult, nor is it eager to interpret it as an insult, when someone says, “This pastor thinks it is enough if he preaches, catechizes, administers the sacraments, hears confessions, and comforts the sick!” It knows that even

²⁰ Norman Nagel, ‘Ordination is Not Other Than...’ Concordia Journal 28 (October 2002): 431 – 446.

²¹ www.bookofconcord.org/confutatio.php

the most faithful pastors do not do enough of this. It has little use for multiplying pastoral duties but treasures those which are commanded in the Scriptures and have been recognized since ancient times. To many people it is something novel that a man should not be a jack of many trades but a master of the few precious means, yet this is what the church has always thought. In a word, it accomplishes much through a few means.”

...It is enough, and more than enough, if a man just carries out the ancient duties of a pastor. Superfluous and even a hindrance is the officiousness of modern pastors. Here the slogan should be, “Not many, but much.” The poverty of our fathers is richer than the wealth of their opponents. It is through alternating periods of withdrawal and public appearance, stillness and publicity, through persistent use of Word and sacrament, through giving of a quiet but full measure, through modesty and steadfastness that the Lutheran Church attains its goals,” (165—166).²²

Oh, may Thy pastors faithful be,
 Not lab'ring for themselves, but Thee!
 Give grace to feed with wholesome food
 The sheep and lambs bought by Thy blood,
 To tend Thy flock, and thus to prove
 How dearly they the Shepherd love.

Oh, may Thy people faithful be
 And in Thy pastors honor Thee
 And with them work and for them pray
 And gladly Thee in them obey,
 Receive the prophet of the Lord
 And gain the prophet's own reward!

So may we, when our work is done
 Together stand before Thy throne
 And joyful hearts and voices raise
 In one united song of praise,

²² “Three Books about the Church” by Wilhelm Loehe. Translated, edited, and with an Introduction by James L. Schaaf. Fort Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 1989.

With all the bright celestial host,
To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.²³

²³ Christopher Wordsworth, 1862; Lutheran hymn made up of verses 2, 5, 9, 10