

The Lutheran Doctrine of the Ministry: Confessional and Theological Resources for Study, Reflection, and Discussion

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Introduction

An observer of the Lutheran theological landscape noted in 2001 that the doctrine of the Ministry “continues to be the most hotly discussed topic in contemporary Lutheranism.” Since then, debates among Lutherans over this doctrine have only intensified. It seems, in fact, that differences on the Ministry (both real and perceived) are the chief fracture point in the ongoing ecclesiastical splintering process that is taking place within world Lutheranism. But for Confessional Lutherans – who agree in their conviction that the Holy Scriptures are the inspired Word of God, and that the Lutheran Confessions are a correct statement and explanation of the Word of God – it should be possible to overcome this confusion and lack of agreement.

A recently-issued special report to the leaders of one Lutheran church body recommended that they “initiate a synod-wide review of key doctrines and practical issues pertinent to challenges facing” their church body, “in an effort to foster and preserve unity in doctrine and practice.” It called for “a fresh approach to examining each study topic,” which “should be firmly grounded in a solid method of exegesis of Holy Scripture,” and which “should incorporate insights from church fathers, Lutheran confessional documents, Lutheran dogmaticians; it should incorporate insights from the history and the experience of the Christian church through the ages. This approach is intended to stimulate a fresh, vigorous study of the issues, and to discourage a mere repetition of often-used terms and statements.”

Regarding the specific topic in which we are presently interested, this report went on to observe that “Considerable attention has been given to ministry issues in recent years,” but it also noted that “many of the discussions on ministry have taken place in a context that is separated from the larger question of Christian vocation.” It expressed the hope that “A synod-wide study on vocation, church and ministry...can help clarify understanding and provide answers to difficult questions,” and that such a study could be one that “focuses on crystallizing a proper understanding of church and ministry, while clearing up confusion raised by careless writing, exegesis in a historical vacuum, adoption of anti-clerical notions, misunderstandings about Christian vocation, and the potential influence of Arminian evangelicalism upon our synod and upon our understanding of ministry, Christian service, and vocation.”

Such a recommendation, for such a restudying of the doctrine of the Ministry, should be wholeheartedly welcomed and supported by all lovers of truth and Christian concord, regardless of synodical affiliation. Lutherans of *all* synodical traditions would certainly benefit from being involved in such a noble and worthwhile effort. With God’s help, and in the light of his Word, the misunderstandings and disunity that currently exist among the world’s Lutherans on the subject of the Ministry could be overcome. The destructive fracturing process that we have bemoaned could be halted, and reversed.

The materials in this compilation are herewith made available to the church at large with the modest hope that they can make a positive contribution toward the achievement of this goal. To be sure, this compilation does not include everything that would be needed for the kind of comprehensive and multi-faceted study that is described above. This compilation does not, for example, attempt to provide all the resources that would be necessary for a direct exegetical study of those passages of Scripture that pertain to the doctrine of the Ministry – although there are indeed some resources in this collection that would be useful in such an exegetical study. We must also remember that the Confessions themselves are, most fundamentally, *expositions of Scripture*, and that they are accepted as a “normed norm” for teaching in the church only because they have been judged to be *correct* expositions of Scripture. But in any case, the focus and intent of this compilation is, rather, the bringing together of numerous “Confessional and Theological Resources” on the topic of the Ministry, from the Book of Concord, and from the writings of widely-respected Lutheran theologians from all eras of Lutheran history whose teaching was in harmony with the Book of Concord. A better

knowledge of what the Lutheran Confessors and other orthodox theologians teach (on the basis of God's Word) regarding the doctrine of the Ministry would certainly be an invaluable asset in such a comprehensive study.

In spite of all the controversies over the Lutheran doctrine of the Ministry that have been waged in the past, and that are still being waged even now, a case can be made that the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a whole does indeed have a fundamentally consistent and knowable doctrine of the Ministry. This compilation seeks to make that case by means of the many historic testimonies that it brings together, and that it herewith offers to its readers for study and reflection. By means of a careful and thorough review of the resources that are made available in this compilation, we sincerely believe that the beleaguered Lutherans of our time can be significantly renewed in their understanding of, and commitment to, the Biblical, Confessional, and historic Lutheran doctrine of the Ministry.

Materials from the private writings of Martin Luther and the Concordists (especially Martin Chemnitz) predominate in this collection. In the sixteenth century these men were providentially raised up by God to serve as pastors and teachers of his church in a very unique way, at a time when such pastors and teachers were sorely needed. The authority of the Symbolical Books that they penned is acknowledged by all Confessional Lutherans, and Confessional Lutherans also have a very high regard for the private writings of these great servants of God. Their insights in regard to the doctrine of the Ministry, as they elsewhere elaborated on and explicated what they wrote in the Symbolical Books, are, and should be, of great value.

As we study and ponder these resources, we will, of course, remember the three-fold distinction regarding theological authority in the church to which the "Rule and Norm" section of the Formula of Concord bears witness. At the risk of oversimplifying, we summarize this distinction in our own words as follows: 1. The Scriptures cannot err, and therefore they do not err. 2. The Confessions can err, but they do not err. 3. The orthodox fathers of the church can err, and they sometimes do err, but they usually do not err.

The excerpts and quotations that are included in this compilation are apportioned into twenty sections or topical divisions – some of which do admittedly overlap with each other to a considerable degree. Each of these topical divisions (with the exception of the last one) is, in turn, organized into two categories: "Testimonies from the Lutheran Confessions" and "Testimonies from the writings of Lutheran theologians."

To preserve the context – and thereby the meaning – of the various statements, lengthy excerpts, rather than short snippets, are the rule. Some of the excerpts are quite broad in what they discuss, so that they could just as well have been placed under a different topical division than the one under which they are found. Still, a conscious attempt was made to find the best fit for everything.

In the case of three particularly long excerpts – authored respectively by E. W. Kaehler, Charles Porterfield Krauth, and Henry Eyster Jacobs – no attempt was made to tie them down to just one topical division. They are therefore placed in section 20 under their own heading as "Comprehensive explanations of the doctrine of the Ministry." What is particularly attractive about these three selections is that they approach this doctrine with an acknowledgment that terms like "Public Ministry" or "Ecclesiastical Ministry" are used in the Lutheran theological tradition in both a *narrower* and a *wider* sense. This observation holds the key to clearing up much confusion, and has the potential to show us how to get past some of the terminological and conceptual impasses in which we now find ourselves.

Some Lutherans (past and present) start out by defining the "Public Ministry" exclusively in terms of its narrower sense or meaning (with reference to the pastoral office, and to the full ministry of Word and Sacrament that is carried out by the pastoral office), and they go on to develop their understanding of this doctrine along those lines, without acknowledging a theologically significant wider sense. Other Lutherans (past and present) start out by defining the "Public Ministry" exclusively in terms of its wider sense or meaning (with reference to all ecclesiastical offices that participate, to one degree or another, in bringing God's Word to others), and they go on to develop their understanding of this doctrine along those lines, without acknowledging a theologically significant narrower sense. In each of these cases, a way of explaining the doctrine of the Ministry that can fairly be judged as truncated and incomplete is the result. The careful explanations of Kaehler, Krauth, and Jacobs, by comparison, offer a third and better alternative. Their way of describing these things can help all of us to see past the limitations of our own parochial tradition (whatever that may be), and to embrace a more balanced, far-reaching, and genuinely catholic doctrine of the Ministry.

It will no doubt be noticed that some of the excerpts and quotations in this collection *seem* to contradict other excerpts and quotations on certain points. In most cases these seeming contradictions do not represent real differences in teaching, but only differences in emphasis or in the usage and definition of terms. In some of these excerpts and quotations, the authors may not have chosen their words as carefully as they could have. And of course, some of our

revered fathers in the faith may occasionally have been mistaken in how they conceived of some aspect of the doctrine of the Ministry. But statements that have some weak or imprecise expressions, or that reflect a mistaken notion on a certain small point, can still provide useful insights on the doctrine of the Ministry as a whole. A careful reading of the various excerpts and quotations that are included in this collection will, we think, make manifest many more examples of authors *complementing* each other than of authors *contradicting* each other.

The twenty topical divisions are as follows:

1. The role of the Lutheran Confessions in contemporary Lutheran discussions regarding the Ministry (and other articles of faith)
2. The meaning and usage of terms in the doctrine of the Ministry (and related articles of faith)
3. The Word of God, the Office of the Keys, and the inherent power of the Law and the Gospel to condemn and to forgive
4. The preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments (the Means of Grace)
5. The Office of the Keys and the Means of Grace: entrusted to the Church
6. The right and duty of every Christian to confess and speak God's Word
7. The Public Ministry of the Word: instituted and governed by God
8. The Public Ministry of the Word: representing Christ's Church
9. The Public Ministry of the Word: representing Christ
10. The Public Ministry of the Word in the narrower sense: the office of governing and guiding the Church with the Word of God (the office of spiritual oversight)
11. The office of spiritual oversight: its indispensability and defining duties in the public administration of the Means of Grace
12. The office of spiritual oversight: its various manifestations in the Old Testament, in the New Testament, and in the history of the Church
13. The office of spiritual oversight: entrusted (except in emergencies) only to qualified males
14. The Public Ministry of the Word in the wider sense: all ecclesiastical offices that participate in, or directly support, the public administration of the Means of Grace
15. Ecclesiastical offices that assist, in limited or supplementary ways, in the public administration of the Means of Grace ("helping offices" or "limited offices")
16. "Helping offices" or "limited offices": entrusted to qualified males or females, in accordance with the order of creation
17. The Public Ministry of the Word: competency and call
18. The Public Ministry of the Word: ordination and the ceremonies of ordination

19. The Public Ministry of the Word and ecclesiastical fellowship

20. Comprehensive explanations of the Public Ministry of the Word

Since there is an intimate connection between the doctrine of the Ministry and the doctrine of the Church in Lutheran theology, an addendum that provides “Additional resources pertaining to the Church, its marks, and its unity” is also included.

It is commonly thought that many if not most of the theological issues facing the church of our time are new, and that the church of past generations did not have occasion to address these issues. But in regard to the doctrine of the Ministry, if a fair-minded reader will compare the various aspects of the doctrine that we are currently debating with the various aspects of the doctrine that are already covered in the Confessions, and in the writings of orthodox Lutheran theologians of the past, he will notice that few if any of our contemporary questions have not already been answered. We can learn much more from the fathers of our church than we usually imagine. The challenges that we face are, essentially, the challenges that they also faced. Their Biblically-based responses to these challenges should also be our Biblically-based responses to these challenges.

Confessional quotations marked “K/W” are from *The Book of Concord*, edited by Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000). Abbreviations for the various Confessional writings are as follows: AC: Augsburg Confession. Ap: Apology of the Augsburg Confession. FC Ep: Formula of Concord, Epitome. FC SD: Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration. LC: Large Catechism. SA: Smalcald Articles. SC: Small Catechism. Tr: Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope. Occasionally a more precise or alternate rendering of a word or phrase is provided in brackets, within the text of the quotation from the Kolb/Wengert translation.

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The Commemoration of St. Ambrose of Milan
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Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings... (Hebrews 13:7-9, NASB)

1. The role of the Lutheran Confessions in contemporary Lutheran discussions regarding the Ministry (and other articles of faith)

TESTIMONIES FROM THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS:

Fundamental, enduring unity in the church requires above all else a clear and binding summary and form in which a general summary of teaching is drawn together from God’s Word, to which the churches that hold the true Christian religion confess their adherence. For this same purpose the ancient church always had its reliable creeds, which were not based upon private writings but on such books as were set forth, approved, and accepted in the name of the churches that confessed their adherence to a single teaching and religion. For this reason we have made this mutual declaration with hearts and mouths that we intend to create or accept no special or new confession of our faith. Rather, we confess our adherence to the publicly recognized writings that have been regarded and used as creeds or common confessions in all the churches of the Augsburg Confession at all times... These writings, accepted officially and universally among us, have always been regarded in churches and schools that teach purely as the summary and model of the teaching that Dr. Luther of blessed memory had thoroughly set forth in his writings, on the basis of God’s Word, against the papacy and other sects. We likewise intend to appeal to and rely on the detailed expositions of his teaching in his doctrinal and polemical writings, but in the manner and fashion in which he himself did in the Latin preface of his collected works with a necessary and Christian admonition. There he expressly made the distinction that God’s Word

alone ought to be and remain the only guiding principle and rule of all teaching and that no person's writing can be put on a par with it, but that everything must be totally subject to God's Word. This does not mean that other good, useful, pure books that interpret Holy Scripture, refute errors, and explain the articles of faith are to be rejected. Insofar as they are in accord with this model for teaching, they should be regarded and used as helpful interpretations and explanations. In order to preserve pure teaching and fundamental, lasting, God-pleasing unity in the church, it is necessary not only to present the pure, beneficial teaching correctly, but also to censure those who contradict it and teach other doctrines (1 Tim. 3[:9]; Titus 1[:9]). For, as Luther states, true shepherds are to do both: pasture or feed the sheep and ward off the wolves, so that they may flee from other voices (John 10[:4b-5,16b]) and "separate the precious from the vile" (Jer. 15[:19, Vulgate]). Thus, we have come to fundamental, clear agreement that we must steadfastly maintain the distinction between unnecessary, useless quarrels and disputes that are necessary. The former should not be permitted to confuse the church since they tear down rather than edify. The latter, when they occur, concern the articles of faith or the chief parts of Christian teaching; to preserve the truth, false teaching, which is contrary to these articles, must be repudiated. (FC SD Rule and Norm: 1-2,9-10,14-15, K/W pp. 526,528-30)

From this our explanation, friend and foe may clearly deduce that we have no intention of giving up anything of the eternal, unchangeable truth of God (which we also do not have the power to do) for the sake of temporal peace, tranquillity, and outward unity. Such peace and unity, which is intended to contradict the truth and suppress it, would not last. It makes even less sense to whitewash and cover up falsifications of pure teaching and publicly condemned errors. Rather we have a deep yearning and desire for true unity and on our part have set our hearts and desires on promoting this kind of unity to our utmost ability. This unity keeps God's honor intact, does not abandon the divine truth of the holy gospel, and concedes nothing to the slightest error. Instead, it leads poor sinners to true, proper repentance, raises them up through faith, strengthens them in new obedience, and thus justifies and saves them eternally, solely through the merit of Christ. (FC SD XI:94-96, K/W pp. 655-56)

Therefore, it is our intent to give witness before God and all Christendom, among those who are alive today and those who will come after us, that the explanation here set forth regarding all the controversial articles of faith which we have addressed and explained – and no other explanation – is our teaching, faith, and confession. In it we shall appear before the judgment throne of Jesus Christ, by God's grace, with fearless hearts and thus give account of our faith, and we will neither secretly nor publicly speak or write anything contrary to it. Instead, on the strength of God's grace we intend to abide by this confession. (FC SD XII:40, K/W p. 660)

TESTIMONIES FROM THE WRITINGS OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGIANS:

What our Symbolical Books have to say about the ministry is fundamentally clear and straightforward. It can be made plain to any honest person of good will. The fudged and muddled clutter in our current ministry cupboard can be untangled, I am convinced, if we will learn anew from our Confessions how to make the right, biblical distinctions and avoid bogus ones. (Kurt E. Marquart, "The Ministry, Confessionally Speaking," in *The Office of the Holy Ministry* [Crestwood, Missouri: Luther Academy, 1996], p. 7)

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. (Martin Luther, "Opinion on the Recess of the Imperial Diet"; quoted in C. F. W. Walther, *The True Visible Church* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1961], p. 44)

We do not interpret God's word by the Creed, neither do we interpret the Creed by God's word, but interpreting both independently, by the laws of language, and finding that they teach one and the same truth, we heartily acknowledge the Confession as a true exhibition of the faith of the Rule – a true witness to the one, pure, and unchanging faith of the Christian Church, and freely make it our own Confession, as truly as if it had been now first uttered by our lips, or had now first gone forth from our hands. (Charles Porterfield Krauth, *The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology* [Philadelphia: General Council Publication Board, 1871], p. 169)

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. (Charles Porterfield Krauth, *The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology* [Philadelphia: General Council Publication Board, 1871], p. 186)

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. (Joseph A. Seiss, "Our Confessions in English," *Lutheran Church Review*, Vol. I, No. 3 [July 1882], p. 216)

It is a real joy to be able to say, in gratitude to God, that we have invariably got the impression that they [the Missourians] are all possessed of the same spirit...: a heartfelt trust in God, a sincere love for the symbols [the ecumenical creeds and the Lutheran Confessions] 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. (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. 63)

2. The meaning and usage of terms in the doctrine of the Ministry (and related articles of faith)

TESTIMONIES FROM THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS:

...we have thought it worthwhile to cite in customary and familiar phrases the view of the holy Fathers, which we also follow. (Ap II:51, K/W p. 120)

...we are minded not to manufacture anything new through this work of concord nor to depart in either substance or expression to the smallest degree from the divine truth, acknowledged and professed at one time by our blessed predecessors and us, as based upon the prophetic and apostolic Scripture and comprehended in the three Creeds, in the Augsburg Confession presented in 1530 to Emperor Charles V of kindest memory, in the Apology that followed it, and in the Smalcald Articles and the Large and Small Catechisms of that highly enlightened man, Dr. Luther. On the contrary, by the grace of the Holy Spirit we intend to persist and remain unanimously in this truth and to regulate all religious controversies and their explanations according to it. (Preface 23, K/W p. 15)

TESTIMONIES FROM THE WRITINGS OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGIANS:

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. (Ralph F. Smith, *Luther, Ministry, and Ordination Rites in the Early Reformation Church* [New York: Peter Lang, 1996], p. 3)

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. (Charles A. Hay, "Article V: The Office of the Ministry," in *Lectures on the Augsburg Confession* [Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1888], p. 154)

A call issued through the church...is a call from Christ himself. 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 follow 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. (Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966], p. 332)

No one, says Luther, should attempt to serve God unless he is certain that God has bid him do it "either through His Word, or through men who have authority over us in God's place." ... Thus a "call of God" is, according to Luther, a divine command given to an individual. And such a command comes either directly from God, as in the case of Abraham, or mediately through the word of God and through people in authority. ... It is this understanding of a call of God that illuminates Luther's terminology of office (*Amt*). For Luther continuously relates the two together through the idea that one's office is the thing God bids one to do. ... Thus "office" can become a synonym with *Werk* (work) or even *Tun* (a thing done). As a thing commanded, "office" can also be used in the plural to indicate various things commanded. ... So for Luther and the Confessions it is in the command of God that one receives his offices or works to perform. ... It should not be surprising then that "office" or "offices" can on the one hand refer to individual tasks commanded by God. This is particularly true of the Latin *officium*, which could mean specific tasks or duties performed. We can refer to this as office in the narrow sense. On the other hand, the meaning of "office" ... indicates the sphere of work or operation of the person given such duty and obligations. This is especially true when Luther and the Confessions refer to the common orders of society and the general commands that govern them. This can be referred to as the office in the wide sense. Often these senses of "office" are found mixed together, something requiring careful reading. ... Thus in theory, if not in actual practice, one could speak of offices within one's office. But one could never rightly speak of an office without or even separate from its functions, because it is precisely these duties that give substance to "office" in the wider sense. It is this terminology of call and office that Luther and the Confessions use within their theology of the public ministry of the church. ... On the one hand, "office" can occasionally refer to individual functions that are performed within the sphere of work that one has been given. ... On the other hand, Luther and the Confessions often use "office" in the wide sense when teaching about office in the church. Here the word "office" refers to the sphere of activity (*Wirkungskreis*) in which

the officeholder performs the duties given him to perform. In this category fall the terms of concrete offices such as *Bischofsamt* (office of the bishop), *Pfarramt* (parish office), or *Schullehreramt* (schoolteacher's office). ... This use of the wide sense of "office" to speak of churchly posts can be expanded even further so as to add yet another tier or layer to the terminology of office. Thus arise words like *Kirchenamt* that include all actual concrete offices held by individuals in the church. This ties into Luther's idea of the general orders (*Stände*) of the world and is in fact equivalent to one of the orders, namely, the public life of the church in all its facets. ...the singular "office" can be used to designate everything from a singular function (*Verrichtung*) to the estate containing all the concrete offices in the church (*Stand*). (Mark D. Nispel, "Office and Offices," *Logia*, Vol. VI, No. 3 [Holy Trinity 1997], pp. 6-8)

The Symbolical Books see the sacred ministry chiefly but not exclusively in dynamic and functional terms. Nevertheless, the Symbolical Books are conscious of the fact that apart from its incumbents the sacred ministry is an abstraction. ... A minor problem arises on occasion when one tries to ascertain if "ministry" (*ministerium*) in a given passage means generally and abstractly the function of preaching the gospel and administering the sacraments – as it does frequently – or if it means concretely the incumbents of the sacred ministry as they engage in these functions. Sometimes, as in AC 5,1 Latin and 28,9, this is a matter of exegetical decision. Of interest is the fact that *Predigtamt* (literally, "the office of preaching") occasionally (for instance, AC 5,1 German and Ap 7,20 German) has "the Gospel" or "the Gospel and the sacraments" as an explanatory apposition. To be effective, the Gospel must actually be preached and the sacraments must be administered. But these are precisely the functions the Symbolical Books attribute to the incumbents of the sacred ministry. ... The Symbolical Books...see the sacred ministry both as an office (*ministerium*; *Amt*) and as an order or estate (*ordo*; *Stand*) within the church (Ap 13,11-12; 22,13; 28,13; SA III,11,1; compare SC Table of Duties 1, *heilige Orden und Stands*, "holy orders and estates"). (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], pp. 554-55)

...great caution is necessary in coming to conclusions concerning the doctrine of the Lutheran church on the ministry as found in the Confessions, when looking at individual texts in our Lutheran symbols in which the words "office" [*Amt*], "preaching office" [*Predigtamt*], and "office of the keys" [*Schlüsselamt*], etc., are found. And, I will add...that the presumption must be that where the word "office" occurs in such texts, that this is being used in the simple sense of a "commissioned work" [*aufgetragenen Thuns*] without any other additional meanings, because this alone is the essential idea of "office"... ("Bemerkungen über das Amt," *Erlanger Zeitschrift*; reprinted in *Lehre und Wehre*, Vol. 7 [1861], pp. 295-96; quoted in Mark D. Nispel's Response to "Accountability and Faithfulness in Reaching the Lost" by Robert D. Newton) (*In his introduction to this article, C. F. W. Walther describes it as "valuable" [wertvolles].*)

To the apostles and the Reformers, "office" is not different from but rather the same as "a function arranged by God" [*von Gott egeordneter Function*]. (C. F. W. Walther, "Theologische Axiome," *Lehre und Wehre*, Vol. 9 [1863], p. 270; quoted in Mark D. Nispel's Response to "Accountability and Faithfulness in Reaching the Lost" by Robert D. Newton)

"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 office of the ministry [*Predigtamt*] or Gospel and the sacraments" [Apology VII/VIII:20]. ... In this passage of the Apology...one can also recognize very clearly what those of old frequently understood by office of the ministry (*Predigtamt*), namely, [that] they often took "office of the ministry" as entirely synonymous with "Gospel." The Apology does not have Grabau's understanding, according to which "the office of the ministry" (*Predigtamt*) is always equivalent to "the office of a pastor" (*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 office of the ministry, 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*). (C. F. W. Walther, "The True Visible Church," *Essays for the Church* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992], Vol. I, p. 102)

The call in AC XIV is to both office (*status, officium, Amt*) and function (*officium, munus, opus, Amt*). (Robert D. Preus, "The Doctrine of the Call," in *Church and Ministry Today* [Saint Louis: The Luther Academy, 2001], p. 20)

The ordained ministry exists *in* the church, the priesthood does not (in the same fashion): the latter *is* the church. *The church is a priesthood; it has an ordained ministry.* This remains true [for Luther], whether Luther says that all Christians *have* the inner, spiritual priesthood, or that the first priestly office (function) *is* the ministry of the Word, or that the priesthood *is* the ministry of the Word. The foremost function of the spiritual priesthood *is* the ministry of the Word, which is to proclaim God's wonderful deeds. This office, common to all Christians..., is fulfilled privately and publicly in due order: privately under certain circumstances by any layman, e.g., "mutual consolation," but in a special sense, with public responsibility, by the ordained clergy. There is indeed permanent tension in Luther's view. It is...(a) the ever-mysterious wonder of *God's* working in and through *men* – in the church, in the ministry, and in the world; and specifically (b) the tension in two uses of the term "ministry of the Word." In one sense, ...this term means simply the church's (the priesthood's) task of proclaiming the Gospel; ...we may recall that although the *Augsburg Confession*, Article 5, is entitled "The Ministry of the Church," the article deals with the divine establishment of the means of grace in general, not with the clergy. ... Luther's vision is that of a *ministering* church. In the second sense, of course, the term "ministry" means the public office in the church; the clergy are the special ministers of the church, around whom the church's order is built. ... The authority of the ordained ministry is neither independent of the God-instituted church, nor derived from the humanly administered church, local or otherwise. God does his work through men, but he retains the sovereignty before which both the whole body of the church and its clergy must bow. With all the shifts of emphasis in Luther's teaching on the church – notably a strengthening of the authority both of the clergy and of the "Christian (civil) government," and some shift in terminology – this outlook remained basic and essentially unchanged. (Robert H. Fischer, "Another Look at Luther's Doctrine of the Ministry," *The Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. XVIII, No. 3 [August 1966], pp. 270-71)

Clergy Titles: The most frequently used term in the [Lutheran] church orders for an ordained clergyman throughout the period under study was *priest* (*Priester, Briester, Prester*). In every decade before 1570 it occurred more than all other terms combined. Thereafter other terms competed with it, notably [*Kirchen*]diener (servant) or its Latin form *Minister*, which were first popular in southern Germany and gradually made their way north. After 1600, *pastor* (*Pastor*), used infrequently in the sixteenth century, was found more frequently. ... A *parson* (*Pfarrherr, Kerckhere*) was technically in charge of a parish church, but the term was also used (along with *Priester*) to refer to the priest presiding at a mass in which several priests took part. The term *Wochner* (from the German *Woche*, "week"), found in only a handful of orders, was used for churches with several priests on staff to designate the priest responsible for the services in a particular week. An assisting priest in a parish was called a *deacon* (*Diakon, Diaconus*)* or chaplain (*Kapellan, Kaplan*). The deacon had specific functions in a liturgical service, such as reading the Gospel and handling the chalice during communion. In a very few large churches with a great deal of ceremony, a *subdeacon* read the Epistle and carried the houseling cloth (a towel used to catch crumbs that might fall from the host while it was being distributed). Occasionally the term *Ministrant* was used to refer to a priest assisting during mass. The word *preacher* (*Prediger, Predicant*) was used most often to designate the priest preaching the sermon on a given day. But some cities called priests specifically to preach in one or more churches and not to be in charge of a parish; in these cases the term refers to these people. Occasionally the word was used in a general sense as a synonym for priest. The *superintendent* was a priest who oversaw the churches in a given region. Saxony had two kinds of superintendents, general and special, equivalent to bishops and rural deans.

[*There were one or two exceptions to this use of the term "Diakon." Philip Han's *Kirchen Buch* for Magdeburg (1615) used "Diakon" in the sense of "Pfarrer" and "Lector" in the sense of "Diakon." It is unclear whether Johann Gerhard's Saxe-Coburg order of 1626 used "Diakon" to refer to someone who was not yet ordained to the priesthood but who was fulfilling certain of its functions or simply to a priest who had not yet been assigned a parish of his own. The order directed that insofar as possible, students should not advance directly from school into the pastorate until they have spent time teaching or in the diaconate or otherwise in the preaching office so that they can learn the ceremonies of the church and gain experience. The deacon should be given a pastorate only after the Pfarrer has testified that the deacon has gained the necessary experience both in his preaching and in the discharge of his office in caring for the healthy and sick, and the prisoners. Cities may retain an older, senior deacon who instructs the younger ones. A person with the necessary qualifications who has not served as a deacon may be ordained into the pastorate.]

Titles of Other Church Officials: Every parish had a lay assistant to the pastor called a *clerk* (*KÜster*, *Custos*, *Opfermann*). This office derived from the same pre-Reformation office as the parish clerk in England and was similar to it... The standard translation today is “sexton,” which is what the office in Germany has indeed become, but “clerk” better represents the nature of the office in the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries. The duties of the clerk, according to the 1581 church order for Hoya, were (1) to ring the bell at the proper time; (2) to service the altar and the singing; (3) to attend with the pastor to baptisms, burials, and visiting the sick, to make certain that there is fresh water in the baptismal font, and to clean the font regularly; (4) if there is a clock tower, to attend to it each morning and evening; (5) to keep the church clean; (6) to drive from the church dogs that run around during services and bite each other; (7) to keep grazing animals away from the churchyard; (8) to know the catechism from memory, and be able to write, and sing the customary hymns in German and Latin; (9) when the pastor is ill and no substitute can be obtained, to read to the people the five chief parts of the catechism with Luther’s explanation, and to examine the children in the catechism; (10) to assist the pastor in admitting and excluding people from the sacrament; (11) the clerk shall be dismissed if he does not attend the Lord’s Supper after being warned; (12) to ring the prayer bell (*Betglocke*) each morning, noon, and evening; (13) to dress as befits a servant of the church; (14) not to sell beer or brandy, on threat of dismissal; and (15) not to set himself against the pastor. The somewhat cryptic requirement to service the singing refers to the task of leading the singing of the congregation.** The 1718 order for the Lutheran congregation in London additionally specified that the clerk select the hymns after the pastor has informed him of the text for the day, announce the hymns to the congregation, keep a register of those baptized and married, deliver to the pastor after the sermon a list of those to be prayed for, and report problems in the lives of the congregation’s members. In Braunschweig and other cities he also managed the church’s books. In areas without schools, the clerk, as the most educated man in the village after the pastor, often took it upon himself to assist pupils who had a particular desire to learn to read and write. This not only produced an educated peasantry but also made the clerk’s job of teaching the catechism easier. In areas with German schools, the *schoolmaster* (*Schulmeister*) undertook this task. The schoolmaster also led the unison singing of the boys’ choir, and some orders assigned to him the clerk’s task of leading congregational singing; others specified that this was to be done by either the schoolmaster or the clerk.*** Generally, where there was a school choir to lead the congregation, the schoolmaster led the choir and the choir led the people. But where there was no choir, the clerk led the singing, thus substituting for the choir. Occasionally the term *lead singer* or *precentor* (*Vorsinger*) was used to refer to the clerk or other person leading the singing in a particular service, although a document from Dinkelsbühl dated 1573 considered the precentor a position unto itself, to be filled by someone who (1) had the pastor’s approval; (2) was a German schoolmaster, if possible; (3) if no German schoolmaster was available, was at least a good citizen; (4) was of good character and not critical of the church; (5) was willing to work for a low salary; and (6) was accomplished in the psalms and had a pleasing voice. Some cities had Latin schools, in which the instruction was done in that language. During the second half of the sixteenth century, 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. During the sixteenth century, schools had anywhere from two to six hours of music instruction per week, with most having four or five. In most places from 1570 to 1730 cantors had no responsibility for composing music; Leipzig, at the time of J. S. Bach, and a few other large cities were exceptions. Court chapels had cantors as well, and there the term was originally used to mean any singer, not necessarily the choir director, as when Paul Köler was installed in 1572 in Wolfenbüttel as “Kantor oder SÄnger.” Prior to the middle of the sixteenth century the rector served the function of the cantor in all but the largest cities, but during the second half of the century cantorates developed in a number of smaller cities. It was not unusual in the early decades for the cantorate to serve as a stepping stone to the pastorate, and in many places in Saxony and Thuringia during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries more than half the cantors eventually became pastors. In general the cantorate as an institution was more important in northern and middle Germany than in the south, where the influence of Calvin and Zwingli had a detrimental impact on the perceived importance of music. Some cities had an *assistant cantor* or *subcantor* (*succentor*). Occasionally in earlier documents one finds the terms cantor and succentor used interchangeably to refer to the same person. During the sixteenth century the subcantor came to refer to a third schoolteacher who handled the simpler hymn and chant singing while the cantor directed the more complex figural music. Zwickau had already adopted the two-cantor system by 1529, and the practice spread throughout middle Germany in the late sixteenth and

seventeenth centuries. In 1583 Halle, with 620 pupils in the school, had four cantors. Ulm had three cantors during the seventeenth century, called *Cantor*, *Succentor*, and *Vicesuccentor*. Churches with organs had an *organist* as well. Often the school rector or another teacher played the organ, otherwise the organist was a layman who was also employed outside the church. The social status of the organist who was not also a teacher was slightly lower than that of the cantor, for the cantor was educated, but the organist merely trained.

[**Similarly, according to the 1585 order for Saxe-Lauenburg, the clerk's office was to open and close the church at the proper times, keep it clean for services and funerals, ring the bells, take care of the belongings of the church, including items needed for mass, altar items, chalice, lamps, candles, etc. He also sang the psalms of Dr. Luther from the book, teaching them to the people. In the villages he taught arithmetic, reading, writing, and the catechism to boys and girls, and in the city he taught the same things to the girls, and his wife taught them sewing and other such things. On Sunday afternoons he instructed the young people in Luther's catechism. The clerk also had responsibilities at funerals, and no one was allowed to bury his own dead to avoid paying the clerk his fee. He also assisted in visiting the sick and at baptisms of children.]

[***Girls also learned to sing, at least in places. The 1533 order for Meissen and Voiland and the 1533 Leininger order both provide that there be one hour's practice of spiritual songs (*geistliche Lieder*) in the afternoon for the girls' school.] (Joseph Herl, *Worship Wars in Early Lutheranism* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2004], pp. 41-43, 254-55)

Very illuminating and significant is the treatment in Pastor E. W. Kaehler's 1874 theses... The theses distinguish 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. (Kurt E. Marquart, *The Church and Her Fellowship, Ministry, and Governance* [Fort Wayne, Indiana: The International Foundation for Lutheran Confessional Research, corrected edition 1995], p. 144) (*A substantial excerpt from the essay by Kaehler to which Marquart refers can be found in section 20 below.*)

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. (Thomas P. Nass, "The Revised *This We Believe* of the WELS on the Ministry," *Logia*, Vol. X, No. 3 [Holy Trinity 2001], pp. 37-38)

...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 [Melanchthon] 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. It is the doctrine of the Gospel that matters, and not human theology. (Hermann Sasse, *This is my body* [revised edition] [Adelaide, South Australia: Lutheran Publishing House, 1977], p. 253)

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 accustomed 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. (John P. Meyer, "Unionism," in *Essays on Church Fellowship* [Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1996], pp. 63-64)

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. What does God care about a synod, when the saving truth hangs in the balance? 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 in this District! 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. (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)

When the pure preaching of the Word is called the mark of the true church, then the term "preaching" is generally taken for the confession of the doctrine that all members of a church, both pastors and hearers, have in common and for the reading of the Biblical texts, which also is a preaching in a certain sense according to Acts 15:21. Preaching in a narrow sense is more properly a function of the pastor rather than of the whole congregation. (John Gerhard, *Conf. cathol.*, fol. 728-29; quoted in C. F. W. Walther, *Church and Ministry* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987], p. 107)

3. The Word of God, the Office of the Keys, and the inherent power of the Law and the Gospel to condemn and to forgive

TESTIMONIES FROM THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS:

...Dr. Luther explained...: "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..." ...the law is a divine teaching in which the righteous, unchanging will of God revealed how human beings were created in their nature, thoughts, words, and deeds to be pleasing and acceptable to God. This law also threatens those who transgress it with God's wrath and temporal and eternal punishments. For, as Luther stated..., "Everything that reproves sin is and belongs to the law. ..." ... Human beings have not kept the law of God but have transgressed it. Their corrupted human nature, thoughts, words, and deeds battle against the law. For this reason they are subject to God's wrath, to death and all temporal afflictions, and to the punishment of the fires of hell. As a result, the gospel...teaches what people should believe, namely, that they receive from God the forgiveness of sins; that is, that the Son of God, our Lord Christ, has taken upon himself the curse of the law and borne it, atoned and paid for all our sins; that through him alone we are restored to God's grace, obtain the forgiveness of sins through faith, and are delivered from death and all the punishments of our sins and are saved eternally. ... This gospel proclaims that through Christ God forgives all the sins of those who believe the gospel, accepts them for Christ's sake as his children out of sheer grace without any merit of their own, and makes them righteous and

saves them. (FC SD V:11-12,17,20,25, K/W pp. 583-86)

The foremost office or power of the law is that it reveals inherited sin and its fruits. It shows human beings into what utter depths their nature has fallen and how completely corrupt it is. ... The New Testament retains this office of the law and teaches it, as Paul does and says, in Romans 1[:18]: “The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all” people. Also Romans 3[:19-20]: “so that...the whole world may be held accountable to God” and “no human being will be justified in his sight”; and Christ says in John 16[:8]: the Holy Spirit “will convict the world of sin.” ... To this office of the law, however, the New Testament immediately adds the consoling promise of grace through the gospel. This we should believe. As Christ says in Mark 1[:15]: “Repent, and believe in the good news.” ... Jesus himself says in Luke 24[:47]: “You must preach repentance and forgiveness of sins in my name to the whole world.” But where the law exercises such an office alone, without the addition of the gospel, there is death and hell, and the human creature must despair, like Saul and Judas. As St. Paul says: “The law kills through sin” [cf. Romans 7:9-11]. Moreover, the gospel does not give consolation and forgiveness in only one way – but rather through the Word, sacraments, and the like (as we shall hear), so that with God there is truly rich redemption from the great prison of sin (as Ps. 130[:7-8] says). (SA III, II:4; III:1,4,6-8, K/W pp. 312-13)

...Christ commanded that the promise of the gospel must be proclaimed to all those to whom repentance is preached (Luke 24[:47]; Mark 16[:15]). We should never regard this call from God, which takes place through the preaching of the Word, as some kind of deception. Instead, we should know that God reveals his will through it, namely, that he wills to work through his Word in those whom he has called, so that they may be enlightened, converted, and saved. For the Word through which we are called is a ministry of the Spirit. It “gives the Spirit,” or through it the Spirit is conferred (2 Cor. 3[:8]); it is a “power of God” that saves (Rom. 1[:16]). Because the Holy Spirit wills to be efficacious and to give strength, power, and ability through the Word, it is God’s will that we accept the Word and believe and follow it. (FC SD XI:28-29, K/W p. 645)

...we...observe holy days...so that people will have time and opportunity on such days of rest, which otherwise would not be available, to attend worship services, that is, so that they may assemble to hear and discuss God’s Word and then to offer praise, song, and prayer to God. But this, I say, is not restricted, as it was among the Jews, to a particular time so that it must be precisely this day or that, for in itself no one day is better than another. Actually, worship ought to take place daily. However, because this is more than the common people can do, at least one day a week ought to be set apart for it. Because Sunday has been appointed for this purpose from ancient times, it should not be changed, so that things may be done in an orderly fashion and no one create disorder by unnecessary innovation. This, then, is the simple meaning of this [third] commandment: Because we observe holidays anyhow, we should use them to learn God’s Word. The real business [office] of this day should be preaching [the preaching office] for the benefit of young people and the poor common folk. ...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, not on account of the external work but 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. Conversely, any conduct or work apart from God’s Word is unholy in the sight of God, no matter how splendid and brilliant it may appear... 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. ... 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. (LC I:83-86,91-94, K/W pp. 397-99)

The power of the keys administers and offers the gospel through absolution, which is the true voice of the gospel. Thus, we also include absolution when we talk about faith, because “faith comes from what is heard,” as Paul says [Rom. 10:17]. For when the gospel is heard, when absolution is heard, the conscience is uplifted and receives consolation. Because God truly makes alive through the Word, the keys truly forgive sins before God according to [Luke 10:16], “Whoever listens to you listens to me.” Therefore we must believe the voice of the one absolving no less than we would believe a voice from heaven. Absolution can properly be called the sacrament of penance, as even the more learned scholastic theologians say. At the same time, this faith is nourished in many ways in the midst of temptations through

the proclamation of the gospel and the use of the sacraments. For these are signs of the New Testament, that is, signs of the forgiveness of sins. They offer, therefore, the forgiveness of sins, as the words of the Lord's Supper clearly state [cf. Matt. 26:26, 28], "This is my body, which is given for you. ... This cup...is the new covenant in my blood. ..." Thus faith is formed and strengthened through absolution, through hearing the gospel, and through use of the sacraments, so that it might not succumb in its struggle against the terrors of sin and death. This understanding of repentance is plain and clear. It increases the value of the sacraments and the power of the keys, illumines the benefits of Christ, and teaches us to make use of Christ as our mediator and propitiator. (Ap XII:39-43, K/W p. 193)

For we also retain confession especially on account of absolution, which is the Word of God that the power of the keys proclaims to individuals by divine authority. Therefore it would be unconscionable to remove private absolution from the church. Moreover, those who despise private absolution know neither the forgiveness of sins nor the power of the keys. As for the enumeration of sins in confession, we have said earlier that we do not hold it to be necessary by divine authority. Now when some object that a judge ought to hear a case before pronouncing a sentence, that is irrelevant because absolution is not judgment but the administration of another person's gift. For Christ gave the command to remit sins; ministers administer this command. They do not have a command to investigate secrets. (Ap XII:99-103, K/W p. 204)

TESTIMONIES FROM THE WRITINGS OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGIANS:

...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)... (Martin Luther, "The Private Mass and the Consecration of Priests," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 38 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971], p. 189)

The...church teaches that neither priests nor Christians produce a single sacrament; even the holy Christian church itself does not do so. Our office is called and ought to be not one of producing or effecting conversion but solely one of offering and bestowing. For example, a pastor or preacher does not produce the gospel and by means of his preaching or office his word does not become the gospel; otherwise, everything he would say would have to be the gospel. He only offers and bestows the gospel through his preaching. The gospel is there beforehand and must be there beforehand; this gospel our Lord Christ has produced, brought about, and left behind as a legacy. First he imprinted it upon the apostles' hearts and then, through the apostles' successors he continued to imprint it upon more and more Christian hearts, besides also letting it be preserved visibly in books and pictures. Thus there remains nothing for the office of the ministry or the office of preaching other than this single work, namely, to bestow or to present the gospel which Christ commanded to be preached. The pope and his abominations have indeed produced many doctrines out of their head, but they are not called God's word or gospel. Thus the baptizer produces no baptism, but Christ has produced it beforehand. The baptizer solely offers and bestows it: For there we have Christ's ordinance, which is, as St. Augustine says: "The word is added to the element, and it becomes a sacrament." When one takes water and adds his word to it, then it is a baptism, as he commands in Matthew, the last chapter: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" [Matt. 28:19]. This command and institution do it; they cause the water and the word to be a baptism. Our work or action *ex opere operato* does nothing; for it is not therefore called a baptism because I am baptizing or doing the work, even if I were holier than St. John or an angel; but my baptizing is called a baptism because Christ's word, command, and institution have ordained that water and his word should be a baptism. This ordinance of his, I say, and not our action or *opus operatum* constitutes baptism. Our action only offers and bestows such baptism, ordained and constituted by Christ's command and institution. For this reason he alone is and remains the one true, eternal baptizer who administers his baptism daily through our action or service until the day of judgment. So our baptizing should properly be called a presenting or bestowing of the baptism of Christ, just as our sermon is a presenting of the word of God. It could, however, be called our sermon or baptism, yet with the understanding that it does not become a baptism or God's word by our actions but that we have received it from Christ and give or administer it to others. Similarly, a servant may call the bread which he distributes his bread; yet he must understand it to be his lord's bread and must let this be known to be the case. So, too, it is not by our doing,

speaking, or work that bread and wine become Christ's body and blood, much less is it by the chrism or consecration; rather, it is caused by Christ's ordinance, command, and institution. For Christ commanded (as St. Paul says in I Corinthians 11[:22 ff.]) that when we meet together and speak his words with reference to bread and wine, then it is to be his body and blood. Here, too, we do nothing more than administer and bestow bread and wine along with his words according to his command and institution. This command and institution of his have the power to accomplish this, that we do not present and receive simply bread and wine but his body and blood, as his words indicate: "This is my body, this is my blood." So it is not our work or speaking but the command and ordinance of Christ which 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. We hear these words, "This is my body," not as spoken concerning the person of the pastor or the minister but as coming from Christ's own mouth who is present and says to us: "Take, eat, this is my body." We do not hear and understand them otherwise and know indeed that the pastor's or the minister's body is not in the bread nor is it being administered. Consequently, we also do not hear the command and ordinance according to which he says, "Do this in remembrance of me," as words spoken concerning the pastor's person; but we hear Christ himself through the pastor's mouth speaking to us and commanding that we should take bread and wine at his word, "This is my body," etc., and in them according to his command eat his body and drink his blood. (Martin Luther, "The Private Mass and the Consecration of Priests," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 38 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971], pp. 198-200)

In my youth I heard a story of how at one time the preacher suddenly took ill just when he was supposed to preach. At that moment a person came to him and offered to preach for him, and hastily paged through a book and sketched a sermon. Still, he preached so excellently and earnestly that the entire congregation wept. At the close of the service he said: "Do you want to know who I am? I am the devil and have preached so earnestly to you in order that I might be able to accuse you all the more justly and severely on the day of judgment to your greater condemnation, if you have not lived according to it." Whether this story is true or not, I do not care to investigate; but I know full well that it is not far from the truth and deals with the principal point in the right way, namely, that the devil can indeed possess and bestow the word, the offices, and the sacraments of Christ; for he can disguise "himself as an angel of light" [II Cor. 11:14] and as the majestic God himself, Matthew 4[:8-10]. I would not want to vouch for the fact that the devil has never been a pastor or a preacher. ...

The same rule, that our activity or work does not accomplish anything but solely God's command and ordinance, applies also in the realm of nature. For example, when we plow, sow, and plant, we are doing the work we have been commanded to do in Genesis 3[:17ff.]. However, our particular work does not produce one little grain; rather, it is the command and ordinance of God. He says to the earth, Genesis 1[:11]: "Let the earth put forth vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed. ..." It is as St. Paul says in I Corinthians 3[:7]: "So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth." Whether now the devil or man, a knave or a godly person, does such a work and plants, sows, or waters, God's ordinance and command nevertheless are in force in and of themselves, and the earth brings forth its fruit. For instance, 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. The papists themselves admit that baptism, administered as a joke or playfully, is a true baptism, as is written in the *Ecclesiastical History* of St. Athanasius. According to this account he was playing with his companions and children on the seashore and baptized them, as he had seen it done in the church by the bishop. Bishop Alexander regarded it as a true baptism, and did not baptize the

same children again. One can read about similar matters in the legends according to which several real buffoons wanted to please the heathen in a play and mock the Christians' baptism, as if it were a foolish, ludicrous belief to want to become holy through water, etc. However, in the middle of the play there appeared to one of them a writing which consisted of these words of St. Paul to the Ephesians, chapter 4[:5ff.]: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all," etc. On the basis of these words he became a believer and accepted the mock baptism as a true baptism, took it seriously, and freely confessed Christ. However, when the heathen seized them all, supposing that these buffoons had produced the play in honor of the Christians and to spite the heathen, the rest reviled this one companion of theirs and said he had gone mad. However, he adhered to his baptism and faith, letting himself be martyred for it. Thus he went to heaven after the play was over.

However, the papists are blind and leaders of the blind. They consider only their own person and work, just as if the sacrament had to take place simply because they are such persons and perform such works. They do not inquire about the ordinance or institution of Christ. Yet our person and our work cannot add to it; the ordinance of Christ alone must do it. Chrism, tonsure, chasuble, and similar pomp are of no help. For this reason they themselves do not know and also cannot know what they are doing in their masses.

Let me once and for all answer the question I raised above, how one should regard the pastor in the papacy because they have all been consecrated in no other way than by private bishops for private masses. This is what you should do: You should esteem and look upon his chrism and private consecration as nothing, for it certainly is nothing, and does not help or serve the church and you. You should, rather, consider the fact that he possesses the office of the ministry which is not his but Christ's office. Also do not let yourself be led astray as to whether he has been properly called or whether he has bought or forced himself into his office, how he obtained it, whether standing on his head or on his feet, whether he is Judas or St. Peter; do not concern yourself with that at all. Distinguish between the office and the person, and between the holy place and the sacrilege.

Very well then, he is a pastor, and Christ has thus preserved his holy, beloved office of the ministry in the papacy with its sacrilege. When he preaches the text of the gospel purely, then say: "This is the holy place of Christ." When, besides this, he preaches a different doctrine contrary to the gospel, then say: "This is the sacrilege of the devil who destroys the word." When he baptizes and in this adheres to the ordinance of Christ (even if he does not understand baptism correctly), then say: "The baptism is valid on account of Christ's ordinance, not on account of the pastor or his work." When he absolves you in private or public confession or forgives your sins, even though there is not a papist in the world who might rightly understand what the forgiveness of sins means, for they do not know (as all their books show) whether they forgive guilt or punishment, do not be concerned about this; if he adheres to the words and form and absolves you in the name of Christ, then say: "This holy, comforting absolution is granted to me by my Lord Christ himself through his keys which he has given to the church." If, in addition to this, he imposes upon you penitence according to which you should make satisfaction for your sins, then think of it in this way: "You see, this is the sacrilege which desires to destroy for me the absolution of Christ, as if Christ were to sell me his grace on account of my merit. I want to make amends to my neighbor before the world wherever I have injured him, but before God my satisfaction is founded on Christ himself with his precious blood. I shall abide by this and rely upon it." When the pastor celebrates mass diligently, note this difference: Insofar as he observes the ordinance and institution of Christ and also administers the sacrament to others, be assured that Christ's body and blood are certainly there on account of Christ's ordinance and not on account of the pastor's work or holiness. Insofar, however, as he does not observe the ordinance and intention of Christ but changes and perverts them, it is not necessary for you to believe that it is Christ's body and blood. In fact, you are not to believe it, even as has been said above concerning other private masses. For whether it be high mass or early mass, or whatever they may be called, they are private masses because nothing of the sacrament is given to the church. ... Therefore, when a pastor at Easter time, or at any other time during the year, has administered the one kind to the people from the altar, this is truly the sacrament, even though it has been only half of it; the other kind, which he has not administered but has drunk by himself alone, I do not consider to be the sacrament (until they prove it), but simply wine. (Martin Luther, "The Private Mass and the Consecration of Priests," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 38 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971], pp. 201-05)

...Christ says (Matt. 5:23-24) that whoever is not first reconciled to his brother cannot offer his gift at the altar, and Christ earnestly proclaims to the offended party, Matt. 6:15: "If you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." God promises that He will regard this fraternal reconciliation as valid in heaven (Matt. 18:18).

On this passage Theophylact says: “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!” (Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part II [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978], p. 595)

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, Bk. 4, dist. 17, and Gratian, *De poenitentia*, dist. 5, 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. (Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part II [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978], p. 621)

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. (Jakob Aall Ottesen, *Kirkelig Maanedstidende*, Vol. IV, No. 6 [June 1859], p. 84)

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. (Kurt E. Marquart, *The Church and Her Fellowship, Ministry, and Governance* [Fort Wayne, Indiana: The International Foundation for Lutheran Confessional

4. The preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments (the Means of Grace)

TESTIMONIES FROM THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS:

So that we may obtain this faith, the ministry of teaching the gospel and administering the sacraments was instituted. For through the Word and the sacraments as through instruments the Holy Spirit is given, who effects faith where and when it pleases God in those who hear the gospel, that is to say, in those who hear that God, not on account of our own merits but on account of Christ, justifies those who believe that they are received into grace on account of Christ. Galatians 3[:14]: “So that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” They [the churches among us] condemn the Anabaptists and others who think that the Holy Spirit comes to human beings without the external Word through their own preparations and works. ... Likewise, they teach that one holy church will remain forever. The church is the assembly of saints in which the gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly. And 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...” Although the church is, properly speaking, the assembly of saints and those who truly believe, nevertheless, because in this life many hypocrites and evil people are mixed in with them, a person may use the sacraments even when they are administered by evil people. This accords with the saying of Christ [Matt. 23:2]: “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat. ...” Both the sacraments and the Word are efficacious because of the ordinance and command of Christ, even when offered by evil people. They condemn the Donatists and others like them who have denied that the ministry of evil people may be used in the church and who have thought that the ministry of evil people is useless and ineffective. (AC V, VII-VIII [Latin], K/W pp. 41,43)

There can be no doubt that it is godly and in accordance with the institution of Christ and the words of Paul to use both elements in the Lord’s Supper. For Christ instituted both elements and instituted them not for part of the church but for the entire church. For not only the presbyters but the entire church, by Christ’s authority and not by human authority, use the sacrament, as we suppose the opponents will admit. Now if Christ instituted it for the entire church, why is one element denied to a part of the church? ...as the text of 1 Corinthians 11[:23ff.] clearly shows...it is prescribed that those who use the Lord’s Supper use both together. Therefore, it is evident that the sacrament was instituted for the entire church. ... For thus Jerome says on Zephaniah: “The priests who administer the Eucharist distribute the Lord’s blood to the people. ...” ...Gabriel [Biel] recounts that both elements are not given [to the laity] in order to distinguish between the laity and the clergy [presbyters]. This is no doubt the chief reason for defending the prohibition of one element, namely, in order to exalt the status of the clergy [the order] more highly by some religious ritual. ... If they withheld one element so that there might be a distinction between lay and ordained orders, this in itself should keep us from agreeing with our opponents, even though we would be inclined in other respects to comply with their custom. There are other distinguishing marks between the order of priest and the people. ... To avoid the impression that we are disparaging the true dignity of orders, we will not say more about this cunning counsel. (Ap XXII:1-4,9,13, K/W pp. 245-47)

...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...” (SA III, IV, K/W p. 319)

For we grant that in this life hypocrites and evil people are mingled with the church and are members of the church according to the external association of the church’s signs – that is, the Word, confession of faith, and sacraments – especially if they have not been excommunicated. Neither do the sacraments lose their efficacy when they are

administered by the wicked. ... However, the church is not only an association of external ties and rites like other civic organizations, but it is principally an association of faith and the Holy Spirit in the hearts of persons. It nevertheless has its external marks so that it can be recognized, namely, the pure teaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments in harmony with the gospel of Christ. Moreover, this church alone is called the body of Christ, which Christ renews, sanctifies, and governs by his Spirit as Paul testifies in Ephesians 1[:22-23], when he says, "And [God] has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all." Therefore those in whom Christ is not active are not members of Christ. ... There is an infinite number of ungodly persons within the church itself who oppress it. This article in the Creed presents these consolations to us: so that we may not despair, but may know that the church will nevertheless remain; so that we may know that however great the multitude of the ungodly is, nevertheless the church exists and Christ bestows those gifts that he promised to the church: forgiveness of sins, answered prayer, the gift of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, it says "church catholic" so that we not understand the church to be an external government of certain nations. It consists rather of people scattered throughout the entire world who agree on the gospel and have the same Christ, the same Holy Spirit, and the same sacraments, whether or not they have the same human traditions. ... Therefore, although hypocrites and wicked people are indeed associated with this true church according to the external rites, nevertheless when the church is defined, it must be defined as that which is the living body of Christ and as that which is the church in fact as well as in name. There are many reasons for this. For we must understand what principally makes us members of the church – and living members at that. If we define the church only in terms of an external government consisting of both the good and wicked, people will not understand that the kingdom of Christ is the righteousness of the heart and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Instead they will think that it is only the external observance of certain religious rites and rituals. ... Christ also speaks about the outward appearance of the church when he says, "The kingdom of heaven is like a net" [Matt. 13:47], or like "ten bridesmaids" [Matt. 25:1]. Thus he teaches that the church has been hidden under a crowd of wicked people in order that this stumbling block may not offend the faithful, and so that we might know that the Word and sacrament are efficacious even when they are administered by wicked people. Meanwhile, he teaches that although the ungodly possess certain outward signs in common, they are, nevertheless, not the true kingdom of Christ and members of Christ. For they are members of the devil's kingdom. Nor indeed are we dreaming about some platonic republic, as some have slanderously alleged. Instead, we teach that this church truly exists, consisting of true believing and righteous people scattered through the entire world. And we add its marks: the pure teaching of the gospel and the sacraments. This church is properly called "the pillar...of the truth" [1 Tim. 3:15] for it retains the pure gospel, and, as Paul says [1 Cor. 3:12], "the foundation," that is, the true knowledge of Christ and faith. Even though there are among these people many weak ones who build upon this foundation structures of stubble that will perish (that is to say, certain useless opinions), nevertheless, because they do not overthrow the foundation, these things are to be both forgiven them and also corrected. The writings of the holy Fathers bear witness that at times even they built stubble upon the foundation but that this did not overturn their faith. (Ap VII/VIII:3,5,9-10,12-13,19-21, K/W pp. 174-77) (*Where the Latin version of this confession [quoted here] says that the marks of the church are "the pure teaching of the gospel and the sacraments," the German version [included in the 1580 edition of the Book of Concord] says that these marks are "the preaching office or gospel and the sacraments."*)

TESTIMONIES FROM THE WRITINGS OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGIANS:

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. 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. ... There is no doubt that there remains and is on earth one holy Christian church, until the end of the world. As Christ says in Matthew 28[:20]: "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." This church is nothing other than believers in Christ, those who hold to the articles and parts [of Christian teaching] mentioned above and who believe and teach them and who are persecuted and martyred in the world because of this. For where the Gospel is preached and the sacrament rightly used, there is the holy Christian church. It is not bound by laws and

external practices to places and times, to specific persons and observances. (Schwabach Articles [1529], articles 7, 8, 12; *Sources and Contexts of the Book of Concord* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001], pp. 85-87)

For we must believe and be sure of this, that baptism does not belong to us but to Christ, that the gospel does not belong to us but to Christ, that the office of preaching does not belong to us but to Christ, that the sacrament [of the Lord's Supper] does not belong to us but to Christ, that the keys, or forgiveness and retention of sins, do not belong to us but to Christ. In summary, the offices and sacraments do not belong to us but to Christ, for he has ordained all this and left it behind as a legacy in the church to be exercised and used to the end of the world; and he does not lie or deceive us. Therefore, we cannot make anything else out of it but must act according to his command and hold to it. However, if we alter it or improve on it, then it is invalid and Christ is no longer present, nor is his ordinance. 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. If we would consider the person, then the preaching, baptism, and Lord's Supper which Judas and all his descendants have performed and administered and would still be performing and administering according to Christ's command, would be nothing but the devil's preaching, baptism, and Lord's Supper, for it would then be administered and given to us by the devil's members. But because the office, word, and sacrament are the ordinance of Christ and not of Judas or the devil, we permit Judas and the devil to remain Judas and the devil, and yet accept through them the blessings of Christ. For when Judas went to the devil he did not take his apostolic office along with him but left it behind, and Matthias received it in his stead. Offices and sacraments always remain in the church; persons are daily subject to change. As long as we call and induct into the offices persons who can administer them, then the offices will surely continue to be exercised. (Martin Luther, "The Private Mass and the Consecration of Priests," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 38 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971], pp. 200-01)

The temple is now as wide as the world. 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. (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)

...Christ says: My sheep not only hear me, they also obey and follow me [John 10:3-5]; they increase in faith daily through hearing the Word of God and the right and perfect use of the blessed sacraments. There is strengthening and comfort in this church. And it is also the true church, not cowls, tonsures, and long robes, of which the Word of God knows nothing, but rather wherever two or three are gathered together [Matt. 18:20], no matter whether it be on the ocean or in the depths of the earth, if only they have before them the Word of God and believe and trust in the same, there is most certainly the real, ancient, true, apostolic church. (Martin Luther, "Sermon in Castle Pleissenburg, Leipzig," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 51 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959], pp. 310-11)

The preaching of the holy gospel itself is principally and actually an absolution in which forgiveness of sins is proclaimed in general and in public to many persons, or publicly or privately to one person alone. Therefore absolution may be used in public and in general, and in special cases also in private, just as the sermon may take place publicly or privately, and as one might comfort many people in public or someone individually in private. Even if not all believe [the word of absolution], that is no reason to reject [public] absolution, for each absolution, whether administered publicly or privately, has to be understood as demanding faith and as being an aid to those who believe in it, just as the gospel itself also

proclaims forgiveness to all men in the whole world and exempts no one from this universal context. Nevertheless the gospel certainly demands our faith and does not aid those who do not believe it; and yet the universal context of the gospel has to remain [valid]. (Martin Luther and Philip Melanchthon, Letter to the Council of the City of NÜrnberg [April 18, 1533], *Luther's Works*, Vol. 50 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975], pp. 76-77)

5. The Office of the Keys and the Means of Grace: entrusted to the Church

TESTIMONIES FROM THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS:

In former times, there were serious controversies about the power of bishops, in which some people improperly mixed the power of the church and the power of the sword. ...our people have been compelled, for the sake of instructing consciences, to show the difference between the power of the church and the power of the sword. They have taught that because of the command of God both are to be devoutly respected and honored as the highest blessings of God on earth. ...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. For not bodily things but eternal things, eternal righteousness, the Holy Spirit, eternal life, are being given. These things cannot come about except through the ministry of Word and sacraments, as Paul says [Rom. 1:16]: "The gospel...is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith." And Psalm 119[:50]: "Your promise gives me life." Therefore, since this power of the church bestows eternal things and is exercised only through the ministry of the Word, it interferes with civil government as little as the art of singing interferes with it. For civil government is concerned with things other than the gospel. For the magistrate protects not minds but bodies and goods from manifest harm and constrains people with the sword and physical penalties. The gospel protects minds from ungodly ideas, the devil, and eternal death. ... The power of the church possesses its own command to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments. It should not usurp the other's duty [office]... If bishops possess any power of the sword, they possess it not through a command of the gospel but by human right, granted by kings and emperors for the civil administration of their lands. This, however, is a different function from the ministry of the gospel. ... 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 – doing all this not with human power but by the Word. In this regard, churches are bound by divine right to be obedient to the bishops, according to the saying [Luke 10:16], "Whoever listens to you listens to me." However, when they teach or establish anything contrary to the gospel, churches have a command from God that prohibits obedience. Matthew 7[:15]: "Beware of false prophets." Galatians 1[:8]: "If...an angel from heaven should proclaim to you a gospel contrary to what we proclaimed to you, let that one be accursed!" (AC XXVIII:1,4-13,19,21-24 [Latin], K/W pp. 91,93,95) (*In the text here quoted, the "power of the keys," the "power of the bishops," and the "power of the church" are synonymous terms. The main purpose of this text is not to make a point about the power of the clergy as compared to the power of the laity in the church, but to make a point about ecclesiastical and spiritual power [which is exercised publicly by the church's ministers] as compared to civil and governmental power.*)

It is certain that the common legal authority to excommunicate those guilty of manifest crimes belongs to all pastors. In tyrannical fashion, the [papal] bishops have transferred this solely to themselves and used it for profit. It is evident that the so-called bureaucrats have acted with intolerable license and, out of greed or other lusts, have harassed and excommunicated people without any proper judicial process. What kind of tyranny is this that these bureaucrats have the power to excommunicate people arbitrarily without a proper trial? And in what kinds of matters have they abused this power? Not in punishing real offenses but in violations of fasts or festivals and similar nonsense. Now and then they punished cases of adultery, but in such matters they often harassed innocent and honest people. Moreover, because this is a very serious charge, certainly no one should be condemned without due process. Since, therefore, the bishops

have tyrannically reserved this jurisdiction for themselves and have shamefully abused it, there is no need to obey them as far as it is concerned. On the contrary, since we have just cause for not submitting, it is right to restore this jurisdiction to godly pastors and to take care that it be exercised legitimately for the amendment of morals and the glory of God. Still to be considered is the administration of justice in those cases that, according to canon law, belong to what they call ecclesiastical courts, especially marital cases. This jurisdiction the bishops also possess by human right, and 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. Moreover, secular authorities are compelled by divine law to exercise this authority if the bishops are negligent. The canons concede as much. Therefore, it is not necessary to obey the bishops with regard to this jurisdiction either. Indeed, since they have made certain unjust laws concerning marriage and apply them in their courts, the establishment of other judicial processes is required on these grounds as well. ...there are many unjust papal laws concerning marriage and...on this account the magistrates must establish other courts. Whereas the bishops, who are beholden to the pope, defend ungodly doctrine and ungodly worship and do not ordain godly teachers but abet the pope's violence instead; whereas, moreover, they have taken jurisdiction away from pastors and in tyrannical fashion exercise it alone; whereas, finally, in marital matters they enforce many unjust laws: therefore, these constitute many sufficient and necessary causes why the churches should not acknowledge them as bishops. They themselves ought to remember that wealth has been given to bishops as alms for the administration and benefit of the churches, as the rule states, "The benefice is given for the office." Thus, they cannot possess these alms with a good conscience. Meanwhile, 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. So great are the variety and number of marital controversies that they need a special forum, the creation of which requires the church's wealth. Peter [2 Peter 2:13-15] foretold the appearance of future ungodly bishops who would squander the churches' alms on luxury and neglect the ministry. (Tr 74-82, K/W pp. 342-43)

The keys are an office and authority given to the church by Christ to bind and loose sins – not only the crude and notorious sins but also the subtle, secret ones that only God knows. As it is written [Ps. 19:12], "But who can detect their errors?" And Paul himself complains in Romans 7[:23] that with his flesh he served the "law of sin." For it is not in our power but in God's alone to judge which, how great, and how many sins there are. As it is written [Ps. 143:2]: "Do not enter into judgment with your servant, for no one living is righteous before you." And Paul also says in 1 Corinthians 4[:4]: "I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted." ... 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. However, the enumeration of sins ought to be a matter of choice for each individual... Because private absolution is derived from the office of the keys, we should not neglect it but value it highly, just as all the other offices of the Christian church. In these matters, which concern the spoken, external Word, it must be firmly maintained that God gives no one his Spirit or grace apart from the external Word which goes before. We say this to protect ourselves from the enthusiasts, that is, the "spirits," who boast that they have the Spirit apart from and before contact with the Word. (SA III, VII:1–VIII:3, K/W pp. 321-22)

...in addition to the [private] confession that we are discussing here, there are two other kinds, which have an even greater right to be called the common confession of Christians. I refer to the practice of confessing to God alone or to our neighbor alone, asking for forgiveness. These two kinds are included in the Lord's Prayer when we say, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," etc. Indeed, the entire Lord's Prayer is nothing else than such a confession. ... Similarly the second confession, which all Christians make toward their neighbor, is also included in the Lord's Prayer. We are to confess our guilt before one another and forgive one another before we come to God and ask for forgiveness. Now, all of us are debtors to one another; therefore we should and we may confess publicly in everyone's presence, no one being afraid of anyone else. ... However, besides the sum total of our sin, there are also individual ones, when a person has provoked someone else to anger and needs to ask for pardon. Thus we have in the Lord's Prayer a twofold absolution: both our sins against God and against our neighbors are forgiven when we forgive our neighbors and become reconciled with them. Besides this public, daily, and necessary confession, there is also the secret confession that takes place privately before a single brother... This 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. This type of confession is not included in the commandment like the other two but is left to all to use whenever they need it. 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 [Matthew 18:15-19]. So if there is a heart that feels its sin and desires comfort, it has here a sure refuge where it finds and hears God's Word because through a human being God looses and absolves from sin. ...the pope's preachers have in the past...simply driven people together en masse just to show what sort of impure and filthy people they were. Who was able under those conditions to go to confession willingly? We, on the contrary, do not say that a person should look to see how full of filthiness they are or should reflect on their condition. Rather we give this advice: If you are poor and miserable, then go and make use of the healing medicine. Those who feel their misery and need will no doubt develop such a desire for confession that they will run to it with joy. But those who ignore it and do not come of their own accord, we let go their way. However, they ought to know that we do not regard them as Christians. Thus we teach what a wonderful, precious, and comforting thing confession is, and we urge that such a precious blessing should not be despised, especially when we consider our great need. If you are a Christian, you need neither my compulsion nor the pope's command at any point, but you will force yourself to go and ask me that you may share in it. However, if you despise it and proudly stay away from confession, then we must come to the conclusion that you are not a Christian and that you also ought not receive the sacrament. For you despise what no Christian ought to despise, and you show thereby that you can have no forgiveness of sin. And this is a sure sign that you also despise the gospel. In short, we want nothing to do with compulsion. However, 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. (LC Confession: 8-14,25-31, K/W pp. 477-79)

...the Holy Spirit...has a 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, through which he illuminates and inflames hearts so that they grasp and accept it, cling to it, and persevere in it. Where he does not cause it to be preached and does not awaken the understanding of it in the heart, all is lost... For where Christ is not preached, there is no Holy Spirit to create, call, and gather the Christian church, apart from which no one can come to the Lord Christ. ... I believe that there is on earth a holy little flock and community of pure saints under one head, Christ. It is called together by the Holy Spirit in one faith, mind, and understanding. It possesses a variety of gifts, and yet is united in love without sect or schism. Of this community I also am a part and member, a participant and co-partner in all the blessings it possesses. I was brought into it by the Holy Spirit and incorporated into it through the fact that I have heard and still hear God's Word, which is the beginning point for entering it. Before we had come into this community, we were entirely of the devil, knowing nothing of God and of Christ. The Holy Spirit will remain with the holy community or Christian people until the Last Day. Through it he gathers us, using it to teach and preach the Word. By it he creates and increases holiness, causing it daily to grow and become strong in the faith and in its fruits, which the Spirit produces. Further we believe that in this Christian community we have the forgiveness of sins, which takes place through the holy sacraments and absolution as well as through all the comforting words of the entire gospel. This encompasses everything that is to be preached about the sacraments and, in short, the entire gospel and all the official responsibilities of the Christian community. ...everything in this Christian community is so ordered that everyone may daily obtain full forgiveness of sins through the Word and signs appointed to comfort and encourage our consciences as long as we live on earth. Although we have sin, the Holy Spirit sees to it that it does not harm us because we are a part of this Christian community. Here there is full forgiveness of sins, both in that God forgives us and that we forgive, bear with, and aid one another. ...the Holy Spirit continues his work without ceasing until the Last Day, and for this purpose he has appointed a community on earth, through which he speaks and does all his work. For he has not yet gathered together all of this Christian community, nor has he completed the granting of forgiveness. Therefore we believe in him who daily brings us into this community through the Word, and imparts, increases, and strengthens faith through the same Word and the forgiveness of sins. (LC II:40,42-43,45,51-55,61-62, K/W pp. 436-39)

...we reject and condemn it when the Schwenckfelders teach: ... That the church's ministry – the Word as it is proclaimed and heard – is not 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. ... That a minister of the church who is not personally truly renewed, righteous, and godly cannot effectively teach other people or distribute a proper, true sacrament to them. (FC SD XII:28,30,35, K/W pp. 658-59)

TESTIMONIES FROM THE WRITINGS OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGIANS:

And I will give you the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you bind on earth will also be bound in heaven and whatever you will free on earth shall also be freed in heaven [Matt. 16:19]. As I advised above to retain the simple meaning of the text, so do the same thing here. The keys ARE given to the one who stands upon this rock through faith. He is given it by the Father. Now we cannot point to any individual person whom we can know is standing upon this rock. One falls from it today, the other tomorrow, as St. Peter had fallen. Therefore no one can be specified to whom the keys belong except the churches (*Kirchen*) or the congregations (*Gemeine*), that is, all those who stand upon the rock. The Christian church alone has the keys and no one else, although the bishops and the pope can use them under the authority of the congregations (*Gemeine*). A pastor carries out the Office of the Keys, baptizes, preaches, distributes the Sacrament and performs other offices. By this he serves the congregation, not by his own personal authority, but by that of the congregation. He is a servant of the entire congregation which is given the Keys, even if he is a hypocrite. For he thus acts in the place of the congregation, so that the church does it. If the church does it, God does it. So the congregation must have a servant. If the whole congregation would want to baptize the child and their thousands of hands be applied, it would not be good. That is why they must have a servant who carries it out on behalf of the congregation. Now the key to bind and to loose is the authority to teach and not only to absolve. For 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. Yet it chiefly involves preaching. For where there is preaching, whoever believes is saved. That is called opening the door. But whoever does not believe is damned. That is closing the door. The binding of sin then remains upon these unbelievers. 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. Saint Peter had used the keys in the Acts of the Apostles [2:41] when he turned three thousand people with his preaching unto repentance. So we Christians also all have the authority to bind and to loose. (Martin Luther, "The Feast of Saints Peter and Paul," *Festival Sermons of Martin Luther* [The Church Postils] [Dearborn, Michigan: Mark V Publications, 2005], Summer Section, pp. 94-95) (*An alternate translation [by John Theodore Mueller] of a portion of Luther's statement can be found as follows in C. F. W. Walther, Church and Ministry* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987], p. 276: "The keys to bind and loose are the power to teach, not merely to absolve; for the keys pertain to everything by which I may help my neighbor: to the comfort that one can give to another; to public and private confession, absolution, and whatever else there may be. But above all they pertain to preaching. To preach 'He who believes will be saved' means to open heaven, and to preach 'He who does not believe will be condemned' means to close heaven. The binding rests on this: When I preach, 'You belong to the devil wherever you may stand or go,' heaven is closed to such a one. But if he should fall down and confess his sin and I say, 'Believe in Christ; then your sins are forgiven,' that means to open heaven. Thus Peter used the keys when, as reported in Acts, he converted three thousand persons in his sermon (Acts 2:41). So all of us Christians have the power to bind and to loose.")

The Gospel continues: "Receive ye the Holy Spirit: Whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained" [John 20, 22-23]. This power is here given to all Christians, although some have appropriated it to themselves alone, like the pope, bishops, priests and monks have done: they declare publicly and arrogantly that this power was given to them alone and not to the laity. But Christ here speaks neither of priests nor of monks, but says: "Receive ye the Holy Spirit." Whoever has the Holy Spirit, power is given to him, that is, to every one that is a Christian. But who is a Christian? He that believes. Whoever believes has the Holy Spirit. Therefore every Christian has the power, which the pope, bishops, priests and monks have in this case, to forgive sins or to retain them. Do I hear then, that I can institute confession, baptize, preach and administer the Lord's supper? No. St. Paul says in I Cor 14, 40: "Let all things be done decently and in order." If everybody wished to hear confession, baptize and

administer the Lord's supper, what order would there be? Likewise, if everybody wished to preach, who would hear? If we all preached at the same time, what a confused babble it would be, like the noise of frogs! Therefore the following order is to be observed: the congregation shall elect one, who is qualified, and he shall administer the Lord's supper, preach, hear confession and baptize. True, we all have this power; but no one shall presume to exercise it publicly, except the one who has been elected by the congregation to do so. But in private I may freely exercise it. For instance, if my neighbor comes and says: Friend, I am burdened in my conscience; speak the absolution to me; then I am free to do so, but I say it must be done privately. (Martin Luther, "Sermon for the Sunday after Easter" [Second Sermon] [1522], *Complete Sermons of Martin Luther* [Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2000], Vol. 1.2, pp. 375-76)

For no one can deny that every Christian possesses the word of God and is taught and anointed by God to be priest, as Christ says, John 6[:45], "They shall all be taught by God," and Psalm 45[:7], "God has anointed you with the oil of gladness on account of your fellows." These fellows are the Christians, Christ's brethren, who with him are consecrated priests, as Peter says too, 1 Peter 2[:9], "You are a royal priesthood so that you may declare the virtue of him who called you into his marvelous light." But if it is true that they have God's word and are anointed by him, then it is their duty to confess, to teach, and to spread [his word], as Paul says, 1 Corinthians 4 [II Cor. 4:13], "Since we have the same spirit of faith, so we speak," and the prophet says in Psalm 116[:10], "I came to believe, therefore I speak." And in Psalm 51[:13], he [God] says of all Christians, "I will teach the ungodly your ways, and sinners will return to you." Here again it is certain that a Christian not only has the right and power to teach God's word but has the duty to do so on pain of losing his soul and of God's disfavor.

If you say, "How can this be? If he is not called to do so he may indeed not preach, as you yourself have frequently taught," I answer that here you should put the Christian into two places. First, if he is in a place where there are no Christians he needs no other call than to be a Christian, called and anointed by God from within. Here it is his duty to preach and to teach the gospel to erring heathen or non-Christians, because of the duty of brotherly love, even though no man calls him to do so. This is what Stephen did, Acts 6-7, even though he had not been ordered into any office by the apostles. Yet he still preached and did great signs among the people. Again, Philip, the deacon and Stephen's comrade, Acts 8[:5], did the same thing even though the office of preaching was not commanded to him either. Again, Apollos did so too, Acts 18[:25]. In such a case a Christian looks with brotherly love at the need of the poor and perishing souls and does not wait until he is given a command or letter from a prince or bishop. For need breaks all laws and has none. Thus it is the duty of love to help if there is no one else who could or should help. Second, if he is at a place where there are Christians who have the same power and right as he, he should not draw attention to himself. Instead, he should let himself be called and chosen to preach and to teach in the place of and by the command of the others. Indeed, a Christian has so much power that he may and even should make an appearance and teach among Christians – without a call from men – when he becomes aware that there is a lack of teachers, provided he does it in a decent and becoming manner. This was clearly described by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 14[:30], when he says, "If something is revealed to someone else sitting by, let the first be silent." Do you see what St. Paul does here? He tells the teacher to be silent and withdraw from the midst of the Christians; and he lets the listener appear, even without a call. All this is done because need knows no command. If then St. Paul says here that anyone from the midst of the Christians may come forward if there is a need and calls him through such a word of God, and tells the other to withdraw and deposes him by the power of his word, how much more right does a whole congregation have to call someone into this office when there is a need, as there always is, especially now! For in the same passage St. Paul gives every Christian the power to teach among Christians if there is a need, saying, "You can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be admonished" [1 Cor. 14:31]. Again, "You should earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues; but all things should be done decently and in order" [1 Cor. 14:39-40]. Let this passage be your sure foundation, because it gives such an overwhelming power to the Christian congregation to preach, to permit preaching, and to call. Especially if there is a need, it [this passage] calls everyone with a special call – without a call from men – so that we should have no doubt that the congregation which has the gospel may and should elect and call from among its members someone to teach the word in its place.

But if you say, "Did not St. Paul command Timothy and Titus to institute priests? [I Tim. 4:13; Titus 1:5], and do we not read, Acts 14[:23], that Paul and Barnabas instituted priests among the congregations? (Therefore, the congregation cannot call anyone, nor can anyone draw attention to himself and preach among Christians; rather, one must have permission and authorization from bishops, abbots, or other prelates who represent the apostles)" I answer

that if our bishops, abbots, etc., did represent the apostles, as they boast, one opinion would certainly be to let them do what Titus, Timothy, Paul, and Barnabas did when they instituted priests, etc. But since they represent the devil and are wolves who neither want to teach the gospel nor suffer it to be taught, they are as little concerned with instituting the office of preaching or pastoral care among Christians as the Turks or the Jews are. They should drive asses and lead dogs. Moreover, if they were really decent bishops who wanted to have the gospel and wanted to institute decent preachers, they still could not and should not do so without the will, the election, and the call of the congregation – except in those cases where need made it necessary so that souls would not perish for lack of the divine word. For in such a need, as you have heard, not only may anyone procure a preacher, be it through pleas or the power of worldly authority, but he should also hurry to the scene himself and make an appearance and teach if he can – for need is need and has no limits – just as everyone should hurry to the scene of a fire in town and not wait until asked to come. Otherwise, if there is no such need and if there are those who have the right, power, and grace to teach, no bishop should institute anyone without the election, will, and call of the congregation. Rather, he should confirm the one whom the congregation chose and called; if he does not do it, he [the elected man] is confirmed anyway by virtue of the congregation's call. Neither Titus nor Timothy nor Paul ever instituted a priest without the congregation's election and call. This is clearly proven by the sayings in Titus 1[:7] and 1 Timothy 3[:10], "A bishop or priest should be blameless," and, "Let the deacon be tested first." Now Titus could not have known which ones were blameless; such a report must come from the congregation, which must name the man. Again, we even read in Acts 4 [6:1-6] regarding an even lesser office, that the apostles were not permitted to institute persons as deacons without the knowledge and consent of the congregation. Rather, the congregation elected and called the seven deacons, and the apostles confirmed them. If, then, the apostles were not permitted to institute, on their own authority, an office having to do only with the distribution of temporal food, how could they have dared to impose the highest office of preaching on anyone by their own power without the knowledge, will, and call of the congregation? (Martin Luther, "That a Christian Assembly or Congregation has the Right and 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. 309-12)

Here [in Matt. 18:20] 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]. He does not say: "I will see it. I will hear it," or "I will come to you," but "I am there already." (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* [Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008], pp. 277-78)

Has the office to forgive and retain sins been entrusted only to the apostles? These happened to be present with a few others when Christ spoke the words (John 20:30). But this office has not been bound to their persons; it belongs to the whole church. Christ says: "If he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth," etc. (Matt. 18:17-18). ... Although every believer may privately forgive another his sins when he explains to him the Gospel, ...nevertheless for the public assembly of the church the Holy Spirit has established His order so that nothing may be done improperly and dishonorably. Therefore, it is not permitted that a woman should speak in the church, or even a man, unless he has been called. But the church has its

ministers [*Diener*], to whom the public preaching of the Gospel, that is, the forgiving and retaining of sins, has been entrusted. According to Acts, Paul told the elders of the congregation at Ephesus: "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God" (Acts 20:28). From this and other passages of Holy Scripture it is obvious that the office to forgive and retain sins, which is the office to preach the Gospel, has indeed been given to the whole church, but it has been so regulated that the church should be edified and not be confused. (Johannes Brenz, Commentary on John 20; quoted in C. F. W. Walther, *Church and Ministry* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987], p. 280)

In Matt. 18:17-18 the Lord Christ entrusts the supreme jurisdiction and power in matters of the church not to the secular government but to His congregation. Among these matters the most important are the election and calling of ministers and the right to judge doctrine and to depose unfaithful pastors. He says expressly that whoever does not want to hear the church shall be regarded as an excommunicated heathen and a tax collector. This is to be understood in the sense not only that the church has the power to excommunicate impenitent sinners but also that the congregation has the supreme authority in all church matters such as reproof, church discipline, divisions, judging doctrine, and appointing pastors, to mention only these things. (Tilemann Heshusius, *Concerning Calling and Deposing Ministers* [Giessen, 1608], pp. 50-51; quoted in C. F. W. Walther, *Church and Ministry* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987], p. 343)

...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. (Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part II [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978], pp. 96-97)

...for children who stand in danger, who are weak after birth, a woman is allowed to baptize in such an emergency. ... In the same way, 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 [*Ecclesiae Ministris*] 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? [*quid enim praedicatio Euangelii, & annunciatio promissionis gratiae Dei in Christo exhibitae, aliud est quam absolutio a peccatis*]). ... So in a similar way, in time of emergency, when a church servant [*Ecclesiarum Ministris*] or other man is not present, a woman is allowed to baptize. ... He [Paul] does not simply say: A woman may not teach; but adds: *in the church*; that is, in the public gathering... [*Ideo non simpliciter dicit: Mulier non doceat: sed addit, IN ECCLESIA, hoc est, in coetu publico...*] [cf. 1 Cor. 14:35]. (Jacob Andreae, *Acta colloquii Montis Bellisgartensis*; quoted in Mark D. Tranvik, "Jacob Andreae's Defense of the Lutheran Doctrine of Baptism at Montbeliard," *Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. VI [new series], No. 4 [Winter 1992], pp. 431-32, 436)

Because a Christian's place is in the pulpit, 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. Similarly, with my sinful hand I baptize an infant in the name [of the Trinity,] etc. With these words, the child is set free from death, sin, and the devil. Likewise, when I administer the Sacrament (to you and say), "This is My body," etc. Likewise, again, when I ordain a priest and say, "You shall be a priest," etc. That is right, and the devil cannot prevent it, for we have Christ, the Word, and the Gospel. ... 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. ...He wants to bestow Himself and His power [on human beings]. Such is the glory of Christians, if we believe. We condemn the devil by virtue of our spiritual authority... (Martin Luther, "Sermon for the First Sunday after Epiphany" [1544], *Luther's Works*, Vol. 58 [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2010], pp. 74-75)

I am not speaking only of those who are ministers but of all Christians. They are able, in case of need or peril of death, to lift up one another. If you hear from me, "Your sins are remitted you," then you hear that God wills to be gracious, to justify you and save you from sin and death, so that you may be righteous and live. ... In order that you and I may be certain, it must be definitely said and established that it is not the pastor who absolves me, not the preacher who commands me to believe, but God who speaks through him. Therefore, I am certain without having to pay a penny to believe it. For the Lord says, "I send you, and with the same mission with which the Father sent Me" [cf. John 20:21]. That is the point on which it hinges, when I hear that the pastor, or my neighbor in case of need, sees my anguish and terror because of sin and says, "Brother, you are afflicted with despair," etc. [For] the Lord has committed [*befohlen*] a public office to called ministers (and to everyone privately) by which one should comfort another and assure him that it is by this means that the kingdom advances against sin and death; then he is lifted up and receives consolation against sin and death amid temptation, because he lays hold of the word of Christ, "As the Father has sent Me" [John 20:21]. (Martin Luther, "Sermon for the First Sunday after Easter, John 20:19-29" [1540], *Luther's Works*, Vol. 69 [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009], p. 431)

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 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. (Ulrik Vilhelm Koren, "The Right Principles of Church Government," in *Faith of Our Fathers* [Mankato, Minnesota: Lutheran Synod Book Company, 1953], pp. 117-19, 123-24, 126-27)

...Christians are a priesthood to whom all instructions for the maintenance and spread of Christianity are given, and to this end the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed to them, that their work may be effectual for the accomplishment of the Lord's gracious purpose. All the rights and duties of the children of God by faith are theirs. Therefore when they assemble for worship and work, theirs is the duty and the privilege – since not all can perform the requisite public functions without creating confusion that would defeat their object – to elect some one to act in behalf of them all in conducting the worship and administering the means of grace. To him is thus committed the public office of the ministry of the church, and whoever presumes to usurp this ecclesiastical office, without being thus rightly called, sins at once against the divine institution and the rights of the Christian people. The members of the congregation thus calling a minister to perform the public functions necessary in their corporate capacity do not abdicate or forfeit the gifts and privileges which they possess as kings and priests, to whom the Lord has intrusted the means of grace and thus the keys of the kingdom of heaven. They retain all their rights and powers, in virtue of which they call a minister for the public discharge of the duties which these involve. They have signed away nothing when they have elected a pastor. They never had the right to infringe upon the equal rights of others, and never were appointed to the ecclesiastical office. When the work of the congregation is to be done, according to the Lord's direction they appoint some one to do it in their behalf, because it is impossible for each individually to discharge the duty directly in his own person. But the work which is thus done according to the Christian people's call is their work, for the public performance of which they have made the minister their agent. For the right conduct of such ecclesiastical office they hold him responsible to the church, whose representative they have called him to be; and as the work which they have called him to do is that which the Lord has primarily and immediately consigned to them and for which He has given the necessary instructions, He holds them responsible to Him for its performance according to His revealed will. He is thus at once the minister of Christ and of His Church. As the congregation is thus responsible for the discharge of the public office according to the Lord's will, it is manifest why the Church must insist that no one should publicly in the church preach or administer the Sacraments unless he be rightly called. (Matthias Loy, *The Augsburg Confession* [Columbus, Ohio: Lutheran Book Concern, 1908], pp. 777-78)

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. (Hermann Sasse, “Ministry and Congregation,” *We Confess the Church* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986], p. 78)

...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. (Hermann Sasse, “Church Government and Secular Authority,” *The Lonely Way*, Vol. I [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2001], p. 223)

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 co-ordinates 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. (Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966], pp. 323-24) (*An excerpt from the portion of Luther’s treatise “On the Councils and the Church” to which Althaus refers can be found in section 13 below.*)

...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 makes the church the church is contained in the “Word”: the *preaching* of the gospel, its visible and tangible form in the *sacrament*, and the *Holy Spirit* by the gospel, whose office is to sanctify. The Holy Spirit who is given in the Word

is the one who makes a human being into a Christian and makes a gathering of Christians into the church. For this reason, where the Word of God is, there the church is. 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. The Word even caused the creation; it also caused the new creation, the communion of saints. The Word is thus never the possession of the church or in any way built into the church or arranged on the basis of the church; instead, it is the *foundation* of the church. (Oswald Bayer, *Martin Luther’s Theology* [Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008], pp. 257-58)

6. The right and duty of every Christian to confess and speak God’s Word

TESTIMONIES FROM THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS:

Even if their knowledge of the catechism were perfect (although that is impossible in this life), yet 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. ... God solemnly enjoins us in Deuteronomy 6[:7-8] that we should meditate on his precepts while sitting, walking, standing, lying down, and rising, and should keep them as an ever-present emblem and sign before our eyes and on our hands. God certainly does not require and command this so solemnly without reason. He knows our danger and need; he knows the constant and furious attacks and assaults of the devil. Therefore, he wishes to warn, equip, and protect us against them with good “armor” against their “flaming arrows” [Ephesians 6:11,16], and with a good antidote against their evil infection and poison. ... This much is certain: those who know the Ten Commandments perfectly know the entire Scriptures and in all affairs and circumstances are able to counsel, help, comfort, judge, and make decisions in both spiritual and temporal matters. They are qualified to be a judge over all doctrines, walks of life, spirits, legal matters, and everything else in the world. ... Therefore, I appeal once more to all Christians, especially the pastors [parish rectors] and preachers, that they not try to become doctors too soon and imagine that they know everything. ... 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. Let them never stop until they have proved by experience and are certain that they have taught the devil to death and have become more learned than God himself and all his saints. If they show such diligence, then I promise them – and their experience will bear me out – that they will gain much fruit and God will make excellent people out of them. (LC Longer Preface: 9-10,14,17,19-20, K/W pp. 381-83)

...we are absolutely forbidden to speak evil of our neighbor. Exception is made, however, of civil magistrates, preachers, and fathers and mothers in order that we may interpret this [eighth] commandment in such a way that evil does not go unpunished. We have seen that the Fifth Commandment forbids us to injure anyone physically, and yet an exception is made of the hangman. By virtue of his office he does not do his neighbor good but only harm and evil, yet he does

not sin against God's commandment because God of his own accord instituted that office, and, as he warns in the First Commandment, he has reserved to himself the right of punishment. Likewise, although no one personally has the right to judge and condemn anyone, yet if they are commanded to do so and fail to do it, they sin as much as those who take the law into their own hands apart from any office. In that case necessity requires one to report evil, to prefer charges, to give evidence, to examine witnesses, and to testify. It is no different than when a physician, in order to cure a patient, is sometimes compelled to examine and touch the patient's private parts. Just so, 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. (LC I:274-76,278-80, K/W pp. 422-23) (*When the text here quoted says that "We have seen that the Fifth Commandment forbids us to injure anyone physically, and yet an exception is made of the hangman," it is referring to the observation that had been made regarding the Fifth Commandment, 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" [LC I:180-81, K/W p. 410].*)

It is especially necessary for the most eminent members of the church, the kings and princes, to attend to the church and take care that errors are removed and consciences restored to health, just as God expressly exhorts them: "Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth" [Ps. 2:10]. The first concern of kings should be to promote the glory of God. It would, therefore, be most shameful for them to use their authority and power to encourage idolatry and countless other disgraceful acts and to slaughter the saints. Even if the pope held councils [synods], how can the church be restored to health if the pope permits nothing to be decreed against his will, if he grants no one the right to express an opinion – except his minions, whom he has bound by terrible oaths and curses to defend his tyranny and ungodliness, the Word of God notwithstanding? Since, however, judgments of the councils [synods] are judgments of the church, not of the pontiffs, 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. And as other Christians are obliged to censure the rest of the pope's errors, so must they rebuke him when he avoids and obstructs the church's inquiry and true judgment. (Tr 54-56, K/W p. 339)

TESTIMONIES FROM THE WRITINGS OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGIANS:

Now follows the office of the ministry. ... For it does not yet suffice that I have the Lord so that he is mine, and that I find in him all comfort, peace and joy; but I must henceforth also do as he has done: for it follows thus in the text: "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you" [John 20, 21]. The first and highest work of love a Christian ought to do when he has become a believer, is to bring others also to believe in the way he himself came to believe. And here you notice Christ begins and institutes the office of the ministry of the external Word in every Christian; for he himself came with this office and the external Word. Let us lay hold of this, for we must admit it was spoken to us. In this way the Lord desires to say: You have now received enough from me, peace and joy, and all you should have; for your person you need nothing more. Therefore labor now and follow my example, as I have done, so do ye. My Father sent me into the world only for your sake, that I might serve you, not for my own benefit. I have finished the work, have died for you, and given you all that I am and have; remember and do ye also likewise, that henceforth ye may only serve and help everybody, otherwise ye would have nothing to do on earth. For by faith ye have enough of everything. Hence I send

you into the world as my Father hath sent me; namely, that every Christian should instruct and teach his neighbor, that he may also come to Christ. By this, no power is delegated exclusively to popes and bishops, but all Christians are commanded to profess their faith publicly and also to lead others to believe. ... Furthermore Christ now gives a command, he breathes upon the disciples and says: "Receive ye the Holy Spirit: whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained" [John 20, 22-23]. This is a great and mighty power which no one can sufficiently extol, given to mortal men of flesh and blood over sin, death and hell, and over all things. ...Christ...gives spiritual power and rule, and wishes to say this much: When ye speak a word concerning a sinner, it shall be spoken in heaven, and shall avail so much as if God himself spake it in heaven; for he is in your mouth, therefore it has the same force as if he himself spoke it. Now it is always true, if Christ speaks a word, since he is Lord over sin and hell, and says to you: Thy sins are forgiven; then they must be forgiven and nothing can prevent it. Again, if he says: Thy sins shall not be forgiven thee; then they remain unforgiven, so that neither you, nor an angel, nor a saint, nor any creature, can forgive your sin, even if you martyred yourself to death. This same power belongs to every Christian, since Christ has made us all partakers of his power and dominion; and here his is not a civil but a spiritual rule, and his Christians also rule spiritually. ... God has given us the Word and the authority to speak... Therefore Christ's meaning is: Ye shall have the power to speak the Word, and to preach the Gospel, saying, Whosoever believeth, has the remission of his sins; but whosoever believeth not, has no remission of sin. (Martin Luther, "Sermon for the Sunday after Easter" [First Sermon], *Complete Sermons of Martin Luther* [Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2000], Vol. 1.2, pp. 358-60, 362)

But this office of the keys belongs to all of us who are Christians... For the word of Christ in Matt. 18[:15] is addressed not only to the Apostles, but, certainly, to all the brethren: "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault... If he listens to you, you have gained your brother." And, further on, "If he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. 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" [Matt. 18:17,18]. We need pay no attention to the bogey man of these masqueraders [the papists] when they distinguish between the power of the keys and the use of the keys, a distinction based on no Scripture but on their own recklessness alone. As usual they beg the question. For when it is incumbent on them to show that they have a power different from that given the whole church, they rush on as if this were already demonstrated, and then go on to this fictitious distinction that the power of the keys belongs to the church, their use, however, to the bishops. This is trifling, and the argument has nothing to support it. 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"? The pope? 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." Who are those addressed? Are they not all Christians? Is it not the church? If here the giving of the keys to the church means not the use but only the authority, we would by the same source claim that its use has never been given to anyone, even to Peter (Matt. 16[:19]). For clearly the words of Christ are everywhere the same when he bestows the office of binding and loosing. If in one place or with reference to one person they signify a conferring of authority, they signify a conferring of authority everywhere. If they signify the conferring of the use in one place, they signify the conferring of the use everywhere. For the words of God are everywhere the same and we are not permitted to give them one meaning in one place and another meaning elsewhere, though these masks [the papists] make bold to ridicule the mysteries of God with their fictions. So the lies of men are of no avail. 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," and "Whatever you," etc. And the words which were spoken alone to Peter, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven," 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. Were this not true we would be denying to Christ himself the right and use of the keys as he dwells among even a couple of his disciples. (Martin Luther, "Concerning the Ministry," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 40 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958], pp. 26-27)

But for the absolution to be right and efficacious, it must spring from the command of Christ, which is as follows: I declare thee free from all thy sins, not in my own name, nor in the name of any saint, nor for the sake of any human merit, but in the name of Christ and by the authority of his command, who has commissioned me to say to you that all your sins are forgiven, hence, not I but he himself by his own mouth forgives thee thy sins, and thou art under obligation to receive this and believe it firmly, not as the word of man, but as if thou hadst heard it from the lips of the Lord Christ himself. Therefore, although this power to forgive sins belongs to God only, we should nevertheless know that he exercises and imparts this power through this external office, to which Christ has called his apostles, and commands them to proclaim in his name forgiveness of sins to all who desire it. Sins are forgiven, therefore, not by human will and power, but by the command of Christ, for this purpose he then also sends the Holy Spirit, namely, in order to forgive sins. God...has placed the forgiveness of sins in the public office and the Word, in order that we may continually have it with us, upon our lips and in our hearts. There we shall find absolution and forgiveness, and we know that where we hear this message proclaimed to us by the command of Christ we are bound to believe it as if it were announced to us by Christ himself. Behold, such is the authority given through this office of the apostles to the church which extends farther and higher than all the authority upon earth, that without it no one, and it matters not how great and mighty he may be, shall come nor can come to God, nor have the comfort of conscience, nor be free from God's wrath and eternal death. ...Jesus Christ...does not say: ye shall forgive sins on your own account, but: "I send you, as my Father hath sent me." I myself do not do this of my own choice or counsel, but I am sent by the Father. This same commandment I give to you unto the end of the world, that both ye and all the world shall know that such forgiveness or retaining of sin is not done by human power or might, but by the command of him who is sending you.

This is not said alone to the ministers or the servants of the church, but also to every Christian. Here each may serve another in the hour of death, or wherever there is need, and give him absolution. If you now hear from me the words, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," then you hear that God wants to be gracious to you, deliver you from sin and death, and make you righteous and blessed. Yea, you say, thou hast indeed given me absolution, but who knows whether it is certain and true with God that my sins are forgiven? Answer: If I have done this and said this as a man, then thou mayest well say: I do not know whether thy absolution is effective and efficacious or not, but that thou mayest be sure concerning this, thou must be instructed in the Word of God, that thou canst say, I have been absolved neither by the minister nor by any other man; for thus the minister has not taught me to believe: but God has spoken and done it through him; of this I am sure, for my Lord Christ has commanded and said: As my Father hath sent me, so also send I you. Here he indeed puts those to whom he gives the command on an equality with himself, because they are sent by him to accomplish that for which he is sent by God, namely, to remit and retain sins. There it rests and that does it, otherwise, without such a command, absolution would amount to nothing.

If thou, therefore, art sad and worried on account of thy sins, and art afraid of death, with which God eternally punishes sin, and thou hearest of thy minister, or if thou canst not have access to him, of a Christian neighbor comforting thee with these or similar words: Dear brother or sister, I see that thou art timid and in despair, and fearest the wrath and judgment of God on account of thy sins, of which thou art conscious, and on whose account thou art terrified – listen to me and let me announce to you, Be of good comfort and cheer, for Christ thy Lord and Savior, who came into the world for the sake of sinners in order to save them, has given the command through the public office to his called servants, and wherever necessary, to every one in particular, that one is to comfort another for Christ's sake, and in his name acquit him of his sins. I say, when thou therefore hearest this comfort, then receive it with joy and thanksgiving, as if thou didst hear it from Christ himself; then thy heart shall indeed be at peace, established and comforted, and thou canst then joyfully say: I have heard a man speak to me and comfort me; for the sake of himself I did not believe a single word, but I believe my Lord Christ, who has established this kingdom of Grace and forgiveness of sins, and has given this commandment and authority unto men to remit and retain sins in his name.

Therefore every Christian when the devil attacks him and suggests that he is a great sinner, and he must be lost and condemned etc., should not long contend with him or remain alone, but go or call to him his minister, or any other good friend, lay his difficulty before him, and seek counsel and comfort from him, and remain firm in that which Christ here declares: "Whose soever sins ye remit etc.," and as he says in another place: "Where two or more are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" [Matt. 18, 20], and whatever this person says to him in the name of Christ from the Scriptures, let him believe it, for according to his faith it shall be done unto him. For two or more come together in the name of Christ when they converse with one another, not on temporal things, how money and riches may be acquired or gained; but on what would be of service for the salvation and happiness of their souls;

as for instance, when thou art in the confessional or anywhere else art making known thy weaknesses and temptations, and he to whom thou art disclosing it sees that Moses through the law has thee in a dilemma; that thy sin is oppressing thee; that death is alarming and frightening thee, and thou groanest and complainest concerning thine own life, so that even words like these are apt to fall: Oh, that I had never been born, or, Oh, that God would prolong my life, I would amend my life, etc. If then thy pastor or anyone else begins to comfort thee, not in a worldly way nor for the sake of money, but because he sees thou art in anxiety and fear of sin and death, and says to thee, Let everything go that is upon earth – money, goods, everything that pertains to man, and pay now attention to this; thy heart is indeed in great pangs and asks: Can I be freed from my suffering, misery, and evil conscience? How can I escape Moses with his fearful threats? I say, listen to him when he speaks to thee in this manner: I say to thee in the name of the Lord Christ, who died for thy sins, that thou art to permit thyself to be comforted, to believe and be sure that thy sins are forgiven, and that death cannot harm thee.

Yea, my dear brother, you say, how wilt thou prove that this is true? Answer: Christ our Lord said to his disciples and to entire Christendom: I command and bid you, that ye shall forgive and retain sin. Whatever ye do then in this, ye do not of yourselves; but because ye are doing it at my command and bidding, therefore I do it myself. Therefore thy minister or pastor as the one who cares for thy soul (*Seelsorger*), or any Christian in such a case is called for and sent to comfort thee. And because he is seeking only the salvation of thy soul, thou art, therefore, bound to believe him as though Christ were standing there himself and would lay his hand upon thee and speak the absolution. (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. 391-95)

Now, however, the papists quote to us the saying of Paul (I Cor. 14[:34]): "The women should keep silence in the church; it is not becoming for a woman to preach. A woman is not permitted to preach, but she should be subordinate and obedient." They argue from this that preaching cannot be common to all Christians because women are excluded. My answer to this is that one also does not permit the dumb to preach, or those who are otherwise handicapped or incompetent. 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. How could Paul otherwise have singlehandedly resisted the Holy Spirit, who promised in Joel [2:28]: "And your daughters shall prophesy." Moreover, we read in Acts 4 [21:8-9]: "Philip had four unmarried daughters, who all prophesied." "And Miriam the sister of Moses was also a prophetess" [Exod. 15:20]. And Huldah the prophetess gave advice to pious King Josiah [II Kings 22:14-20], and Deborah did the same to Duke Barak [Judg. 4:4-7]; and finally, the song of the Virgin Mary [Luke 1:46-55] is praised throughout the world. Paul himself in I Cor. 11[:5] instructs the women to pray and prophesy with covered heads. 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. For this reason we are firmly convinced on the basis of the Holy Scriptures that there is not more than one office of preaching God's Word, and that this office is common to all Christians; so that each person may speak, preach, and judge, and all the rest are obliged to listen. (Martin Luther, "The Misuse of the Mass," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 36 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959], pp. 151-52)

These portions...were called by the ancient fathers the catechism, that is, an instruction for children, which the children and all who want to be Christians should know. And one who does not know them should not be counted among the number of Christians. For when a person does not know this, it is a sign that he has no regard for God and Christ. Therefore I have admonished you adults to hold your children and servants and yourselves to this; otherwise we shall

not admit you to holy communion. For if you parents and masters do not help, we shall accomplish little with our preaching, and if I preach all year long and the crowd only comes in and looks at the walls and windows of the church, it is of no use. A person who wants to be a good citizen owes it to his family to urge them to learn these portions of the catechism, and if they will not, do not give them any bread to eat. If the servants grumble, then throw them out of the house. If you have children, train them to learn the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. If you urge them diligently to do this, they will learn much in a year's time. But when they have learned this, there are many excellent passages scattered throughout the Scriptures; these they should learn afterwards; if not all, at least some of them. God has appointed you a master and a wife in order that you should hold your family to this. And you can do this easily enough by praying in the morning when you rise, in the evening when you go to bed, and before and after meals. Thus they will be brought up in the fear of the Lord. I am not saying this for nothing; I am determined that you shall not cast it to the winds. I should never have believed that you were such ignorant people if I did not learn it every day. 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." Note that well – that they learn to fear God and not become like their fathers! ... We probably think that the Ten Commandments are there only to be preached from the pulpit, but they need rather to be applied to use. For God has commanded you to fear and trust him. So the young can be well brought up in the discipline of the Lord [Eph. 6:4]. For they must fear God if they are to cease from doing evil for his sake and [they must trust God if they are to do the good for his sake]. It is small wages when I give you three or four guildens, but God gives you a happy life here and, after that, eternal life. The fault lies with us householders. Necessity has forced us to engage teachers because the parents have not assumed this responsibility. But every master and mistress should remember that they are bishops and bishopesses for Gretel and Hans. (Martin Luther, "Ten Sermons on the Catechism," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 51 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959], pp. 137-38, 140)

It is sure that God does not make a practice of speaking in a miraculous way and by means of special revelations, particularly where there is a lawful ministry that He has established in order to speak with men through it, to teach them, instruct them, comfort them, rouse them, etc. In the first place, He has entrusted His Word to parents, as Moses often declares: "Tell your children these things." In the second place, He has given it to the teachers in the church, as Abraham says in Luke 16:29: "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." Where there is a ministry [*Predigtamt*], we should not wait for either an inward or an outward revelation. Otherwise all the orders of society would be confused. Let the clergyman teach in the church, let the civil officer govern the state, and let parents rule the home or the household. These human ministries were established by God. Therefore we must make use of them and not look for other revelations. Nevertheless, I do not deny that even after Methuselah's death Noah heard God speaking. God speaks with men in a twofold way: in the first place and ordinarily, through the public ministry, that is, through parents and the teachers of the church [*das Öffentliche Predigtamt, das ist durch die Eltern und Lehrer in der Kirch*]; in the second place, through inner revelation or through the Holy Spirit. This latter method, however, He is wont to employ only in special situations and very rarely. It is profitable to be aware of this, so that we may not emulate the fanatics, who disregard the Word and expect new revelations. (Martin Luther, "Lectures on Genesis," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 2 [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1960], pp. 82-83)

The voice of the Holy Spirit is heard through the voice of the preacher or the voices of the united congregation in confession, prayer and hymn (which are also different forms of preaching...). (Henry Eyster Jacobs, *A Summary of the Christian Faith* [Philadelphia: The United Lutheran Publication House, 1905], pp. 290-91)

True, we all have authority to preach, yea, we must preach God's name; we are commanded to do so. Peter says in his first Epistle, 2, 9-10: "But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: who in time past were no people, but now are the people of God: who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." Nevertheless, Paul establishes order in 1 Cor 14, 40 and says: "In whatever you do among yourselves, let everything be done decently

and in order.” In a family there must be order. If all the heirs strive for lordship, anarchy will reign in the family. If, however, by common consent, one of the number is selected for the heirship, the others withdrawing, harmony will obtain. Likewise, in the matter of preaching we must make selection that order may be preserved. But since all who are Christians have authority to preach, what will be the outcome? for women will also want to preach. Not so. St. Paul forbids women to put themselves forward as preachers in a congregation of men, and says: “They should be subject to their husbands.” For when a woman will not submit to being led and governed, the result will be anything but good. These are, however, the words of Paul in 1 Tim 2, 11-12: “Let a woman learn in quietness with all subjection. But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness.” If it happened, however, that no man could be secured for the office, then a woman might step up and preach to others as best she could; but in no other instance. (Martin Luther, “Sermon for Pentecost Tuesday,” *Complete Sermons of Martin Luther* [Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2000], Vol. 2.1, pp. 374-75)

*But all believers are called priests, Rv 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. (Martin Chemnitz, *Ministry, Word, and Sacraments* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981], p. 29)*

7. The Public Ministry of the Word: instituted and governed by God

TESTIMONIES FROM THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS:

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. It teaches that we have a gracious God, not through our merit but through Christ's merit, when we so believe. 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. ... It is also taught that at all times there must be and remain one holy, Christian church. It is the assembly of all believers among whom the gospel is purely preached and the holy sacraments are administered according to the gospel. For this is enough for the true unity of the Christian church that there the gospel is preached harmoniously according to a pure understanding and the sacraments are administered in conformity with the divine Word. It is not necessary for the true unity of the Christian church that uniform ceremonies, instituted by human beings, be observed everywhere. As Paul says in Ephesians 4[4-5]: “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism.” Likewise, although the Christian church is, properly speaking, nothing else than the assembly of all believers and saints, yet because in this life many false Christians, hypocrites, and even public sinners remain among the righteous, the sacraments – even though administered by unrighteous priests – are efficacious all the same. For as Christ himself indicates [Matt. 23:2-3]: “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat. ...” Condemned, therefore, are the Donatists and all others who hold a different view. (AC V, VII-VIII [German], K/W pp. 40,42)

Therefore, in his immeasurable goodness and mercy God provides for the public proclamation of his divine, eternal law and of the wondrous counsel of our redemption, the holy gospel of his eternal Son, our only Savior Jesus Christ, which alone can save. By means of this proclamation he gathers an everlasting church from humankind, and he effects in human hearts true repentance and knowledge of sin and true faith in the Son of God, Jesus Christ. God wants to call

human beings to eternal salvation, to draw them to himself, to convert them, to give them new birth, and to sanctify them through these means, and in no other way than through his holy Word (which people hear proclaimed or [which they] read) and through the sacraments (which they use according to his Word). 1 Corinthians 1[:21]: “Since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe.” Acts 11[:14]: “[Peter] will give you a message by which you and your entire household will be saved.” Romans 10[:17]: “So faith arises from the proclamation, and proclamation comes through God’s word.” John 17[:17,20]: “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. I ask on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word.” Therefore, the eternal Father calls from heaven regarding his dear Son and all who proclaim repentance and forgiveness of sins in his name, “Listen to him!” (Matt. 17[:5]). All who want to be saved should listen to this proclamation. For the proclamation and the hearing of God’s Word are the Holy Spirit’s tools, in, with, and through which he wills to work effectively and convert people to God and within whom he wants to effect both the desire for and the completion of their conversion. A person who has not yet been converted to God and been reborn can hear and read this Word externally, for in such external matters...people have a free will to a certain extent even after the fall, so that they may go to church and listen or not listen to the sermon. Through these means (the preaching and hearing of his Word), God goes about his work and breaks our hearts and draws people, so that they recognize their sins and God’s wrath through the preaching of the law and feel real terror, regret, and sorrow in their hearts. Through the preaching of the holy gospel of the gracious forgiveness of sins in Christ and through meditating upon it, a spark of faith is ignited in them, and they accept the forgiveness of sins for Christ’s sake and receive the comfort of the promise of the gospel. In this way the Holy Spirit, who effects all of this, is sent into their hearts. ... For the Spirit enlightens and converts hearts through the Word that is proclaimed and heard, so that people believe the Word and say yes to it. Therefore, neither the preacher nor the hearer should doubt this grace and activity of the Holy Spirit, but they should be certain that when the Word of God is preached purely and clearly according to God’s command and will and people listen to it seriously and diligently and meditate upon it, God will certainly be present with his grace... ..because the Holy Spirit’s activity is often hidden under the cover of great weakness, we should be certain, on the basis of and according to the promise, that the Word of God, when preached and heard, is a function [office] and work of the Holy Spirit, through which he is certainly present in our hearts and exercises his power there (2 Corinthians 2 [1 Cor. 2:11ff. or 2 Cor. 3:5-6]). However, if people do not want to hear or read the proclamation of God’s Word, but disdain it and the congregation of God’s people and then die and perish in their sins, they can neither find comfort in God’s eternal election nor obtain mercy. For Christ, in whom we are chosen, offers his grace to all people in the Word and in the holy sacraments, and he earnestly desires that people should hear it. He has promised that where “two or three are gathered” in his name and are occupied with his holy Word, he will be “there among them” [Matt. 18:20]. (FC SD II:50-57, K/W pp. 553-55)

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. One must, then, see Peter as representing the whole company of apostles in these sayings, which consequently do not attribute to him any special prerogative, preeminence, or lordship. Granted that it is said, “On this rock I will build my church” [Matt. 16:18], certainly the church is not built upon the authority of a human being but upon the ministry of that confession Peter made, in which he proclaimed Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God. For that reason Christ addresses him as a minister: “On this rock,” that is, on this ministry. Furthermore, 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]. That ministry is not valid because of the authority of any person but because of the Word handed down by Christ. (Tr 23-26, K/W p. 334)

The opponents do not consider the priesthood as a ministry of the Word and of the sacraments administered to others. Instead, they consider it as a sacrificial office... We teach that the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross was sufficient

for the sins of the entire world and that there is no need for additional sacrifices... Thus priests 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. We do not have another priesthood like the Levitical priesthood – as the Epistle to the Hebrews [chaps. 7-9] more than sufficiently teaches. But 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... (Ap XIII:7-13, K/W p. 220) (*Where the Latin version of this confession [quoted here] says that the church has the mandate to appoint “ministers,” the German version [included in the 1580 edition of the Book of Concord] says that the church has the mandate to appoint “preachers and deacons.” Lutheran “deacons” in the sixteenth century were public ministers of Word and Sacrament who served under the supervision of a [senior] pastor or parish rector.*)

It was also 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.). (AC XXVII:13 [German], K/W p. 82)

Concerning the Marriage of Priests: They [the papists] had neither the authority nor the right to forbid marriage and burden the divine estate of priests with perpetual celibacy. (SA III, XI:1, K/W p. 324)

...let us show from the gospel that the Roman bishop is not superior by divine right to other bishops and pastors. In Luke 22[:24-27] Christ expressly forbids lordship among the apostles, for the question of who would be in charge and become, as it were, the vicar of the absent Christ was the very thing about which they were arguing when Christ spoke of his passion. Christ rebuked the apostles for this error and taught that there would be neither lordship nor superiority among them but that the apostles would be sent as equals to carry out the ministry of the gospel in common. For that reason he said, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, but it is not so with you. Rather whoever wants to be great among you will be your servant.” The contrast here shows that lordship is rejected. ... According to John 20[:21], Christ commissions the apostles as equals, without distinction, when he says: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” He sends forth each one individually in the same way as he himself was sent, he says, and therefore he bestows upon no one any privilege or lordship over the rest. In Galatians 2[:2,6] Paul clearly asserts that he was neither ordained nor confirmed by Peter, nor does he acknowledge Peter as one from whom such confirmation had to be sought. He expressly argues that his call did not depend on the authority of Peter, yet he should have acknowledged Peter as his superior, if Peter were such by divine right. ...since Paul makes it clear that he had no desire to ask for Peter’s confirmation, ...he teaches that the authority of the ministry depends upon the Word of God, that Peter was not superior to other apostles, and that ordination or confirmation was not to be sought from Peter alone. In 1 Corinthians 3[:4-8,21-22] Paul regards all ministers as equals and teaches that the church is superior to its ministers. Thus he grants neither preeminence nor lordship over the church or the other ministers to Peter. For he says, “All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas” [1 Cor. 3:21-22], which is to say, neither Peter nor the other ministers may assume lordship or preeminence over the church or burden the church with traditions or allow the authority of any person to count for more than the Word. ... The Council of Nicea determined that the bishop of Alexandria would preside over the churches in the East and that the bishop of Rome would have charge of the “suburban” churches, that is, those in the Roman provinces in the West. Thus, in the beginning the authority of the Roman bishop grew out of a conciliar decision, that is, by human right, for if the Roman bishop had possessed his superiority by divine right, it would not have been proper for the council to withdraw any jurisdiction from him and to transfer it to the see of Alexandria. (Tr 7-12, K/W pp. 331-32) (*Where the Latin version of this confession [quoted here] says “that the authority of the ministry depends upon*

the Word of God, that Peter was not superior to other apostles, and that ordination or confirmation was not to be sought from Peter alone,” the German version [included in the 1580 edition of the Book of Concord] says “that the preaching office 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.”)

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. As a result, when the regular bishops become enemies of the gospel or are unwilling to ordain, the churches retain their right to do so. 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, just as 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. 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. ... All this evidence makes clear that the church retains the right to choose and ordain ministers. Consequently, when bishops either become heretical or are unwilling to ordain, the churches are compelled by divine right to ordain pastors and ministers for themselves in the presence of their pastors. (Tr 60-70,72, K/W pp. 340-41) (*When the text here quoted says that “The gospel bestows...”, this should be understood as the equivalent of “The New Testament revelation bestows...” 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” [Tr 7, K/W p. 331]. This is then followed by an exegetical discussion of several passages from the Gospels and Epistles [Tr 8-11, K/W pp. 331-32]. The “gospel” in its narrower meaning – the message of God’s grace in Christ – bestows the forgiveness of sins, and does not bestow “legal authority.” See also Ap IV:5, where “in the gospel” in the Latin version [K/W p. 121] becomes “in the New Testament” in the German version. And while the text here quoted says that the distinction between presbyters and bishops is by human right, it does **not** say that the distinction between presbyters/bishops and **deacons** is by human right. The deacons [and archdeacons] of the ancient church are not included here among those who “preside” over or in the churches.)*

...the keys only have the power to bind and loose on the earth according to [Matt. 18:18], "Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." As we said earlier, the keys do not have the power to impose penalties or to institute rites of worship but only have the command to remit the sins of those who are converted and to convict and excommunicate those who refuse to be converted. For just as "to loose" means to forgive sins, so also "to bind" means not to forgive sins. For Christ is talking of a spiritual kingdom. And God's mandate is that ministers of the gospel absolve those who are converted, according to [2 Cor. 10:8], "...our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up." (Ap XII:176-77, K/W p. 218)

TESTIMONIES FROM THE WRITINGS OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGIANS:

My advice is, restore freedom to everybody and leave every man free to marry or not to marry. But then there would have to be a very different kind of government and administration of church property; the whole canon law would have to be demolished; and few benefices would be allowed to get into Roman hands. I fear that greed is a cause of this wretched, unchaste celibacy. As a result, everyone has wanted to become a priest and everyone wants his son to study for the priesthood, not with the idea of living in chastity, for that could be done outside the priesthood. [Their idea is to] be supported in temporal things without work or worry, contrary to God's command in Genesis 3[:19] that "in the sweat of your face you shall eat your bread." The Romanists have colored this to mean that their labor is to pray and say mass. I am not referring here to popes, bishops, canons, and monks. God has not instituted these offices. ... I want to speak only of the ministry which God has instituted, the responsibility of which is to minister word and sacrament to a congregation, among whom they reside. Such ministers should be given liberty by a Christian council to marry to avoid temptation and sin. (Martin Luther, "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 44 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966], pp. 176-77)

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. [Titus 1:5-7] 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. Paul does not give the name "elder," however, to the tonsured and anointed idols [the papal bishops], but to the honest pious citizens in a city, men of good conduct and repute; they are to become bishops, and several of them in every city, as the Greek text clearly states here, and in Phil. 1[:1]: "Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with their bishops and deacons: grace and peace, etc." Philippi was a single city and had many bishops, whom Paul greets here. Similarly in Acts 20[:28] Paul sent a message to the single city of Ephesus and summoned the elders of the congregation to him, saying to them among other things: "Take heed to yourselves and to the people over whom the Holy Spirit has made you bishops, to feed his sheep, which he obtained with his blood." Now Ephesus was one city; and Paul calls the elders in their congregation bishops, and says that the Holy Spirit has appointed many of them. ... I implore you, Christian friend, for God's sake, do not let yourself be moved one whit by the golden crowns and pearl mitres, red hats and cloaks, gold, silver, precious stones, mules, horses and retinue, with all the glory, ornament and splendor of the popes, cardinals and bishops, those lost sheep; but believe Paul in the Holy Spirit: these are not bishops, but idols, puppets, camouflages and wonders of the wrath of God. You have heard that Paul's bishops are honorable married men, as many of them in a city as are needed to care for the people. These words [of St. Paul] are not words of the church, nor of the councils, nor of the fathers, ...but words of the Holy Spirit and of Jesus Christ, indeed, of the divine majesty. ... For this reason we recognize and assert on behalf of God the Holy Spirit that Christian bishops are honorable, married, mature, good men, learned in the word of truth [I Tim. 2:15], many in a single city, who are chosen by the neighboring bishops or by their own people. They might be the very ones whom we now call parish priests, and their chaplains and deacons, if only they were not – to please their superior idols – misusing the mass, being forced to keep silent concerning the gospel, and perishing in false vows of celibacy, till no episcopal function is left for them to carry out. This is a divine decision and the Holy Spirit's method and manner of appointing bishops, such as SS. Spiridion, Augustine, and Ambrose. (Martin Luther, "The Misuse of the Mass," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 36 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959], pp. 155-56, 158)

...the bishops who now rule over many territories are not Christian bishops according to divine order. They are bishops according to the order of the devil and of human abomination. ...St. Paul writes, Titus 1[:5-7], "Appoint an elder in every town, a blameless man, the husband of one wife. For a bishop must be blameless since he is God's steward." Here, I think, no one can deny that bishop and elder are one and the same for St. Paul, since he says Titus should appoint an elder in every town, a blameless man because a bishop must be blameless. He calls this same elder "bishop." Thus it is clear from this text that Paul means this man to be a bishop, a brave, old, and honest man who has a chaste wife and devout children. He should provide the church with preaching and sacraments. That is why he must be learned and completely blameless. ... Furthermore, I ask whether or not St. Paul's word and order are derived from God's word and order? I think that the pope himself...cannot deny that St. Paul's word is God's word and that his order is the order of the Holy Spirit. ... If, then, everything Paul says and institutes is God's word and the order of the Holy Spirit, we conclude, first, that everything contrary to his word and order is certainly contrary to God and the Holy Spirit. If it is contrary to God and his Spirit, it is certainly of the devil. ...it follows that all Christians must on pain of God's disfavor and for the salvation of their souls, keep God's word and order as taught and instituted by St. Paul. On the other hand, they must tear down and destroy and eradicate all of the devil's order, which is established contrary to God's word and order, even if they should lose body, life, property, honor, friends, and everything else. And if they cannot destroy it, they must still avoid it and flee from it as though it were the devil himself. (Martin Luther, "Against the Spiritual Estate of the Pope and the Bishops Falsely So Called," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 39 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970], pp. 276-77)

Now there is no doubt that the ministry of the Word and the sacraments...was instituted by the Son of God also in the New Testament. For the church has a command about calling and appointing ministers. And the promise is added: 1. God approves the ministry of those who have been called and set apart for the ministry by the voice of the church. Thus Paul says (Acts 20:28), of those who had been called mediately, that the Holy Spirit had made them guardians to feed the church of God. And in Eph. 4:11 it is written that the Son of God gave as gifts not only apostles but also pastors and teachers, who are called mediately. 2. The promise is added that God will give grace and gifts by which those who have been legitimately called will be able rightly, faithfully, and profitably to do and perform the tasks which belong to the ministry. John 20:22: "Receive the Holy Spirit." Likewise [Luke 24:45]: "Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures." Matt. 28:20: "Lo, I am with you always," etc. 1 Tim. 4:14: "Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophetic utterance when the...elders laid their hands upon you." 2 Tim 1:6: "Rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands." Luke 21:15: "I will give you a mouth and wisdom." Matt. 10:19-20: "What you are to say will be given to you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you." 3. This promise is also added, that God is present with the ministry, that by His blessing He gives the increase to its planting and watering, and that He is truly efficacious through the ministry to call, enlighten, convert, give repentance, faith, regeneration, renewal, and, in short, to dispense through the ministry everything that pertains to our salvation. Matt. 28:20: "Lo, I am with you always." John 20:22-23: "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any," etc. Matt. 16:19: "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven...and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." According to 2 Cor. 3:6 ff. it is a ministry not of the letter but of the Spirit, who gives life and takes away the veil from men's hearts that they may be converted and set free, so that "with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, they may be changed into His likeness." 2 Cor. 5:19-20: "He has entrusted to us the word of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us." 2 Cor. 13:3: "Are you seeking proof of Him who is speaking in me, namely Christ?" Eph. 4:8,11-14: "He gave gifts to men ... apostles, pastors, teachers, for the equipment of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of Christ, so that we may not be...driven hither and thither, and carried about with every wind of doctrine," etc. 1 Cor. 3:6: "God gave the growth." 1 Cor. 15:58: "In the Lord your labor is not in vain." Rom. 1:5,11,16: "He gave me grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith. ... That I may impart to you some spiritual gift. ... The Gospel is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith." 1 Tim. 4:16: "Attend to teaching, for by so doing you will save yourself and those who will hear you." 1 Cor. 4:15: "I became your father in Christ through the Gospel."

These very great and comforting promises concerning the ministry ought to be displayed, as it were, in a prominent place in the church, in order that the dignity of the ministry might be extolled against the fanatics, and that those to whom the ministry has been committed may go about their labors and bear their difficulties with greater eagerness, and that men may learn to use the ministry reverently. For without the preaching and hearing of the Word there is no faith, no calling on God, no salvation (Rom. 10:14). However, no one is able to preach in order that faith may

follow hearing unless he be sent (Rom. 10:15). Moreover, this also is certain, 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). Therefore the apostles with some public testimony and public attestation of the church announced and as it were pointed out the call of those who had been legitimately chosen for the ministry of the Word and the sacraments. For the Holy Spirit willed that also Paul, who had been called immediately, should be declared and designated as the one who should be the apostle of the Gentiles. In that public approbation, attestation, or announcement, since it was a public action, the apostles employed the outward rite of the laying on of hands, which was customary at that time with those people, in part on account of the public designation of the one called, in part on account of the prayers and supplications which were made by the whole church in behalf of the person called. The rite of laying on hands was extraordinarily suited to this process: 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." If ordination is understood in this way, of the ministry of the Word and the sacraments, as already the Apology of the Augsburg Confession [XIII:11-12] explained the position of our churches, then we have no objection to calling ordination a sacrament. And there the words are added, "We shall not object either to calling the laying on of hands a sacrament." ...

This reminder must, however, be added, that the rite of ordination must be distinguished from the ceremony of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, for ordination is not a sacrament 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, neither are all to be ordained who desire and ask that forgiveness of sins be applied and sealed to them. ... 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. Now the ministry of the Word and the sacraments has divine promises, and the prayer at ordination rests on these, 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. (Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part II [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978], pp. 691-95)

They 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. Therefore this slander must first of all be removed. Now the Anabaptists and Enthusiasts are rightly disapproved, who either take the use of the external ministry of Word and sacrament entirely out of the church, or imagine that it is useless and unnecessary. For they teach that new and special revelations should rather be sought and expected from God without the use of the external ministry of Word and sacrament, and that this kind of calling, illumination, and conversion is much more excellent and worthy of honor than if we use the voice of the ministry. And indeed, it is God by whose power, working, efficacy, impulse, and inspiration whatever pertains to calling, illumination, conversion, repentance, faith, renewal, and in short, to the business of our salvation is begun, effected, increased, and preserved in men. But God arranged by a certain counsel of His that He wills to dispense these things, not by infusing new and special revelations, illuminations, and movements into the minds of men without any means, but through the outward ministry of the Word. This ministry He did not commit to angels, so that their appearances are to be sought and expected, but He put the Word of reconciliation into men, and He wills that the proclamation of the Gospel, divinely revealed, should sound forth through them. (Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part II [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978], pp. 677-78)

And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? [1 Cor. 12:28-29]. The apostles hold the chief place, as immediately called; as those who laid the foundations of the churches among the Gentiles (see Rev. 21:14); and as those who were led by the Holy Spirit, into all truth, and thus were absolutely infallible. In the second rank are placed the prophets, who taught concerning future or abstruse subjects, such as those in the Church at Antioch (Acts 11:27), Judas and Silas (Acts 14:32), Agabus (21:10), and the daughters of Philip (Acts 21:9). In the third rank are placed the teachers, who although they did not speak from immediate revelation, nevertheless were divinely endowed with a peculiar gift for teaching. If the question be asked why in this catalogue the Apostle omits the “evangelists and pastors,” who in Eph. 4:11 have the third and fourth places, while the “teachers” have the fifth place; the reason, I think, is that the evangelists are comprehended here, partly under the prophets and partly under the teachers, as, like Mark and Luke, they were divinely inspired, or were not. ... From this order, it is clear that there is a subordination of ministers of the Church; and, that it is of divine right, and necessary for the harmonious constitution of the mystical body, and differs in ranks of dignity, [Johann] Huelsemann proves: 1. From the word “hath set,” which is employed equally concerning the natural appointment of members of the body, from the pure will of God (ver. 18), and the application of this will in appointing ministers in the Church, especially if the word *tienai* be explained by parallel passages, as Acts 20:28; Rom. 4:17; 9:33; 2 Cor. 5:19; 1 Thess. 5:9; 1 Tim. 1:12; 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11. 2. Because the same natural necessity of subordination occurs in the harmony of the natural (vers. 13-15), and of the ecclesiastical body (vers. 27-29). 3. A diversity of dignity is manifest also from the terms “honorable” and “less honorable” (vers. 22,23,24). 4. Also from the diversity of dignity between the eye and the toe (vers. 17,22). 5. From the offices signifying precedency of order and dignity (ver. 28). 6. Finally, by a comparison of the offices. For as teaching and prophesy, in the abstract, excel bodily and external ministries (Acts 6:2,3; 1 Cor. 14:39; 1 Tim. 5:17), so, in the concrete, ministers occupied in these diverse offices are of higher rank one to the other, according to the above cited passage in the Epistle to Timothy, and here (vers. 28,29), as well as in the last verse, where “the greater gifts” are mentioned. (Abraham Calov, *Biblia Illustrata*, Vol. IV [1719]; quoted in Henry Eyster Jacobs [ed.], *The Lutheran Commentary*, Vol. VIII [New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1897], pp. 88-90)

Luther was not long a student of the Bible before he discovered that the Christian Church and the Roman Church are not identical. He soon perceived the characteristics of the New Testament Episcopate, and saw that no such distinction is ordained of God, as that which the Roman Church makes between clergy and laity. ... The Reformation had announced salvation through Christ, and justification through faith. In place of a priesthood communicating salvation, it laid down as a postulate, the universal priesthood of all believers. As early as 1520, Luther in his address to the Christian nobles of Germany says: “All Christians are truly of the spiritual estate, and there is among them no distinction save only that of office. As St. Paul says, in 1 Cor. xii. that we are altogether one body, yet each member hath his own work, whereby he serves the other. The great thing is, that we have one baptism, one Gospel, one faith, and are alike Christians, Eph. iv. For Baptism, the Gospel, and faith, these alone make spiritual, make a Christian people.” This view

led first, negatively, to the renunciation of those arrangements of the Roman Church which could not be harmonized with it, and then, positively to a new order of divine service, and to the establishment of the office of the Evangelical ministry. With this ministry commenced the renewed constitution of the Church. In Luther's judgment the great significance of the ministry is that in it the universal priestly calling of all believers comes into a rightly ordered exercise. He says: "Though we are all priests alike no man must undertake or assume to himself without our consent and choice to do that which we all have equal authority to do. For that which is common no one can assume to himself without the will and command of the Church"; and he repeats the same view elsewhere. The place in which the pastor is to work is the congregation by which he has been called, and in which he is to give himself to the preaching of the Gospel, the administration of the sacraments, and the exercise of love and good works to the poor, the sick and the afflicted, and the training of the young in the Christian faith and life. ...

In the Augsburg Confession these solemn convictions gave themselves witness before the Emperor and the realm, as also in the Apology and the Smalcald Articles. The essential element in the ministry is calling men; in which the Church represents her divine master, fulfilling his purpose and acting in his name. "To obtain this justifying faith," says the Augsburg Confession, Article V., "God hath instituted the ministry to teach the Gospel, and to impart the sacraments." In Article XXVIII, the ecclesiastical power or power of the bishops according to the Gospel is a power and command of God to preach the Gospel, to remit and retain sins and to administer the sacraments. This rests upon the command and commission of Christ; John 20:21. "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you. Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained"; as also Mark 16:16. "Go ye into all the world, preach the Gospel to every creature," etc. In these citations is made manifest that the confessors regarded the ministry, historically considered, as directly instituted by our Lord. They regard all ministers as so far co-ordinate with the apostles. ... Luther, in his exposition of Ps. 110, says: "We must distinguish the office of a preacher or minister from the common estate of priests to which all baptized children belong." This office is none other than a public ministry committed to one person by the whole Congregation who are all equally priests. Every Christian has and exercises works of the priestly class, but besides this there is the common office of public teaching, to which pastors and preachers belong; for not all in the Congregation at large can attend to this office. It would not be fitting that baptism and the Holy Sacrament should be administered in each particular house; some must be chosen and ordained who are fitted to preach and are exercised thereto in the Holy Scriptures; who can perform the office of teacher and defend the doctrine; who can also administer the sacraments so that it may be known who has been baptized, and that all things may be done in order. Otherwise there would gradually be a Church where every neighbor would preach to another, and everything would be done without order. This is not, however, the priestly estate in itself, but a general or common public office for those who are all priests, i.e., Christians. The seeming conflict between some of Luther's stronger utterances and the conservative statements of the Confessions, is relieved by general considerations – one of the intensity of conviction and the unity in aim of Luther, which often leads to a certain isolation of statement, that seeming to be asserted absolutely, which other passages in his works show we must take relatively. In him pre-eminently, as is the case with all writers who have written extensively, and have often been obliged to write hurriedly, we must interpret and modify one utterance by all the others. Secondly, Luther often has in his mind, not in what way was the institution of the ministry actually carried out historically, but this rather, what are the inherent and final powers to which, in case of necessity, the Church can appeal to obtain a ministry, when the ordinary historical channels are closed. (Charles Porterfield Krauth, "Church Polity," III, *Lutheran Church Review*, Vol. III, Whole No. 12 [Oct. 1884], pp. 320-25)

8. The Public Ministry of the Word: representing Christ's Church

TESTIMONIES FROM THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS:

In the Large Catechism ["Creed," 51-53], Luther wrote, "Of this community I also am a part and member, a participant and co-partner in all the blessings it possesses. I was brought into it by the Holy Spirit and incorporated into it through the fact that I have heard and still hear God's Word, which is the beginning point for entering it. Before we had come into this community, we were entirely of the devil, knowing nothing of God and of Christ. The Holy Spirit will remain with the holy community or Christian people until the Last Day. Through it he gathers us, using it to teach and preach the Word.

By it he creates and increases holiness, causing it daily to grow and become strong in the faith and in the fruits which the Spirit produces. ..." In these words the catechism makes no mention whatsoever of our free will or our contribution but ascribes everything to the Holy Spirit, namely, that through the ministry of preaching he brings us into the Christian community, in which he sanctifies us and brings about in us a daily increase in faith and good works. (FC SD II:36-38, K/W p. 551)

Now there are two, and no more than two, basic kinds of sacrifice. One is the atoning sacrifice, that is, a work of satisfaction for guilt and punishment that reconciles God, conciliates the wrath of God, or merits the forgiveness of sins for others. The other kind is the eucharistic sacrifice. It does not merit the forgiveness of sins or reconciliation but is rendered by those who have already been reconciled as a way for us to give thanks or express gratitude for having received forgiveness of sins and other benefits. ... In point of fact there has been only one atoning sacrifice in the world, namely, the death of Christ... The Levitical sacrifices of atonement were so called only in order to point to a future expiation. ...they had to come to an end after the revelation of the gospel. Moreover, because they had to come to an end with the revelation of the gospel, they were not truly atoning sacrifices, since the gospel was promised for the very reason that it set forth the atoning sacrifice. Now the rest are eucharistic sacrifices, which are called "sacrifices of praise," namely, the preaching of the gospel, faith, prayer, thanksgiving, confession, the afflictions of the saints, and indeed, all the good works of the saints. ... They are performed by those who are already reconciled. These are the sacrifices of the New Testament, as Peter teaches [1 Peter 2:5], "a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices." ...with the abrogation of Levitical worship, the New Testament teaches that new and pure sacrifices will be made, namely, faith, prayer, thanksgiving, confession, the preaching of the gospel, suffering on account of the gospel, and similar things. Malachi [1:11] speaks about such sacrifices, "For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name is great among the nations, and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering." ...the prophet's own words give us their meaning. They say, first, that the name of the Lord will be great. This takes place through the preaching of the gospel, which makes known the name of Christ and the Father's mercy promised in Christ. The proclamation of the gospel produces faith in those who receive the gospel. They call upon God, they give thanks to God, they bear afflictions for their confession, they do good works on account of the glory of Christ. In this way the name of the Lord becomes great among the nations. Therefore "incense" and "a pure offering" do not refer to a ceremony *ex opere operato* but to all those sacrifices through which the name of the Lord is made great, namely, faith, prayer, the preaching of the gospel, confession, etc. (Ap XXIV:19,22,24-26,30-32, K/W pp. 261-62,264)

We are perfectly willing for the Mass to be understood as a daily sacrifice, provided that this includes the entire Mass, that is, the ceremony together with the proclamation of the gospel, faith, prayer, and thanksgiving. For these things are joined together as a daily sacrifice in the New Testament; the ceremony was instituted for the sake of these things, and must not be separated from them. Accordingly, Paul says [1 Cor. 11:26], "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." (Ap XXIV:35, K/W p. 265)

...because the priesthood of the New Testament is a ministry of the Spirit, as Paul teaches in 2 Corinthians 3[:6], it has but the one sacrifice of Christ which makes satisfaction for and is applied to the sins of others. It has no sacrifices like the Levitical, which could be applied *ex opere operato* to others; instead, it presents the gospel and sacraments to others so that they may thereby receive faith and the Holy Spirit, be put to death and be made alive. ... Through the ministry of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit works in our hearts. Therefore his ministry benefits others when he works in them and gives them new birth and life. (Ap XXIV:59, K/W pp. 268-69)

TESTIMONIES FROM THE WRITINGS OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGIANS:

Thou shalt honor thy father and mother 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 [the spiritual authorities] behave toward their responsibilities like those mothers who forsake their children and run after their lovers, as Hosea 2[:5] says. 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. The older people should provide a good example, and Christendom would be filled and adorned with fine young people. 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 this state of affairs prevailed one could say how honor and obedience ought to be paid to the spiritual authorities. But now the situation is much the same as it is with those natural parents who let their children do as they like. Today the spiritual authorities issue decrees, make dispensations, and take money. They pardon beyond what they have power to pardon. ... 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, even though Christians constituted the smallest part of the population. ... 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. It should also be one of the tasks of the spiritual authorities to reduce the [number of] institutions, monasteries, and schools where they cannot be properly cared for. It is much better to have no monastery or institution than one in which an evil system rules and provokes God to anger all the more. ...the spiritual authorities...are just like parents who give a command which is contrary to God. In a state of affairs like this we have to be sensible. The Apostle has said that those times in which such authorities rule shall be perilous (I Tim. 4:1 ff., II Tim. 3:1 ff.). ...our first task is to take a firm hold of the first three commandments and the First Table, and be quite certain that no man, neither bishop, pope, nor even angel, may command or prescribe anything contrary to these three commandments and their works, whether it is contrary to them or does not further them. And if they attempt to impose such demands, we must consider their demands unauthorized and worthless. (Martin Luther, "Treatise on Good Works," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 44 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966], pp. 80, 82, 87-89)

Therefore, when a bishop consecrates it is nothing else than that in the place and stead of the whole community, all of whom have like power, he takes a person and charges him to exercise this power on behalf of the others. It is like ten brothers, all king's sons and equal heirs, choosing one of themselves to rule the inheritance in the interests of all. In one sense they are all kings and of equal power, and yet one of them is charged with the responsibility of ruling. To put it still more clearly: 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. ... In times gone by Christians used to choose their bishops and priests in this way from among their own number, and they were confirmed in their office by the other bishops without all the fuss that goes on nowadays. St. Augustine, Ambrose, and Cyprian each became [a bishop in this way]. ... Because we are all priests of equal standing, no one must push himself forward and take it upon himself, without our consent and election, to do that for which we all have equal authority. For no one dare take upon himself what is common to all without the authority and consent of the community. And should it happen that a person chosen for such office were deposed for abuse of trust, he would then be exactly what he was before. Therefore, a priest in Christendom is nothing else but an officeholder. As long as he holds office he takes precedence; where he is deposed, he is a peasant or a townsman like anybody else. (Martin Luther, "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 44 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966], pp. 128-29)

For as all citizens of a free city, as many as live in it, have a common right and equal liberty so far as the republic is concerned, and as they nevertheless, for the sake of order, elect senators and place a mayor at their head, handing over to him the keys and statutes of the city in order that he might use them in the common name of all and rule the republic according to them, so also do the citizens of the city of God. They indeed have a share in all holy things, and all things are theirs, whether it be Paul or Peter, life or death, things present or things to come (1 Cor. 3:21). They possess all things under their one Head, Christ, who has given to His church all things necessary for salvation, which he procured by His sacrificial merit, and in it to every single member in particular, even to the most humble. But for the sake of order, they elect certain persons to whom they entrust the administration of the keys of the kingdom of heaven. So there are among us deacons, pastors, doctors, bishops, or superintendents so that all things, according to Paul's direction, are done decently and in order (1 Cor. 14:40). Here the Jesuits will cry out: "Very well! This example also confirms the supremacy of the pope, who in the church of Christ, together with the college of cardinals, is exalted above all, as are the mayor and the senators in a city." But this example does not at all support the pope; it rather subverts his whole tyranny. A mayor is lord neither of the senators nor of the citizens, but he is a fellow citizen. He has been placed at the head of all merely for the sake of order. He does not dare undertake anything arbitrarily, much less anything against the liberty of the citizens. But he is held to do all things according to the law and the counsel of the senate. Of the pope the teachers of canon law, his adulators, once boasted (and the Jesuits have not recanted it to this very day), "The power of the pope is of such a nature and so great that no person dare ask him: Why do you do that?" (See section 40 of the canon law, the chapter, "If the Pope.") It is certain that if a free republic would get such a mayor, they would chase him out of the city before sunset. (Polycarp Leyser, *Harmonia quatuor evangelistarum* 85, fol. 1627; quoted in C. F. W. Walther, *Church and Ministry* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987], pp. 283-84)

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." (Charles Porterfield Krauth, *The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology* [Philadelphia: General Council Publication Board, 1871], p. 177)

9. The Public Ministry of the Word: representing Christ

TESTIMONY FROM THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS:

Therefore in accordance with the Scriptures we maintain that the church is, properly speaking, the assembly of saints who truly believe the gospel of Christ and have the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, we admit that in this life many hypocrites and wicked people, who are mixed in with these, participate in the outward signs. They are members of the church according to their participation in the outward signs and even hold office in the church. Nor does this detract from the efficacy of the sacraments when they are distributed by the unworthy, because 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. The words of Christ teach us this so that we are not offended by the unworthiness of ministers. (Ap VII/VIII:28, K/W p. 178)

TESTIMONIES FROM THE WRITINGS OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGIANS:

And it is surely a great thing for God to appear to a human being and to fit His promises to a particular individual. For this reason many consider the saintly fathers far more blessed in this respect than we are, since they had such definite and individual comforts and appearances from God through the ministry of the angels. Someone will say: "If He were to appear to me, too, in a human form, what great joy this would bring to my heart! Then I would surely not be reluctant to undergo any peril or misfortunes for God's sake. But this has been denied me. I only hear sermons, read Scripture, and make use of the sacraments. I have no appearances of angels." I answer: You have no reason to complain that you have been visited less than Abraham or Isaac. You, too, have appearances, and in a way they are stronger, clearer, and more numerous than those they had, provided that you open your eyes and heart and take hold of them. You have

Baptism. You have the Sacrament of the Eucharist, where bread and wine are the species, figures, and forms in which and under which God in person speaks and works into your ears, eyes, and heart. Besides, you have the ministry of the Word [*Predigtamt*] and teachers through whom God speaks with you. You have the ministry of the Keys, through which He absolves and comforts you. "Fear not," He says, "I am with you." He appears to you in Baptism. He baptizes you Himself and addresses you Himself. He not only says: "I am with you," but: "I forgive you your sins. I offer you salvation from death, deliverance from all fear and from the power of the devil and hell. And not only I am with you, but all the angels with Me." What more will you desire? Everything is full of divine appearances and conversations. (Martin Luther, "Lectures on Genesis," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 5 [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968], p. 21)

...this is what Jacob says: "This place in which I am sleeping is the house and church of God" [Genesis 28:17]. Here God Himself has set up a pulpit, and He Himself is the first to preach about the descendants and about the uninterrupted continuance of the church. But Jacob, together with the descendants in his loins, is the listener. Likewise the angels in heaven. For if there is even one person who hears the Word together with the angels who are present along with him, it is sufficient. But he describes the glow of this church in a very magnificent manner by saying that here the entrance to the kingdom of heaven is open. For God governs us in such a way that wherever He speaks with us here on earth, the approach to the kingdom of heaven is open. This is truly extraordinary consolation. Wherever we hear the Word and are baptized, there we enter into eternal life. But where is that place found? On earth, where the ladder which touches heaven stands, where the angels descend and ascend, where Jacob sleeps. It is a physical place, but here there is an ascent into heaven without physical ladders, without wings and feathers. This is how faith speaks: "I am going to the place where the Word is taught, where the Sacrament is offered and Baptism is administered." And all those things that are done in my sight in a physical place are heavenly and divine words and works. That place is not only ground or earth; but it is something more glorious and majestic, namely, the kingdom of God and the gate of heaven. ...

There is no reason for you to run to St. James's or to withdraw into a corner or to hide yourself in a monastery. Do not seek a new and foolish entrance. But look in faith at the place where the Word and the sacraments are. Direct your step to the place where the Word resounds and the sacraments are administered, and there write the title THE GATE OF GOD. Let this be done either in the church and in the public assemblies or in bedchambers, when we console and buoy up the sick or when we absolve him who sits with us at table. There the gate of heaven is, as Christ says (Matt. 18:20): "Where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Throughout the world the house of God and the gate of heaven is wherever there is the pure teaching of the Word together with the sacraments.

But we should look at the external place not only with the eyes of the flesh and in the manner of beasts; nor should we think that the Word itself is an empty sound. Of course, it is a human voice, and he who speaks the Word is a human being. The temple itself is built of stones and wood, and it is our temple. When assemblies are not held there, it is not the temple of God unless this term is used in a relative sense. But when sermons are delivered there, when the sacraments are administered and ministers are ordained to teach, then say: "Here is the house of God and the gate of heaven; for God is speaking, as 1 Peter 4:11 states: 'Whoever speaks, as one who utters oracles of God; whoever renders service, as one who renders it by the strength which God supplies.'" ... For the flesh fixes its eyes only on the water, on the bread, on the wine, and on the ground where Jacob slept; but the spirit must see the water, the hand, the Word of God, and God in the water. ... Therefore one must learn contrary to the view of the flesh that it is not a simple word and only an empty sound, but that it is the Word of the Creator of heaven and earth. Thus the imposition of hands is not a tradition of men, but God makes and ordains ministers. Nor is it the pastor who absolves you, but the mouth and hand of the minister is the mouth and hand of God.

Therefore we should acknowledge and make much of the boundless glory of God by which He has revealed Himself to us in His church. For it is not the kind of house in which He creates as He created all things in the beginning out of nothing. No, it is a house in which He speaks with us, deals with us, feeds us, and cares for us when we are asleep and when we are awake. ...the sacrilegious papists...imagine that the church should be a physical congregation devoted to drink, food, clothing, etc., although our church also has much that is physical and external, like bread, water, land, etc. But there is a great difference between the physical things of which the papists boast and those we have. For the former have been taken up and employed contrary to God, not for God or according to God's Word. Therefore their church is only empty pretense, imagination, and a false show. On the other hand, it is an exceedingly important thing when Jacob declares specifically that God's house is found where God dwells with us, where we are the household, yes, the sons and daughters, and He Himself is our Father, who speaks and deals with us and brings it about in the most

intimate way that the church is also the gate of heaven. For He dwells with us in order that we may enter into the kingdom of heaven. And, what is most delightful, He comes first and appears to us on the ladder. He descends and lives with us. He speaks and works in us. Thus the church is established among men when God dwells with men, with this end in view that it may be the gate of heaven and that we may pass from this earthly life into the eternal and heavenly life. Who can adequately marvel at or comprehend this, namely, that God dwells with men? This indeed is that heavenly Jerusalem which comes down out of heaven from God and has the splendor of God, as is stated in Rev. 21:2.

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." From this it follows most properly that in the church nothing should be heard or seen except what God does, according to the statement (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." But if I am uncertain about the Word or the administration of God, I must be silent. But whenever I minister, that is, baptize or absolve, I must be certain that my work is not mine, but God's, who works through me. Baptism is a work of God; for it is not mine, although I lend my hands and my mouth as instruments. Thus when I absolve you or call you to the ministry and lay my hands on you, you should not doubt that, as Peter says, it is God's strength.

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. Jacob saw this, his descendants also saw it, we too, and all who are now the church or will be the church after us see it, namely, that the church is the house of God which leads from earth 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). Indeed, if anyone speaks with himself and meditates on the Word, God is present there with the angels; and He works and speaks in such a way that the entrance into the kingdom of heaven is open. (Martin Luther, "Lectures on Genesis," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 5 [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968], pp. 246-51)

10. The Public Ministry of the Word in the narrower sense: the office of governing and guiding the Church with the Word of God (the office of spiritual oversight)

TESTIMONIES FROM THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS:

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. He did not give them the power of the sword or the right to establish, take possession [of], or dispose of the kingdoms of the world. 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]. (Tr 30-31, K/W p. 335) (*The authority of those who "govern the church by the Word" includes "the command...to administer the sacraments." Through the sacrament of baptism "we are initially received into the Christian community" [LC IV:2, K/W p. 456]. The Lord's Supper is "the common sacrament of the church," which is not to be played with "apart from God's Word and outside the church community" [SA II, II:9, K/W p. 303]. "...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" [LC V:32, K/W p. 470].*)

So we have introduced three kinds of fathers in this [fourth] commandment: fathers by blood, fathers of a household, and fathers of the nation [fathers in blood, and fathers in office to whom belong the care of the household and the country]. 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]. 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. (LC I:158-63, K/W p. 408)

It is not for trivial reasons that we constantly treat the catechism and exhort and implore others to do the same, for we see that unfortunately many preachers and pastors [parish rectors] are very negligent in doing so and thus despise both their office and this teaching. ... Everything that they are to teach and preach is now so very clearly and easily presented in so many salutary books... Yet, they are not upright and honest enough to buy such books, or, if they have them already, to consult or read them. Oh, these shameful gluttons and servants of their bellies are better suited to be swineherds and keepers of dogs than guardians of souls and pastors [parish rectors]. Now that they are free from the useless, bothersome babbling of the seven hours, it would be much better if morning, noon, and night they would instead read a page or two from the catechism, the Prayer Book, the New Testament, or some other passage from the Bible, and would pray the Lord’s Prayer for themselves and their parishioners. In this way they would once again show honor and respect to the gospel... Many regard the catechism as a simple, trifling teaching, which they can absorb and master at one reading and then toss the book into a corner as if they are ashamed to read it again. ... But this I say for myself: I am also a doctor and a preacher, just as learned and experienced as all of them who are so high and mighty. Nevertheless, each morning, and whenever else I have time, I do as a child who is being taught the catechism and I read and recite word for word the Lord’s Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Psalms, etc. I must still read and study the catechism daily, and yet I cannot master it as I wish, but must remain a child and pupil of the catechism – and I also do so gladly. These fussy, fastidious fellows would like quickly, with one reading, to be doctors above all doctors, to know it all and to need nothing more. Well this, too, is a sure sign that they despise both their office and the people’s souls, yes, even God and his Word. (LC Longer Preface: 1-3,5,7-8, K/W pp. 379-80)

...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 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. (FC SD X:10, K/W p. 637) (*Where the German version of this confession [quoted here] 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 [included in the 1584 edition of the Book of Concord] 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.*)

Furthermore, it is also debated whether bishops have the power to establish ceremonies in the church as well as regulations concerning food, festivals, and the different orders of the clergy. ... Concerning this question, our people teach that bishops do not have the power to institute or establish something contrary to the gospel... ..bishops or pastors may make regulations for the sake of good order in the church, but not thereby to obtain God’s grace, to make satisfaction for sin, or to bind consciences, nor to regard such as a service of God or to consider it a sin when these rules are broken without giving offense. So St. Paul prescribed in Corinthians that women should cover their heads in the assembly [1 Cor. 11:5], and that preachers in the assembly should not all speak at once, but in order, one after the other [1 Cor. 14:30-33]. Such regulation belongs rightfully in the Christian assembly for the sake of love and peace, to be obedient to bishops and pastors in such cases, and to keep such order to the extent that no one offends another – so that there may not be disorder or unruly conduct in the church. However, consciences should not be burdened by holding that such things are necessary for salvation or by considering it a sin when they are violated without giving offense to others; just as no one would say that a woman commits a sin if, without offending people, she leaves the house with her head uncovered. (AC XXVIII:30,34,53-56 [German], K/W pp. 94,96,98,100)

TESTIMONIES FROM THE WRITINGS OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGIANS:

The Corinthians had come to divisions among themselves and to boasting of certain apostles as their leaders. With one party it was Peter, with another Paul, and with yet another Apollos. Each one exalted the apostle by whom he was baptized or was taught, or the one he regarded most eminent. Now comes Paul and interposes, permitting no one to boast of any apostle, and teaching them to laud Christ alone. He tells them it matters not by whom they were baptized and taught, but it is of the utmost importance that they all hold to Christ together and own allegiance to him alone. ... "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God" [1 Cor 4, 1]. The reference is to all apostles and all heirs to the apostolic chair, whether Peter, Paul or any other. Let us, then, be very careful how we regard the apostles and bishops; we must attach neither too much nor yet too little importance to them. Not without reason did Paul – the Holy Spirit, in fact – make this restriction; and without doubt we are under obligation to follow it. The same limit here made concerning apostles applies to bishops. It designates the character of their office and the extent of their power. ... Paul warns us against receiving apostles or bishops as anything but "ministers of Christ"; nor should they desire to be regarded otherwise. ... He [Paul] has reference to the ministry that is an office. All Christians serve God but all are not in office. In Romans 11, 13, also, he terms his office a ministry: "Inasmuch as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I glorify my ministry." And in the epistle selection preceding this (Rom 15, 8) he says: "I say that Christ hath been made a minister of the circumcision." Again (2 Cor 3, 6): "Who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the spirit." ...

Mark you, beloved, to serve Christ, or to serve God, is defined by Paul himself as to fulfil a Christ-ordained office, the office of preaching. This office is a service or ministry proceeding from Christ to us, and not from us to Christ. Note this carefully; it is important. Otherwise you cannot understand the design of the Pauline words, "ministry, ministration, to minister." So he always has it. Seldom does he speak of the service or ministry rendered primarily above them to God; it is usually of the ministry beneath them, to men. Christ, too, in the Gospel bids the apostles to be submissive and servants of others. Lk 22, 26. To make himself clearly understood in this matter of service, or ministry, Paul carefully adds to the word "ministers" the explanatory one "stewards," which can be understood in no other way than as referring to the office of the ministry. He terms his office "service or ministry of Christ" and himself "minister of Christ," because he was ordained of God to the office of preaching. So all apostles and bishops are ministers of Christ; that is preachers, messengers, officers of Christ, sent to the people with his message. The meaning of the verse, then, is: "Let every individual take heed not to institute another leader, to set up another Lord, to constitute another Christ. Rather be unanimously loyal to the one and only Christ. For we apostles are not your lords, nor your masters; we are not your leaders. We do not preach our own interests, nor teach our own doctrines. We do not seek to have you obey us, or give us allegiance and accept our doctrine. No, indeed. We are messengers and ministers of him who is your Master, your Lord and Leader. We preach his Word, enlist men to follow his commandments, and lead only into obedience. And in this light should you regard us, expecting of us nothing else than to bring the message. Though we are other persons than Christ, yet you do not receive through us another doctrine than his; another word, another government, nor another authority than his. He who so receives and regards us, holds the right attitude toward us, and receives, not us, but Christ, whom alone we preach. ..." ... How can one be a servant of Christ if he does not teach Christ's message? Or how can he teach his own message when he is under obligation to teach only Christ's? If he advocates his own counsels, he makes himself lord and does not serve Christ. If he advocates Christ's counsels, he cannot himself be lord.

From this you may judge for yourself whence arises Popery and its ecclesiastical authority, with all its priests, monks and high schools. If these can prove they teach nothing but the message of Christ, we must regard them as his ministers or servants. But if we can prove they do not so teach, we must regard them as not his servants. ... The word "steward" here signifies one who has charge of his lord's domestics... For "oekonomus" is Greek and signifies in English [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. Paul puts a distinction between the stewards of God and temporal stewards. The latter provide material nourishment, and exercise control of the physical person; but the former provide spiritual food and exercise control over souls. Paul calls the spiritual food "mysteries." (Martin Luther, "Sermon for the Third Sunday in Advent," *Complete Sermons of Martin Luther* [Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2000], Vol. 3.2, pp. 64-70)

From the passage, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive," etc. [John 20:22,23], some conclude that therefore only those who personally have the Holy Spirit are able to forgive sins. But this isn't the meaning, for Christ gives the Spirit to the public office and not to a private person, as he had just said, "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" [John 20:21]. Consequently he was speaking about those who had been called and who had the authority to preach, administer the sacraments, etc. When somebody has the authority to preach he also has the authority to administer the sacraments, for we hold that the sacrament is less important than preaching. (Martin Luther, Table Talk #512, *Luther's Works*, Vol. 54 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967], p. 90)

I can hope for no good from the form of excommunication which has been taken for granted in your court [the court of Duke Maurice of Saxony in Dresden]. If it is to come to pass that courts will rule churches according to their desire, God will withhold his blessing, and the last error shall be worse than the first [cf. Matt. 27:64], for what is done without faith is not good [cf. Rom. 14:23]. And what is done without vocation is undoubtedly done without faith and comes to nought. Either they must themselves become pastors and must preach, baptize, visit the sick, administer Communion, and perform all ecclesiastical functions, or else they must cease to confuse callings. Let them be concerned about their courts and leave the churches to those who have been called to them and who are accountable to God for them. It is not to be tolerated that others take actions if we are to be held responsible for them. We desire that the functions [offices] of the Church and of the court be kept separate, or that both of them be given up. Satan continues to be Satan. Under the papacy he caused the Church to meddle in the State. Now he desires the State to meddle in the Church. But with God's help we propose to resist and to do what we can to keep the callings separate. (Martin Luther, Letter to Daniel Greiser [Oct. 22, 1543], *Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel* [Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960], p. 345)

The Christian Church has no authority to ordain any article of faith, never has ordained and never will ordain one. The Church of God has no power to enact any precept as to good works, never has done it, never will do it. All articles of faith are fully established in Holy Writ, so that there is no need of ordaining even one more. All precepts of good works are fully prescribed in Holy Writ, so that there is no need of appointing even one more. The Church of God has no authority to ratify articles [of faith] or precepts [of good works], or to give sanction to Holy Scripture itself, as though the Church were a higher authority or clothed with judicial powers, never has done it, nor ever will do it. On the contrary, the Church of God is ratified and endorsed by Holy Scripture as its lord and judge. The Church of God approves, that is, it recognizes and acknowledges the articles of faith or Holy Scripture as a subject or a servant does the seal of his lord. For the maxim is sure: He who has no power to promise and grant either the future or present life, cannot ordain articles of faith. The Church of God has authority to appoint rites and customs in regard to festivals, food, fasting, prayers, vigils, etc., but not for others, only for itself; neither has it ever done, nor will it ever do otherwise. 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. This pastor or prelate has nothing to ordain, because he is not the Church, unless it be that his church empowers him. (Martin Luther, "Propositiones adversus totam synagogam Sathanae 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 [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953], pp. 430-31)

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 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. (Norwegian Synod Theses on Lay Preaching [1862]; in Herman Amberg Preus, *Vivacious Daughter* [Northfield, Minnesota: The Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1990], p. 131) (*An alternate translation*)

of the theses can be found as follows in **Grace for Grace** [Mankato, Minnesota: Lutheran Synod Book Company, 1943], pp. 138-39: "1. God has instituted the public ministerial office for the public edification of the Christians unto salvation by the Word of God. 2. God has not instituted any other office for the public edification of the Christians to be used along-side of the public ministerial office. 3. When a man assumes the direction of the public edification of the Christians by the Word, he thereby assumes and exercises the public ministerial office. 4. It is a sin when a person assumes this (office) without a call or without need. 5. It is both a right and a duty in case of actual need for anyone who is capable of doing so to exercise the public ministerial office in a Christian and orderly manner. 6. The only correct definition of 'need' is that there exists a need when a pastor is not at hand and cannot be secured; or when, if there is a pastor, he either does not serve the people properly but teaches false doctrine, or cannot serve them adequately but only so rarely that the people cannot thereby be brought to faith or be kept in it and be defended against errors, so that the Christian must faint for lack of care. 7. When such need exists, efforts should be made to relieve it by definite and proper arrangements according as circumstances will permit.")

11. The office of spiritual oversight: its indispensability and defining duties in the public administration of the Means of Grace

TESTIMONIES FROM THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS:

Concerning church government it is taught that no one should publicly teach, preach, or administer the sacraments without a proper [public] call. (AC XIV [German], K/W p. 46)

Among our opponents there is no catechesis of children whatever, even though the canons prescribe it. Among us, pastors and ministers of the church are required to instruct and examine the youth publicly, a custom that produces very good results. 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] the gospel. (Ap XV:41-42, K/W p. 229) (*Where the Latin version of this confession [quoted here] says that "the chief worship of God is to preach [teach] the gospel," the German version [included in the 1580 edition of the Book of Concord] says 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."*)

...our people have been compelled, for the sake of comforting consciences, to indicate the difference between spiritual and secular power, sword, and authority. They have taught that, for the sake of God's command, everyone should honor and esteem with all reverence both authorities and powers as the two highest gifts of God on earth. Our people teach as follows. 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. 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." The same power of the keys or of the bishops is used and exercised only by teaching and preaching God's Word and by administering the sacraments to many persons or to individuals, depending on one's calling. Not bodily but eternal things and benefits are given in this way, such as eternal righteousness, the Holy Spirit, and eternal life. These benefits cannot be obtained except through the office of preaching and through the administration of the holy sacraments. For St. Paul says [Rom. 1:16]: "The gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith." Now inasmuch as the power of the church or of the bishops bestows eternal benefits and is used and exercised only through the office of preaching, it does not interfere at all with public order and secular authority. For secular authority deals with matters altogether different from the gospel. Secular power does not protect the soul but, using the sword and physical penalties, it protects the body and goods against external violence. ... That is why one should not mix or confuse the two authorities, the spiritual and the secular. For spiritual power has its command to preach the gospel and to administer the sacraments. It should not invade an alien office. ... However, where bishops possess secular authority and the sword, they possess them not as bishops by divine right but by human, imperial right, given by Roman emperors and kings for the secular administration of their lands. That has nothing at all to do with the office of the gospel. Consequently, 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 – not with human power but with God’s Word alone. That is why parishioners and churches owe obedience to bishops, according to this saying of Christ (Luke 10[:16]): “Whoever listens to you listens to me.” But whenever they teach, institute, or introduce something contrary to the gospel, we have God’s command in such a case not to be obedient (Matt. 7[:15]): “Beware of false prophets.” And St. Paul in Galatians 1[:8]: “But even if we or an angel from heaven should proclaim to you a gospel contrary to what we proclaimed to you, let that one be accursed!” (AC XXVIII:4-12,19-24 [German], K/W pp. 90,92,94)

In the [Augsburg] Confession we have said what power the gospel grants to bishops. Those who are now bishops do not perform the duties [offices] of bishops according to the gospel, even though they may well be bishops according to canonical order, about which we are not disputing. But we are talking about a bishop according to the gospel. We like the old division of power into the “power of the order” and the “power of jurisdiction.” Therefore, bishops have the power of the order, namely, the ministry of Word and sacraments. They also have the power of jurisdiction, namely, the authority to excommunicate those who are guilty of public offenses or to absolve them if they are repentant and ask for absolution. Bishops do not have the power of tyrants to act apart from established law, nor regal power to act above the law. Bishops have a definite command, a definite Word of God, which they ought to teach and according to which they ought to exercise their jurisdiction. ... They have the Word; they have the command about the extent to which they should exercise their jurisdiction, namely, when anyone does something contrary to the Word that they have received from Christ. (Ap XXVIII:12-14, K/W pp. 290-91)

O you bishops! How are you going to answer to Christ, now that you have so shamefully neglected the people and have not exercised your office...? ... Therefore, my dear sirs and brothers, who are either pastors [parish rectors] or 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. ... To begin with, teach them these parts: the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, etc., following the text word for word, so that they can also repeat it back to you and learn it by heart. 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, but instead should simply be sent back home to the pope and his officials and, along with them, to the devil himself. ... In the second place, once the people have learned the text well, then teach them to understand it, too, so that they know what it means. ... In the third place, after you have taught the people a short catechism like this one, then take up a longer catechism and impart to them a richer and fuller understanding. ... Finally, because the tyranny of the pope has been abolished, people no longer want to receive the sacrament, and they treat it with contempt. This, too, needs to be stressed, while keeping in mind that we should not compel anyone to believe or to receive the sacrament and should not fix any law or time or place for it. Instead, we should preach in such a way that the people make themselves come without our law and just plain compel us pastors [parish rectors] to administer the sacrament to them. ... For these reasons you do not have to make any law concerning this, as the pope did. Only emphasize clearly the benefit and the harm, the need and the blessing, the danger and the salvation in this sacrament. Then they will doubtless come on their own without any compulsion. If they do not come, give up on them and tell them that those who do not pay attention to or feel their great need and God’s gracious help belong to the devil. However, if you either do not urge such participation or make it into a law or poison, then it is your fault if they despise the sacrament. How can they help but neglect it, if you sleep and remain silent? Therefore, pastors [parish rectors] and preachers, take note! Our office has now become a completely different one than it was under the pope. It has now become serious and salutary. Thus, it now involves much toil and work, many dangers and attacks, and in addition little reward or gratitude in the world. But Christ himself will be our reward, so long as we labor faithfully. (SC Preface: 4,6,10-11,14,17,21-22,24-27, K/W pp. 348-51)

...it is certain that most people in our churches use the sacraments – absolution and the Lord’s Supper – many times during the course of a year. Moreover, those who instruct the people about the worth and fruits of the sacraments do so in such a way as to invite the people to use the sacraments frequently. ... Also, excommunication is pronounced on the openly wicked and on those who despise the sacraments. These things are thus carried out according to both the gospel and the ancient canons. However, we do not prescribe a set time because not everyone is prepared in the same

way at the same time. ... Our pastors, accordingly, do not force those who are not ready to use the sacraments. With regard to the enumeration of sins, our people are taught in such a way as not to ensnare their consciences. ...it is beneficial to accustom the inexperienced to enumerate some things in order that they might be taught more easily... Good pastors will know how profitable it is to examine the inexperienced. We do not, however, wish to sanction the torture of the summists... They speak only about the lists of sins. ... This teaching has driven many devout minds to hopeless despair, because they believed that an enumeration of sins was necessary by divine mandate, and yet they experienced this as impossible. (Ap XI:3-6,9-10, K/W pp. 186-87)

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. (AC XXV:1-4 [German], K/W p. 72)

Confession consists of two parts. One is that we confess our sins. The other is that we receive the absolution, that is, forgiveness, from the confessor as from God himself and by no means doubt but firmly believe that our sins are thereby forgiven before God in heaven. ...the confessor...may say: "Let it be done for you according to your faith' [Matthew 8:13]. And I by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ forgive you your sin in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Go in peace." 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. (SC V:16,27-29, K/W pp. 361-62)

Consciences were tormented by enumeration of sins and satisfactions. The opponents never mentioned faith, by which we freely receive the forgiveness of sins. All their books and sermons were silent about the exercise of faith in its struggle with despair or about the free forgiveness of sins on account of Christ. In addition, they horribly profaned the Mass and introduced many other godless acts of worship into the churches. ... By contrast, due to God's blessing, our priests attend to the ministry of the Word. They teach the gospel about the blessings of Christ, and they show that the forgiveness of sins takes place on account of Christ. This teaching offers solid consolation to consciences. In addition they teach about the good works that God commands, and they speak about the value and use of the sacraments. ...among them [our opponents] the priests use the sacrament to make money. Among us it is used more frequently and more devoutly. For the people use it, but only after they have been instructed and examined. They are taught about the proper use of the sacrament, that it was instituted as a seal and testimony of the gracious forgiveness of sins and therefore as an encouragement to sensitive consciences in order that they may be completely convinced and believe that their sins are freely forgiven. ... Moreover, if we must speak about outward appearances, attendance in our churches is greater than among the opponents'. Practical and clear sermons hold an audience. But neither the people nor the theologians have ever understood the opponents' teaching. (Ap XXIV:46-50, K/W p. 267)

But let us speak about the term "liturgy." This word does not properly mean a sacrifice but rather public service. Thus, it agrees quite well with our position, namely, that 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. ..." Thus the term "liturgy" fits well with the ministry. (Ap XXIV:80-81, K/W p. 272)

...as Chrysostom says in his Sermon on the Passion, "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." And Luther says: "This command and institution of his have the power to accomplish this, that we do not distribute and receive simply bread and wine but his body and blood, as his words indicate: 'This is my body, this is my blood.' So 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." (FC SD VII:76-77, K/W pp. 606-07)

For Chrysostom tells how the priest stands every day and invites some to receive the sacrament, but forbids others to approach. The ancient canons also indicate that one priest officiated and gave the sacrament to the other priests and deacons. For the words of the Nicene canon read: "After the priests, the deacons shall receive the sacrament from the bishop or priest in order." (AC XXIV:36-38 [German], K/W p. 70)

TESTIMONIES FROM THE WRITINGS OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGIANS:

Concerning Ecclesiastical Orders, they [the Churches among us] teach that no man should publicly teach, or administer the sacraments, except he be rightly called; according also as Paul giveth commandment to Titus "to ordain elders in every city" [Titus 1:5]. (Philip Melanchthon, Variata edition of the Augsburg Confession [1540], article XIV; in *The Book of Concord* [edited by Henry Eyster Jacobs], Vol. II: Historical Introduction, Appendixes and Indexes [Philadelphia: General Council Publication Board, 1893], p. 140)

[1 Peter 5:]1. *So 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.* 2. *Tend the flock of God that is your charge...* Here St. Peter tells how those who are to govern in the spiritual realm should conduct themselves. Now in the previous chapter (1 Peter 4:11) he stated that no one should teach or preach anything unless he is sure that it is God's Word, in order that our conscience may rest on solid rock. For it is impressed on us Christians that we must know with certainty what is pleasing to God and what displeases Him. Where this is not the case, there are no Christians. Then the apostle also stated that everyone must regard whatever office or work he has as being performed for God. This verse, however, is really addressed to the bishops or pastors, to inform them what qualifications they should have and how they should conduct themselves. ... These are the men whom Christ called His officials and council. They administer the spiritual rule; that is, they preach, and they care for a Christian congregation. ...when St. Peter and other apostles came into a city in which there were believers or Christians, they selected an elderly man or two who were upright, were married and had children, and were versed in Scripture. These men were called *πρεσβυτεροι*. Later Paul and Peter also called them *επισκοποι*, that is, bishops. Therefore the words "bishop" and "priest" had one and the same meaning. ... These elders, says St. Peter, who are to take care of and provide for the people, I exhort. I am one of them. Accordingly, you see clearly that he calls those men elders who have had an office and have preached. For this reason he also calls himself an elder. ... Now what should the elders do? We read: *Tend the flock of Christ that is your charge.* Christ is the chief Shepherd, and under Him He has many shepherds as well as many flocks of sheep. These sheep He has assigned to His shepherds here and there in many lands, as St. Peter writes here. What are these shepherds to do? They are to lead Christ's flock to pasture. ... It is well known what leading to pasture means. It means that the shepherds give the sheep pasture and provide them with fodder to make them fruitful, likewise that they take care that wolves do not come and tear the sheep to pieces. ... Now St. Peter is speaking in particular of the flock of Christ, as though he were saying: "Do not think that the flock belongs to you. You are only servants." ... The bishops are servants of Christ. It is their duty to tend His sheep and give them pasture. Therefore to give pasture is nothing else than to preach the Gospel, by which souls are fed and made fat and fruitful, and that the sheep are nourished with the Gospel and God's Word. This alone is the office of a bishop. Thus Christ also says to Peter (John 21:16): "Tend My sheep," which is to say: "The sheep you are to tend are not yours; they are Mine." ... To be sure, among all Christians one finds many, both men and women, who can preach as well as the one who preaches at a particular place. But in the whole group there are always many who are not strong. Therefore someone must be selected to strengthen them, lest wolves come and tear the sheep to pieces. For a pastor must not

only lead to pasture by teaching the sheep how to be true Christians: but, in addition to this, he must also repel the wolves, lest they attack the sheep and lead them astray with false doctrine and error. For the devil does not rest. (Martin Luther, "Sermons on the First Epistle of St. Peter," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 30 [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1967], pp. 132-35)

...the people...ought to know what the office of the Church is so that they can beware of false apostles, bishops, and ministers. "This is how [one] should regard [us, as ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God]" [1 Cor. 4:1]. ...he is not speaking about the people in general, but rather about those who govern [*gubernatores*] and hold office in the Church, such as the bishops, parish pastors, and preachers who teach the Word and administer the Sacraments, in which the mysteries are given and distributed. [Paul calls them] "ministers" [*Diener*] [1 Cor. 4:1]. Such a one is not like a [mere] servant [*servus*]. Rather, he is one of whom Christ [is speaking] in Matthew 24[:45]: "Where is a trustworthy [steward] to be found, [whom his master will set over his household,] to give [them their] portion at the proper time?" ... A preacher or a bishop should desire nothing higher than to be regarded as a minister of Jesus Christ, one who faithfully distributes his Lord's goods. ...he is speaking about the ministers of the Word, to whom the mandate [has been given] to distribute not money, but rather the remission of sins and consolation, that we should teach faithfully, as stewards over His spiritual goods, so that [the people] are rescued from the power of the devil. (Martin Luther, "Sermon for the Third Sunday in Advent" [1545], *Luther's Works*, Vol. 58 [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2010], pp. 342-43)

Kindly tell your dear sir and friend that he is not in duty bound to go ahead in this matter and give Holy Communion to himself and his household. Nor is this necessary since he is neither called nor commanded to do this. And if the tyrannical ministers will not administer it to him and his family, though they should do it, yet he can 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. And though they might have done it, such an example is no longer to be followed today, just as it cannot be permitted that today Christians have all things in common as was the case with the first Christians. For now the Gospel is spread throughout the world [*Öffentlich*], as are the sacraments also. 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 command 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 be administered by 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. And here he [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 he should not baptize. For there is a great difference between the public office [the ministry] in the church and [the care 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 any necessity nor a call here, we must do nothing out of our own devotion without God's definite command, for no good will come from it. (Martin Luther, "Concerning House Communion," St. Louis Edition, 10:2225; quoted in C. F. W. Walther, *Church and Ministry* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987], pp. 173-74)

I have been told how these infiltrators worm their way to harvesters and preach to them in the field during their work, as well as to the solitary workers at charcoal kilns or in the woods. Everywhere they sow their seed and spread their poison, turning the people from their parish churches. There you see the true print and touch of the devil, how he shuns the light and works in the dark. Who is so dull as not to be able to discern that these are messengers of the devil? If they came from God and were honest, they would first of all repair to the parish pastor and deal with him, making clear their call and telling what they believed and asking for his permission to preach publicly. If then the parish pastor would not permit it, they would be blameless before God and could then wipe the dust off their feet, etc. [cf. Luke 10:11]. For to the pastor is committed the pulpit, baptism, the sacrament [of the altar], and he is charged with the care of souls. But now these want to dislodge the pastor secretly, together with all of his authority, without revealing their secret commission. They are indeed regular thieves and murderers of souls, blasphemers, and enemies of Christ and his churches. ... Also we should teach and urge the people to report such intruders to their pastors, for they are duty bound to do so, if they are

Christians and seek salvation. When they do not do so, they abet the emissaries of the devil and these infiltrators in secretly 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). If the people hear such instruction and know the meaning of the call, some devoted members will undoubtedly report these furtive preachers and conspirators. For, as said, if we emphasize the matter of the call, we can worry the devil. A parish pastor can claim that he possesses the office of the ministry, baptism, the sacrament, the care of souls, and is commissioned, publicly and legally. Therefore the people should go to him for these things. (Martin Luther, "Infiltrating and Clandestine Preachers," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 40 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958], pp. 384-85)

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 reprint], pp. 531-32)

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*]. (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* [Fort Wayne, Indiana: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 1993], p. 184)

How is the Church gathered and governed in this world? Through the ministry of the Gospel or through hearing, reading, meditating on, etc., the Word of God; through which Christ Himself is effective, converts the hearts and minds of its hearers to God by His Holy Spirit, and with true knowledge of God and faith illumines, comforts, governs and sanctifies them to eternal life. "Everyone who believes in Christ will be saved. But how will they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? How will they hear without a preacher? So then faith comes from the hearing of the Word of God," Romans 10. "Thy word gives me life," Psalm 119. "In Thy word I have hoped," Psalm 130. "He will speak to you the words through which you and your household will be saved," Acts 11. *What is the ministry of the Gospel?* The ministry of the Gospel is the office which God has instituted, the office of preaching and confessing the Word of God, the Law and the Gospel concerning Christ, in the public assembly of the Church; of rightly administering the sacraments; of announcing the forgiveness of sins or of absolving those who repent; of excommunicating the obstinate; and of ordaining ministers of the Church, through which ministry God is truly effective for the salvation of all who believe, Luke 24; Matt. 10, 18 and 28; Rom. 10; Eph. 4; 1 Tim. 5; 2 Tim. 2. *What is ordination?* In general, the ordination of ministers is the ritual by which the public testimony is given in the presence of the entire Church of a certain person that he has been legitimately called and is fit to teach the Gospel and administer the sacraments. (David Chytraeus, *A Summary of the Christian Faith*

[Decatur, Illinois: Repristination Press, 1997], pp. 143-44)

All Christians are indeed priests (1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6), because they offer spiritual sacrifices to God. Everyone also can and should teach the Word of God in his own house (Deut. 6:7; 1 Cor. 14:35). Nevertheless, not everyone ought to take and arrogate to himself the public ministry of Word and sacrament. For not all are apostles; not all are teachers (1 Cor. 12:29), but those who have been set apart for this ministry by God through a particular and legitimate call (Acts 13:2; Jer. 23:21; Rom. 10:15). This is done either immediately or mediately. Paul prescribes a legitimate manner of calling which is made through the voice of the church (1 Tim. 3:2-7; and Titus 1:5-9). Christ Himself indeed called certain men to this ministry immediately, in order to show that He approves the ministry of those who are chosen and called by the voice of the church according to the rule prescribed by the apostles... There is added also the promise that God will truly work effectively through the ministry of those who teach the Gospel, which the Son of God wills to preserve in the church through perpetual calling, as Paul says in Eph. 4:8 ff.: He ascended; He gave gifts to men; and He gave some to be apostles, some prophets, others evangelists, others however pastors and teachers for perfecting of the saints in the work of ministry, in edification of the body of Christ. To this use of the ministry, which God both instituted and preserves in the church, men must therefore be guided, and taught that through this ministry there are offered to us eternal blessings, and indeed that God in this way receives us, rescues us from sin and the power of the devil and from eternal death, and restores to us righteousness and eternal life. 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, tranquillity, edification, etc. (Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part II [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978], pp. 678-79)

Paul, to be sure, describes the duty of ministers in one word when he says in 1 Cor. 4:2, "It is required in servants that they be faithful." To this faithfulness pertains the fact that they should have at least a fair knowledge of those things which are required for service or ministry and that they show diligence and constancy in performing their duties. There are several aspects of ministry: (1) The preaching of the Word, for which is required: (a) that "he speak as the oracles of God," 1 Peter 4:11. (b) that he "not teach false doctrine," 1 Tim. 1:3; but "guard the treasure which has been put into your charge," 2 Tim. 1:13; "rightly dividing" the Law and the Gospel, 2 Tim. 2:15. (2) The proper administration of the sacraments. (3) The use of the keys in absolution and excommunication. (4) Praying for the whole church. (5) An example to the believers, 1 Tim. 4:12; Titus 2:7, 1 Peter 5:3, "that the ministry be not discredited," 2 Cor. 6:3. (6) The care of the poor, such as visiting the sick, comforting the afflicted, etc. Furthermore, Paul divides the handling of the Word or preaching into different categories. At one point the Word is dealt with in meetings of the learned. Paul seems to be referring to these meetings in 1 Cor. 14:6 when he lists such things as tongues, revelation, interpretation (v. 26), and knowledge. But "when the whole church," which Paul describes as consisting of both unlearned and learned, "comes together it is foolish," he says, if they all speak in tongues, v. 23. But for meetings of this kind he proposes instruction (*katechesis*), prophecy (*propheteia*), and teaching (*didache*), 1 Cor. 14:19,22,26. These terms can be distinguished: *Katechesis* refers to teaching the basic principles to the unlearned and partially instructed, Luke 1:4; Heb. 6:1; 1 Cor. 3:1, while *propheteia* is interpreted of those who have advanced to a higher knowledge of Scripture. *Didache* applies the teachings of Scripture to regular statements of doctrine (*loci communes*), which it explains in keeping with a logical method. To these three terms Paul adds the following kinds of teaching in 2 Tim. 3:16: *Didaskalia* is correct teaching; *elegchos* refutes false teachings; *paideia* guides our life and morals; and *epanorthosis* condemns and refutes wickedness and evil morals in order to correct them. In Rom. 15:4 *paraklesis* means comfort; *hypomone* is an exhortation to perseverance and patience. In 1 Cor. 10:11 *nouthesia* signifies either a warning or reminder (*Erinnerung*) which is impressed upon the mind or thoughts, or the application of certain examples. 1 Cor. 14:3 has *oikodome* (upbuilding), *paraklesis* (comfort), and *parathyμία* (encouragement). Again in v. 24 he uses the concept of convicting and judging which seem to point to the rule according to which judgments in doctrine are to be made. Likewise 1 Peter 3:15 gives

a general description of the practice of apologetics. And 2 Tim. 4:2 says that certain exhortations are to be “with all long-suffering,” while 1 Peter 3:16 says that this must take place with “meekness.” 1 Thess. 2:7, “Gentle as a nurse cherishing her children.” But when “they will not endure sound doctrine,” 2 Tim. 4:3, then “be prepared in season and out of season to rebuke and encourage.” 1 Tim. 1:3 and 4:11, “command them” and condemn them by the authority of your office. Titus 2:15, “Rebuke with all authority.” Titus 1:13, “Reprove them severely.” In 1 Cor. 14:29 Paul directs that when two or three prophets have spoken that the rest then judge their teaching. Acts 15:6, when controversies arise, then the elders come together for discussion. Acts 20:28,31, be on guard against wolves; tend the flock. Titus 1:9, “Convince the gainsayers.” 2 Tim. 2:25, “Instruct those who stand in opposition.” Titus 1:5, “Appoint elders,” 2 Tim. 2:2, “committing them to faithful men.” 1 Corinthians 14, establish order in the church. See also 1 Timothy 3; Titus 1; and 2 Corinthians 6. (Martin Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989], Vol. II, pp. 392-93)

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.” ... 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. (Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part II [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978], pp. 293-94, 301, 303, 311-13).

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. (Herman Amberg Preus, *Vivacious Daughter* [Northfield, Minnesota: The Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1990], p. 125)

...the spiritual tyrants despised and underestimated the office of preaching and made a great separation between it and the spiritual government, even though it is the highest office, on which all others depend and from which they follow. On the other hand, where there is no office of preaching, none of the others can follow. For John says, John 4[:2], that Jesus did not baptize, he only preached. And Paul boasts, 1 Corinthians 1[:17], that he was not sent to baptize but to preach. Therefore, whoever has the office of preaching imposed on him has the highest office in Christendom imposed on him. Afterward he may also baptize, celebrate mass, and exercise all pastoral care [*See/sorge*]; or, if he does not wish to do so, he may confine himself to preaching and leave baptizing and other lower offices to others – as Christ and all the apostles did, Acts 4 [6:4]. Thus it becomes evident that our present-day bishops are spiritual idols and not bishops. For they leave the highest office of the word, which should be their own, in the hands of the very lowest [orders], namely, chaplains, monks, and mendicants. They also leave the lower offices such as baptizing and other pastoral care to them. In the meantime, however, they administer confirmation, consecrate bells, altars, and churches which are neither Christian nor episcopal duties and which they themselves invented. (Martin Luther, “That a Christian Assembly or Congregation has the Right and 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. 313-14)

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? An old Church father said correctly that the preaching office is a burden beyond even what the shoulders of angels can bear. It appears scarcely possible that even a preacher can be saved. For in the reckoning which shall one day be demanded from him, it will be impossible for him to stand. A negligent preacher, who seeks for himself a nice, easy life, and is satisfied if he only keeps his congregation happy, condemns himself as a useless, shameful servant. But even the preacher who sacrifices himself entirely remains unendingly guilty. Daily he must cry from the depths of his soul: “[Lord,] enter not into judgment with Your servant, for no one living is righteous before you” [Psalm 143:2]. 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. An account will one day be demanded from the hands of the preacher for the entire congregation and for the blood of every soul of the same. What a heavy reckoning a preacher shall have to give one day! What a fearful responsibility he has, a lofty task that exceeds his powers and gifts. Yet, my dear friends, we preachers have a consolation, and this is it: God does not expect

from us gifts that He has not given to us. He does not seek from us works and results that He does not work through us. He only demands from us faithfulness in what He has granted us. And he remains for us a gracious, merciful, patient Father of the house, with whom there is much forgiveness. (C. F. W. Walther, "Sermon on the Office of the Ministry," in Matthew C. Harrison, *At Home in the House of My Fathers* [Lutheran Legacy, 2009], pp. 152-54)

... Luther in 1523...believed that those in 1 Corinthians 14[:30 KJV] 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. ... Regarding students and candidates who also occasionally preach, ...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. They subject themselves thereby at the same time to the election of the Church. ... God give you [in the Norwegian Synod] good courage for the struggle that He has ordained for you! While we [in the Missouri Synod] 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! (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* [Lutheran Legacy, 2009], pp. 138-40)

Among the various functions and official acts of a servant of the Church the most important of all, my friends, is preaching. Since there is no substitute for preaching, a minister who accomplishes little or nothing by preaching will accomplish little or nothing by anything else that he may do. ... When Christ was about to return to the glory which He had with the Father before the foundation of the world, He gave His disciples, together with their commission, this instruction: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature" [Mark 16:15], or as Matthew puts it: "Go ye and teach all nations" [Matt. 28:19a]. Then He adds: "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" [v. 19b]. Not satisfied with having said this, He concluded His instruction with these words: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" [v.20a]. Behold here the Alpha and Omega of the apostolic office, or the ministry of the Church: it is preaching and teaching. This function, however, is not only the most important, but also the most difficult function assigned to a minister of the Church. ... Administering Baptism properly is easy; anybody can do it. Likewise, pronouncing absolution correctly is quite easy; even a boy can do it. Administering Holy Communion is also very easy; any intelligent Christian can do it. But to preach properly is difficult. For this reason a student of theology ought to make proper preaching his highest aim. For if he is unable to preach, he does not belong in the ministry. In our orthodox Church a servant of God is a minister of Jesus Christ, and his worth does not lie in a certain undefined quality that has been imparted to him at his ordination or consecration, in something that other people have not and which, for that reason, makes him such a sacrosanct and precious person. By no means; the worth of a true minister of the Church lies exclusively in his ability to preach properly. If he has not this ability, the pulpit is not the place for him; for the pulpit is for preaching. Preaching is the central element of every divine service. (C. F. W. Walther,

...the author 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). The Office of the Keys belongs to all Christians, and they are all to use this office as Christ's priests. But 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. ... Just as it is evident from the Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions that there is nowhere a special word of institution for the local congregation, so also 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 various 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. As a case in point, we may think of the celebration of the Lord's Supper at a pastoral conference. It is usually held in a local church, but it can take place in a college chapel or even at a summer camp. There surely is no dogmatic reason to say that the sacrament of the altar is being celebrated only by some power inherent in a local, visible congregation. What is demanded is that the work necessitated by the Office of the Public Ministry be not neglected; that there be true shepherding, true care of souls, and the acknowledgment that it is not our Supper but the Lord's Supper. ...the Augsburg Confession mentions with approval Chrysostom's statement "that the priest stands daily at the altar inviting some to Communion and keeping others away" (AC XXIV, 36). Furthermore, the Augustana asserts that one function of the office of the public ministry is that of exclusion: "According to divine right, therefore, it is the office of the bishop to preach the Gospel, forgive sins, judge doctrine and condemn doctrine that is contrary to the Gospel, and exclude from the Christian community the ungodly whose wicked conduct is manifest. All this is to be done not by human power but by God's Word alone. On this account parish ministers and churches are bound to be obedient to the bishops according to the saying of Christ in Luke 10:16, 'He who hears you hears me.'" (AC XXVIII, 21. 22). These matters may seem onerous for a "now generation" who think that their freedom in Christ gives them liberty to do whatever they will and wherever and whenever they will. But not so for a confessional Lutheran. (Bjarne W. Teigen, "The Church in the New Testament, Luther, and the Lutheran Confessions," *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, Vol. 42, No. 4 [Oct. 1978], pp. 392-95)

12. The office of spiritual oversight: its various manifestations in the Old Testament, in the New Testament, and in the history of the Church

TESTIMONIES FROM THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS:

They cite another passage from 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." This passage clearly requires the sacrifices of the righteous... For 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. (Ap XXIV:34, K/W pp. 264-65)

Let them figure out how they will give an account of their decisions to God. Nor do we dare assume that the church immediately approves or accepts whatever the pontiffs decide, especially when Scripture prophesies about bishops and pastors in the passage where Ezekiel says [7:26], "Instruction shall perish from the priest." (Ap XXII:16-17, K/W p. 247)

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. (FC SD XII:6, K/W p. 656) (*One of the men who made this declaration – 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.*)

TESTIMONIES FROM THE WRITINGS OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGIANS:

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 [*Predigtamt*] or bishop [*Bischofsamt*] 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*]. (Martin Luther, “Against the Roman Papacy, an Institution of the Devil,” *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 41 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966], pp. 358-59)

The principal efficient cause of the ministry is the one and only true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is proved (1) by express passages of Scripture as Ps. 68:11; 1 Cor. 12:28; 2 Cor. 5:18: “God...has given us (the apostles and other teachers of the church) the ministry of reconciliation.” (2) By God’s generous promises that He would grant to His church pastors and that He would preserve the ministry. Jer. 3:15; 23:4: “I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them” Joel 2:23 [cf. Luther’s translation]. (3) By God’s special titles of honor, which show that the care and preservation of the ministry greatly concern Him. Thus in Matt. 9:38 He is called the Lord of the harvest, who sends laborers into His harvest; in Matt. 20:1 the householder who hires laborers for His vineyard; in Matt. 21:33 the householder who plants a vineyard and sends His servants to the husbandmen in order that they might receive its fruits; in Luke 13:8 the gardener who has a fig tree planted in his vineyard and digs about it and fertilizes it that it may bear fruit (cf. John 15:1); in 1 Cor. 3:9 the husbandman who in his spiritual field has fellow workers. (4) By the exhortations to ask God for pastors. In Matt. 9:38 Christ admonishes us to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into His harvest. In Acts we read that the church supplicated God whenever pastors were to be elected. But if God is to be asked for pastors, then certainly it is He who grants to His church competent ministers. Here it may be pertinent to remark that one of the apostles was called Matthias, that is, a gift of God. (5) By the testimonies that accrue from experience. For God not only attended to the ministry in His own person when in the state of innocence He issued the command not to eat of the fruit of the forbidden tree and then after the Fall announced the promise concerning the blessed Seed of the woman, revealing it out of the deepest depths of His divine decree, but He also transmitted the ministry to men by placing Adam and the other patriarchs at the head of the church, which then was limited almost entirely to their families. Afterward He sent Moses and other prophets and established the Levitical priesthood. In this way God in the Old Testament instituted and preserved the holy ministry. In the New Testament the Son of God Himself in His assumed human nature administered this office. He also chose His apostles, whom He adequately equipped with the necessary gifts for the preaching of the Gospel and then sent them out into the whole world. After His session at the right hand of God, He still grants to His church pastors and teachers in order that His saints may be perfected for the work of the ministry, by which His mystical body [the church] is edified (Eph. 4:11-12).

Although the institution and preservation of the ministry is an outward work, as we are accustomed to say, and so is common to the whole Trinity, yet as in other similar works, the Triune God acts also here, preserving the distinction and order of the persons. As the Father is the fountainhead of the Trinity, He is also the source of the benefactions that are granted to the church, to which also the institution and preservation of the ministry belongs. God the Father in the Old Testament called the patriarchs, Moses, and the prophets. He chose the Levites to be the priests, and in the fulness of the time He sent His Son in order that in His assumed flesh He might not only carry out the work of redemption but also execute on earth the ministry of teaching. “God, who at various times and in different ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son” (Heb. 1:1-2). For this reason Christ so often appeals to His Father as the One who sent Him (Matt. 10:40; Luke 4:18; John 5:23, and others). In this sense and respect the Father is called the Lord of the harvest, the Lord of the vineyard, the Householder, the Husbandman, etc.,

namely, not only because He sent His servants, the prophets, but also at last His only and beloved Son (Matt. 21:37; Mark 12:6; Luke 20:13, etc.) into the vineyard of the church (2 Cor. 5:18; Gal. 1:16).

The Son speaks to the fathers from the beginning, for which reason He also is called the Word. ... He is the angel who, sent by the Father, went before the Israelites as they left Egypt, guided them through the wilderness, and after the destruction of the Canaanites led them into the Promised Land (Ex. 23:33; 33:2; Is. 63:9). It was He who spoke to Moses and the Israelites on Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:19; Acts 7:38) and from the cherubim on the ark of covenant (Ex. 25:22). It was He who in the fulness of the time assumed human nature and came as a teacher sent of God (John 3:2), spreading the heavenly seed of the Word in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria. He is the Wisdom of God (Prov. 9:1-12; Luke 11:49; 1 Cor. 1:24), saying in Matt. 23:34: "Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets and wise men." He joined to Himself apostles, whom He instructed for three years, then placed them into the ministry, and sent them out into the whole world to preach the Gospel (Matt. 10:1; Luke 9:1; John 20:21; Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15). Exalted to the right hand of the Father, He gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, etc. (Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Cor. 12:28). In a marvelous way He called Saul into the apostleship (Acts 9:15), who therefore says: "Christ sent me to preach the Gospel" (1 Cor. 1:17). As the Son in the house of God, namely, the church, He ordains the householders, to whom He gives the keys to loose and bind (Heb. 3:6; 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Cor. 4:1; Matt. 16:19), wherefore He calls Himself the Master of the house (Matt. 10:25).

The Holy Spirit once spoke through the prophets inspired by God and through teachers of the church. "The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His Word was on my tongue" (2 Sam. 23:2; Acts 28:25; 1 Peter 1:11; 2 Peter 1:21). He it is who anointed Christ in the flesh above His fellows and sent Him forth to preach (Ps. 45:8; Is. 42:1; 61:1; Luke 4:18). He was poured out on the apostles visibly so that they, furnished with power from on high, preached the Gospel to all nations (Acts. 1:8; Luke 24:49). He commanded the apostles, as they worshipped the Lord and fasted, to separate Barnabas and Saul for the work to which He had called them (Acts 13:2). They, therefore, are said to have been sent by the Holy Spirit (v. 4); that is said also of the elders of the church at Ephesus (Acts 20:28). He still supplies the ministers of the Word with the gifts they need for the right and salutary administration of their office (1 Cor. 12:4-11). Therefore, the ministry of the Gospel is also called the ministry of the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:6), not only because the Holy Spirit is given by the preaching of the Gospel (Gal. 3:2), but also because the Holy Spirit has instituted and still preserves the ministry, for He supplies the ministers with the needed gifts. Therefore, when Christ desired to entrust His apostles with the ministry, He first gave them the Holy Spirit by breathing on them (John 20:22) so that whatever they rightly and salutarily did in their capacity as ministers of the church is justly ascribed to the Holy Spirit, who mightily operated in and through them. "It is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you" (Matt. 10:20). (John Gerhard, *Loci theologici*, "De ministerio ecclesiastico," par. 49ff.; quoted in C. F. W. Walther, *Church and Ministry* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987], pp. 184-87)

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. (John Gerhard, *Loci theologici* 24, 212; quoted in Matthias Loy, *Essay on the Ministerial Office* [Columbus, Ohio: Schulze & Gassmann, 1870], pp. 25-26)

The visible church is the assembly of those who hold the Gospel of Christ and rightly use the sacraments, in which God, through the ministry of the Gospel, is efficacious, and He regenerates many unto life eternal. In this assembly, however, there are many unregenerate who nevertheless give their assent to the true doctrine, just as in the time of Mary the church consisted of Zacharias, Simeon, Joseph, Elizabeth, Mary, the shepherds, and many others like them who were in agreement regarding the pure doctrine and did not listen to the Sadducees or the other ungodly priests but to Zacharias, Simeon, Anna, Elizabeth, Mary and people like them. For God preserves some as His remnant among the ministers and gradually restores the ministry. And among these hearers of Zacharias and Elizabeth there were some who were not born again, having sins against conscience; and yet, because they consented to the true doctrine, they were citizens and members of the church in this life.

But meanwhile the priests, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees were in conflict with the Word of God; though they were in control, yet they were not members of the church, according to [Gal. 1:8], "If anyone teach another Gospel, let him be accursed," etc. Thus in the time of Elijah the church consisted of Elijah, Elisha, and their hearers, and the

church was not without a ministry. For the prophets themselves were the ministers of the Gospel and there were some godly priests with them. For there was a fair-sized multitude of saints, as the text says [1 Kings 19:18], "I still have left to Me seven thousand," etc. Mixed with these were some whose morals were subject to criticism, who still, because they assented to the true doctrine, were members of the church in external association and in the function of the ministry. But in the meantime the priests of Baal and those like them who defended ungodly rites were not members of the church.

These examples from history were written to teach the difference between the true and false church. And now these words are part of the definition: "In which assembly God through the ministry of the Gospel, is efficacious." There are two noteworthy elements, not to be omitted, whenever a definition of the church is formulated. For we must not imagine the church without some knowledge of the promise concerning Christ and without the ministry; the church is not in an assembly where there is neither knowledge of the promise of Christ nor the voice nor the ministry of the Gospel. ...these statements testify that there must be the knowledge of Christ in the church of God. See John 3[:18,36]; 17[:17]; 1 Cor. 1[:21]; Rom. 10:14. Eph. 4:11, Christ sitting at the right hand of God, "also gives some prophets, some apostles, some pastors, [and] some teachers," and He clearly says that the ministry of the Gospel must be preserved, so that "it be not tossed about by various winds of doctrine" [cf. v. 14]. Just as the gentiles, when they do not hear the Word of God, fall into frightful ravings and gradually devise other gods and many portents and many prodigious expressions of worship. The same thing happens to heretics, [such as the] Manichaeans, the Anabaptists, etc., because they abandon the Word of God.

Therefore we should know that the church of God is the assembly which is bound to the voice or the ministration of the Gospel. And outside of this assembly, where there is no voice of the Gospel and no invocation of Christ, there are no heirs of eternal life, as it is written, "There is no other name...by which we must be saved" [Acts 4:12]. Thus also Isaiah says in 8[:16], "Seal the law among My disciples," that is, I see that great darkness will follow, but I pray You, O God, that You preserve the hearers of [Your] prophets and seal in them Your doctrine given to the prophets, so that the Word and the true understanding of the Word not be quenched. Some churches remain and these are this assembly which retains Your Word uncorrupted which they have received from the prophets. Therefore Isaiah in 8:20 [cf. Vulgate] adds the words, "To the law and to the testimony. They who do not speak according to this Word shall not have the morning light." For the will of God is not understood except through the Word which He has given, and God wills to be known and invoked as He has revealed Himself. Then we must also add this, that God is efficacious through this ministry that is, through the voice of the Gospel [as it is] heard, read, and pondered. He moves [our] minds by the Holy Spirit, wants us to assent, aids those who assent, and renews eternal life in them. Thus it is written in Rom. 1[:16], "The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believes"; and 2 Cor. 3[:8], "The new covenant is the ministry of the Spirit."

These points contain the saving doctrine and comfort, that is to say, when we know that the promise of eternal life is truly offered in this way through the Word. ...the church is simply and completely bound to the promise of Christ. It is necessary above all things to call upon the name of Christ, and in all those who are capable of being taught there must be knowledge, invocation, and confession of the Son of God. The church has been such since the beginning, from [the time of] Adam, after the promise was given, an assembly sometimes large, sometimes small, which in confidence in the promise of God received the remission of sins and rightly called upon God.

But after this is established, that in the church there must be the voice of the Gospel and the ministry, then questions arise regarding the persons. Is the church bound to the bishops and their colleges, which are said to hold the office of the ministry? Likewise, is [the church] bound to a regular succession of bishops and colleges? I Reply: The church is bound to the very Gospel of God, because, in order that it may be proclaimed in the ministry, God raises up some men from time to time who teach correctly, as it says in Ephesians 4, even if, among these, some have more light, others less. But when the ministers or bishops or colleges or others teach things which are in conflict with the Gospel and the doctrine of the apostles, it is necessary to follow the rule of Paul: "If any one teach another Gospel, let him be accursed" [Gal. 1:8]. From this rule we can judge that the church is not bound to certain titles or a regular succession. For when those who hold the power of orders err, they must not be heeded. (Philip Melancthon, *Loci Communes* [1543]; in Martin Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989], Vol. II, pp. 685-86)

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 lamps [luminaries] of the restored Church and heralds of righteousness [*instauratae 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 deploying the goods of the Lord. Accordingly, they are to be censured who, neither waiting for a mission nor the approval of the Church and of those to whom it matters, seize an ecclesiastical office [*Ecclesiasticum munus*] by private decision, or take it over by force, or buy it for a price, or who by blood relation or by marriage alliance, either effected or about to be effected for a benefice, or by fraud or by buying votes or by other improper means whatsoever, force themselves into or allow themselves to be forced into office by others. What has regularly been made known in sermons concerning the success of such who by lawful or unlawful means force themselves into the sacred order [*ordinis sacro*] has been noted: "As is the call, so is the success." But 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. (Ordination Certificate signed at Wicaco, Pa., on Nov. 25, 1703, by Andreas Rudman, Ericus BiÖrk [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)

...the local pastor's office (*Pfarramt*) has existed since the time of the Patriarchs and before. (Francis Pieper, Statement 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," *Logia*, Vol. XII, No. 2 [Easter 2003], p. 42)

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." (Kurt E. Marquart, *The Church and Her Fellowship, Ministry, and Governance* [Fort Wayne, Indiana: The International Foundation for Lutheran Confessional Research, corrected edition 1995], 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.)

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. (Hermann Sasse, “The Crisis of the Christian Ministry,” *The Lonely Way*, Vol. II [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2002], pp. 357-58)

“As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you” [John 20, 21]. With these words he [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 (although before the world it neither resembles nor is called dominion). And yet this office shall not and cannot extend further than over that alone which before God is called sin; so that wherever sin begins and works their government or rule shall also begin and work, and everything that lives and is called human upon the earth, shall be in subjection to their rule, whether it be emperor or king, great or small, no one is excluded. 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. Now in order to exercise and accomplish the end of this authority and government, special power is required that is not human but divine. Therefore...he breathes on them and says: “Receive ye the Holy Ghost” [John 20, 22], namely, they are to know that such an office and work cannot be carried on in their own strength, but in his power through the Holy Spirit, who operates through their office and word; and it shall thus be the office of the Holy Spirit, who is given for this purpose by Christ, that although the message seems but weak, and nothing more than a weak breath out of the mouth of man, yet such power shall be exercised through it, that sin, God’s wrath, death, and hell must yield to it. (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. 388-90)

... I indeed, whenever I make a comparison of these things, am angry with myself and am ashamed of my life and full of regrets, because after Christ has been revealed, we have such a cold attitude toward our gifts and believe the Word so weakly, whereas the [Old Testament] fathers believed with such great steadfastness and lived in faith in the promises. In this way they overcame great dangers and difficulties. ... For they clung so firmly to the promises about the Shiloh who was to come that in comparison with them we, in the midst of the abundance and great glory of Christ's revelation, are plainly cold and snoring. If it were not sinful, one should punish oneself for paying so little attention to the great majesty of God's works. For is it not a great gift and great glory that in case of necessity even a woman can baptize and say: "I deliver you from death, the devil, sin, and all evils, and I give you the gift of eternal life; I make a son of God out of a son of the devil"? But by daily use that abundance of the Spirit has become commonplace. Yet it is true that a minister of the Gospel who teaches and baptizes is a greater prophet than Jacob or Moses. The clarity of our prophecy is immeasurably superior to the clarity they had. To be sure, they had the same spiritual food, drink, and faith; but the richness of our blessings is so great that even a child can absolve and can transfer from the kingdom of the devil into the kingdom of God by no other means than the Word, as Is. 11:6,8, says: "A little child shall lead the wolf, the lion, and the leopard, etc. The sucking child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adders den." Therefore Peter says: "We have the prophetic Word made more sure. You will do well to pay attention to this." (2 Peter 1:19.) ... But these things should be repeated and discussed frequently, in order that we may glorify the ministry of the Word and give thanks to God because we are better prophets than the fathers and prophets in the Old Testament were. For today even a child or a woman can say to me: "Have confidence, my son. I announce to you the remission of sins. I absolve you, etc." Or does one who hears this and believes not have forgiveness of sins and eternal life? Or is it not madness and insanity to teach that there should be doubt about this, and to deny that all this has been set forth in Holy Scripture, yes, to contend that Holy Scripture opposes this doctrine? O how horrible and full of danger are the times on which we wretched men have fallen! Surely there is no doubt at all that he who offers and administers the sacraments is a prophet and that he who takes them and believes is also a prophet. For "This is My body; this is My blood" (Matt. 26:26,28) are the words of a Prophet. Christ is the Prophet promised in Deut. 18:18-19: "I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren; and I will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And whoever will not give heed to My words which He shall speak in My name, I myself will require it of him." ... Therefore it is necessary for us to magnify the ministry of the church, that is, our glory; for our faith rests not only on the promises but also on the fulfillment of what was promised. We have the Lord Himself speaking with us and setting forth far more illustrious promises than those that were given to the fathers. In Baptism Christ says: "I set you free, rescue you from the power of the devil, and hand you over to My heavenly Father." Here I must conclude with certainty that Christ is not lying; and the more firmly I believe, the saintlier and more blessed I am. And surely there is no cause for doubting, since Christ promises the remission of sins and eternal life. (Martin Luther, "Lectures on Genesis," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 8 [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1966], pp. 308-11)

Therefore it should be understood that the name "priest" ought to be the common possession of believers just as much as the name "Christian" or "child of God." We all have one Baptism in common, one Gospel, one kind of grace, one kind of inheritance of the kingdom of heaven, one Holy Spirit, one God the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 4:4-6). We are all one in Him, as He says in John 17:22 and as St. Paul says in Galatians 3:28: "You are all one in Christ Jesus." This is said of the priestly office, which is the common property of all Christians. However, we deal with a different matter when we speak of those who have an office in the Christian Church, such as minister [*Kirchendiener*], preacher, pastor, or curate. These are not priests in the sense that Scripture commonly speaks of priests. They became priests before they received their office, in fact, when they were baptized. Hence they are not priests because of their calling or office. The Scripture calls them "servants" or "bishops," that is, overseers; the apostles speak of them as presbyters, that is, elders. The best, the most mature men, well-tried, learned, fit, and experienced, were chosen for this office. ... Before anyone becomes a preacher or a bishop, he must first be a Christian, a born priest. No pope or any other man can make him a priest. But having been born a priest through Baptism, a man thereupon receives the office; and this is what makes a difference between him and other Christians. Out of the multitude of Christians some must be selected who shall lead the others by virtue of the special gifts and aptitude which God gives them for the office. Thus St. Paul writes (Eph. 4:11,12): "And His gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipment of the saints" (this means those who are already Christians and baptized priests), "for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ" (that is, the Christian congregation or

church). For although we are all priests, this does not mean that all of us can preach, teach, and rule. Certain ones of the multitude must be selected and separated for such an office. And he who has such an office is not a priest because of his office but a servant of all the others, who are priests. When he is no longer able to preach and serve, or if he no longer wants to do so, he once more becomes a part of the common multitude of Christians. His office is conveyed to someone else, and he becomes a Christian like any other. This is the way to distinguish between the office of preaching, or the ministry, and the general priesthood of all baptized Christians. The preaching office is no more than a public service which happens to be conferred upon someone by the entire congregation, all the members of which are priests.

But you may ask: "Wherein does this priesthood of Christians consist, and what are their priestly works?" The answer is as follows: The very same that were mentioned before: teaching, sacrificing, and praying. But you must know this, as I have also stated before, that Christ is the only High Priest. Before we attempt to do such priestly works, we must have the benefit of His priestly office; yes, we must possess it. The doctrine and preaching by which we are saved comes from Him; He brought it from heaven. He alone has made the complete sacrifice for us all by which we are reconciled to God. Therefore He is also the only one who stands in the immediate presence of God to make intercessions for us an, and without this Mediator no prayer is acceptable to God. But after we have become Christians through this Priest and His priestly office, incorporated in Him by Baptism through faith, then each one, according to his calling and position, obtains the right and the power of teaching and confessing before others this Word which we have obtained from Him. 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. ...

Every Christian has and practices such priestly works. But above these activities is the communal office of public teaching. For this preachers and pastors are necessary. This office cannot be attended to by all the members of a congregation. Neither is it fitting that each household do its own baptizing and celebrating of the Sacrament. Hence it is necessary to select and ordain those who can preach and teach, who study the Scriptures, and who are able to defend them. They deal with the sacraments by the authority of the congregation, so that it is possible to know who is baptized and everything is done in an orderly fashion. If everyone were to preach to his neighbor or if they did things for one another without orderly procedure, it would take a long time indeed to establish a congregation. Such functions, however, do not pertain to the priesthood as such but belong to the public office which is performed in behalf of all those who are priests, that is, Christians. (Martin Luther, "Psalm 110," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 13 [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1956], pp. 330-34)

Preachers (*Prediger*) were limited to preaching; pastors (*Pfarrherren*) exercised the full ministerial office. (Theodore G. Tappert, an editorial notation pertaining to LC Longer Preface: 1, in *The Book of Concord*, edited by Tappert [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959], p. 358)

On all holy days after the high Mass, the fourth deacon who is especially delegated to catechize the peasants and peasant children shall ride to the villages [surrounding the city of Wittenberg] and preach to the people from the catechism. He shall also retell the plain and simple stories or the gospel for the holy day. After the sermon, the entire catechism including the instructions of Christ concerning Baptism and the sacrament [of the Lord's Supper] shall be recited to the people. Then one shall admonish them to pray. The deacon shall sing a German hymn with the peasants before and after the sermon so that the peasants with their children and the hired workers shall learn to sing diligently and rightly. The deacon can indeed exhort them concerning this at the opportune time. ... There should be special preaching [in Wittenberg] on the catechism four times a year, one time by the pastor and the other three times by the other three priests. On the preceding Sunday, the pastor shall warn the people that they are obliged to send their children and hired workers. This shall take place in the first two weeks of Advent, the first two weeks after Quadragesima, in Cross Week and the week following it, and in the two weeks just after the harvest, before one has taken in the hops, around the Sunday before St. Bartholomew's day and the following two weeks. Each time preach eight days, namely, Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays in both weeks after midday at the proper hour for Vespers. (Wittenberg Church Order [1533], *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts* [edited by Aemilius L.

Richter] [Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1967], Vol. 1, p. 221; quoted in Eric Lund, *Documents from the History of Lutheranism 1517-1750* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002], p. 138)

In this chapter [I Cor. 14] St. Paul, thus, often refers to the “congregation,” clearly distinguishing between prophets and people. The prophets speak, the congregation listens. For so he says, “He who prophesies builds up the church.” And again, “Strive to excel in building up the church” [I Cor. 14:4,12]. Who then are those who are to build up the church? Is it not the prophets, and (as he says) those speaking with tongues, that is who read or sing the lesson, to whom the congregation listens, and the prophets whose duty it is to interpret the lesson for the building up of the congregation? It should be clear that he is commanding the congregation to listen and build itself up, and is not commissioning it to teach or preach. He makes an even clearer distinction when he speaks of the congregation as the laity, and says, “If you bless with the spirit, how can anyone in the place of the laity say the ‘Amen,’ when he does not know what you are saying? For you may give thanks well enough, but the other man is not edified” [I Cor. 14:16f.]. This again points to a difference between preacher and layman. ... Thus we read in St. Paul: “Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said,” etc. [I Cor. 14:29]. This of course is said only of the prophets, and of which ones should speak and which should weigh what was said. What is meant by “others”? The people? Of course not. It means the other prophets or those speaking with tongues who should help in the church with preaching and building up of the congregation, those who should judge and assist in seeing to it that the preaching is right. Should it happen that one of the prophets or preachers came upon the best interpretation, the other should yield and say, yes, you are right. I did not understand it as well. ... Though it is no longer the custom for prophets or preachers to sit in the church and take turns in speaking (as St. Paul describes it), some indication and vestige of it does remain. For we do sing alternately in the choir and read one lesson after the other and then together sing an antiphon, hymn, or response. And when one preacher interprets what another reads, and another explains or preaches thereon, then indeed we follow the right method in the churches, according to St. Paul. For then one sings or speaks with tongues, the second translates, the third expounds, and still another confirms or illustrates with maxims and examples, as St. James in Acts 15[:13ff.] and Paul in Acts 13[:14f.]. ... But I would not be in favor of restoring this custom and doing away with the pulpit. Rather I would oppose it, for the people are at present too untamed and forward. And a devil might easily worm his way in among parish pastors, preachers, and chaplains. One would want to be above and better than the other, quarreling and snapping at each other in the presence of the people. Therefore it is better to retain the pulpit, for then at least things are done decently and in order, as St. Paul admonishes. It is sufficient that in one parish the preachers take daily turns in preaching or, if they wish, preach in different places in turn. One might expound in the afternoon or forenoon what the other has sung or read in matins or in the mass, as now and then it happens with the Gospel and the Epistle. For St. Paul is not so rigidly concerned about the one method, but he is concerned about order and decent procedure, and gives this method as an example. We had better keep our custom in preaching since it more than the other will keep order among our stupid folk. In the days of the Apostle the custom of prophets sitting alongside each other was possible. For it was a habit of long standing and practiced daily among a well-disciplined people who had inherited it from Moses through the Levitical priesthood. It would hardly do to restore the practice among such uncouth, undisciplined, shameless people as ours. (Martin Luther, “Infiltrating and Clandestine Preachers,” *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 40 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958], pp. 391-93)

Both the Old and the New Testaments give sufficient evidence of what a divinely wholesome thing it would be if pastors and Christian congregations might be visited by understanding and competent persons. For we read in Acts 9[:32] that St. Peter travelled about in the land of the Jews. And in Acts 15[:2] we are told that St. Paul together with Barnabas revisited all those places where they had preached. All his epistles reveal his concern for all the congregations and pastors. He writes letters, he sends his disciples, he goes himself. So the apostles, according to Acts 8[:14], when they heard how the Word had been received in Samaria, sent Peter and John there. Also we read in the Old Testament how Samuel travelled around, now to Ramah [I Sam. 7:17], now to Nob [I Sam. 21:1], now to Gilgal [I Sam. 10:8; 11:14; 13:8; 15:12] and other places, not out of delight for taking a walk but out of love and a sense of duty in his ministry and because of the want and need of the people. Elijah [I Kings 17-21] and Elisha [II Kings 2-13] did the same, as we read in the books of Kings. More than any, Christ has done this kind of work on behalf of all, and on this account possessed no place on earth where he could lay his head or which he could call his own. This began even while he was in the womb, for he went with his mother over the hills to visit St. John [Luke 1:39]. Formerly, in the days of the ancient Fathers,

the holy bishops diligently followed these examples and even yet much of this is found in the papal laws. For it was in this kind of activity that the bishops and archbishops had their origin – each one was obligated to a greater or lesser extent to visit and examine. For, actually, bishop means *supervisor* or *visitor*, and archbishop a *supervisor* or *visitor of bishops*, to see to it that each parish pastor visits and watches over and supervises his people in regard to teaching and life. And the archbishop was to visit, watch over, and supervise the bishops as to their teaching. ... This office has fared like all holy and ancient Christian doctrine and order – it has become the farce and contempt of the devil and Antichrist with awful and terrible destruction of souls. Who can describe how useful and necessary this office is in the Christian church? One can sense it in the abuses which have come through a period of deterioration and perversion. But no doctrine or vocation has remained sound or pure. On the contrary, a host of frightful sects and mobs, like the chapters and monasteries, have cropped up, whereby the Christian church has been altogether suppressed, faith has died out, love turned into wrangling and war, the Gospel put in the shadow, and purely human inventions, teachings, and dreams have ruled in place of the Gospel. Surely the devil enjoyed success when he tore down this office and brought it under his own power, setting up instead these spiritual scarecrows and monk calves, so that no one resisted him. Even when the office is rightly and diligently administered it takes a lot of effort to exercise it properly, as Paul complained to the Thessalonians, Corinthians, and Galatians, for the apostles themselves had their hands full to keep things in order. What good purpose then can these lazy, sluggish bullies accomplish? Now that the Gospel through the unspeakable grace and mercy of God has again come to us or in fact has appeared for the first time, and we have come to see how grievously the Christian church has been confused, scattered, and torn, we would like to have seen the true episcopal office and practice of visitation re-established because of the pressing need. However, since none of us felt a call or definite command to do this, and St. Peter has not countenanced the creation of anything in the church unless we have the conviction that it is willed of God, no one has dared to undertake it. Preferring to follow what is certain and to be guided by love's office (which is a common obligation of Christians), we have respectfully appealed to the illustrious and noble prince and lord, John, Duke of Saxony, First Marshall and Elector of the Roman Empire, Landgrave of Thuringia, Margrave of Meissen, our most gracious lord and prince, constituted of God as our certain temporal sovereign, that out of Christian love (since he is not obligated to do so as a temporal sovereign) and by God's will for the benefit of the Gospel and the welfare of the wretched Christians in his territory, His Electoral grace might call and ordain to this office several competent persons. To this His Electoral grace through the goodness of God has graciously consented, and he has commissioned and commanded for this purpose these four persons, namely, the gracious and honorable Herr Hans of Planitz, Knight, etc., the worthy and learned Jerome Schurff, Doctor of Laws, etc., the honorable and constant Asmus of Haubitz, etc., and the worthy Philip Melancthon, Master, etc. (Martin Luther, "Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors in Electoral Saxony" [Preface], *Luther's Works*, Vol. 40 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958], pp. 269-72)

...we read in Matt. 28:18: "All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth." ... Christ was about to give to His apostles the command and authority to gather the church throughout the world by the ministry of Word and Sacrament, and He prefaced His remarks by speaking of the full and complete power which had been given to Him in heaven and on earth. Paul writes in 2 Cor. 10:4 and 13:10 that power was given to him by the Lord in His service – for edification, not for destruction. He explains this power by saying: "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but they are the power of God for the pulling down of strongholds," by which "we cast down evil imaginings and every high thing which exalts itself against the knowledge of God." And "we bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, being ready to avenge all disobedience" [2 Cor. 10:4-6], that is, Paul affirms that divine power attends his ministry: (1) against all spiritual wickedness and tyranny of the devil; (2) against all the external worldly machinations, power, and force which oppose his ministry; (3) against all thoughts of the depraved flesh and lusts which strive against the Word; (4) for bringing about the obedience of faith through his ministry; and (5) for the divine punishment of the disobedient and for other miracles. This power which was given to the apostles in their ministry for the necessary work of pastors is neither a natural characteristic nor a created quality nor a normal gift nor an attribute peculiar to the apostles themselves; but it is a divine strength, power, and efficacy which assists them in their ministry and which works effectively through this ministry, as we read in Mark 16:20: "They preached, the Lord everywhere working with them and confirming the Word." Again, "The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes" (Rom. 1:16). So that the apostles might be assured that the things they were doing in their ministry on earth, in accord with Christ's command, were not doubtful, invalid, vain, or useless but rather certain and efficacious, Christ, in instituting the ministry and in sending forth the apostles, asserted that all power in heaven and on earth had been given to Him, from whom the New Testament ministry

has its institution, origin, commission, cause, and dependence. At the same time He promised that with all His authority, strength, might, and efficacy He would be with the apostolic ministry in the church, not only in the person of the apostles but also through all days till the end of the world. (Martin Chemnitz, *The Two Natures in Christ* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971], pp. 316-18)

Jerome...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. (Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part II [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978], pp. 701-03)

Many embarrassing circumstances prevented the Lutheran Church from developing her life as perfectly in her church constitution as in her doctrines and worship. The idea of the universal priesthood of all believers at once overthrew the

doctrine of a distinction of essence between clergy and laity. 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. The ultimate source of power is in the congregations, that is, in the pastor and other officers and the people of the single communions. The right to choose a pastor belongs to the people, who may exercise it by direct vote, or delegate it to their representatives. (Charles Porterfield Krauth, *The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology* [Philadelphia: General Council Publication Board, 1871], pp. 152-53)

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. (Olavus Petri; quoted in Conrad Bergendoff, *The Doctrine of the Church in American Lutheranism* [Philadelphia: Board of Publication of the United Lutheran Church in America, 1956], p. 33)

...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. To slouchy, lazy, and unfaithful mercenaries and gluttons the apostle addresses altogether different words. For such, Scripture has altogether different texts. 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; those doing this follow in the footsteps of the Pope. (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)

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. Even not merely the gifts which are necessary to ground a young boy in a deeper understanding of the divine truths, but also the gifts that are necessary to educate the mind of a young boy in general and to teach him the different dead and living languages of the nations: also these gifts are gifts of the Holy Spirit, which the Savior who ascended to heaven has poured out upon his church for the establishment and preservation of holy offices. "This is why it says: 'When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men.' ... It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up..." (Eph 4:8,11). "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ... Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ... To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, ... to another the ability to speak in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretations of tongues" (1 Cor 12:4,5,7,8a,10b). ... 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. (C. F. W. Walther, "Rede bei Einfuhrung zweier Gymnasiallehrer," *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)

On the part of the church, ordination is the testimony that this man is properly called, is not a sneak, not a vagabond, not one who comes of his own volition, but is sent. It would not be at all wrong if a pastor were ordained in connection with each new call; but our church – no doubt in honor of the office of the holy ministry – has not done that. ... If one has once been ordained and has thereby been certified by the church, the Lutheran Church also has not considered it necessary to ordain him anew, because the church's certification holds good for life. By the way, it actually still happens here and there that ordination is repeated, and one might almost wish that this practice had been continued in general; that would make it much easier to see that ordination is nothing more than a certification of the call and would keep those pastors who have left the office of the ministry from still considering themselves pastors; for this is sure, that one who is no longer head of a congregation (*wer keine Gemeinde mehr hinter sich hat*) can no longer say, "...by virtue of my office..." Therefore, if it still occasionally occurs among us that professors perform ordinations, baptize, [and] speak absolution, that is an anachronism we should abandon...

Objection: When a pastor performs official acts in a parish other than his own, on behalf of his brother fellow pastor, he does that also not by virtue of his [own] call, but by virtue of his fellow pastor's call. May not then a *professor* just as well baptize and perform other official acts by virtue of a pastor's call?

Reply: That is at least contrary to the established practice (*Ordnung*) followed by our church. It has never allowed the transfer of the full office (*das ganze Amt*) to one who himself does not have the full office. In addition, the temporary transfer of the office can absolutely never take place *without consent of the congregation*. The administration of the sacraments presupposes pastors, which preaching as such does not do, and therefore the latter may be transferred to a professor, but he should refrain from the former. Even a pastor should not conduct confession (*Beichte*) in another congregation if it is not necessary, least of all private confession, because that presupposes even private cure of souls (*sogar Privatseelsorge*). (C. F. W. Walther, "Calling a Pastor," *Essays for the Church* [Saint Louis: Concordia

...our confessions...acknowledge on the basis of Holy Scripture the “ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments” (*ministerium docendi evangelii et porrigendi sacramenta*) as *divine institutions*, completely independent of the will and establishment of men, and which are of the essence of the church [AC V]. This *ministerium* is not to be confused with the persons who occupy it. It is an office, a service (*diakonia*), which is to be carried out in the world because it is the will of God. This office exists “not from men nor through men” (Gal 1:1), but only “by the will of God” (1 Cor 1:1). Men could never have thought it up. It is a divine order, a divine institution in the strict sense just as are the offices of the father and secular governing authority. But unlike these offices rooted in the will of God the Creator and Preserver, it is rooted in the will of God the Redeemer. It entered earthly history through the institution of Jesus Christ: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you” [John 20:21]. The sending of the Son, as it were, finds its continuation in the *ministerium ecclesiasticum* [“ecclesiastical ministry, spiritual office”]. For he himself, the crucified and risen Lord, is really and personally present in the proclamation of the Gospel which occurs through this office and in the Sacraments administered by this office.

Thus this office is a gracious gift of God. It is a gift of one who in this office wills that his Gospel be preached to the ends of the earth and until the end of time. Article V of the Augustana which treats *De ministerio ecclesiastico* and immediately follows the article of justification is to be understood accordingly: “To obtain such faith – that is, saving faith in Jesus Christ – God has established the preaching office...” (The text of Schwabach Article VII says expressly “the preaching office or oral word.”) Yet let it be noted that this did not mean the establishment of an office separated from the congregation, a clergy standing over the laity. Certainly “properly called” pastors are the bearers of this office. But it is equally certain that this office – even as a duty to proclaim the Gospel – is also there where the ordinary pastoral office, for whatever reason, is not yet or no longer present. Thus the presence of this office is of the essence of the church. For *church* can only be present where the proclamation of the pure Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments in accordance with their institution is carried out [AC VII 1]. Therefore it is God’s will that the spiritual office be present. On the other hand, the *forms* in which it is organized are not prescribed by divine command, according to Lutheran church doctrine. It can be organized as the pastoral office alone, or it can appear in a number of forms – perhaps as the office of parish pastor, as the office of bishop or archbishop.

And likewise, the congregation – be it the local congregation [*Gemeinde*] or the congregation of an entire country – which as the “assembly of all believers” that has arisen from the proclamation of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments, and that consequently as a whole bears the ecclesiastical office, may be organized in entirely various ways. The church must have legal forms. But there is no law regarding such forms in the Holy Scriptures. All legal forms of the church are rather among the “human traditions” or the “rites and ceremonies established by men” of which Article VII of the Augustana teaches. Thus agreement therein is not *necessary* for the true unity of the church. And Article XV states that these forms should be maintained “if they can be maintained without sin and serve peace and good order in the church.”

Thus our confession strictly distinguishes between that in the church which is of divine law (*de iure divino*) and that which is of human law (*de iure humano*). But practically all external legal forms of the church, of the congregation and the office, belong in the sphere of human law. Does not then this differentiation necessarily lead to the consequence that all external organization of the church is left to arbitrary human action? Must it be surrendered to anyone who usurps power in the church, and must not every existing form of church constitution be acknowledged or tolerated?

The great freedom which Lutheranism possesses in all questions of the external formation of the church has been misused. It has often meant that the question of correct human law has not been taken seriously enough. It has even been declared that it is quite immaterial how the church is constituted. But our confessions do not intend to make the external orders of the church indifferent. ... It is not true that the only concern is that the Gospel be preached and the Sacraments be dispensed but that it is indifferent how this happens. According to Article XIV of the Augustana, it matters greatly who exercises the preaching office, namely, whether the person in question is legitimately called (*rite vocatus*) according to correct ecclesiastical order. Luther also knew that the call (*vocatio*) causes the devil a great deal of woe. Accordingly, he was convinced that bearers of the office who did not possess their office through an orderly call were quite pleasing to the devil. Therefore, the defenders of the view that the external legal orders of the church do not matter if only the Gospel is preached cannot call upon the confessions for support.

Our confessions, in order to oppose the wanton actions of the Papal Church and its false canon law, do sharply

distinguish between divine and human law in the church. But this does not mean that there need be no distinction made between legitimate human law and illicit human law. Nor does it mean that our church despises that *law which serves for peace and good order in the church*. ... According to Lutheran doctrine the church is correctly ordered when its constitution provides a maximum of possibilities for the spiritual office to carry out its service of the proclamation of the pure Gospel and the correct administration of the Sacraments in the name and by the mandate of the Lord of the church, and when it provides a maximum of possibilities for the congregation called by Jesus Christ himself through the Word and Sacraments, which in faith in him is a “congregation of saints,” to lead its life in the world and to accomplish its service to people as is mandated the church of God. This answer continues to assure evangelical freedom in matters of the external formation of the church. Lutheranism could give up this freedom only by giving up its understanding of the New Testament. A multiplicity of ecclesiastical forms of life are possible as long as they do not preclude unity in the faith and thus the unity of the church. The external forms of the church may be adapted to the necessities of times and peoples. The constitution of a church may indeed undergo development. With this answer we avoid the *legalistic misunderstanding* that there is one definite and only correct ordering of the church prescribed in the New Testament. But we also avoid the *libertine misunderstanding* that according to Lutheran doctrine there is no such thing as a false way of organizing the church. We know that no external ordering of the church can assure purity of doctrine. But we also know just as well that *the doctrine of the church is never independent of the external ordering of the church* and that there are church constitutions which make it impossible for the church to preserve its pure doctrine. (Hermann Sasse, “Church Government and Secular Authority,” *The Lonely Way*, Vol. I [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2001], pp. 213-17)

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 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 matters, 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. (Ulrik Vilhelm Koren, "The Right Principles of Church Government," in *Faith of Our Fathers* [Mankato, Minnesota: Lutheran Synod Book Company, 1953], pp. 129-31, 134-36)

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. 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 [the Norwegian Synod] is substantially different from that here in Norway, there is a resemblance in the way it specifically distributes authority and offices. (Herman Amberg Preus, *Vivacious Daughter* [Northfield, Minnesota: The Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1990], p. 51)

...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. And of course, theoretically, as Melancthon correctly says, even the office of a supreme bishop, a pope, is possible. 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. That which distinguishes a bishop from his youngest pastor is of purely human origin. The *ministerium ecclesiasticum* may also be unburdened of peripheral tasks through the establishment of new offices. This happened already in the ancient church through the creation of the diaconate, or in more recent times by the creation of the office of church counselor [*Kirchenvorsteher*, *Kirchenältesten*], or whatever else those who lead the

congregation may be called. The essence and task of the *ministerium ecclesiasticum* is in no way impinged upon by these offices. Preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments belong neither to the deacons nor to him whom we today call a presbyter. The former have the duty of the work of love in caring for the poor. The latter has the duty of helping in the administration of the parish. According to Lutheran doctrine, they do not have a part in church government [*Kirchenregiment*]. For Luther and with him the confessions of our church (AC XIV and XXVIII) mean by *church government* the exercise of the functions peculiar to the office of the ministry: “an authority and command of God to preach the Gospel, to forgive and retain sins, and to dispense and administer the Sacraments” [AC XXVIII 5]. That is ecclesiastical power (*potestas ecclesiastica*), real church government. For in the exercise of these functions through his servant, through the administration of these means of grace, Christ the Lord himself rules his church. (Hermann Sasse, “The Lutheran Doctrine of the Office of the Ministry,” *The Lonely Way*, Vol. II [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2002], pp. 128-29)

At first sight the New Testament features a luxuriant and irreducible variety of offices. ... Behind the appearance of multiformity, 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 “presbyters” 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, evangelists, 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 particular pecking order (Lk. 22:24-27!), but the glorious and permanent (II Cor. 3:11) ministry of life and justification. The Gospel and sacraments themselves – not organizational chains of command – are the content, nature, task, and power of the office. (Kurt E. Marquart, *The Church and Her Fellowship, Ministry, and Governance* [Fort Wayne, Indiana: The International Foundation for Lutheran Confessional Research, corrected edition 1995], pp. 120-23)

...one very important word in Article 14 [of the Augsburg Confession] 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, first in 1518 as a member of the arts faculty and teacher of Greek, again in 1519 as a lecturer on the Bible in the theological faculty, and finally after 1526 as a professor in both faculties. In 1524, he became the first married rector of a European university. 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. (Timothy J. Wengert, *Priesthood, Pastors, Bishops* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008], pp. 42-43)

The primary ministerial function was *preaching*. ... In the evangelical churches of the cities and towns, at least one service with sermon was held every day. In the villages, particularly those that were incorporated in a township, there were, naturally, fewer services. For example, the parish of Wittenberg comprised thirteen villages besides the town. The preaching services there were held by an assistant preacher, called deacon (generally a theological student) who visited each place at regular intervals. Let us mention, by the way, that the parish minister of Wittenberg had three (and, since 1533, four) assistants. He could, of course, count on being helped in his preaching chores by the members of the Theological Faculty. Luther preached regularly in the town church. ... The predominance of teaching became apparent also in the general work of the ministry. The administration of the sacraments was always accompanied by some kind of instruction. In Lutheran churches, young people were not admitted to the first communion service without having been examined by the minister on their faith. ... In the services of confession and penitence which practically everywhere preceded the celebration of the Lord's Supper, the people were examined on their faith. Practically all Lutheran church orders prescribed such a *Glaubensexamen*. To be sure, this "examination" was but part of the confession without which no one could take the sacrament. In Lutheran churches, where the sacrament was celebrated in connection with every main Sunday service and where only those who chose to do so communed, the confessional had a private character. People who intended to take the sacrament had to inform the minister beforehand, and he was not allowed to admit them without having held with them a service of confession. They were not expected to confess their sins in detail, but those who were in need of counsel were encouraged to make complete confession of all that burdened them. ... In Wittenberg and the electorate of Saxony, the method of calling and ordaining a minister remained fluid until about 1535. Until then 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* – became a separate ritual. As such it 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. For many years, the new churches lacked adequately trained preachers. 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. They wielded considerable influence. Indeed, they were the "conscience" of the new profession. 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. (Wilhelm Pauck, "The Ministry in the Time of the Continental Reformation," *The Ministry in Historical Perspectives* [edited by H. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel D. Williams] [New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956])

13. The office of spiritual oversight: entrusted (except in emergencies) only to qualified males

TESTIMONIES FROM THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS:

The Household Chart [Table of Duties] of Some Bible Passages for all kinds of holy orders and walks of life, through which they may be admonished, as through lessons particularly pertinent to their office and duty. For Bishops, Pastors [Parish Rectors], and Preachers: "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]. (SC Table of Duties: 1-2, K/W p. 365)

For Paul says [1 Tim. 3:2] that a married man should be chosen to be bishop. (AC XXIII:11 [Latin], K/W p. 65)

TESTIMONIES FROM THE WRITINGS OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGIANS:

The keys are the pope's as little as Baptism, the Sacrament [of the Altar], and the Word of God are, for they belong to the people of Christ and are called "the church's keys" not "the pope's keys." Fifth, the church is recognized externally by the fact that it consecrates or calls ministers, or has offices that it is to administer [*Zum fünfften kennet man die Kirche eusserlich da bey, das sie Kirchen diener weihet oder berufft oder empter hat, die sie bestellen sol*]. There must be bishops, pastors [*Pfarrher*], or preachers, who publicly and privately give, administer, and use the aforementioned four things [*Stücke*] or holy possessions in behalf of and in the name of the church, or rather by reason of their institution by Christ, as St. Paul states in Ephesians 4[:8], "He received gifts among men..." – his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some teachers and governors, etc. The people as a whole cannot do these things, but must entrust or have them entrusted to one person. Otherwise, what would happen if everyone wanted to speak or administer, and no one wanted to give way to the other? It must be entrusted to one person, and he alone should be allowed to preach, to baptize, to absolve, and to administer the sacraments. The others should be content with this arrangement and agree to it. Wherever you see this done, be assured that God's people, the holy Christian people, are present. 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 erwählen (ausgenommen die Noth)*], as one reads here and there in the epistles of St. Paul [1 Tim. 3:2, Tit. 1:6] that a bishop must be pious, able to teach, and the husband of one wife – and in 1 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 [1 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. ... Now, 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. ... Just as was said earlier about the other four parts of the great, divine, holy possession by which the holy church is sanctified, that you need not care who or how those from whom you receive it are, so again you should not ask who and how he is who gives it to you or has the office. For all of it is given, not to him who has the office, but to him who is to receive it through this office, except that he can receive it together with you if he so desires. Let him be what he will. Because he is in office and is tolerated by the assembly, you put up with him too. His person will make God's word and sacraments neither worse nor better for you. What he says or does is not his, but Christ, your Lord, and the Holy Spirit say and do everything, in so far as he adheres to correct doctrine and practice. The church, of course, cannot and should not tolerate open vices; but you yourself be content and tolerant, since you, an individual, cannot be the whole assembly or the Christian holy people. ... 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. ... Therefore the *ecclesia*, "the holy Christian people," does not have mere external words, sacraments, or offices, like God's ape Satan has, and in far greater numbers, but it has these as commanded, instituted, and ordained by God, so that he himself and not any angel will work through them with the Holy Spirit. They are called word, baptism, sacrament, and office of forgiveness, not of angels, men, or any other creature, but of God; only he does not choose to do it through his unveiled, brilliant, and glorious majesty, out of consideration for us poor, weak, and timid mortals and for our comfort, for who could bear such majesty for an instant in this poor and sinful flesh? ... No, he wants to work through tolerable, kind, and pleasant means, which we ourselves

could not have chosen better. He has, for instance, a godly and kind man speak to us, preach, lay his hands on us, remit sin, baptize, give us bread and wine to eat and to drink. (Martin Luther, "On the Councils and the Church," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 41 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966], pp. 154-56, 164, 171)

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 [cf. Ex. 4:25], the same must be observed regarding Baptism, especially since in the New Testament, after the abrogation of the Levitical distinction of persons, all Christians are a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9; Rev. 1:6), and also since in Christ there is neither male nor female (Gal. 3:28). ... Wherever the same relation exists, the same right also exists. But absolution, which any layman [*Privatperson*] may announce to a dying person from the Gospel, and Baptism, which a layman may administer in an emergency, namely, when no regular minister of the Word can be obtained, stand in the same relation. Hence, there exists here also the same right. 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). Why then should laymen not in an emergency administer Baptism, since they are a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9) and have been made kings and priests to God (Rev. 1:6; 5:10)? (John Gerhard, *Loci theologici*, "De baptismo," 34, 36; quoted in C. F. W. Walther, *Church and Ministry* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987], pp. 285-86)

So we say, either demand proof of a call and commission to preach, or immediately enjoin silence and forbid to preach, for an office is involved – the office of the ministry. One cannot hold an office without a commission or a call. ... I have often said and still say, I would not exchange my doctor's degree for all the world's gold. For I would surely in the long run lose courage and fall into despair if, as these infiltrators, I had undertaken these great and serious matters without call or commission. But 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. Undoubtedly some maintain that in I Cor. 14, St. Paul gave anyone liberty to preach in the congregation, even to bark against the established preacher. For he says, "If a revelation is made to another sitting by, let the first be silent" [I Cor. 14:30]. The interlopers take this to mean that to whatever church they come they have the right and power to judge the preacher and to proclaim otherwise. But this is far wide of the mark. The interlopers do not rightly regard the text, but read out of it – rather, smuggle into it – what they wish. In this passage Paul is speaking of the prophets, who are to teach, not of the people, who are to listen. For prophets are teachers who have the office of preaching in the churches. Otherwise why should they be called prophets? ... What a fine model I imagine that would be, for anyone to have the right to interrupt the preacher and begin to argue with him! Soon another would join in and tell the other two to hush up. Perchance a drunk from the tavern would come in and join the trio calling on the third to be silent. At last the women too would claim the right of "sitting by," telling the men to be silent [I Cor. 14:34]. Then one woman silencing the other – oh, what a beautiful holiday, auction, and carnival that would be! What pig sties could compare in goings-on with such churches? There the devil may have my place as preacher. ... Whoever reads the entire chapter will see clearly that St. Paul is concerned about speaking with tongues, about teaching and preaching in the churches or congregations. He is not commanding the congregation to preach, but is dealing with those who are preachers in the congregations or assemblies. Otherwise he would not be forbidding women to preach since they also are a part of the Christian congregation [I Cor. 14:34 f.]. ... But I am astonished that in their spiritual wisdom they [the interlopers] haven't learned to adduce examples of how women have prophesied and thereby attained rule over men, land, and people. There was Deborah (Judg. 4[:1 f.]), who caused the death of King Jabin and Sisera and ruled Israel. There was the wise woman in Abel, in David's days of whom we read in II Sam. 20[:13 ff.], and the prophetess Huldah, in the days of Josiah (II Kings

22[:14 ff.]). Long before, there was Sarah, who directed her husband and lord, Abraham, to cast out Ishmael and his mother Hagar, and God commanded Abraham to obey her [Gen. 21:10-12]. Furthermore, the widow Hannah (Luke 2[:36 ff.]), and the Virgin Mary (Luke 1[:46 ff.]). Here they might deck themselves out and find authority for women to preach in the churches. How much greater the reason for men to preach, where and when they please. We shall for the present not be concerned about the right of these women of the Old Testament to teach and to rule. But surely they did not act as the infiltrators do, unauthorized, and out of superior piety and wisdom. For then God would not have confirmed their ministry and worked by miracles and great deeds. But 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. (Martin Luther, "Infiltrating and Clandestine Preachers," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 40 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958], pp. 386-91)

Now you might say: "What kind of situation will arise if it is true that we are all priests and should all preach [1 Peter 2:5]? Should no distinction be made among the people, and should the women, too, be priests?" Answer: In the New Testament no priest has to be tonsured. Not that this is evil in itself, for one surely has the right to have the head shaved clean. But one should not make a distinction between those who do so and the common Christian. Faith cannot tolerate this. Thus those who are now called priests would all be laymen like the others, and only a few officiants would be elected by the congregation to do the preaching. Thus there is only an external difference because of the office to which one is called by the congregation. Before God, however, there is no distinction, and only a few are selected from the whole group to administer the office in the stead of the congregation. They all have the office, but nobody has any more authority than the other person has. Therefore nobody should come forward of his own accord and preach in the congregation. No, one person must be chosen from the whole group and appointed. If desired, he may be deposed. Now those people [the papists] have created a special estate and say that it was established by God. They have acquired such freedom that almost in the midst of Christendom there is a greater distinction than there is between us and Turks. 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. (Martin Luther, "Sermons on the First Epistle of St. Peter," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 30 [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1967], pp. 54-55)

...when Paul and the other apostles had been called out of this world, and John had been banished to Patmos, ...a certain presbyter in Asia, a follower or partisan, for so he boasted, of Paul, ...spread a certain story bearing the title *De periode Pauli et Teclae*, or as Gelasius, dist. 13, quotes the title, *De actis Pauli et Teclae* [*The Acts of Paul and Tecla*]. The sum of the story was this, that Tecla, a noble Iconian virgin, had been betrothed through the will and consent of her parents to a certain Thamirus, but that, when Paul had come to Iconium, he had preached about virginity in such a way that Tecla had renounced her bridegroom and against the will of her bridegroom and her parents had vowed celibacy, and that Paul had for many years led this Tecla about with himself and had finally consecrated her with a sacred veil and given her power to teach, baptize, and to veil and consecrate virgins with the vow of perpetual celibacy. This was just about the sum of the fraud, as one can see from Tertullian, *De Baptismo*, from Ambrose, *De virginitate*, and from the legends of Tecla. Now, because the authority of Paul was great in the church, many set this example in opposition and preferred it to the writings of Paul and of the other apostles. However, when John had been restored to the church from exile he saw that this story was not in agreement with the constant teaching and opinion of Paul, who even as he did not permit a woman to teach publicly in the church so also forbade an espoused woman to undertake celibacy against the will of her bridegroom and parents (1 Cor. 7:10), for a betrothed woman is judged to be in the same case as a wife (Deut. 22:22-29). Therefore John convicted that presbyter publicly before the church of having disseminated a false and counterfeit book under the name and title of Paul. ... John removed him from the ministry in order that, for the sake of

posterity, that invention about Tecla might be rejected with a public mark as not genuine but a counterfeit. Thus Tertullian describes the story, *De Baptismo*, and Jerome, *De scripturis ecclesiasticis*. Nevertheless afterward, in the time of Tertullian, certain women tried to lay claim for themselves to the ministry of Word and Sacraments in the church on the authority of this Tecla, whom Tertullian repulsed with this story of the apostle John. (Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part III [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986], pp. 151-52)

Since, however, that is catholic, as Vincent of Lérins not improperly defines it, which always and everywhere has constantly been accepted by all believers on the basis of Scripture, also this observation must be added, that there was in those times not only doubt about the invocation of the saints, when it had begun to be introduced into the church from private devotions of the common people and of women, but that it was also clearly and with great zeal rebuked and placed into the catalog of heresies by Epiphanius, who lived at almost the same time. ... Epiphanius seizes upon the gross excess of certain Thracian women, also in Arabia and in the upper parts of Scythia, who set out a loaf or cake on a square chair covered with a cloth, and offered it in the name of Mary. ... He not only insists that women are not permitted to sacrifice and perform other acts which belong to the public ministry of Word and sacrament, also that sacrifice is to be made only to God, but he goes further, for he says that when those women offer that cake it is a profession that worships and adores Mary. ... Such sacrifices, that is, such adoration, which asks for benefits and aids in needs, Epiphanius argues, is worship belonging only to God. (Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part III [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986], pp. 466-67)

...in my opinion, 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. (Martin Luther, "Sermons on Genesis"; quoted in *Luther on Women* [edited by Susan C. Karant-Nunn and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks] [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003], pp. 24-25)

The impropriety of women's preaching and praying 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. (Matthias Loy, *Essay on the Ministerial Office* [Columbus, Ohio: Schulze & Gassmann, 1870], pp. 40-41)

Shall Women Preach in the Congregation? ... There are mainly three passages of Paul dealing with this question, and whether it shall be answered in the negative or in the affirmative, a careful exegesis of these three Pauline passages will have to decide. Other words of Scripture incidentally touching upon this theme always will have to be interpreted in the light of the words of Paul to the Corinthians and to Timothy, where he in an unmistakable language establishes a rule not for one congregation only but "for all the assemblies of the saints" (1 Cor. 14:33).

The first passage we have is 1 Cor. 11:4-16. In verse 5 it reads: "But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoreth her head"; and in the 13th verse: "Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?" These verses show that in the meetings of the Corinthian Christians the women also took

part in prophesying and praying. (It must have been public meetings which Paul has in view here, because, 1, “prophesying” does not suit the idea of *private* devotion of a husband and wife; and, 2, the whole passage presupposes publicity [publicness]. Paul wants the women to avoid public occasion of offense which they would give if they prophesy or pray with their head uncovered. Compare Meyer.) This, Paul does not forbid here; he denounces only the manner in which they do it; neglecting to cover their head. Here we ask: Did not Paul then tacitly permit the women to prophesy and pray in public meetings? Meyer, pointing to chapter 14:34, where silence is imposed upon them, and to 1 Timothy 2:12, where they are forbidden to teach, says: it has to be taken into account that in these two passages the public assembly of the congregation as such – the whole *ἐκκλησία* – is spoken of. There is no sign of such being the case here, where he does not forbid the prophesying and praying of the women, and at the same time cannot mean *family* worship simply. Therefore Paul here must mean smaller meetings for devotion in the congregation, more limited circles assembled for worship, such as fall under the category of a church in the house (compare chapter 16:19; Rom. 16:5; Col. 4:15). Paul’s readers understood just what kind of meetings were meant, because he wrote on the basis of the information received from the Christians in Corinth.

The second passage is 1 Cor. 14:34-36: 34. “As in all churches of the saints, let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also says the law.” 35. “And if they will learn anything let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame (*αισχρον*, unbecoming, disgraceful) for women to speak in the church.” 36. “What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?” Here in plain words Paul demands that the “women keep silence in the churches,” “as in all assemblies of the saints.” Meyer insists upon connecting the last clause of verse 33 with the beginning of 34, and reads (with Luther and with Weizsaecker in his careful translation of the New Testament) as quoted above. Note that Paul here speaks of a speaking of the women in the public congregation, in the *ἐκκλησία*. Some very modern exegetes have tried to evade the simple and obvious meaning of Paul’s words by pointing to the word *speaking*, *λαλεῖν*, in verse 34. They say *speaking* is not *teaching*, and then they interpret that the women at Corinth had harmed the peace of the congregation by too much talking and gossiping, and that Paul here was forbidding only such unedifying and frivolous conversation.

Is such an interpretation admissible? Five counter-arguments speak against it: 1. Nowhere in the letters of Paul to the Corinthians is there any indication that the peace of the congregation was especially disturbed by too much talk of the women. 2. True, *lalein* can have the meaning of mere talking, of simply employing the organs of speech; but it can also mean exactly the same as teaching. An example is Romans 7:1, “For I speak (*λαλώ*) to them that know the law.” There is therefore no reason why speaking here cannot mean teaching, preaching. 3. From the remark, verse 34, “it is not permitted unto them to speak; *but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also says the law,*” we see that Paul means here speaking as an act of independence. The woman shall be subject to her husband and *therefore* shall not speak publicly in the church, which is unbecoming to her. This argument would not suit the idea of Paul merely forbidding the women to become engaged in talking, gossiping. 4. According to verse 35, the women, in the public congregation, shall not ask questions even for their own instruction, but shall go with such questions to their husbands at home. Therefore Paul must mean public speaking (putting questions) in the services of the congregation where religious instruction was given and received, and cannot refer to indiscriminate talking. 5. With his remark in verse 36, Paul wants to say: The church at Corinth is not the mother church, having the right to establish customs for other churches. Neither is she the only one existing. The same gospel has gone to others who then would also have the right to originate customs and peculiar habits. And what a confusion and disorder that would bring into the Church if every individual congregation was permitted to introduce new customs in questions like this! These words would be unintelligible if Paul here meant nothing but idle talk on the part of the women.

Now we come to the third passage: 1 Timothy 2:12-14. 12. “But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. 13. “For Adam was first formed, then Eve.” 14. “And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.” “But I suffer not a woman *to teach.*” Here we have *διδασκεῖν*. Again Paul takes the public teaching (preaching) of the women in the congregation as an act of independence, which is contrary to divine economy. For a woman to teach in the congregation (in our language, to fill the pulpit) is an “usurping authority over the man,” that stands in contradiction to a fact established at the time of the creation and emphasized after the fall because of the part woman took in it. Then it weighs something that Paul denounces the public teaching of women in the congregation not only in his letter to the Corinthians, but also in his *pastoral* letter to Timothy, where, in a language stronger than that used over against the Corinthians, he gives to his co-laborer instructions not to one church merely but to the practice “in all the assemblies of the saints.”

There are people who say: If Paul would live today and in America he would speak differently. He wrote his instructions on the background of his age with its conceptions of inferiority of the female sex. Such apostolic teachings, they say, must be taken in an historical sense. Now this interpretation would be alright in the mouth of a champion of modern theology; but one who does not want to give up the formal principle of the Reformation, namely that the Holy Scripture is source and rule for all faith and practice, can not afford to take that view. If we cannot believe that in a question like the one here under consideration Paul, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, said something that is true and binding today just as well as at the time of the founding of the Church, then we are on dangerous ground; then we cannot with Peter say that we have a “sure word of prophesy” (2 Pet. 1:19). If we have the right to interpret thus, and so get rid of something that does not suit the taste of our age, what then can we answer if, for instance, a champion of “free love” attacks the institution of marriage, saying that such requirements of the Bible do not hold for our day?

We sum up: 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. (Juergen Ludwig Neve, “Shall Women Preach in the Congregation? An Exegetical Treatise,” *The Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 3 [July 1903], pp. 409-13)

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. Paul’s injunction is expressed in two passages. In 1 Tim. 2,11-14 he says: “Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp the authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression.” [In] 1 Cor. 14,34.35 his mandate reads: “Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the Law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.”

Against these passages the objection has been raised that St. Paul here was simply defending an Oriental custom which is no longer binding in the New Testament, especially not in the United States, thousands of miles from the Orient. To this we reply: These texts do not show in any way that the command must be limited to a certain locality (*viz.*, the Orient) or to a certain age. Rather, they indicate that the prohibition is to be in force in all places and at all times until Judgment Day. Of particular importance is the argument upon which the apostle bases his interdict; for he says: “Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression.” This argumentation proves that the prohibition of St. Paul is obligatory upon the Church regardless of where it may exist or how long it may endure. From the passages quoted we therefore draw the conclusion that all Christian women are to be good teachers in their own specific sphere, but never publicly, 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.

Now, 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. For this reason, too, 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. (Francis Pieper, "The Laymen's Movement in the Light of God's Word," *What Is Christianity? And Other Essays* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1933], pp. 154-57)

...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. In fact, at present we are training more women than men 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 in this essay 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. (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)

The Quaker denomination is not the only one which permits women publicly to teach in the church. This unscriptural practice is found in many Protestant churches today. In order to understand the Biblical command, "Let your women keep silence in the churches" [1 Cor. 14:35], we must clearly distinguish between God's kingdom as the one congregation of all believers and that same kingdom of God in its outward organization as a visible congregation with its external ordinances and local arrangement. In the one congregation of all believers there is no distinction of age or sex, of color or nationality. The only mark of distinction is faith in Christ Jesus. It is of *this* kingdom of God that the apostle says: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26-28). In this kingdom all alike according to their power and possibilities are to be laborers in the Lord's vineyard, and thus we find many Bible passages where honorable mention is made of the devotion and work of women. In this kingdom "all believers are priests unto God." But while all believers are each other's equals in their inward relation as children of God, they are not all each other's equals in their outward relation as members of the visible organized congregation. Children under age are not on an equal footing with their parents in the management of the church's work and finances and plans. Nor do the members of the congregation have equal rights with the minister in the public administration of the means of grace. The power and authority to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments is indeed given to the church itself and to no class in the church, but in order that according to the divine command everything shall be done decently and in order the church itself designates those who shall exercise this ministry for it, and only those who are properly called have the right publicly to teach in the church and administer the sacraments. And 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. (Ernst Heinrich Klotsche, *Christian Symbolics* [Des Moines, Iowa: Lutheran Literary Board, 1929], pp. 293-94)

Question of Admission of Women to Church Offices: This subject...is at the present hour a very contentious question,

and one on which the Church will soon have to take a definite stand. ... 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 [in 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. (This is precisely the argument of those fanatical sects that admit women to the ministry.) 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. ... 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. (Carroll Herman Little, *Disputed Doctrines* [Burlington, Iowa: Lutheran Literary Board, 1933], pp. 69-72)

14. The Public Ministry of the Word in the wider sense: all ecclesiastical offices that participate in, or directly support, the public administration of the Means of Grace

TESTIMONIES FROM THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS:

...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. (Preface 14, 16, K/W p. 9) *(In the addendum to the 1580 edition of the Book of Concord that lists the names of the original subscribers, “theologians” are further identified as “professors of Holy Scripture” and “professors of theology” in the universities, while “ministers of...[the] school” [or “school ministers”] are further identified as “schoolmasters and assistants in the schools.”)*

Anthony, Bernard, Dominic, Francis, and other holy Fathers chose a certain kind of life, either for the sake of study or for the sake of other useful exercises. (Ap IV:211, K/W p. 152)

TESTIMONIES FROM THE WRITINGS OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGIANS:

...applied to the ministry, ...the “wide/narrow” dichotomy can make very good sense. I refer to the important and incisive theses of 1874 by the great Luther scholar and editor, Pastor E. W. Kaehler. ...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. They are not “stewards of the mysteries of God” (1 Cor. 4:1), ministers in the strict and narrow sense of the one God-given Gospel-ministry. (Kurt E. Marquart, “The Ministry, Confessionally Speaking,” in *The Office of the Holy Ministry* [Crestwood, Missouri: Luther Academy, 1996], pp. 18-19) *(A substantial excerpt from the essay by Kaehler to which Marquart refers can be found in section 20 below.)*

I hope, indeed, that believers, those who want to be called Christians, know very well 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] (they used to depict this on broadsides). 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. Indeed, it is only because of the spiritual estate that the world stands and abides at all; if it were not for this estate, the world would long since have gone down to destruction. 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. ...you may rejoice and be

glad from the heart if you find that you have been chosen by God to devote your means and labor to raising a son who will be a good Christian pastor, preacher, or schoolmaster, and thereby to raise for God a special servant, yes (as was said above), an angel of God, a true bishop before God, a savior of many people, a king and prince in the kingdom of Christ, a teacher of God's people, a light of the world – indeed, who can recount all the distinction and honor that a good and faithful pastor has in the eyes of God? There is no dearer treasure, no nobler thing on earth or in this life than a good and faithful pastor and preacher. Just think, whatever good is accomplished by the preaching office and the care of souls is assuredly accomplished by your own son as he faithfully performs this office. For example, each day through him many souls are taught, converted, baptized, and brought to Christ and saved, and redeemed from sin, death, hell, and the devil. Through him they come to everlasting righteousness, to everlasting life and heaven, so that Daniel [12:3] says well that “those who teach others shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness shall be like the stars for ever and ever.” Because God's word and office, when it proceeds aright, must without ceasing do great things and work actual miracles, so your son must without ceasing do great miracles before God, such as raising the dead, driving out devils, making the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the lepers clean, and the dumb to speak [Matt. 11:5]. Though these things may not happen bodily, they do happen spiritually in the soul, where the miracles are even greater, as Christ says in John 14[:12], “He who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do.” If the single believer can accomplish these things working independently with individuals, how much more will the preacher accomplish working publicly with the whole company of people? It is not the man, though, that does it. It is his office, ordained by God for this purpose. That is what does it – that and the word of God which he teaches. He is only the instrument through which it is accomplished. (Martin Luther, “A Sermon on Keeping Children in School,” *Luther's Works*, Vol. 46 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967], pp. 219-21, 223-24) (*An alternate translation of a portion of Luther's statement can be found as follows in Harold E. Wicke, “Is the Pastorate in the Congregation the Only God-Ordained Office in the Church?”, Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. 68, No. 2 [April 1971], pp. 120-21: “I indeed hope that the believers, and those who want to be called Christians, surely know that the spiritual estate is instituted and ordained by God, not with gold or silver, but with the precious blood and bitter death of His own Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. ... He paid a great price, so that we might have in all the world the office to preach, baptize, remit, bind, give the sacraments, comfort, warn, admonish with God's Word, and whatever more belongs to the office of a **Seelsorger**. ... I do not mean the present spiritual estate in monasteries and chapters. ... But that estate I mean, which has the office of preaching (**Predigamt**) and service of the Word and sacraments, which gives the Spirit and all salvation, which one cannot gain through liturgics and pageantry, namely, the pastorate, teacher, preacher, reader, priest, i.e., chaplain, sexton, school teacher, and whatever else belongs to such offices and persons, which estate the Scripture praises highly. St. Paul calls them God's stewards, and servants, bishops, doctors, prophets, and in addition, ‘ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God’ (II Corinthians 5:20).” Another alternate translation [by John Theodore Mueller] of a portion of Luther's statement can be found as follows in C. F. W. Walther, **Church and Ministry** [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987], p. 180: “I hope that all believers and those who desire to be called Christians well know that the spiritual state [the ministry] 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. For out of His wounds truly flow (as it was formerly represented on pictures) the sacraments, which He certainly earned dearly enough, so that we have in the whole world the office to preach, baptize, loose, bind, administer the sacraments, comfort, warn, admonish with God's Word, and whatever else belongs to the office of a pastor. ... But I do not mean the present spiritual state in cloisters and convents. ... I mean the state that has the office of preaching and the ministry of the Word and sacraments. This imparts the Spirit and salvation, which no chanting or pomp can secure, such as that of pastors, teachers, [preachers,] readers, priests (as we call the chaplains), sacristans, school teachers, and whoever else belongs to such offices and personnel. This state Scripture indeed praises and extols very highly.”)

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. It is well to know that the children of lords and other important people are not to be used for this work, for the world also needs heirs, people without whom the temporal authority would go to pieces. I am speaking of the common people... Even though they need no heirs they 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. ... Moreover, that you may not worry too much about where your son's living will come from if he gives himself to learning and to this divine office and ministry, God has not left you or forgotten you in this matter either, so you need not worry or lament. He has promised through St. Paul in I Corinthians 9[:14] that "those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel"; and Christ himself says in Matthew, "The laborer deserves his wages; eat and drink what they have." Under the Old Testament, so that his office of preaching might not perish, God chose and took the whole tribe of Levi, that is to say, one-twelfth of the whole nation of Israel, and gave them the tithe from the whole nation, besides the first-fruits, all kinds of sacrifices, their own cities and pasture lands, fields and meadows, cattle, and all that goes with them. Under the New Testament, see how in former times emperors, kings, princes, and lords gave to this office rich possessions, which the foundations and monasteries now have in more abundance than even the kings and princes themselves. God will not and cannot fail those who serve him faithfully, for he has bound himself by the promise given in Hebrews 13[:5], "I will never fail you nor forsake you." Think, too, how many parishes, pulpits, schools, and sacristanships there are. ... What does this mean except that God has provided kitchen and cellar for your son in advance? ... When I was a young student I heard it said that in Saxony there were (if I remember rightly) about eighteen hundred parishes. If that is true, and every parish required at least two persons, a pastor and a sacristan (except that in the cities there are preachers, chaplains, assistants, schoolmasters, and helpers), then in this one principality about four thousand educated persons are needed... I would like to know where we are going to get pastors, schoolmasters, and sacristans three years from now. If we do nothing about this, and if the princes especially do not try to see that the boys' schools and the universities are properly maintained, there will be such a scarcity of men that we shall have to give three or four cities to one pastor and ten villages to one chaplain, if indeed we can get even that many men. (Martin Luther, "A Sermon on Keeping Children in School," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 46 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967], pp. 231-34)

Perhaps you might say here, "What do you finally want to make of the councils if you clip them so close? At that rate a pastor, indeed a schoolteacher (to say nothing of parents), would have greater power over his pupils than a council has over the church." I answer: Do you think then that the offices of the pastor and the schoolteacher are so low that they cannot be compared with the councils? How could one assemble a council if there were no pastors or bishops? How could we get pastors if there were no schools? I am speaking of those schoolteachers who instruct the children and the youth not only in the arts, but also train them in Christian doctrine and faithfully impress it upon them; I also speak in the same manner of pastors who teach God's word in faithfulness and purity. For I can easily prove that the poor, insignificant pastor at Hippo, St. Augustine, taught more than all the councils (to say nothing of the most holy popes in Rome, whom I fear to mention). I will go further than that: there is more in the Children's Creed than in all the councils. The Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments also teach more than all the councils. Moreover, they not only teach, but also guard against anything new that opposes the ancient doctrine. ... A council, then, is nothing but a consistory, a royal court, a supreme court [*Consistorium, Hofegericht, Camergericht*], or the like, in which the judges, after hearing the parties, pronounce sentence, but with this humility, "For the sake of the law," that is, "Our office is *anathematizare*, 'to condemn'; but not according to our whim or will, or newly invented law, but according to the ancient law, which is acknowledged as the law throughout the entire empire." Thus a council condemns a heretic, not according to its own discretion, but according to the law of the empire, that is, according to Holy Scripture, which they confess to be the law of the holy church. Such law, empire, and judge must surely be feared on pain of eternal damnation. This law is God's word, the empire is God's church; the judge is the official or servant of both. Not only the council, but every pastor and schoolteacher is also the servant or judge of this law and empire. Moreover, a council cannot administer this judicial office forever without intermission; for the bishops cannot forever remain assembled together, but must gather only in times of certain emergencies and then anathematize, or be judges. Thus, if an Arius in Alexandria grows too strong for his pastor or bishop, attracts the people, and also urges other pastors and people in the country to join him, so that the pastor in Alexandria is defeated and his judicial office can no longer defend the law of the empire, that is, the true

Christian faith – in such an emergency and at such a time the other pastors and bishops should rally with all their might around the pastor of Alexandria and help him defend the true faith against Arius and condemn Arius to save the others, so that this misery does not get the upper hand. And if the pastors are unable to come, the pious Emperor Constantine should add his power to help assemble the bishops. ... But in this empire of the church the rule is, “The word of our God will stand for ever” [Isa. 40:8]. One has to live according to it and refrain from creating new or different words of God and from establishing new and different articles of faith. That is why pastors and schoolteachers are the lowly, but daily, permanent, eternal judges who anathematize without interruption, that is, fend off the devil and his raging. A council, being a great judge, must make old, great rascals pious or kill them, but it cannot produce any others. A pastor and a schoolteacher deal with small, young rascals and constantly train new people to become bishops and councils, whenever it is necessary. A council prunes the large limbs from the tree or extirpates evil trees. But a pastor and a schoolteacher plant and cultivate young trees and useful shrubs in the garden. Oh, they have a precious office and task, and they are the church’s richest jewels; they preserve the church. Therefore all the lords should do their part to preserve pastors and schools. For if indeed we cannot have councils, the parishes and schools, small though they are, are eternal and useful councils. (Martin Luther, “On the Councils and the Church,” *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 41 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966], pp. 131-35)

But the holy orders and true religious institutions established by God are these three: the office of priest [*Priestersamf*], 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. (Martin Luther, “Confession Concerning Christ’s Supper,” *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 37 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1961], p. 364) (*An alternate translation of Luther’s statement can be found as follows in Willard D. Allbeck, **Studies in the Lutheran Confessions** [Revised Edition] [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968], p. 71: “...the holy orders and true institutions established by God are these three: the priestly office, matrimony, and civil authority. All those who are found in the pastoral office or ministry of the Word, are in a holy, true, good, God-pleasing order and estate, since in it they preach and administer the sacraments, and oversee the treasury, the sextons, and messengers or servants. This is nothing else that a holy work before God.”*)

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. (Martin Luther, Johannes Bugenhagen, and George Spalatin, “Exposition of the Distinction that Must Be Made between Spiritual and Secular Government” [letter to Leonhard Beier, July 24, 1536], 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])

The universality of this [New Testament] priesthood is also shown by the characteristic functions of these priests, which are: to offer sacrifices to God; to approach Him, i.e. to pray for oneself and others; to confess and teach God’s Word; to pass judgment on all doctrines and spirits; to baptize and administer the Eucharist; to bind and loose sins; etc. That all these activities are appropriate and common to all Christians and are equally required of all believers, lay and clerical, is manifestly clear from the testimonies...of Holy Scripture. ...the privilege of administering and receiving the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper also applies to all members of the church, not just to sacrificing priests who have been anointed and tonsured. The truth of this is shown by the fact that even women are permitted, in case of necessity, to baptize – to administer the life-giving Word of God by which man is regenerated and freed from sin, death, and the power of the devil. And with regard to the Lord’s Supper, Christ says to all Christians: “This do in remembrance of Me.” We have definitely established, then, that the priesthood of the New Testament and all the sacerdotal functions connected with

it are equally common to all Christians and that the New Testament sets forth no particular priestly order distinct from the laity – that, to the contrary, all alike who have been reborn by the Holy Spirit through God’s Word and believe in Christ are priests and truly spiritual persons. Thus Paul calls the ministers of the church – those in charge of preaching the Word and administering the sacraments – not “priests” or “spiritual persons” (for these designations apply equally to all Christians ruled by the Holy Spirit) but “ministers,” “pastors,” “bishops,” “deacons,” “elders,” “stewards,” “servants,” etc. Now although the New Testament priesthood is universal, no one in the public assembly of the church should appropriate or discharge on his own authority this right which is the common property of all. Rather, some 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. 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. In Acts 20[:28], Paul says to the presbyters of the church at Ephesus whom he has called to him: “Take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops, to feed the church of God.” Note also Phil. 1:1; Titus 1:5-7; 1 Peter 5:1,2; etc. Later, 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. ... This episcopal order and the ranks connected with it are not evil in themselves. They 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. (David Chytraeus, *On Sacrifice* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962], pp. 95, 97-102)

Because many duties belong to the ministry of the church which cannot all conveniently be performed by one person or by a few, when the believers are very numerous – in order, therefore, that all things may be done in an orderly way, decently, and for edification, these duties of the ministry began, as the assembly of the church grew great, to be distributed among certain ranks of ministers which they afterward called *taxeis* (ranks) or *tagmata* (orders), so that each might have, as it were, a certain designated station in which he might serve the church in certain duties of the ministry. Thus 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. That is what Paul says in 1 Tim. 3:10: “Let them also be tested first, and so let them

minister.” Likewise: “Those who serve well as deacons will gain a good rank for themselves.” [1 Tim. 3:13] Thus there were in the worship service of the church at Antioch (Acts 13:1) prophets and teachers, of whom the former either prophesied of future events or interpreted the more difficult passages of Scripture (1 Cor. 14:29-32), while the latter set forth the elements of Christian doctrine to the people (Heb. 5:12-14). Paul and Barnabas receive Mark into the ministry (Acts 13:5) not merely in order that he might render bodily services to them but so that they might be able to entrust some parts of the ministry of the Word to him, as Paul expressly says (Acts 15:38). There were in the church at Corinth apostles, prophets, and teachers; some spoke in tongues, some interpreted, some had psalms, some prayers, benedictions, and giving of thanks, not in private exercises but in public assemblies of the church. (1 Cor. 12:28-30; 14:26-27) In Eph. 4:11 the following ranks of ministers are listed: (1) apostles, who were not called to some certain church, and who had not been called through men, but immediately by Christ, and had the command to teach everywhere, and were furnished with the testimony of the Spirit and of miracles, that they might not err in doctrine but that their doctrine might be divine and heavenly, to which all the other teachers should be bound; (2) prophets, who either had revelations of future events or interpreted tongues and the Scriptures for the more advanced, for these things are ascribed to the prophets of the New Testament in 1 Cor. 14; (3) evangelists, who were not apostles and yet were not bound to some one certain church but were sent to different churches to teach the Gospel there, but chiefly to lay the first foundations; such an evangelist was Philip (Acts 21:8), and Timothy (2 Tim. 4:5), Tychicus, Sylvanus, etc.; that there were such evangelists also after the times of the apostles Eusebius testifies, Bk. 3, ch. 37, etc.; (4) pastors, who were placed over a certain flock, as Peter shows (1 Peter 5:2-3), and who not only taught but administered the sacraments and had the oversight over their hearers, as Ezekiel (34:2 ff.) describes the pastoral office; (5) teachers, to whom the chief governance or oversight of the church was not entrusted but who only set the doctrine before the people in a simple manner, such as the catechists were later; thus Paul (Rom. 2:20) speaks of “a teacher of children,” and the word teach is expressly used in this sense in Heb. 5:12. All these ranks the apostles include under the terms “presbytery” and “episcopacy.” Sometimes they also call those to whom the ministry of Word and sacrament has been committed by the term “minister” (“servant”). (Col. 1:7,23; 1 Thess. 3:2; 2 Cor. 3:6; 11:23; Eph. 3:7) Also Paul himself sometimes performed the ministry of the Word in such a way that he entrusted the administration of the sacraments to others. 1 Cor. 1:17: “Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the Gospel.” And in 1 Tim. 1:17 he mentions two kinds of presbyters, of whom some labored in preaching and teaching, while others had been placed in charge of ecclesiastical discipline. Tertullian also mentions this kind of presbytery, *Apologeticus*, ch. 39. This about completes the list of ranks into which we read that the ecclesiastical ministry was divided at the time of the apostles.

This division has examples also in the Old Testament. For David, according to 1 Chron. 23 ff., divided the ministry of the temple into certain ranks or orders. Also in the synagogue there were readers, who only read the Scripture text. There were, besides, also teachers who interpreted the Scripture and applied the text for the purpose of exhortations (Luke 2:46; Acts 15:30-35). And this was the difference between the scribes and Pharisees.

However, because of the present dispute, the following reminder must be added: (1) that there is no command in the Word of God, which or how many such ranks or orders there should be; (2) that there were not at the time of the apostles in all churches and at all times the same and the same number of ranks or orders, as can be clearly ascertained from the epistles of Paul, written to various churches; (3) that there was not [originally], at the time of the apostles, such a division of these ranks, but repeatedly one and the same person [an apostle] held and performed all the duties which belong to the ministry, as is clear from the apostolic history. Therefore 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, about which we have spoken until now, 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 for the reasons already set forth.

This example of the apostles the primitive church imitated for the same reason and in similar liberty. For the grades of the duties of the ministry were distributed, not however in identically the same way as in the church at Corinth or in that at Ephesus, but according to the circumstances obtaining in each church. ... Therefore the ranks or orders were distinguished, not by empty titles but according to certain duties that belonged to the ministry of the church. 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. ...subdeacons were placed under them; they collected the offerings of the faithful which were contributed for the sustenance of the poor and the ministers. Besides these there were lectors, who read publicly to the people from the Scriptures, especially from the Old Testament, for the reading of the New Testament was thereafter given to the deacons. There were psalmists or cantors, who sang first what the whole assembly was accustomed to sing. There were doorkeepers, who at the time of the Sacrament, after the announcement by the deacon, put out of the church the Gentiles, catechumens, penitents, the possessed, heretics, and persons who had been excommunicated, for thus Dionysius describes this office. Bishops, presbyters, and deacons had their *famuli*, servants, companions, or followers, whose services they used when necessity demanded it, as Paul had used the services of Onesimus. They called these men acolytes. ... Besides these there were exorcists, who had the gift of casting out or restraining demons.

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. (Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part II [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978], pp. 682-88)

The ministry [*Predigtamt*] is the highest office in the Church, from which, as its stem, all other offices of the Church [*Kirchenämter*] issue. ... Since the incumbents of the public ministry [*des Öffentlichen Predigtamtes*] have in their public office, for the sake of the common interests of their congregations, John 20:21-23, the administration of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, which the Church possesses originally and immediately, Matt. 16:19; 18:18, their office must necessarily be the highest office in the Church, and from it, as from the stem, all other offices must issue, inasmuch as the keys embrace the entire authority of the Church. In accordance with this the incumbents of this office are in the Holy Scriptures called elders, bishops, rulers, stewards, etc.; and the incumbents of an inferior office are called deacons, that is, servants, not only of God, but also of the congregation and of the bishop; and it is stated regarding the latter in particular that they must care for the congregation and must watch over all souls, as those that must render an account for them, 1 Tim. 3:1,5,7; 5:17; 1 Cor. 4:1; Titus 1:7; Heb. 13:17. We see from this that the holy apostles in the beginning discharged, together with their ministry of preaching, also the office of deacons in Jerusalem, until the growth of the congregation required that for their relief this latter office be assigned to special persons, Acts 6:1-6. For 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. (C. F. W. Walther, "The Voice of Our Church Concerning the Question of the Church and the Ministry," *Walther and the Church* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1938], pp. 78-79)

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. 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. Their office too was as little the ministry of the Word [i.e. the "office of soul care"] as the deacon's office. It is rather a branch or helping office of the holy ministry of the Word [i.e. the "office of soul care"]. ...

The so-called Deacons and Lay Elders of the apostles' time were, as was already suggested, 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*). These helping offices were not established in all congregations and yet no divine command was being transgressed. Therefore also the Deacons and Lay Elders are sometimes installed for a certain period of time or for a certain term, or when one does not need them any longer he releases them from their office.

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 recognized 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 since there is no distinction between such offices according to divine right, so likewise between them and a *Lutheran* Deacon, to whom the office of the Word is commended. For the call to preach God's Word publicly is truly the essence of the preaching office. To preach is the highest office (function) in the church, alone on account of which all other functions are necessary. It is also the judge of all other offices. Therefore the office of Lutheran Deacon is no helping office as is, for example, the office of caring for alms, the office of Church Father or Lay Elder. Rather it is the one true office which is specially instituted and established by Christ Himself. ... 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. (C. F. W. Walther, "Comments on the Expulsion of a Lutheran 'Deacon,'" *Der Lutheraner*, Vol. 23, No. 9 [Jan. 1, 1867], pp. 65 ff. [translated by Mark D. Nispel])

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. ...

St. Paul gives us a list of officers and functions, transient and permanent, in 1 Cor. 12:28: "God hath set (put, appointed, constituted) in the Church some" (for even in the highest affluence of spiritual gifts in the early Church there was official distinction), "first Apostles, second, prophets, third, teachers, after that miracles" (which Luther, substituting the concrete for the abstract, renders "*Wunderthäter*," doers of miracles), "then gifts of healing, helps" (Luther, for the same reason as before, *Helfer*, helpers), "governments" (Luther *Regierer*, governors), "diversities of tongues." The verses following, 29,30, repeat "Apostles," prophets, teachers, miracles, healings, diversities of tongues; *omit* helps and government, and *add* interpreters (expounders). In this enumeration the clearly transient are the prophets, (the workers of) miracles, gifts of healing and diversities of tongues, with the correlative *interpreter*. It is disputed, but not on tenable grounds, whether the Apostles also belong to the extraordinary officers of the Church. The helps and governments seem not to point to separate officials but simply to special functions of particular persons and hence are not referred to again in verses 29,30. "The teachers" are permanent, and to them the helps and governments are elsewhere assigned. ... In Eph. 4:11,12, we have another Apostolic list, "He gave some Apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints; for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." ... Compared with 1 Cor. 12:28-30 we find that it *repeats* Apostles, prophets, teachers; *omits* miracles, healings, diversities of tongues, helps, governments and interpreters, and *adds* evangelists and pastors. The omissions are in part accounted for by the difference of his [Paul's] object in Ephesians which causes him to dwell exclusively on the ministry as a teaching body. The pastors and teachers are two names for the same office. ... The introduction of the "evangelists" in this passage appears to point to the existence of an office not specified in the former list, but an evangelist seems not to have been a distinct office in the Church but a preacher with a special work, probably that of a travelling missionary, within prescribed limits. Philip, the evangelist, is mentioned, Acts 21:8, and Timothy is charged, 2 Tim. 4:5, to do the work of an evangelist, to do pastoral work, when there were not yet congregations organized, and to bring about an organization as early as possible. ... The title of the pastoral office, which covers its teaching and preaching and oversight, is that of *Eldership* and the *Bishop's office*. The Elders or Bishops are those to whom was committed the headships of congregations. These two names, presbyters or elders and bishops, are entirely coordinate. A New Testament bishop is an elder and a New Testament elder is a bishop. ...

Acts 6. A careful study of this passage shows: 1. That the functions to which deacons were elected, were functions which had been exercised by the apostles; hence the deacons' duties are not lay duties, but are official. 2. They were chosen as aids to the apostles, in order that the whole time and strength of the apostles might be devoted

to the more difficult and important part of this work. The apostles were to give themselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. 3. The fundamental idea of the diaconate, therefore, was not the serving of tables, or the performing of secular duties within the church. That was but the specific determination of the general idea at that particular time. The generic idea of the diaconate is that it is an office designed to relieve the ministry of some of its relative, incidental and yet more distracting duties, in order to leave it free for others. Hence the broader and truer conception of the deacon is that he is the minister's aid. This fact accounts for it, that the apostles looked to the deacons for something more than a mechanical performance of the ministrations of the provision made by the church for the widows. The seven men were to be full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom. Stephen, who was chosen, and is first in the list, was a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. And we see that he devoted himself to other duties than merely those of the daily ministrations of the widows. Out of this truer conception of the nature of the diaconate, arises the fact that in the epistles we see that the deacons had larger functions than those which would be naturally assigned them, on the current misconception of the nature of their office. 1 Tim. iii. 8-13, gives a description of the necessary characteristics of deacons, which shows that they were in a larger sense aids in the general work of the ministry. This view of the nature of the diaconate alone explains the fact that from the earliest, post-apostolic antiquity, and indeed in the time of the apostolic fathers, the deacons were permanent officials in the church, with a range of functions of increasing importance, making them more and more efficient aids in part of the work of the ministry. (Charles Porterfield Krauth, "Church Polity," *Lutheran Church Review*, Vol. II, Whole No. 8 [Oct. 1883], pp. 316-19 [Part I]; Vol. III, Whole No. 10 [April 1884], pp. 139-40 [Part II])

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. (Henry Eyster Jacobs, "Theses on the Ministry and Ordination," *Lutheran Church Review*, Vol. XXVII, No. 1 [January 1908], pp. 91-92)

The followers of Jesus were a band of learners whom He was training to become the church. From among them He selected twelve to be His apostles (Mark iii. 13-19; Luke vi. 13-17). These twelve were His daily companions. During His whole public ministry He had them in training. Day after day He instructed, developed, and moulded them. Thus He fitted them to be His witnesses and to carry on His work (John xv. 27). ... Their office was in some respects peculiar and extraordinary. They had been chosen and trained directly by Christ. They were witnesses of His resurrection (Acts i. 22 and ii. 32; 1 John i. 1-3; 2 Peter i. 16). These founders of the church were endowed with special gifts and powers and had a general commission to preach and labor everywhere. In these respects they have had and can have no successors. But in as far as they were Christ's ministers of the Word they were the predecessors of all true ministers, and all such are their successors. All the New Testament offices of the church have grown out of the apostolate or are

modifications of it. What are these New Testament offices? They are all a ministry. There are two forms of this ministry. One is the ministry of the Word, the other is the ministry of mercy. The former is set forth in the New Testament under a number of names, forms, and activities. Part of these pertain to the ordinary ministry and part to the extraordinary. The former are permanent and are in the church to-day. The latter are temporary and were needed for the church in its infancy. (See 1 Cor. xii. 28; Eph. iv. 11.) We have already seen that the apostolic office was in many respects extraordinary. The same is true of the New Testament prophets. These were men needed, like the apostles, for that age of founding and forming the church when as yet there were no New Testament writings. They were men, like the apostles, directly inspired by the Holy Spirit. ... To this class belonged Judas and Silas (Acts xv. 32), Agabus (Acts xi. 28 and xxi. 10-12), the daughters of Philip (Acts xxi. 9), and others. ... In like manner we find as an extraordinary New Testament office, that of the evangelists. We find only Philip, who was also one of the seven deacons (Acts xxi. 8), and Timothy (2 Tim. iv. 5), thus designated. Others, however, were in the same work and calling. The evangelist, like the apostle, was a missionary. ... Apostles, prophets, and evangelists, then, had the extraordinary forms of the New Testament ministry. The last two are closely related to the first. All could claim divine authority for their office and work; all were ministers of the Word; all exercised their office through the Word.

Passing now from the temporary and extraordinary ministry of the Word we come to the permanent and ordinary. For this we find many names, but it is one office. The bearer of this office is sometimes called pastor, at other times teacher, then presbyter or elder, and again *episcopus* or bishop. These are different names for the same office. ... These elders were the pastors of the congregations. They were over the churches, ruled them with the Word and by a godly example, in the spirit of love (Acts xx. 28; 1 Thes. v. 12; 1 Tim. v. 17; Heb. xiii. 7,17). They were to shepherd their flocks – i.e., to feed, to guard, to lead, to heal (Acts xx. 28; 1 Cor. ix. 7; 1 Pet. v. 2; 1 Thes. v. 12; 1 Tim. iii. 1-11; Tit. i. 7-10; Jas. v. 14). ... To look after and minister to the poor was the work of a deacon. ... The office was a noble one. It was instituted by the apostles. It took a part of their work upon itself. It was one of the church's vital "helps." It ministered to Christ's poor in His name. ... The first deacons were men. But as the work of mercy among women was often unsuited to men, pious women assisted the deacons. Ere long we find women deacons. ... We see, then, that the female diaconate grew out of the male diaconate, and this again was instituted by the apostles, and assumed a part of their work. The ministry of the Word, then, comes directly from the apostolate, which comes directly from Christ. The ministry of mercy comes also from the apostles, and likewise continues a work of Christ. It is clear, therefore, that the Lord Jesus instituted the office of the New Testament ministry, even as He Himself was its first bearer. The office comes not from man, but from Christ. The church has never been without it. ... The important passage, Eph. iv. 11, shows clearly that not only the apostolate, but also the branches that grow from it are a gift of the glorified Christ. (George Henry Gerberding, *The Lutheran Pastor* [Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1902], pp. 27-32,34-36)

The Church in its communion with God and in its winning of souls, is bound to the preaching of the Word of God and the administration of the sacraments. Therefore a ministry of the Gospel is necessary. Moreover, the Church manifests its faith in manifold activities for its own upbuilding and for the welfare of mankind. All this makes it necessary for the Church to organize itself in some form of polity. But all orders and ranks of the ministry and all regulations for organization are human ordinances. No form of ministry or church polity is prescribed in the New Testament. The apostolic office is an apparent exception to this statement. But it is not prescribed that the apostolic office should continue in the Church. It could not be perpetuated. The name *apostle* was used in the early Church for any preacher who carried the Gospel from place to place in the name of the Lord. Instances of this loose use of the name are found in the New Testament also. Cf. II Cor. 11:5,13; 12:11; Rev. 2:2; Acts 14:14; I Thess. 2:6. But in the strict sense of the name, the office was singular. The apostles were appointed before the founding of the Church and for its founding. The permanent element in the apostleship was not the office itself, but the preaching of the Gospel. No form of ministry is prescribed in the New Testament, although a diversity of forms is exemplified in it. A comparison of earlier and later epistles, for instance [I] Corinthians with the pastoral epistles, shows a development in the forms of the ministry in apostolic times. ... A beginning is made at Jerusalem with deacons for the care of the poor, Acts 6:5. Soon we read of elders at Jerusalem, possibly on the synagogue model, Acts 11:30. Then we read of elders also in missionary churches, Acts 14:23. These are identical with bishops, Acts 20:17,28. In the pastoral epistles the offices of bishops or elders and deacons are fully developed. The ministry of the Word did not belong exclusively to the elders, perhaps it was not their principal function at all. But there were elders who taught the Word, I Tim. 3:2; 5:17; Titus 1:9. ... The ministry of the Church is the office of the means of grace. This ministry is of divine institution, but it was committed by the Lord to no

class in the Church, but to the Church itself. The Church itself, according to the wisdom given to it, designates those who shall exercise this ministry for it. The preaching of the Gospel is the preaching of the Church, not a private power or prerogative of a minister. Baptism and Communion are sacraments of the Church, not individual operations of a privileged person. In the work of administering the Word of God according to arising needs and circumstances the Church appoints ministers for different functions, one a pastor, another a missionary, another a teacher, and it may be [that the Church] assigns to them different degrees of jurisdiction and authority, for instance a president of a synod or a superintendent, whom it may call bishop. But that which is common and essential in all such offices and ranks is the one office of the means of grace. This is the divinely appointed element; the other features are variable. In this sense there is parity of ministers of the Gospel. ... But besides the direct dispensation of Word and sacrament the Church engages in manifold activities for its own upbuilding and for the welfare of its members and of mankind. The ultimate aim of all this activity is the spiritual good of men. For these activities it makes such provision of official appointment as the needs of the work and its own wisdom dictate. So, for example, the ministry of mercy has gained recognition along with the ministry of the Word. (Andrew George Voigt, *Between God and Man: An Outline of Dogmatics* [Philadelphia: The United Lutheran Publication House, 1926], pp. 208-11)

Luther...recognized a threefold preaching office. He did not simply equate the office of bishop with that of pastor; instead, he allowed the higher office of oversight (*antistites*) to continue. Its incumbents are "to oversee all offices, so that the teachers exercise their office and do not neglect it, the deacons distribute goods properly and do not become weary; to punish sinners and invoke the ban promptly so that every office is conducted rightly." In the cities pastors are assisted by preachers. Luther wanted four or five in Wittenberg, related to the quarters of the city; in each case several deacons are also to be assigned. Luther's renewal of the diaconate is little known and did not last long. The reason doubtless lies in the fact that CA 14 [Augsburg Confession, Article 14] does not mention this office or a call to it. ... He himself had a clear picture of the ancient church's practice: the deacon is, as servant of the bishop, likewise servant of the congregation. He registers and cares for the poor, visits the sick, and manages church property. Thus the administrative functions receive particular emphasis. The fact that deacons were also called upon for preaching, as in the case of Stephen, hastened the demise of poor relief – a gap which was filled by the hospitalers. Deacons need not harbor feelings of inferiority or jealousy; all officeholders stand equal before God. Occasional statements of Luther, then, indicate that he adopted the traditional threefold division of the pastoral office [i.e. bishops, presbyters/preachers, and deacons], but that cannot be considered a contradiction to CA 14 unless one ties the call to the office [as required in CA 14] with the particular legal forms (examination, installation, etc.) that were subsequently introduced in the evangelical territories. ... One thing is clear: these offices derived from the pastoral office – the bishop on a higher level and the preacher on a lower one – serve the truth and the effectiveness of the gospel. That also applies to diaconal service and to the office of schoolmaster, "which next to the office of preaching, is the most useful, greatest, and best." 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. This is true not only of the persons who lead worship in the congregation but also of the times and places of worship – "so that it will be preached outwardly and will be visible in time, place, and persons." ... 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. (Luther lists "pastors, teachers, preachers, lectors, priests [whom men call chaplains], sacristans, schoolmasters, and whatever other work belongs to these offices and persons.") ... 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* [cf. 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. Finally, this whole structure of proclamation, education, and social welfare requires a financial base. (Wilhelm Maurer, *Historical Commentary on the Augsburg Confession* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986], pp. 194-95, 197)

We find the regulations of the Lutheran Church in Holland, in their fully developed form, in a statistical work published before the seventeenth century closed, Bentham's *Condition of the Churches and Schools of Holland*. This writer says that, with the exception of doctrine, the Lutheran Church in Holland was, at that time, in all respects the same as the Reformed. It had complied with this external order as the price of toleration, and, besides this, had been closely

related to the Lutheran Church at Strassburg, where a similar resemblance to the Reformed had prevailed. ... At that time there were thirty-four churches and forty-five ministers... At Amsterdam there were for the one congregation two church buildings, with six ministers, one of whom preached in German, and thirty-thousand souls. For many generations it had the distinction of being the largest Lutheran congregation in the world. ... Every five years a synod of all the Lutheran congregations was held at Amsterdam. It was the gradual development of the union, made in 1605, between seven of the Lutheran pastors, whose parishes had previously been isolated and independent, which was followed by the "Fraternity" of 1614. Important matters occurring between the meetings were settled, if possible, by an appeal to the three nearest congregations. ... Their public service was very similar to that of their Reformed neighbors; and yet it had some noteworthy [Lutheran] features. ...

The church constitution of 1597, as revised in 1614, 1644, and 1681, binds all preachers to teach according to the rule of the divine Word, as declared in the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures, and forbids them to depart from either the doctrine or the modes of expression "of our symbolical books, viz., the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, its Apology, the Smalcald Articles, and the Formula of Concord, together with the two catechisms of Luther." All sermons are to be directed to the edification of the congregation, by teaching God's Word purely, distinguishing between true and false doctrine, and, with all plainness and directness, reprovng sin. ... No private religious meetings were held without the knowledge and approval of the pastor. The administration of the Lord's Supper was announced two weeks in advance. Before their first communion, a careful examination was made of all young persons. To prevent those from coming to the Lord's Supper who had not been properly instructed and been present at the preparatory service, or otherwise privately conferred with the pastor, the custom widely prevalent in the Reformed Church had been adopted by the Lutherans. Those entitled to commune were furnished with "tokens," which the elders standing by the side of the Lord's Table received as the communicants approached. At the previous distribution of the tokens by the elders to applicants, one or more of the pastors was present to see that none received them who should not commune. ... Rigid discipline was exercised according to a detailed process. ...

Every congregation was governed by a "consistorium," composed of the pastors and lay elders, or such other persons as were elected by the congregation. The final decision in all doctrinal questions belonged to the pastors. All discussions of the consistorium were secret. Ordinations occurred either in the congregation of which the candidate had been elected pastor, or in the congregation at Amsterdam. The [pastoral] representatives of the three nearest congregations and a [pastoral] representative of the congregation at Amsterdam officiated at such ordinations. Controversies between pastors were not brought before the congregation, but were settled in the consistorium. ...

The provisions of the Holland order concerning lay elders especially concern us, since we know their influence upon our own [American] churches. The time of their election was fixed as the first Sunday in May, at the time and place of the afternoon service. Ten names were nominated yearly for elders, and twelve for deacons, double the number to be elected. The term of service was two years. No one elected was excused, unless for most clear and weighty reasons. To avoid all offense, a father and son, or two brothers, or two brothers-in-law could not serve in these offices at the same time. They were installed with the laying on of hands, and, at the expiration of their term, they were dismissed from office, according to a very full order, in which they receive the thanks of the congregation for their services, and the benediction of the pastor. They were responsible for the pure preaching of God's Word, the right administration of the sacraments, the godly life, and the observance of the church regulations by the pastor; and, for this purpose, the presence of at least some of the elders at every public service was deemed necessary. On the dismissal of the congregation, they stood by the door with the receptacles for the collections in their hands, in order to receive the contributions of the people for the support of the church and for the poor. In this they were aided by the deacons. They saw to the support of the pastor, and cooperated with him in removing all causes of offense among the members, in reprovng sin wherever it occurred, in bringing the erring to repentance, or, where this could not be effected, in the exercise of discipline.

The deacons were purely collectors and distributors of alms. In their house-to-house visitations they were charged with the duty of bringing to the church service those who had been negligent in this particular. There was also a special office devoted to the care of the sick. This included frequent visitations by one competent to console the sick with God's Word, who reported to the pastor as his spiritual, or to the deacons as their pecuniary, aid was needed. As parish clerk, the same officer was charged with the duty of putting the hymns on the hymn-board, keeping the register of baptisms and marriages, collecting the requests for the special prayers of the congregation, and reporting all irregularities of those receiving alms to the deacons or consistorium. This office of *Zieken-trooster*, "comforter of the sick," was found in the Reformed churches in Holland, and was transported by them to America.

Such was the Lutheran Church in Holland when it sent members to the colony which Holland had founded on the banks of the Hudson, and when the Dutch Lutheran churches in New York were under the care of the consistorium of Amsterdam. (Henry Eyster Jacobs, *A History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States* [Fifth Edition] [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907], pp. 38-45)

Since Lutheranism in New York had its beginnings in an environment similar to that in The Netherlands, the organization of the Church developed naturally on a congregational basis, in which each congregation was an entity in itself. During the Dutch period [before 1664] the organization was of the loosest type, without a constitution or a body of formally elected or appointed officers. The leaders always signed their petitions simply as "members," but they always referred to the group as "our congregation" [*onse Gemeente*], and the [Amsterdam] Consistory recognized it in the same way. The full power of the congregation to call a pastor was likewise recognized by the Consistory, which undertook to secure a pastor only "persuant to the request made by the members of our Confession in New Netherland and the power thereto conferred in their letter upon the Consistory." Shortly after legal recognition had been granted to the congregations by the English [in 1664], the leaders assumed the title of "Overseers" [*Voorstanders*], and formal organization took place in 1669, upon the arrival of [Pastor Jacob] Fabritius, when "twelve men from the [New York City] congregation, who were found suitable thereto, were, with the general approval and after previous special announcement and the delivery of an election sermon, publicly ordained and elected to the offices of elders, deacons and overseers" [*Ouderlingen, diaconen ende voorstanders*]. Probably soon thereafter...the office of lay reader [*Voorleser*] was used, and by the close of the seventeenth century also that of church master [*Kerkmeester*]. All the officers, together with the Pastor, were members of the Church Council [*Kerkeraad*]. ... All the offices were copied from the Amsterdam Lutheran Church, excepting that of the lay reader. The latter was doubtless taken from the local Dutch Reformed Church, which had the office as early as 1639. In the Amsterdam Church there were "school-masters" [*School-meesters*], whose duties in the absence of the pastor were similar to those of the lay reader, but the latter term apparently was not used. (Harry Julius Kreider, *Lutheranism in Colonial New York* [New York, 1942], pp. 81-83)

15. Ecclesiastical offices that assist, in limited or supplementary ways, in the public administration of the Means of Grace ("helping offices" or "limited offices")

TESTIMONIES FROM THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS:

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." (AC XXIV:36-38 [Latin], K/W p. 71) (*The deacons of the ancient church served as liturgical assistants, but they were not authorized to officiate at the Lord's Supper, as presbyters and bishops were.*)

...because God's Word and command cannot be changed by any human vow or law, priests and other clergy [spirituals] have taken wives for themselves... It can also be demonstrated from the historical accounts and from the writings of the Fathers that it was customary in the Christian church of ancient times for priests and deacons to have wives. This is why Paul says in 1 Timothy 3[:2]: "Now a bishop must be above reproach, the husband of one wife." ... How can the marriage of priests and clergy [spirituals], especially of the pastors [parish rectors] and others who are to serve the church, be disadvantageous to the Christian church as a whole? (AC XXIII:9-11, 16 [German], K/W pp. 62, 64, 66) (*The deacons of the ancient church are included here, together with priests [presbyters] and bishops, in the category of "clergy" ["spirituals"].*)

While monasteries were once schools for Christian instruction, they have now degenerated – as though from a golden to an iron age... To be sure, we are not blaming all the monks. We think that here and there good men can be found in the monasteries who have a moderate opinion of these human acts of devotion and who do not approve of the cruelty that the hypocrites among them display. ...obedience, poverty, and celibacy, provided they are not impure, are

nonobligatory forms of discipline. Hence the saints can use them without sinning, as did Bernard, Francis, and other holy men. They used them for their physical benefit, to have more leisure for teaching and other pious duties, not because the works themselves are services that justify or merit eternal life. ... It is likely that here and there in the monasteries there are still some virtuous people [men] serving the ministry of the Word who follow these observances without wicked ideas. (Ap XXVII:5,8,21-22, pp. 278,281) (*Where the Latin version of this confession [quoted here] says that monasteries were once “schools for Christian instruction,” the German version [included in the 1580 edition of the Book of Concord] says that monasteries were once “schools in which youth and others were trained in the Holy Scriptures.” Where the Latin version says that it is likely that there are still some virtuous men in the monasteries who are “serving the ministry of the Word,” the German version says that it is likely that there are still such men in the monasteries who are “reading and studying.”*)

...foundations and monasteries, established in former times with good intentions for the education of learned people [men] 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, 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. (SA II, III:1, K/W p. 306) (*Monasteries, which are ecclesiastical institutions, should be used for the education of the children and youth of the church. At the same time, the education of children and youth is also a domestic responsibility: “For all other authority is derived and developed out of the authority of parents. Where a father is unable by himself to bring up his child, he calls upon a schoolmaster to teach him...” [LC I:141, K/W p. 405]. Where the German version of the Small Catechism says that catechetical instruction is to be carried out by the “head of a house” [or housefather] among the members of the household [K/W pp. 351,354,356,359,362], the Latin version says that this instruction is to be carried out by “schoolmasters” among their pupils. 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: “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” [LC V:85-87, K/W pp. 475-76].*)

TESTIMONIES FROM THE WRITINGS OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGIANS:

[1 Timothy 3:]8. *Deacons likewise must be serious.* Deacons were men who also preached occasionally. 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. That custom has long ceased to exist. In the papist church the man who reads the Gospel is a subdeacon. The distribution of goods and the care of the poor have been relegated to the hospices. The truth of the matter is that there ought to be chaplains and common funds. ... There ought to be deacons for the church – men who should be of service to the bishop and at his recommendations have control in the church in external matters. ... [1 Timothy 3:]10. *Let them be tested first.* ... First the deacons should be tested. All the more should bishops and professors be tested. How should they be tested, and with what test? According to what they are, can do, and actually do. Earlier we said that the bishops should be tested... The acid test is that a recommendation be required from those who know them. You see, the deacon takes care of the people and is the bishop’s steward. He should be tested first. But how do I know that they are blameless? How do I know which are not of bad reputation or which only care for useless things? So one may be able to gather from the testimony of his neighboring brethren who is a good and faithful man. We must not call a deacon because of his appearance or because he is friendly. We do not test him in this way. If, however, we try to find out from testimony whether he is good, serious, diligent, and the kind of

man who gladly pursues piety and is happy to listen to preaching, then we are testing him. One will be able to determine this from the testimony of his brothers and neighbors. We must not take people into the ministry unless they have this testimony. When the apostles were sending out the brethren, they did not send them out without letters of recommendation, as we do in the case of our monks and bishops. This is an apostolic ritual. *Then let them serve as deacons.* He imposes neither the office of teaching nor the qualifications of the bishop on deacons. Instead he gives them the responsibilities for supplies or financing. They should be serious, not double-tongued. They should not sow disharmony within the church. They should have a talent for bringing harmony, for increasing concord, peace, and the reputation of the bishop. They should not be drinkers but be attentive to their business. (Martin Luther, "Lectures on 1 Timothy," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 28 [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1973], pp. 295-98)

He [Paul] adds the promise: [1 Timothy 3:]13. *For those who serve well, etc.* You have heard about the arrangement of the office of bishops and deacons, along with their wives. You have heard what sort of men Paul wants set up in the church. The rest is the promise which he connects to this: "For those who serve well, etc." This promise which the deacons have can be taken generally to refer to bishops as well as to deacons. Paul strengthens them in this way that each is established in his own service. Yet he seems to be speaking especially about deacons, and he seems to be encouraging them. To be sure, the sense is: deacons belong to a lower order; inequality generally causes discord; and, since the lesser envy the greater, they become double-tongued. Paul now wants to interject this promise and make them content with their lot. He says in substance: "Even if you do not have duties as solemn as bishops, yet you should be content with your rank. Before God you will not be lower than bishops, as if bishops were better people." ... The deacon wants to be the bishop: "I know as much as he does, and I can preach as well as he." That's the way they act today too. That rivalry Paul forbids everywhere. "Let us have no self-conceit," Gal. 5:26. Let us not rival each other except in good. In this way, then, he now comforts deacons and wants to make them content, etc. Let each serve faithfully in his own vocation. If someone else has a loftier situation, let him not be jealous or despise his own lot. "You should be careful that you serve well." They should be good men, not double-tongued. "If they serve well," a marvelous text! If deacons do not seem to have so important a position, they nonetheless have the highest position in reliance on and faith in Christ. It is enough that they remain in faith toward Christ. That deacon can be free if he knows that his work pleases Christ and that his diaconate is as pleasing to Christ as is a bishop in his bishopric. Therefore he should comfort them that they may minister willingly and well and not be jealous. If some who are jealous do this because they consider that they have a gift of eloquence and good appearance, they have no confidence in pastors who do not have the same blessings. This is to ask for an official position from the world and the flesh. "Give thanks! You can be as rich in Christ as a bishop." What is it to me that I do not have the same function? It is enough that I have the same wealth as he – or even greater. What would the farmer ask who has \$1,000 in the bank? He doesn't want to live in the city and beg. "So you, O deacon, minister well. Be a good servant. You are very rich. Paul gives a high recommendation to your position. Although on the surface these offices appear unimportant before the world, yet deacons have an excellent position in faith and in Christ." (Martin Luther, "Lectures on 1 Timothy," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 28 [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1973], pp. 299-301)

Then the apostles took counsel amongst themselves and called all the disciples together and said, "It would not be proper that we lay aside the Word of God to wait tables. Therefore you, dear brothers, find among you seven men who are already with you and filled with the Holy Ghost and are wise, whom we can appoint for this need. But we will remain in prayer and in the Office of the Word of God" [Acts 6:2-4]. Then they selected seven men among whom was also Stephen, who were called "deacons," as they are to the present day. This is an office by which they should take possession of the common goods and portion those goods out to the Church. This also still happens in the tradition. The apostles attended to the preaching while these seven men were leaders who portioned out the goods. ... In this history we see for the first time how a Christian congregation should be organized. Also, you see the true picture of a spiritual government which is led by the apostles. They oversee the souls by their preaching and prayers. They also organize it so that their physical needs are cared for by choosing a few men who can distribute the goods which they have. So Christian government is concerned with both the spiritual and bodily needs of the people so that no one might have any need, as Saint Luke says. They are fed abundantly both in body and soul. Now that is an accurate description and a good example for us. It would be good that the same thing be done now among Christ's people. A city like Wittenberg could be divided into four or five parts and each section given a preacher and some deacons so that each section would

be responsible for preaching and the distribution of the goods, visiting the sick and seeing to it that no one has any need. But we do not have the additional people. For that reason I fear that it will not come to pass until our Lord God Christ sees to it. As you know, in the papacy they made epistle readers and Gospel readers out of the diaconate. Also, when a bishop is elected, he does not take that office in order to preach, for he had that already in his office as a priest as does every poor lowly priest. He is only made a bishop to be seated upon a high throne and called "Most Gracious Eminence." Likewise, no one is chosen to be a deacon in the office described at the time of the apostles. Rather they stand by the altar and each reads an epistle or Gospel to carry out their office. All of that is abuse. What belongs to preaching and praying is called the mass. Those who had at one time taken care of people's physical needs are now called "lectors." But from this text those in the diaconate are better pictured as nursing home directors, as those we call advocates or ombudsmen. So, if a common treasury is to be administered, offices must be specified from the congregation to fill them. "Bishop" designates a man holding the divine Office, who should hand out the divine and spiritual treasures, preach the Gospel and care for people with the Word of God. He must have servants who are deacons who should serve the congregation so that there is kept a registry of the poor people whose needs are all taken care by the congregation. They should visit the sick and take good care of the treasury. (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. 150,152-53)

In every church there shall be no more than one sexton [*Küster* or *Coster*] who unlocks the doors, rings the bell, brings water for baptism, remains by the altar [during the service], prepares the bread and the wine, etc. He shall obey the preachers and not grumble, doing in the church what he is called upon to do and helping the pastors in cases of emergency when they must go out. ("The Church Order for the City of Braunschweig" [1528], *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des sechszehnten Jahrhunderts* [edited by Aemilius L. Richter] [Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1967], Vol. 1, p. 113; quoted in Eric Lund, *Documents from the History of Lutheranism 1517-1750* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002], p. 148)

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. ... 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. ("General Articles for the Visitation in Electoral Saxony" [1557], *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)

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). ("Saxon General Articles" [1580], *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], *Evang.-Luth. Schulblatt*, Vol. 4, No. 5 [January 1869])

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. Emergencies 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 (*Recht*), 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. ... The separation of the Christian school office from the preaching office does not release the pastor from his accountability in regard to the Christian instruction and training of the young. Therefore the office of overseeing the school remains with him and the faithful administration of this function is his holy duty. ...the pastor as such should perform oversight over the school insofar as the teacher has an ecclesiastical office and has as the goal of his work the building of the church of Christ and Christendom. (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]) (*In regard to this essay, C. F. W. Walther writes: "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)])

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. (Herman Amberg Preus, *Kirkelig Maanedstidende*, Vol. IV, No. 10 [October 1859], p. 154; in Erling T. Teigen, "The Legacy of Jakob Aall Ottesen," *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, Vol. 44, No. 1 [March 2004], p. 105)

Two distinct types of schools stand out in the sixteenth century, the one German, the other Latin. Although the German school was not completely developed, it was slowly progressing from the stage where the chief purpose was to give catechetical instruction, to a higher plane where the work embodied at least rudiments of intellectual education. Included in this class are the schools for girls (*Mädchenschulen*) and those for boys (*deutsche Knabenschulen* or merely *deutsche Schulen*). The work was purely elementary, catechism, reading, and writing being the principal or sole parts of the curriculum. In the latter part of the century there developed also German writing schools (*Modistenschulen*, "*deutsche Schreiberei und Rechenschulen*") the purpose of which was to give special preparation to such boys as expected to enter the service of the state or community in the capacity of clerks, secretaries, and the like. ... Such vernacular institutions were naturally not intended to meet the needs of the learned class. Supplying such needs was the work of the Latin school, an institution distinctly preparatory in its nature, with work leading up to university entrance. ... In the most elementary German school the teacher was called the German schoolmaster (*der deutsche Schulmeister*); although in reality he was often merely the sexton and had no other title than that, – *Custos*, *Kuster*, *Aedituus*, *Kirchendiener*, *Kirchenschreiber*, *Schreiber*, *Glockner*, *Opfermann*, *Leuter*, and *Schulmeister* being variously used for this office. It was generally in the smaller places that the sexton had to add the work of teaching to his other burdens. In the special schools for teaching writing and computation, the teacher was called a *Modist*... The teacher of the girls'

school was almost always called the schoolmistress (*Schulmeisterin*); but in some cases a schoolmaster held this position. In the Latin school the title of the teacher depended upon the rank. Where there were two teachers, the superior was called the *Schulmeister* or *Ludirector*. His assistant was the *Cantor* or the *Custos* (Sexton). The same titles were used in a school with three teachers, – the sexton then holding the lowest place. In schools with four teachers, the arrangement was as follows: (1) *Rector, Ludirector, Magister, or Meister*; (2) *Conrector, Subrector, Supremus, or Cantor*; (3) *Baccalaureus or Pädagoge*; (4) *Cantor, Infimus, Baccalaureus, or Pädagoge*. ... An assistant teacher might also be called *Præceptor, Collaborator*, or merely associate (Gesell). The title of *Professor*, generally reserved to the university, was sometimes given to teachers in the higher preparatory schools... ...[Georg] Mertz, who has a very high appreciation of the merits of the teachers and the adverse circumstances under which they were compelled to work, says [in *Das Schulwesen der deutschen Reformation*] that in the evangelical schools they were far below the ideal which the Reformers held. But in an age when even clergymen were often found unsuited to their work and neglectful of their duties, it is not surprising to find that schoolmasters, then generally regarded as belonging to an inferior branch of the ministry of the church, were not always men of the very highest character. ... The makers of church and school ordinances agree in demanding very high character in teachers. ... “God-fearing and respectable” are the adjectives which generally describe the characteristics desired in a teacher in the lower schools, whether for boys or for girls. ... In the definite statements of requirements more attention was paid to the moral character of the teacher in the lower schools than to his intellectual equipment. In the Latin schools the intellectual and moral are combined in statements of requirements. (Charles Leonidas Robbins, *Teachers in Germany in the Sixteenth Century* [New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1912], pp. 21-22, 27-28)

Toward the close of the [sixteenth] century we find certain evidences of the beginning of seminaries for teachers, – institutions for their maintenance although not for instruction except in connection with schools already existing. Such a case is found in the *Ordnung* for Strassburg in 1598. One section of this is headed, “The Seminary of the Church, that is, What measures are to be taken for the training of such persons as shall in future be of service to church and school.” A part of this section provides that the cloister of S. Wilhelm is to be a *Collegium* (that is, a kind of residence hall) for boys of talent and good character who are to bind themselves to study theology in the Strassburg Academy, to the teaching of the catechism in the institution, and to the service of the church in that city. In the text itself there is no distinction between the ministry of the church and the work of teaching; but the heading of the section shows that the latter is regarded as being bound with the former. (Vormbaum I:402.) Indeed, Mertz holds that wherever we find special institutions for the training of clergymen, we can speak of institutions for the training of teachers, the future work of the persons in attendance always being taken into consideration. (Mertz, p. 411.) ... The *Ordnung* of Württemberg (1559) makes elaborate provision for the choosing, maintenance, studies, and government of young men who receive aid to enable them to attend the University of Tübingen. The recipient of such aid had to pledge himself to the study of theology in the university and afterwards to take up the work of pastor, chaplain, deacon, or schoolmaster in the duchy of Württemberg unless granted permission by the duke to enter the service of someone else. From this it seems clear that the preparation of a teacher was regarded as being practically the same as that required of a clergyman. From other sources it appears that the work of teaching was but a stage in the complete preparation for the ministry. The large number of teachers who took up the pastoral duties...shows still more plainly the relation between the two professions, or rather between the two parts of the one [profession], the work of the ministry. ... As the school was considered a vital part of the work of the church, the appointment of teachers was very largely in the hands of the clergy and church boards. ... The purpose of education as then conceived, the intimate connection between church and school, the character of local government, the fact that education had always been almost entirely in the hands of the church made it very natural that the clergy should have the predominating, if not sole voice in the selection of teachers. (Charles Leonidas Robbins, *Teachers in Germany in the Sixteenth Century* [New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1912], pp. 40-41, 44)

One of the most important considerations in the matter of the teacher’s place in society and his relations with the people and institutions of his community is discovered in the fact that his office had the most intimate connection with the work of the church. His was a holy service which was a part of the greater work of the newly organized Protestant church. That is to say, the place of the teacher was generally what it had been through the preceding centuries. That schools would be necessary even though there were no church and no religion was a well recognized fact, but this did not divorce the

work of teaching from the general field of church activity. The church did exist; religious instruction was highly necessary; the school was a necessary instrument in preserving the institution through training leaders and in giving a certain amount of elementary instruction in matters of religion. From these facts it is evident that the teacher stands as servant of the church, even though he may also serve the state. So close was this connection between the work of teaching and that of the ministry that in almost all the lower schools, the teacher was required to do a part of the work that might seem to be the special duty of the pastor, that of teaching the catechism and giving training in church music. In many places the schoolmaster or one of his assistants was required to accompany the pupils to church and supervise their conduct during the service. This is true of the Latin as well as of the German schools. A multitude of examples might be cited; but the single case of Wittenberg will suffice to show how closely the work of teaching was connected with the service of the church. "On four days of the week the music of the church shall be supplied by the schoolmasters and his three associates, each being responsible for a day; as for example, the schoolmaster on Monday, the first associate on Tuesday, the *cantor* on Thursday, and the *tertius* on Friday. On the other day they shall all be in the church." (Pallas I:1:14.) ...the teacher is examined and certificated by representatives of the church in most cases; his salary comes for the most part from church funds; his supervisors are almost all clergymen; and his standing in the community depends largely upon the fact that he is in reality an officer of the church. Furthermore, his work is regarded as a fitting preparation for any person who expects to become a pastor. Luther even goes so far as to say that a young man was hardly fit to enter the ministry until he had had some actual teaching experience. (*Von den Konzillien*.) The Brandenburg *Visitations- und Consistorialordnung* of 1573 gives special encouragement to schoolmasters and associates who wish to enter the ministry. ["If in the towns of our Electorate there are schoolmasters and associates who desire to fill such offices, they shall be given preference." (Richter II:361.)] In Pomerania according to the *Ordnung* of 1563, only such men as expected to enter the ministry were to be made sextons. It is furthermore required that the sexton be able to teach the catechism, and, in the towns, to help in the schools. (Richter II:245.) Hesse, 1566, makes it possible for the schoolmaster (if he has studied theology) to pass the cup in the administration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. (Richter II:295.) While there may have been a tendency to destroy the half-clerical character of the teacher and make him a "poorly paid, slightly esteemed, submissive servant of a city or a small district" (Otto Kaemmel, *Geschichte des Leipziger Schulwesens*, 36), the *Ordnungen* throughout the [sixteenth] century show that it is still the wish of the church to have him regarded as one of her most important representatives. He is regarded as offering most promising material for the perpetuation of the ministry; and his work as a teacher of things secular does not take from him his function as teacher of things sacred. (Charles Leonidas Robbins, *Teachers in Germany in the Sixteenth Century* [New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1912], pp. 91-92)

...Paul...had spoken of the duty of women in general in [1 Timothy] ch. 2, and was going to speak about widows and deaconesses in ch. 5... (Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part III [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986], pp. 130-31)

To begin with, it is not necessary to search out by conjecture or to learn from the writings of the fathers what was the nature of the association of widows at the time of the apostles. For there are clear descriptions (Acts 6:1; 1 Tim. 5:3 ff.), namely, that the church customarily received into its care poor widows who had neither parents nor children nor friends nor household, nor were able to perform work by which they could sustain themselves, in order that they might be sustained by the alms of the church, and that they should be considered by the deacons in the daily distribution of alms. ... And that the church in turn for this support used their work for the care of the poor, of strangers, of the afflicted and the sick (as the ministry of the deaconesses is described in the history of the church) can be gathered from this, that Paul wants such a one to be enrolled who has before shown hospitality to strangers and performed humane works for the afflicted. It seems also to have been the duty of widows to wash corpses and to wrap them (Acts 9:37). And Paul gives the instruction of young girls and young women to older women (Titus 2:3 ff.), which passage can, however, be understood generally about all matrons of more advanced age. ... Since Paul says [1 Tim. 5:11-15] that those fallen widows had condemnation, and had turned back after Satan, the question is what that dreadful sin of theirs was which made them enemies of Christ, slaves of Satan, and worthy of damnation. The papalists say that wanting to marry after taking the vow is so great a sin. But let us see whether Paul says this. ... In 1 Cor. 7:39 Paul teaches that pious widows may marry whom they will, only that it be in the Lord, that is, in fear and with invocation of the Lord, or not to marry with denial of faith and godliness. But these widows wanted to marry, not in the Lord, but sportively and insolently in

wantonness against Christ. This is certainly a dreadful description of a dreadful sin. Therefore it is not simply and per se wanting to marry, but wanting to marry in the way Paul describes here, that is damnable. For he mentions four sins one by one: I. They had grown wanton against Christ; II. When they ought to have ministered to the poor, to strangers, to the afflicted and sick, they neglected and cast off the duties of their ministry, and gadded about from house to house in idleness, as gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not. And because Christ says, Matt. 25:45: "As you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to Me," therefore Paul says that these widows have been wanton not only against the poor, but against Christ Himself; III. He says that by that wantonness they had given occasion to the enemy to speak evil of and blaspheme the sound doctrine of the Gospel; IV. He says that some of them were finally turned back after Satan. ... Therefore it means that complete apostasy or defection of these widows from faith and the religion of Christ finally followed. For when they had first grown wanton against Christ, there finally followed outright defection from Christ, and following after Satan... For to do the duties of their ministry fraudulently, and to grow wanton against Christ, as Paul says of these widows, are sins which drive out faith. (Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part III [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986], pp. 100-04)

For Martin Chemnitz, Anna [cf. Luke 2:36-38]...is proof for all women that, despite Eve's sin, they too can be saved. Without such biblical examples women might despair, since Christ was a man and not a woman. The fact that Anna was allowed, like Simeon, to preach and teach in the temple, both publicly and privately, should give comfort to pious women that "they also, as well as men, belong to the kingdom of Christ" [*Postilla* (1594), p. 187]. 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. Along with her duties of washing and cleaning, her main responsibilities were in the girls' school, where she would have taught Scripture along with proper behavior and modesty. Along with her special comfort to women in the knowledge that they too are children of God, Anna is also a comfort to the elderly, especially widows. However, Chemnitz warns, widows must remember to care first for their own families, children, grandchildren, and parents. Only if they are alone without such family responsibilities should they take on the role of serving the church, and then only if they meet the moral requirements of such a position; that is, if they have led a life of piety and moderation. Such aged widows, whom Chemnitz terms "beguines," would have a home and continued care provided for them by the community. Even such a home, however, is only for women who "are peaceful, conducted themselves well and honorably in their youth, and are worthy of such alms" [pp. 191-92]. ...Chemnitz, who specified an order of widows for the church, tightly restricted those who could participate in such an order. (Beth Kreitzer, *Reforming Mary* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2004], p. 75)

16. "Helping offices" or "limited offices": entrusted to qualified males or females, in accordance with the order of creation

TESTIMONIES FROM THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS:

...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. (SA III, VIII:10-13, K/W p. 323)

Moreover, it is debated whether bishops or pastors have the right to institute ceremonies in the church and make laws concerning food, holy days, ranks or orders of ministers, etc. ...concerning this question, our people teach...that bishops do not have the power to establish anything contrary to the gospel. ...it is lawful for bishops or pastors to establish ordinances so that things are done in the church in an orderly fashion... Thus, Paul ordered that women should cover

their heads in the assembly [1 Cor. 11:5] and that interpreters should be heard in the church in an orderly way [1 Cor. 14:30]. It is fitting for the churches to comply with such ordinances for the sake of love and tranquillity and to keep them insofar as they do not offend others. Thus, everything may be done in an orderly fashion in the churches without confusion, but in such a way that consciences are not burdened by thinking such things are necessary for salvation or that they sin when violating them without offense. Just as no one would say that a woman commits a sin by leaving the house with her head uncovered in an inoffensive way. (AC XXVIII:30,34,53-56 [Latin], K/W pp. 95,97,99,101) (*St. Paul writes in 1 Cor. 11:5 that "every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head."*)

TESTIMONIES FROM THE WRITINGS OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGIANS:

The second thing in this Gospel [Luke 1:39-56] is the Magnificat which Mary sings. By this she manifests the prowess of a doctor or master of theology and teaches us how we should comport ourselves toward God. ...she teaches us how to comport ourselves before God, with praise and thanksgiving. ... "My soul," says she, "doth magnify the Lord," that is, I praise and extol God, not just with my mouth but with my heart and my life, with all my strength and members; and with all my soul I want to sing and praise God. ... "My spirit," she says further, "hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." My "spirit," that is, my innermost being, all the faculties with which I perceive God rejoice not in the temporal things but in God. ... Therefore, let all the learned on earth come together and try their hand at composing even a single verse equal to this verse, and then they will see the extent of their skill. Mary sets high her focus, and yet is humble, so humble, that she, a great doctor and prophetess, who is more learned than all the apostles and prophets, becomes governess and handmaiden for Elisabeth. (Martin Luther, "[First] Sermon for the Day of Mary's Visitation," *Complete Sermons of Martin Luther* [Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2000], Vol. 7, pp. 347, 350-51)

[Joel 2:28: *I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy...*] Joel says here "flesh"; this means all types of people without discrimination. The Holy Spirit will be poured out in heaven, and all will prophesy. Therefore the law of Leviticus about the priesthood is repealed and a new one is given, that reads: "Your sons," daughters, young men, old women. That means all types of flesh, that is, [all types of] people. I accept women, maidens, and will teach them all how they will prophesy. Servants will come into the [priestly] office, like Hannah, or maidservants. Therefore the description of the priesthood is no longer valid. Against this it is not possible for the Jews to respond that their priests must be correct and not deformed, as with Aaron, etc. But Peter was not from a priestly family, nor were the apostles nor was Christ. None of them took on a priestly office, and they were from other tribes. None of them was from the tribe of Levi or Aaron. But Joel says, all types of people are the same as bishops, priests, popes and cardinals. This is a powerful text that knocks priesthood onto its back. It is not valid to hold onto the office of the priesthood, because this was not endowed. And it will also be that priests will come out of all tribes. Today there are the sons of peasants; it is fit and proper that they have the gift of prophecy, about which we can use the phrase "is poured out." No one is discriminated against, neither city residents nor peasants. Therefore this text truly sets up a new priesthood, that does not depend so much on the person. The four daughters of Philip were prophetesses. 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. This all counts as prophesying, not preaching. 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... (Martin Luther, "Sermon on Joel 2:28"; quoted in *Luther on Women* [edited by Susan C. Karant-Nunn and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks] [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003], p. 61)

The first chapter [of Titus] has set forth the antithesis between pious and impious ministers of the Word. This second chapter contains the duties of all the estates of society. It says: "Conduct yourself according to the model, and pay no attention to questionings and to Jewish myths. Remain in the right and *sound doctrine*, and thus instruct others." Sound doctrine is pure doctrine, to which all things are pure, which teaches how to have a pure mind and conscience, which makes men good, faithful, and charitable. *Bid the older men*, as well as other orders of society. ... Then he [Paul] continues: *sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness*, that is, those who are upright, not false, counterfeit, or lazy in faith. A good gold piece is an honest coin; the same quality pertains to an honest wine, one which has not been adulterated. That is, they have a pure and sure faith, because they are under obligation to teach morality. ... [Titus 2:]3.

[*Bid*] the older women. He instructs the men how they ought to live, and by the word “sound” he indicates that he wants them to be set apart from profane things. He wants their wives, the older women, to be adorned *with holy* and decent *deportment*, that is, deportment that is fitting for saints or for holy things. ... [*They are to be*] good teachers. “Good teachers” are those who are instructed, apt, and skillful at teaching, filled with good doctrines and exhortations, because he will appoint older women as the instructors of younger women. To what end? [Titus 2:]4. *And so train the young women*. They should train by example and by word and should make them modest; that is, they should train them in modesty, so that they are sensible, not noisy and raucous but quiet and gentle. Any of them who is not modest should be taught and instructed by [an older] woman, so that the young women love their husbands and are devoted to their children. They should see to it that they take care of their husbands and children. ... Thus he instructs matrons to be good teachers and to train younger women to love their husbands and children. (Martin Luther, “Lectures on Titus,” *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 29 [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968], pp. 53-54)

Since it becomes Christians then to make good use of the Holy Scriptures as their one and only book and it is a sin and a shame not to know our own book or to understand the speech and words of our God, it is a still greater sin and loss that we do not study languages, especially in these days when God is offering and giving us men and books and every facility and inducement to this study, and desires his Bible to be an open book. ... Here belongs also what St. Paul calls for in I Corinthians 14[:27,29], namely, that in the Christian church all teachings must be judged. For this a knowledge of the language is needful above all else. The preacher or teacher can expound the Bible from beginning to end as he pleases, accurately or inaccurately, if there is no one there to judge whether he is doing it right or wrong. But in order to judge, one must have a knowledge of the languages... Therefore, although faith and the gospel may indeed be proclaimed by simple preachers without a knowledge of languages, such preaching is flat and tame; people finally become weary and bored with it, and it falls to the ground. But where the preacher is versed in the languages, there is a freshness and vigor in his preaching, Scripture is treated in its entirety, and faith finds itself constantly renewed by a continual variety of words and illustrations. ... To this point we have been speaking about the necessity and value of languages and Christian schools for the spiritual realm and the salvation of souls. Now let us consider also the body. Let us suppose...that we were to consider solely the temporal government from the standpoint of its worldly functions. Does it not need good schools and educated persons even more than the spiritual realm? ... Now if...there were no souls, and there were no need at all of schools and languages for the sake of the Scriptures and of God, this one consideration alone would be sufficient to justify the establishment everywhere of the very best schools for both boys and girls, namely, that in order to maintain its temporal estate outwardly the world must have good and capable men and women, men able to rule well over land and people, women able to manage the household and train children and servants aright. Now such men must come from our boys, and such women from our girls. Therefore, it is a matter of properly educating and training our boys and girls to that end. ...the common man is doing nothing about it; he is incapable of it, unwilling, and ignorant of what to do. Princes and lords ought to be doing it, but they must needs be sleigh riding, drinking, and parading about in masquerades. ... Therefore, dear [city] councilmen, it rests with you alone; you have a better authority and occasion to do it than princes and lords. ...if children were instructed and trained in schools, or wherever learned and well-trained schoolmasters and schoolmistresses were available to teach the languages, the other arts, and history, they would then hear of the doings and sayings of the entire world, and how things went with various cities, kingdoms, princes, men, and women. ... For my part, if I had children and could manage it, I would have them study not only languages and history, but also singing and music together with the whole of mathematics. ... My idea is to have the boys attend such a school for one or two hours during the day... In like manner, a girl can surely find time enough to attend school for an hour a day... The exceptional pupils, who give promise of becoming skilled teachers, preachers, or holders of other ecclesiastical positions, should be allowed to continue in school longer, or even be dedicated to a life of study, as we read of [those who trained] the holy martyrs SS. Agnes, Agatha, Lucy, and others. That is how the monasteries and foundations originated; they have since been wholly perverted to a different and damnable use. There is great need of such advanced study, for the tonsured crowd is fast dwindling. ... We must certainly have men to administer God’s word and sacraments and to be shepherds of souls. But where shall we get them if we let our schools go by the board, and fail to replace them with others that are Christian? (Martin Luther, “To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools,” *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 45 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1962], pp. 364-71)

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 [*weyberin*], who with men likewise are awaiting heaven and eternal life. (*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 [translated by Gaylin R. Schmeling])

The female schoolteachers should obtain and receive honorable counsel who are wise in the Gospel and are of good report. ... For 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. (*Braunschweigsche Kirchenordnung* [1528] [prepared by Johannes Bugenhagen], in *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," *Ev. Luth. Schulblatt*, Vol. 31 [1896], pp. 329-32 [translated by Gaylin R. Schmeling])

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. (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], *Evang.-Luth. Schulblatt*, Vol. 4, No. 5 [January 1869])

17. The Public Ministry of the Word: competency and call

TESTIMONIES FROM THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS:

...we have desired to direct and earnestly to exhort our churches and schools first of all to the Holy Scripture and the Creeds and then to the aforementioned Augsburg Confession, in order that especially the youth who are being trained for service in the church and for the holy ministry may be instructed faithfully and diligently, so that among our descendants the pure teaching and confession of the faith may be kept and spread through the help and assistance of the Holy Spirit until the glorious return of our only redeemer and savior, Jesus Christ. (Preface 21, K/W p. 14)

Concerning church order they [the churches among us] teach that no one should teach publicly in the church or administer the sacraments unless properly called. (AC XIV [Latin], K/W p. 47)

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 [the papal opponents] 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. For this reason, we dare not approve the cruelty of those who persecute this doctrine. We know that the church exists among those who rightly teach the Word of God and rightly administer the sacraments; it does not exist among those who not only try to destroy the Word of God with their edicts, but who also butcher those who teach what is right and true. Even the canons are gentler with those who violate them. 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. (Ap XIV:1-5, K/W pp. 222-23)

...they were convinced that the monastic profession was far better than baptism and that the monastic life was more meritorious than the life of magistrates, pastors, and the like, who are subject to God's commands in their callings without artificial religious observance. None of these things can be denied, for they appear in their books. What happened later on in the monasteries? In former times they were schools of Holy Scripture and of other subjects useful to the church; bishops and pastors were taken from there. Now everything is different... In former times they were suitable places for learning. Now people pretend that this kind of life was instituted to merit grace and righteousness. (AC XXVII:13-16 [Latin], K/W pp. 83,85)

TESTIMONIES FROM THE WRITINGS OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGIANS:

We, the members of this parish and our posterity, therefore solemnly purpose and promise henceforth to provide food, sustenance, and support through our ten elected directors out of our common chest, to the limit of our resources as God grants us grace, and as occasion demands to make the following disbursements, namely: *Disbursements for the pastoral office*: 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, one-fourth to be paid each quarter at the Ember fast out of the common chest, in return for a proper receipt. ... 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. ... *Disbursements for the 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, this teaching to be done during certain specified hours by the clear light of day and in a respectable place that is above suspicion. ... 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. ("Fraternal Agreement on the Common Chest of the Entire Assembly of Leisnig" [1523], *Luther's Works*, Vol. 45 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1962], pp. 186-89) (*Luther is not the author of this document, but it was written under his influence, and was later endorsed and recommended by him. In his Preface to*

the printed edition of this "Fraternal Agreement," which he addresses to "all Christians in the congregation of Leisnig," Luther writes: "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..." [Luther's Works, Vol. 45, p. 169]

Let everyone, therefore, who knows himself to be a Christian, be assured of this, that we are all equally priests, that is to say, we have the same power [*potestam*] in respect to the Word and the sacraments. However, no one may make use of this power except by the consent of the community or by the call of a superior. (For what is the common property of all, no individual may arrogate to himself, unless he is called.) And therefore this "sacrament" of ordination, if it is anything at all, is nothing else than a certain rite whereby one is called to the ministry of the church. Furthermore, the priesthood is properly nothing but the ministry of the Word – the Word, I say; not the law, but the gospel. And the diaconate is the ministry, not of reading the Gospel or the Epistle, as is the present practice, but of distributing the church's aid to the poor, so that the priests may be relieved of the burden of temporal matters and may give themselves more freely to prayer and the Word. For this was the purpose of the institution of the diaconate, as we read in Acts 5 [6:1-6]. (Martin Luther, "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 36 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959], p. 116)

God calls in two ways, either by means or without means. Today He calls all of us into the ministry of the Word by a mediated call, that is, one that comes through means, namely, through man. But the apostles were called immediately by Christ Himself, as the prophets in the Old Testament had been called by God Himself. Afterwards the apostles called their disciples, as Paul called Timothy, Titus, etc. These men called bishops, as in Titus 1:5 ff.; and the bishops called their successors down to our own time, and so on to the end of the world. This is a mediated calling, since it is done by man. Nevertheless, it is divine. Thus when someone is called by a prince or a magistrate or me, he has his calling through man. Since the time of the apostles this has been the usual method of calling in the world. It should not be changed; it should be exalted, on account of the sectarians, who despise it and lay claim to another calling, by which they say that the Spirit drives them to teach. But they are liars and impostors, for they are being driven by a spirit who is not good but evil. It is not lawful for me to forsake my assigned station as a preacher, to go to another city where I have no call, and to preach there. (As a doctor of divinity, of course, I could preach throughout the papacy, provided that they let me.) I have no right to do this even if I hear that false doctrine is being taught and that souls are being seduced and condemned which I could rescue from error and condemnation by my sound doctrine. But I should commit the matter to God, who in His own time will find the opportunity to call ministers lawfully and to give the Word. For He is the Lord of the harvest who will send laborers into His harvest; our task is to pray (Matt. 9:38). Therefore we should not intrude into someone else's harvest, as the devil does through his sectarians. With ardent zeal they claim to be saddened that men are being so miserably led astray, and to want to teach them the truth and rescue them from the devil's clutches. Therefore even when a man seeks, with pious zeal and good intentions, to rescue with his sound doctrine those who have been led astray into error, this is still a bad example, which gives ungodly teachers an excuse to intrude themselves, after which Satan himself occupies the see. This example does a great deal of damage. But when the prince or some other magistrate calls me, then, with firm confidence, I can boast against the devil and the enemies of the Gospel that I have been called by the command of God through the voice of a man; for the command of God comes through the mouth of the prince, and this is a genuine call. Therefore we, too, have been called by divine authority – not by Christ immediately, as the apostles were, but "through man."

Now this doctrine of the certainty of the call is extremely necessary on account of the pernicious and demonic spirits. Every minister of the Word may boast with John the Baptist (Luke 3:2): "The Word of the Lord has come upon me." Therefore when I preach, baptize, or administer the sacraments, I do so as one who has a command and a call. For the voice of the Lord has come to me, not in some corner, as the sectarians boast, but through the mouth of a man who is carrying out his lawful right. But if one or two citizens were to ask me to preach, I should not follow such a private call; for this would open the window to the ministers of Satan, who would follow this example and work harm, as we have

said above. But when those who are in public office ask me, then I should obey. Therefore when Paul says “not from men nor through man” [Gal. 1:1], he is knocking down the false apostles. It is as though he were saying: “No matter how much these vipers may brag, of what more can they brag than that they have come either ‘from men,’ that is, on their own, without any call, or ‘through man,’ that is, being sent by someone else? I am not concerned about any of this; nor should you be. But as for me, I have been called and sent neither from men nor through man but immediately, that is, by Jesus Christ Himself. In every way my call is like that of the apostles, and I am indeed an apostle.” Therefore Paul deals thoroughly with this doctrine of the call of the apostles. Elsewhere he distinguishes between apostleship and other ministries, as in 1 Cor. 12:28 ff. and in Eph. 4:11, where he says: “And God has ordained some in the church as apostles, prophets, etc.” He puts apostles into first place, so that those may properly be called apostles who have been sent immediately by God Himself without any other person as the means. Thus Matthias was called by God alone; for when the other apostles had chosen two men, they did not dare decide between them but cast lots and prayed God to indicate whom He preferred (Acts 1:23-26). Since he was to be an apostle, it was necessary that he be called by God. Thus Paul was called to be the apostle to the Gentiles (Rom. 11:13). This is why the apostles are called saints; for they are sure of their calling and doctrine and have remained faithful in their ministry, and no one of them has become an apostate except Judas, because their call is a holy one. This is the first attack Paul makes against the false apostles, who ran when no one sent them. The call, therefore, is not to be despised. For it is not sufficient if a man has the Word and the pure doctrine. He must also have the assurance of his call, and whoever enters without this assurance enters only in order to kill and destroy (John 10:10). For God never prospers the work of those who are not called. Even if they teach something good and useful, it does not edify. 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. In these conflicts what is one to do whose call is unsure and whose doctrine is corrupt? Therefore 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). On the other hand, it is dreadful when the conscience says: “You have done this without a call!” Here a man without a call is shaken by such terror that he wishes he had never heard the Word he preaches. For by his disobedience he sullies all his works, regardless of how good they are, so that even his greatest works and deeds become his greatest sins.

Thus you see how necessary it is to boast and glory in our ministry this way. In the past, when I was only a young theologian and doctor, I thought it was imprudent of Paul in his epistle 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. When we boast this way, we are not looking for prestige in the world or praise from men or money, or for pleasure or the good will of the world. The reason for our proud boasting is that we are in a divine calling and in God’s own work, and that the people need to be assured of our calling, in order that they may know that our word is in fact the Word of God. This, then, is not a vain pride; it is a most holy pride against the devil and the world. And it is a true humility in the sight of God. (Martin Luther, “Lectures on Galatians” [1535], *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 26 [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963], pp. 17-21)

...give heed to his Word and command when he says: “I send you,” etc., as if he wanted to say: I must first come to you to announce to you the will of my Father through the Gospel; institute the holy sacraments: and absolution. You should not come to me in a different way. But since I cannot be bodily at all places in the whole world, and shall not be visibly present with you always, I will do as my Father hath done. ...to this purpose I send you, that ye shall run as my messengers through the entire world. And besides you and after you I will ordain others who shall run and preach, as I sent you, even unto the end of the world, and I will continue to be with you that ye may know that it is not you who are accomplishing this, but I through you. From this command we also have the power to comfort the sorrowful consciences and to absolve from sin, and we know that, wherever we exercise this office, not we but Christ himself is doing it. Therefore every Christian, in this case as well as when he hears the Word preached in the pulpit, should hear the same,

not as the word of man, but as the Word of God himself; then he can indeed be sure and need not doubt a moment that he has the forgiveness of sins, for Christ has established through his resurrection that whenever a called servant of the Church, or someone else in the time of need, absolves his neighbor who is distressed and desires comfort, it shall count as much as if Christ had done it himself, because it was done at his command and in his name. Therefore, when two deal thus with each other they are gathered together in the name of Christ... he ought to speak to the sick and say: ... I see very well thy heart is despondent and terrified; thou art wrestling with doubts and canst not help thyself nor deliver thyself; but Christ has established upon the earth a comforting and blessed kingdom, when he says: "As my Father hath sent me, so send I you." He has consecrated us all to be priests, in order that one may proclaim to the other forgiveness of sins. Therefore I come to thee in the name of this our blessed Lord Christ, and tell thee not to be so despondent and terrified as though there were no comfort, help, and counsel any more to be had. Dost thou not hear what Christ says, that he came for the sake of the sinners, not the righteous, to save them [cf. Luke 5, 32]? Therefore be at peace, receive these glad tidings with joy and thank him for them most heartily, that he permits me to announce to thee without any trouble and expense on thy part; yea, he even gives command to the effect that thy sins are remitted. Therefore I absolve and make thee free from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. To this thou shalt reply joyfully: I thank thee, merciful God, thou heavenly Father, that thou hast forgiven me my sins through thy dear Son Christ; and do not doubt that thou art surely absolved by God the Father himself. From this you can see that this paragraph concerning the office of the keys does not at all confirm the tyranny of the pope, but it is there for the purpose...that I can come to thee, when thy conscience is worried, to help and counsel thee in thy last hour, or at other times, and say: Power, money, honor and goods, everything must be set aside; we have now only to speak of the kingdom of Christ – only through this and through nothing else must thou be helped from sin and death. (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. 396-98)

Thus Paul writes in II Tim. 2[:2]: "These things entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others." Here Paul rejects all the show of tonsure and anointing and ordaining and only requires that they be able to teach, and to them alone he wants to entrust the Word. If the office of teaching [*Amt des Worts*] be entrusted to anyone, then everything accomplished by the Word in the church is entrusted, that is, the office of baptizing, consecrating, binding, loosing, praying, and judging doctrine. Inasmuch as the office of preaching the gospel is the greatest of all and certainly is apostolic, it becomes the foundation for all other functions [*Ämtern*], which are built upon it, such as the offices of teachers, prophets, governing [the church], speaking with tongues, the gifts of healing and helping, as Paul directs in I Cor. 12[:28]. Even Christ chiefly proclaimed the gospel, as the highest function of his office, and did not baptize [John 4:2]. Paul, too, gloried in the fact that he was sent not to baptize [I Cor. 1:17], as to a secondary office, but to the primary office of preaching the gospel. This procedure is forced upon us by necessity and is commended by the common understanding of faith. For since the church owes its birth to the Word, is nourished, aided and strengthened by it, it is obvious that it cannot be without the Word. If it is without the Word it ceases to be a church. A Christian, thus, is born to the ministry of the Word in baptism, and if papal bishops are unwilling to bestow the ministry of the Word except on such as destroy the Word of God and ruin the church, then it but remains either to let the church perish without the Word or to let those who come together cast their ballots and elect one or as many as are needed of those who are capable. By prayer and the laying on of hands let them commend and certify these to the whole assembly, and recognize and honor them as lawful bishops and ministers of the Word, believing beyond a shadow of doubt that this has been done and accomplished by God. For in this way the common agreement of the faithful, those who believe and confess the gospel, is realized and expressed. ...it ought to be sufficient to admonish and affirm what Christ said in Matt. 18[:19,20], "If two of you agree upon 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 in the midst of them." If then the agreement of three or two in the name of the Lord makes all things possible, and Christ endorses as his own the things they do, how much more may we not believe that it has happened or can happen with his approval and guidance when we come together in his name, pray together, and elect bishops and ministers of the Word from among ourselves. (Martin Luther, "Concerning the Ministry," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 40 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958], pp. 36-37)

[Jonah 3:]1-2. *Then the Word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying: Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city.* This is written that we may guard against undertaking anything without God's word and command. The first command

of God had been nullified by Jonah's disobedience. Thus if God had not repeated His order, Jonah would not have known whether or not he was still to execute it. ... Moreover, this second commission contains the added command to preach what God tells him. Thus both the office and the Word employed in the office must be comprehended in the divine command. If that is done, the work will prosper and bear fruit. But when men run without God's command or proclaim other messages than God's Word, they work nothing but harm. Jeremiah, too, drives both these facts home, saying (Jer. 23:21): "I did not send the prophets, yet they ran; I did not speak to them, yet they prophesied." 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. For it is decreed that whenever God speaks, it comes to be (Ps. 33:9), that all things are to come to pass by His Word (John 1:3). Therefore "every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up" (Matt. 15:13). (Martin Luther, "Lectures on Jonah," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 19 [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1974], p. 83)

[Matt. 5:]2. *And He opened His mouth and taught them and spoke.* Here the evangelist opens with a preface stating how Christ prepared Himself for the sermon He wanted to deliver: He went up on a mountain, sat down, and opened His mouth, to make it evident that He was in earnest. These are the three things, so to speak, which every good preacher should do: First, he takes his place; second, he opens his mouth and says something; third, he knows when to stop. "Takes his place" means that he presents himself as a master, a preacher with both the ability and the responsibility, one who comes with a call and not on his own, one to whom it is a matter of duty and obedience. Then he can say: "I am not coming because my own purpose and preference impel me, but I must do so because it is my office." This is said against those who have been causing us so much toil and trouble and still are, the schismatic rascals and fanatics who roam all over the country. They poison the people before the clergy and the government can discover it; and so they defile one household after another, until they have poisoned an entire city, and from the city an entire country. To guard against such sneaks and cheats, one ought not to let anyone preach unless he has been appointed and commissioned for it. Nor should anyone take it upon himself, even though he is a preacher, to preach against a lying preacher whom he hears misleading the people in a papal or other church. Nor should anyone sneak around into the houses and set up private preaching-meetings. He should stay at home and mind his own official business and pulpit. If he neither will nor can enter the pulpit publicly, he should keep quiet. God does not want people running all over the place with His Word as though they were driven by the Holy Spirit and had to preach, or were seeking nooks or corners or pulpits to preach where they have no official call. Even though St. Paul was called as an apostle by God, he did not want to preach in places where other apostles had preached before (Rom. 15:20). Therefore it says here that Christ went up the mountain openly and publicly when He began His preaching ministry. A little later He said to His disciples (Matt. 5:14,15): "You are the light of the world. Men do not light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, to give light to all in the house." The office of the ministry and the Word of God are supposed to shine forth like the sun. We should not go around sneaking and plotting in the dark, as when we play blind man's bluff, but deal openly in broad daylight, to make it perfectly plain that both preacher and hearer are sure about the propriety of the teaching and the legitimacy of the office, so that concealment is unnecessary. Act the same way if you are in the ministry and have the commission to preach. Take your place openly, and fear no one; then you can boast with Christ (John 18:20): "I have spoken openly and freely before the world, and I have said nothing in the corner." But you say: "What? Does this mean that no one should teach anything except in public? Should not the head of a household teach his servants in his house or keep a pupil or someone there who recites to him?" Answer: Of course that is all right and in its proper place here. The head of every family has the duty of training and teaching his children and servants, or of having them taught. In his house he is like a minister or bishop over his household, and he has the command to supervise what they learn and to be responsible for them. But you have no right to do this outside your own household and to force yourself upon other households or upon your neighbors. Nor should you put up with it if some such sneak comes to you and sets up a special preaching-meeting in your household for which he has no authorization. If someone comes into a house or city, let him be required to furnish proof that he is known, or let him show by letter and seal that he has proper authorization. Not every vagabond is to be believed who boasts that he has the Holy Spirit and who uses this to insinuate himself into this or that household. In short, this means that the Gospel or proclamation should not be listened to in a corner, but high up on a mountain and openly in the free daylight. (Martin Luther, "The Sermon on the Mount," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 21

[Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1956], pp. 7-8)

Psalm 50:16-20 says of these teachers in corners: "To the wicked God says: 'What right have you to recite My statutes, or take My covenant on your lips? For you hate discipline, and you cast My words behind you. If you see a thief [that is, a thief of souls, John 10:8], you are a friend of his; and you keep company with adulterers [that is, false believers and heretics]. You give your mouth free rein for evil, and your tongue frames deceit. You sit and speak against your brother, you slander your own mother's son.'" ... To be sure, the apostles...had a command and were ordained and called and sent to preach the Gospel in all places; as Christ said (Mark 16:15): "Go into all the world and preach to all creatures." Since then, however, no one has had this general apostolic command; but every bishop or pastor has had his definite diocese or parish. For this reason St. Peter (1 Peter 5:3) calls them κληρους, that is, "parts," indicating that to each of them a part of the people has been committed, as Paul writes to Titus also (Titus 1:5). ... It does not help their case to say that all Christians are priests. It is true that all Christians are priests, but not all are pastors [*Pfarrer*]. For to be a pastor one must be not only a Christian and a priest but must have an office [*ampf*] and a field of work committed to him [*befolgen kirchspiel*]. This call [*beruff*] and command [*befelh*] make pastors and preachers. A burgher or layman may be a learned man; but this does not make him a lecturer and entitle him to teach publicly in the schools or to assume the teaching office, unless he is called to it. I have had to say these things about the sneaks and false preachers – of whom there are now all too many – in order to warn both pastors and rulers. They should exhort and command their people to be on their guard against these vagabonds and knaves and to avoid them as sure emissaries of the devil, unless they bring good evidence that they are called and commanded by God to do this work in that special place. Otherwise no one should let them in or listen to them, even if they were to preach the pure Gospel, nay, even if they were angels from heaven and all Gabriels at that! For it is God's will that nothing be done as a result of one's own choice or decision, but everything as a consequence of a command or a call. That is especially true of preaching, as St. Peter says (2 Peter 1:20,21): "You should know this first: No prophecy was brought out by the will of man; but the holy men of God spoke, driven by the Holy Spirit." Therefore Christ, too (Luke 4:41), would not let the devils speak when they cried out that He was the Son of God and told the truth; for He did not want to permit such an example of preaching without a call. Let everyone, then, remember this: If he wants to preach or teach, let him give proof of the call or command which drives and compels him to it, or else let him be silent. ... But perhaps you will say to me, "Why do you, by your books, teach throughout the world, when you are only preacher in Wittenberg?" I answer: I have never wanted to do it and do not want to do it now. I was forced and driven into this position in the first place, when I had to become Doctor of Holy Scripture against my will. Then, as a Doctor in a general free university, I began, at the command of pope and emperor, to do what such a doctor is sworn to do, expounding the Scriptures for all the world and teaching everybody. Once in this position, I have had to stay in it, and I cannot give it up or leave it yet with a good conscience, even though both pope and emperor were to put me under the ban for not doing so. For what I began as a Doctor, made and called at their command, I must truly confess to the end of my life. I cannot keep silent or cease to teach, though I would like to do so and am weary and unhappy because of the great and unendurable ingratitude of the people. And even if I were not a Doctor, I am, nevertheless, a regularly called preacher and may teach my own people with writings. If others have desired these writings of mine and have asked for them, it is my duty to accede to their request. For I have never pushed myself in or desired or asked that anyone should read these writings, but have acted just like other pious pastors and preachers. They write books and neither prevent people from reading them nor drive them to do so; thus they teach throughout the world. They do not run and sneak like these worthless, uncalled knaves into the offices of others without the knowledge and consent of the pastors; but they have a definite office and position by which they are driven and compelled. (Martin Luther, "Psalm 82," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 13 [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1956], pp. 65-66)

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 bidding of God? Will he not through them bring forth more truly devilish lies? (Martin Luther, "Infiltrating and Clandestine Preachers," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 40 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958], p. 387)

But by God's grace we know how the sabbath is to be kept, for we have learned it from this our Lord, the Son of God. It is true that at that time the particular day of the sabbath was fixed for the Jewish people, and also a specified place, a special tribe or [group of] persons, and a particular priesthood or service of worship was appointed. For all this must take place only in their country and in the temple at Jerusalem, conducted by the Levites, who belonged to the priestly tribe, from which tribe alone the ministers of the church were drawn. But we, who are in the kingdom of our Lord Christ, are not thus bound to a tribe or place, so that we must adhere to one place alone and have only one race or one particular, separate kind of persons. Rather we are all priests, as is written in I Pet. 2[:9]; so that all of us should proclaim God's Word and works at every time and in every place, and persons from all ranks, races, and stations may be specially called to the ministry, if they have the grace and the understanding of the Scriptures to teach others. ...the one who is called to the office and commissioned to preach should not preach to himself alone, but to the whole congregation. Therefore it should also be arranged in such a way that they may all assemble at a definite and convenient time, when the ordinary man can be away from his trade or work, and at a definite place where they may know and hear their preacher. ...every one should agree in these things, make themselves ready, and come together to hear God's Word and to respond to him by calling upon him together, praying for every kind of need, and thanking him for benefits received. If this cannot be done under roof or in the church, then let it be done out of doors or wherever there is room. St. Paul preached at the riverside in Philippi (Acts 16[:13]), and in a hall at Troas (Acts 20[:8-12]). Just so that it be an orderly, public, reverent assembly, since one cannot and should not appoint a special place and location for each individual, and one should not seek out secret corners to hide away, as the Anabaptists do. (Martin Luther, "Sermon at the Dedication of the Castle Church in Torgau, Luke 14:1-11" [October 5, 1544], *Luther's Works*, Vol. 51 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959], pp. 335-36)

The Office of Superintendent: This pastor (*Pfarrherr*) shall be superintendent of all the other priests who have their parish or benefice in the region, whether they live in monasteries or foundations of nobles or of others. He shall make sure that in these parishes there is correct Christian teaching, that the Word of God and the holy Gospel are truly and purely proclaimed, and that the holy sacraments according to the institution of Christ are provided to the blessing of the people. The preachers are to exemplify a good life so that the people take no offense but better their own lives. They are not to teach or preach anything that is contrary to the Word of God or that contributes to rebellion against the government. ... We have also considered it wise to ordain that in the future when a pastor or preacher either by death or otherwise leaves his benefice and someone is accepted in his place by the patron, such a one shall be presented to the superintendent before he is given the benefice or received as a preacher. The superintendent shall question and examine him as to his life and teaching and whether he will satisfactorily serve the people, so that by God's help we may carefully prevent any ignorant or incompetent person from being accepted and unlearned folk being misled. For time and again and especially in recent years experience has shown how much good or evil may be expected from competent or incompetent preachers. So there is good reason to keep this point under sharp surveillance in order by God's grace to guard against and prevent further irregularity and trouble, so that the name of God and his Word be not blasphemed among us. Of this St. Paul has faithfully warned us in many passages. *Schools:* The preachers are to exhort the people to send their children to school so that persons are educated for competent service both in church and state. For some suppose it is sufficient if the preacher can read German, but this is a dangerous delusion. For whoever would teach another must have long practice and special ability which are achieved only after long study from youth on. As St. Paul says in I Tim. 3[:2]: A bishop must be capable to instruct and to teach others. Thereby he shows that preachers must be better qualified than laymen. He praises Timothy in I Tim. 4[:6] because he has been instructed from his youth,

nourished on the words of the faith and of good doctrine. For it is not an insignificant art to teach others clearly and correctly, and it is not within the power of such folk as have no learning. (Philip Melancthon, "Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors in Electoral Saxony," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 40 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958], pp. 313-14)

Now then, with regard to the call, it is certain from the Word of God that no one should be heeded in the church who has not been lawfully [*legitime*] called, whether this takes place immediately or mediately. For Paul clearly says in Rom. 10:15 that they cannot preach (that is, lawfully, even though in fact they try it) "who have not been sent," cf. Jer. 23:21. In fact, the churches must not and cannot with profit hear those who do not have the testimonies of a lawful call. For the words of Paul are clear, Rom. 10:14-15: How can they hear, so that by hearing the faith which justifies and saves is conceived, if they do not have a preacher who has been sent? See Jer. 27:14-15; Heb. 5:4. Therefore it was right to rebuke and reject the Anabaptists, whom Luther called *arge Schleicher* (wicked intriguers), who enter into homes and upset people in [their] faith. They even say that if anyone understands the doctrine of the Gospel, whether he be a cobbler or a tailor or a blacksmith, he should teach and preach. And how much from these fanatics the Sacramentarians differ in this matter they themselves saw, who themselves also often teach without a call. When in France the papists once talked with the Sacramentarians about the call and asked them what kind of call they had, Beza replied that he had neither a mediate nor an immediate call, but an extraordinary call to teach in France. And I hear that they have this practice in Geneva, that they instruct some men in theology and then send them to France to teach. But such as a call is so also is [its] success. They rightly say of Origen that he thrust himself into the office of teaching without a call, and it happened as a result that he fell into so many errors. (Martin Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989], Vol. II, p. 698)

But who can doubt whether the promises of grace, help, power, and divine efficacy in the ministry which God gave to the prophets and apostles also apply to those who have been mediately called? And regarding this we must know that the prophets and apostles who were called immediately indeed had many and great prerogatives. Nevertheless Scripture shows that the promises of divine grace and efficacy pertain also to a mediate call, 2 Tim. 1:6. And lest anyone think that this pertains only to those who were mediately called, to be sure, but through apostles, he says in 1 Tim. 4:14: "The grace [Vulgate] that has been given to you through the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." And in 2 Cor. 3:6, which Timothy also signed, Paul says, "God has made us able for the ministry of the new covenant." And in 1 Tim. 4:16 he says of Timothy, "You will save yourself and those who hear you." And it is noteworthy that when, in the church of Corinth, the effectiveness of the ministry is measured on the basis of the persons, whether mediately or immediately called, or on the basis of the gifts of the ministers, Paul says, 1 Cor. 3:5-8, "Who is Apollos? Who is Paul, if they are not servants through whom you believed, and that as the Lord gave to each? I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. Therefore neither is the one who plants anything, nor the one who waters, but God who gives the increase. Now, the one who plants and the one who waters are one." Here it is notable that Paul was called immediately and Apollos mediately. And yet Paul proclaims that, as regards the efficacy of the ministry and divine grace, they are one. But it is worth the effort also to consider what these regular means are which God wills to use for a mediate call. And here we need to remember well that God does not ordinarily use the ministry of angels for a mediate call. ... But Christ gave the keys to His church as His bride, Matt. 18:19, and He promised that whatever they would agree on on earth and request, it would also be given by His Father who is in heaven. To the same [church] He entrusted His Word and the sacraments, just as Paul proclaims regarding the ancient people, Rom. 3:2, that "To them were entrusted the oracles of God" and, Rom. 9:4, "To them belong the adoption as sons, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the Law, the worship and the promises," and to the church, Eph. 4:12, "the ministry." For, 1 Cor. 3:21-22, all things belong to the church, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas. And therefore Paul, when in 1 Tim. 3:15 he has spoken of the mediate call, adds that the church is the pillar and the mainstay of truth. (Martin Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989], Vol. II, p. 701)

Further, this also is worth considering: whether the church has full power to call to the ministry any kind of persons it wishes. For in the Old Testament the ministry was indeed hereditary, as it were in the tribe of Levi. Likewise the priesthood was hereditary in the family of Aaron. And yet when the priests departed from the Word, God removed them, as happened to Eli, 1 Sam. 3:12. Thus, when the Levites did not do their duty, God raised up prophets from other tribes who brought them back into line. But in the New Testament this does not happen. And yet the Lord of the harvest gave

His church a formula, and, so to say, instruction [as to] how they must be like in doctrine and life who are to be chosen and called for the ministry of the Word, 1 Tim. 3:2-7; Titus 1:6-9. And this rule, which is to be followed, the church must set before itself in true fear of the Lord, if it wants the Lord Himself to call and send workers into His harvest through this means. But what we have said above about the apostolic calling, that it should stretch into the whole world, we cannot say also now about those who are called mediately. For teachers, pastors, bishops, [and] presbyters are called to certain churches and do not have authority to teach everywhere or in all churches. Thus in Acts 14:23 elders are ordained for individual churches, and in Titus 1:5 Titus is left in Crete to establish churches in every city. And thus God, through a special call, ordinarily shows where He wants someone's labor to be used. Therefore by virtue of this call they do not have authority to teach in other churches to which they do not have a special call. Hence in the Council of Chalcedon, in Canon 6, and in Gratian, Canon 16, it states that absolutely no one should be ordained except to a specific and particular church. Yet [John] Gerson says that the formula for the public preferment of teachers is this: "I give you authority to engage in disputation, to teach, and to lecture here and everywhere in the world." And Luther says that he very often drew comfort from his preferment because public authority was given him to teach the Gospel and to condemn errors. And though these things be so and, besides, good reasons may underlie, for which a person might also lawfully teach in several places, yet such preferment or license to teach differs for the most part from the apostolic call. Moreover, just as there is a lawful method for calling someone into the ministry of the church, so also there is a lawful method for removing someone or for transferring [him] from one church to another. In...our churches many also do not understand this matter correctly. For just as, when one hires a servant, he has the power to dismiss [him] when he wishes, so some think that they have authority also to dismiss a preacher, though they have no just cause. Thus there also are some who think that no preacher can with a good conscience betake himself from one place to another. We shall add also a few words on this matter. Just as the one God properly claims for Himself the right to call even when the call takes place mediately, so also is it properly of God to remove a person from the ministry. Therefore, as long as God endures in the ministry His minister who teaches correctly and lives blamelessly, the church does not have authority to remove someone else's servant. But when he no longer edifies the church by doctrine or life, but destroys [it], then God Himself removes him. Hos. 4:6; 1 Sam. 2:30. Therefore there are two reasons for which God removes unfaithful ministers from their office: (1) because of doctrine, when they teach error. For Mal. 2:7, "The lips of the priest should guard knowledge, and they should require the Law from his mouth." When he rejects this, then he in turn is rejected by God. (2) Because of life, when they act in such a way that the name of the Lord is blasphemed. Thus the life of the sons of Eli was shameful and scandalous and they caused the people to abhor the sacrifices of God. And although the church may tolerate such a one for some time, yet God finally removes [him], for He says, "They that honor Me I will honor," 1 Sam. 2:30. And then also the church not only can but also should remove such a one from the ministry. For just as God calls, so also does He remove through means. But just as a call in keeping with the instruction of the Lord of the harvest, so also, when someone must be removed from the ministry, it is necessary that the church can show with certainty that this is the judgment and this is the will of God. ... On the basis of these foundations the second question can also be determined, regarding the transfer of some minister from one church to another. ... The Lord of the harvest has the authority to transfer His ministers from one church to another. The church also has the same power, as long as all things are done lawfully. Thus Paul moves Timothy and Titus from place to place, but not out of his own impulsiveness or private Judgment, not because of unlawful striving for honor or heavy-handedness, not out of pleasure or presumption, but for the benefit, the need, and the edification of the church. (Martin Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989], Vol. II, pp. 703-04)

But what if some minister is to be dismissed or removed from office? 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. (Martin Chemnitz, *Ministry, Word, and Sacraments* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981], p. 37)

To begin with, it is certain that no one is a legitimate minister of the Word and the sacraments – nor is able rightly and profitably to exercise the ministry for the glory of God and the edification of the church – unless he has been sent, that is, unless he has a legitimate call (Jer. 23:21; Rom. 10:15). ...God, the author, preserver, governor, and (if I may use this term) husbandman of the ecclesiastical ministry, has reserved for Himself the right and authority of calling and sending those whom He wants to receive as co-workers in this ministry, and wants it to belong to Himself as Lord of the harvest. Therefore Christ says in Matt. 9:38: “Pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.” Jer. 23:21: “I did not send the prophets, yet they ran.” Eph. 4:11: Christ gives apostles, evangelists, pastors, teachers. Acts 20:28: “The Holy Ghost has made you overseers to feed the church of God.” Acts 13:4: “They were sent out by the Holy Spirit.” Therefore it is necessary for a legitimate call to the ministry of the church that the person who is to be a legitimate minister of the Word and the sacraments be called and sent by God, so that both the minister and the church can truthfully declare, as it is written in Is. 59:21: “I have put My words in your mouth.” 2 Cor. 5:19-20: “He has entrusted to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us.” Luke 10:16: “He who hears you hears Me.” John 20:21: “As the Father has sent Me, even so I send you.”

These things must be considered in a call of the church, in order that both the minister and also the church can state with certainty that God is present with this ministry and works through it, as He says in Matt. 28:20: “I am with you.” John 20:22: “Receive the Holy Spirit.” 2 Cor. 3:6: “He has qualified us to be ministers...not of the letter but of the Spirit.” 1 Cor. 3:5-9: “You are God’s field, God’s building.” “We are God’s assistants.” “Paul plants; Apollos waters; God gives the growth.” John 20:23: “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” Matt. 16:19: “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.” ...

Now when God Himself speaks immediately to men and with His own voice makes known His will, as He often did in the Old Testament, and as later, in the time of the New Testament, He spoke through a Son (Heb. 1:2), then there is no doubt about the efficacy of the Word. However, God did not always want to set His Word before the church without means, with His own voice, but determined by sure counsel to use the voice of the ministry as His ordinary means or instrument. Nevertheless there remains also in this medium what is appropriate to the prophets: “Thus says the Lord: ...because I have put My words in your mouth...” [Is. 59:21]. “...God making His appeal through us” [2 Cor. 5:20]. “Do you seek proof that Christ is speaking in me?” (2 Cor. 13:3). That these things are right and proper in those who are called immediately by the divine voice, not through men but by God Himself, as were the prophets in the Old Testament and the Baptist and the apostles – this no sane person is able to doubt. But God called few men in this immediate manner. For those who at the time of the apostles were prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, bishops, presbyters, and deacons were called to the ministry not immediately but by the voice of the church. Now are the things which Scripture teaches about the presence and efficacy of God through the ministry doubtful, uncertain, or false in the case of a mediate call? Surely, this is a very great and comforting promise, that Scripture declares that also that call which is issued by the voice of the church is divine, or from God. Eph. 4:11: The Son of God gives pastors and teachers, who certainly were not, like the apostles, called immediately. And in Acts 20:28 Paul addresses the presbyters, who had been appointed either by Paul or by Timothy, thus: “The Holy Spirit has made you overseers.” Therefore Paul, in the signature of 1 Corinthians, links Sosthenes to himself; in 2 Corinthians, Timothy; in 1 Thessalonians, Sylvanus. Therefore Paul applies the sayings: “We are God’s fellow workers” [1 Cor. 3:9]; “He has entrusted to us the message of reconciliation...God making His appeal through us” [2 Cor. 5:19-20], also to those who had been called mediately. Likewise, he declares that God works efficaciously also through the ministry of those who were called through the voice of the church: “Apollos waters; God gives the growth” [1 Cor. 3:6]. And in 1 Tim. 4:16 he says to Timothy: “You will save both yourself and your hearers.” Eph. 4:11 ff.: He gives teachers for building up the body of Christ, that we may attain to unity of faith, and doing the truth may grow in Christ. The promises are most delightful, and very necessary, namely, that the call also of those who have been called by the voice of the church is divine, that God is present with and works effectively through their ministry. Therefore Paul says that there is in Timothy a grace and a gift through the laying on of hands. He does not say only, “of my hands” [2 Tim. 1:6], but adds, “when the...elders laid their hands upon you” (1 Tim. 4:14), lest it be thought that it makes a difference whether a person is ordained by apostles or by presbyters.

However, in order that this mediated call may enjoy these privileges, it is necessary that it be legitimate, i.e.,

that it be made in the manner and by the persons prescribed by Scripture. With respect to the kind of persons who should be called to the ministry a certain rule has been prescribed (Acts 6:3; Titus 1:6-9; 1 Tim. 3:2-13). But the question here is by whose voice and vote this election and call ought to be made in order that it may be possible to declare that it is divine, that is, that it is God Himself who through these means chooses, calls, and sends laborers into His harvest. Of this there are sure and clear examples in Scripture. In Acts 1:15-26, when another person had to be substituted in place of Judas, Peter laid the matter not before the apostles alone, but also before the rest of the disciples, for that is how the believers were at that time called, their number, gathered together, being about 120. There Peter set forth from Scripture what sort of person it should be and how they ought to choose him, to which they added their prayers. Lots were cast because the call was not to be simply mediated, but apostolic. For this reason lots were not used in calls thereafter. In Acts 6:2-6, when deacons are to be chosen and called, the apostles are not willing to arrogate the right of calling to themselves alone, but they call the church together. They do not, however, wholly renounce oversight over the calling and commit it to the pleasure of the common people or of the blind and confused crowd, but they are as it were steersmen and directors of the election and calling, for they set forth the principle and rule as to the sort of persons they should be and how they should be chosen. The men are placed before the apostles in order that the election might be examined, to see whether in their judgment it has been rightly made. They prayed, and approved the election by the laying on of hands. 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." It is useful to observe in the apostolic history that sometimes both the ministers and the rest of the congregation jointly proposed and chose those whom they considered suitable (e.g., Acts 1:23). At other times the church proposed and chose; however, the election was submitted to the judgment of the apostles for their approval (Acts 6:3-6). Thus Paul sends to the churches Timothy, Titus, Sylvanus, etc. In Acts 14:23 presbyters were proposed, whom the church accepted by raising of hands. Meanwhile some also offered their services to the church, 1 Tim. 3:1: "If any one aspires to the office of bishop, he desires a noble task." Always, however, in a legitimate call at the time of the apostles the consent of the church and the judgment and approval of the presbytery was present and required. (Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part II [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978], pp. 705-08)

Now the Holy Spirit, through Paul, His chosen instrument, in many words and accurately describes the qualities which God requires in a bishop in order that the dignity, importance, and sanctity of the ministry may be retained, equipped, and aided. *First*, so far as his teaching is concerned, that a bishop be *didaktikos* ["an apt teacher," 1 Tim. 3:2], that is, as He Himself explains, that he "hold the mystery of the faith" (1 Tim. 3:9) and embrace sound doctrine (Titus 1:9), be studied in and "nourished on the words of the faith and of...good doctrine" (1 Tim. 4:6), that he be capable also of teaching others, avoid wordy battles of words and empty strife, rightly divide the Word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15 [KJV]), "be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to confute those who contradict it" (Titus 1:9), "be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching" (2 Tim. 4:2), continue in what he has learned (2 Tim. 3:14), "follow the pattern of...sound words" (2 Tim. 1:13), "guard what has been entrusted" to him, and "keep the commandments unstained and free from reproach" (1 Tim. 6:20, 14), attend to reading, not neglect his gift, but stir it up by meditation and exercise, in order that his progress may be apparent to all (1 Tim. 4:13-15), pray for himself and for the church (1 Tim. 2:1-2). This is how Paul explains what *didaktikos* means. *In the second place* He seeks in a bishop the gift of governing the church, and describes how he "ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church," that is, how he ought to care for or govern the church (1 Tim. 3:1 ff., 15), how he is to set up the ministries and have supervision over them (1 Tim. 3:8 ff.; Titus 1:5 ff.), how he ought to deal with adversaries of the doctrine (1 Tim. 1:13 ff.; 2 Tim. 2:14 ff.; Titus 3:9-11), how ecclesiastical judgments are to be set up and exercised in the case of those who sin, the fallen, or the accused (1 Tim. 5:19 ff.; 2 Tim. 2:23-26), how supplications or public prayers are to be instituted (1 Tim. 2:1 ff.), how godly duties are to be prescribed to all orders of classes in the church and how things which are amiss in them are to be corrected (1 Tim. 2:8-15; 5:1-18; 6:1-2, 17-19; Titus 2:2-10; 3:1-2), how the care for the poor is to be exercised. These things, according to Paul, belong to the bishop's governing. *Third*. Because the

presence, guidance, and strengthening of the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary for the right performance of the ministry, Paul demands in a bishop such holiness, lest he drive out the Holy Spirit through sins against conscience. Therefore, he says, he should “hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience” (1 Tim. 3:9), “in accordance with the prophetic utterances...wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience,” which some have rejected and “made shipwreck of their faith” (1 Tim. 1:18-19). He should train himself “in godliness...in love, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim. 4:7,12), shun greed, which has drowned many in perdition, “aim at righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness, fight the good fight...take hold of eternal life” (1 Tim. 6:11-12). He is to work “as a good soldier of Christ,” for “no soldier on service gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to satisfy the one who enlisted him”; he is to do his best to present himself “to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed.” Anyone who purifies himself from what is ignoble “will be a vessel for noble use, consecrated and useful to the master of the house, ready for any good work.” He should “shun youthful passions and aim at...peace, along with those who call upon the Lord” (2 Tim. 2:3-4,15,21-22). He is to avoid the vices which make one unfit for faith (2 Tim. 3:1-5), imitate “my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions, my sufferings” (2 Tim. 3:10-11), “be steady, endure suffering...fulfill your ministry” (2 Tim. 4:5), “keep yourself pure” (1 Tim. 5:22). *In the fourth place*, Paul requires in a bishop such holiness of life, such uprightness of morals and dignity of behavior, in order that he may also be an example for the flock, or the believers (1 Peter 5:3), “in speech and conduct, in love,” in spirit, “in faith, in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12), showing himself “in all respects a model of good deeds,” in “teaching,” in “integrity,” in “gravity,” that the adversaries “may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say” of him (Titus 2:7-8), with no one able to accuse him (1 Tim. 3:2). Thus he enumerates and describes these virtues (1 Tim. 3:2 ff.; Titus 1:6 ff.). These are the good qualities which the Holy Spirit demands in a minister of the Word, and He shows that by them the dignity, gravity, reverence for, and holiness of the ministry of the Word and sacraments in the New Testament is established, equipped, and aided. (Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part III [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986], pp. 124-25)

...those among us who shall minister in the church are, from an early age first, not only reared toward piety, but are also educated in the important languages (namely Latin, Greek and Hebrew). They also study the liberal arts and sciences. But above all, they are taught holy theology, and it is presented to them accurately, according to the Holy Scriptures by the teachers of theology. And when the time comes, following their schooling, to enter into the ministry of the church, they are called by the theologians and counselors, who have been appointed for this purpose by our most illustrious and most pious prince. They bring from their teachers written testimonies of their conduct of life. Then they are carefully examined whether they understand the pure content of the Christian faith and whether they possess the necessary gifts to teach the multitudes. When they are judged worthy, if they will be engaged [as ministers], they pledge under oath to teach the church piously and correctly, and to lead a blameless life so that to no one is given occasion for scandal [cf. Rom 14:13]. Following this they are sent to the church which they are to be assigned, where in one or two sermons they give a sample of those gifts which they have received from God. When they are approved by the church, then in a full assembly of the people (after a sermon has been preached and a number of prayers said relating to this matter), they are ordained by the superintendent of the locality in the presence of one or more ministers. And from then on, he takes care of the church which has been entrusted to him. (The Tübingen Theologians [including Jacob Andreae], *Correspondence with the Patriarch of Constantinople [1577]*, in George Mastrantonis, *Augsburg and Constantinople* [Brookline, Mass.: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1982], pp. 130-31)

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. (Jesper Rasmussen Brochmand; quoted in “Lay Celebration of the Sacrament of the Altar,” *Logia*, Vol. II, No. 1 [Epiphany/January 1993], p. 55)

It is therefore safest to adhere to the principle that Christ Himself has given when He said: “Where two or three (not to speak of a larger congregation) are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:20). From this it follows that such an assembly or congregation in itself has the power to do and execute all things that are demanded for the exercise of divine worship and for which Christ has promised His gracious presence. Such an assembly, though it has an inward communion with other Christians and the same confession or religion, nevertheless

is not of necessity or by obligation directed to anyone else, but it has Christ in its midst by His Word and sacraments, just as have the others. Hence, it must also have the proper and certain right to call persons for worship and ministry; for this belongs to the church or congregation, which has the authority to elect one or several competent persons to serve as presbyters or elders and leaders in doctrine. Now if the congregation already has pastors, they above all, together with the rest, belong to those who are to call and appoint pastors along with the magistrates, and no [e]state should be excluded. Now if today a congregation of converted Christians would be organized, let us say, in India or on an unknown island by a Christian landing there, it follows from what has been said – and the theologians may expatiate on this matter – that such a congregation, according to God's Word, can establish the ministry and ministerium by its own power; and though thereby it essentially would become a member of the universal church, being united in doctrine, it would not be absolutely bound to send its ministers for ordination or consecration to a bishop or a consistory or ministerium, especially if that would be difficult on account of great distance or peril; nor would it have to be governed in outward church matters by foreign authorities. Yet it would maintain communion with all other Christians by its same doctrine and faith without depending on any church government. However, it would be neither a sin nor a heresy if it would adhere to a certain church and its government, as some separatists in England think who greatly exaggerate the idea of liberty. We have examples of coreligionists [fellow Lutherans] living in distant lands, such as in Moscow, where for hundreds of miles there are no churches of our confession, who maintain congregations and public worship. Similarly, there are many congregations in Hungary under Turkish rule who have pastors and *exercitia religionis* (exercises of religion). These cannot be asked to become members of the external church in other countries and subject themselves to certain superintendents or consistories, but such congregations have the full right to appoint their own ministerium and ministers. The pastor whom they call does everything in such congregations that is the duty of a bishop or superintendent of a large diocese; for it is not the size or number in itself that determines the increase or decrease of the office. ... When we consider that the first church meetings were held, as time and place permitted, in humble private homes, perhaps also in the fields and woods or in caves and caverns, as well as that neither archbishops nor bishops administered the office of a minister or pastor in the way and with such authority as in later times, but very poor and simple persons who during the week, especially in poor congregations, had to support themselves by working on the farms, we can understand much better that the kind of church government that developed in the course of time and still prevails today is not a matter that stems immediately from any divine command or right, or that on this depends the truth of the doctrine or the very essence of the church. (Veit Ludwig von Seckendorf, *Christenstaat* 3, 11, par. 3,5,6; quoted in C. F. W. Walther, *Church and Ministry* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987], pp. 239-41)

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. (C. F. W. Walther, *American Lutheran Pastoral Theology* [New Haven, Missouri: Lutheran News, 1995], pp. 46-47)

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" (*Consil. theol. Witeb.* III, 55). (J. P. Beyer, "Vom Beruf zum Amt der Kirchendiener," Missouri Synod Eastern District *Proceedings* [1889], pp. 36-37; quoted in "Theology and Practice of 'The Divine Call': A Minority Opinion" [2003])

If anyone comes [wanting to be a pastor], he must first present a witness that the synod cannot reject because it comes from brethren in the faith who have the reputation of being totally conscientious. However, if such a witness is not available, then, if it can be proven that he has passed his exams, a colloquy must be held, one that is as stringent as possible [*aufsstrengste*]. It is not enough to ask in a general way whether he adheres to the Confessions without reservation! That is a poor guarantee. A person may claim that he adheres to the Confessions without reservation even though he teaches something altogether different, proclaims a way of salvation that is completely wrong. Or he may harbor many false ideas along with sound ones, ideas that negate the sound ones. When the colloquy has demonstrated that his doctrine is orthodox, then he must also be solemnly pledged to uphold the Confessions. That practice was not just introduced in the 17th century, or after the acceptance of the Formula of Concord by the Lutheran Church. Already in Luther's day, all pastors had to pass an examination or colloquy, and then they were solemnly pledged. ... The Lutheran Church has committed itself to proclaiming and defending the pure doctrine of God's Word as expounded in the Confessions. So it will turn away anyone who does not agree with its doctrinal stance. For that reason, it has every right to require of everyone who wishes to enter its ministry of preaching that he says: "Yes, that is also what I believe, and I shall not proclaim anything else." ... Everything we have here said about pastors applies to schoolteachers as well. Teachers in the public schools [*Freischulen*] are in a completely different situation; they have chosen a secular vocation, which in itself we do not deprecate in any way. But our teachers are serving the Church in an official capacity [*sind in einem kirchlichen Amt*]. They must teach God's Word in the name of the congregation and must feed Christ's little lambs in the sweet meadows of the Gospel. That is why we should not accept anyone who has not pledged himself to abide by the Confessions. They should make the same confession that pastors do. They should be reminded that when they enter the service of the Church, they have renounced the secular vocation and are to serve the Church to their last breath, and this should also be their greatest joy. That's why it is important that there be a certain degree of solemnity, and that the congregation hears: "He is being sworn into office [*wird verpflichtet*]." The members of the congregation must with their own ears hear: "Our pastors and teachers are not allowed to put their own ideas out there for sale [*ihre eigene Weisheit auskrämen*]. If they depart from the Augsburg Confession, we will put them under Church discipline, and if they do not change their ways, we have the authority to dismiss them from office. ..." (C. F. W. Walther, "Duties of an Evangelical Lutheran Synod," in Matthew C. Harrison, *At Home in the House of My Fathers* [Lutheran Legacy, 2009], pp. 239, 241, 246-47)

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 [of the Augsburg Confession] 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. (C. A. T. Selle, *Die Augsburgische Konfession: Das Grundbekenntnis der christlichen Kirche* [translated by Roger Kovaciny])

Doctrine of the Call to the Ministry: On this subject there is general agreement in our Lutheran Church. Some writers, however, have introduced confusion on it by first dividing the Church into two classes, the clergy and the laity, and by claiming that the rights of both these parties are to be recognized in extending a call. Others, and these are even more

numerous, have obscured the clear teaching on this matter by dividing the Call into an internal and an external call. The Call may be defined as the election and designation of a man for the work of the ministry. This call is not immediate, but mediate. It is grounded upon the spiritual priesthood of believers; but is not to be identified with it, since believers do not give up any of the functions of their spiritual priesthood. They simply call men to fill the divinely-instituted office of the ministry and to exercise the public functions of the spiritual priesthood of all believers. 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. The division of the Church into two classes, the clergy and the laity, implies two orders and is a first step toward a hierarchical view of the Church. The call extended by the congregation or by the representative Church, though a mediate call, is a divine call and is ascribed in the Scriptures to God, to the Holy Spirit, and to Christ. (Cf. 1 Cor. 12:28; 4:1; Acts 13:2; Acts 20:28). The call above described is the only call to the ministry. The so-called inner call is due to Calvinistic or Reformed influence. ... It is quite true that no young man should put himself in a course of training and so in a position to receive a call unless he is thoroughly convinced through the Scriptures that the Lord would have him enter upon this work. He should have this inner conviction that this is the life-work his Lord would have him do; but this call is not a call to the ministry. This matter has been set forth very clearly by Dr. [Joseph] Stump in his dogmatic, *The Christian Faith*: "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 have 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" [p. 379]. This sane and sensible view of the matter is highly commended. (Carroll Herman Little, *Disputed Doctrines* [Burlington, Iowa: Lutheran Literary Board, 1933], pp. 58-59)

18. The Public Ministry of the Word: ordination and the ceremonies of ordination

TESTIMONIES FROM THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS:

Concerning Ordination and Vocation: If the bishops wanted to be true bishops and to attend to the church and the gospel, then a person might – for the sake of love and unity but not out of necessity – give them leave to ordain and confirm us and our preachers, provided all the pretense and fraud of unchristian ceremony and pomp were set aside. However, they are not now and do not want to be true bishops. Rather, they are political lords and princes who do not want to preach, teach, baptize, commune, or perform any proper work or office of the church. In addition, they persecute and condemn those who do take up a call to such an office. Despite this, the church must not remain without servants on their account. Therefore, as the ancient examples of the church and the Fathers teach us, we should and will ordain suitable persons to this office ourselves. They [the papists] may not forbid or prevent us, even according to their own laws, because their laws say that those who are ordained even by heretics should also be regarded as ordained and remain ordained. Similarly, St. Jerome writes about the church at Alexandria that it had originally been ruled by the priests and preachers together, without bishops. (SA III, X:1-3, K/W pp. 323-24)

The Council of Nicea determined that the bishop of Alexandria would preside over the churches in the East and that the bishop of Rome would have charge of the "suburban" churches, that is, those in the Roman provinces in the West. Thus, in the beginning the authority of the Roman bishop grew out of a conciliar decision, that is, by human right... Again, the Council of Nicea established that bishops are to be elected by their own churches with one or more neighboring bishops present. ... Cyprian states that in his fourth letter to Cornelius: "Therefore, according to divine tradition and apostolic usage, one should carefully follow and safeguard the practice maintained by us and in almost all the provinces. For the proper celebration of ordinations, other neighboring bishops of the same province should assemble with the people for whom a leader is to be ordained. A bishop is to be chosen in the presence of people who are fully acquainted with the life of each candidate. This was the case among you with the ordination of our colleague Sabinus: that by the vote of the whole body and the decision of the bishops gathered in their presence, the episcopal office was entrusted to him with

the laying on of hands.” Cyprian calls this practice a divine tradition and apostolic usage and declares that it was observed in almost all the provinces. Therefore, since in most of the world, in both Greek and Latin churches, ordination and confirmation were not sought from the Roman bishop, it is clear enough that the churches at that time did not attribute preeminence and lordship to the Roman bishop. Such preeminence is impossible, for it is impossible for one bishop to be the overseer of all the churches in the world or for churches located in remote places to seek ordination from one bishop only. ... Jerome says: “If it is authority one is after, the world is greater than the city [of Rome]. Wherever there is a bishop, whether in Rome, Eugubium, Constantinople, Rhegium, or Alexandria, he has the same worth and priestly dignity. ...” (Tr 12-16,18, K/W pp. 332-33)

TESTIMONIES FROM THE WRITINGS OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGIANS:

For thus it is written in I Pet. 2[:9]: “You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, and a priestly royalty.” Therefore we are all priests, as many of us as are Christians. But the priests, as we call them, are ministers chosen from among us. All that they do is done in our name; the priesthood is nothing but a ministry. This we learn from I Cor. 4[:1]: “This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.” From this it follows that whoever does not preach the Word, though he was called by the church to do this very thing, is no priest at all, and that the sacrament of ordination can be nothing else than a certain rite by which the church chooses its preachers. For this is the way a priest is defined in Mal. 2[:7]: “The lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and men should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.” You may be certain, then, that whoever is not a messenger of the Lord of hosts, or whoever is called to do anything else than such messenger service – if I may so term it – is in no sense a priest; as Hos. 4[:6] says: “Because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me.” (Martin Luther, “The Babylonian Captivity of the Church,” *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 36 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959], pp. 112-13)

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. (Martin Luther, sermon of October 16, 1524, WA 15, p. 720; quoted in Susan C. Karant-Nunn, *Luther’s Pastors: The Reformation in the Ernestine Countryside* [Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1979], p. 56)

Do not be in confusion just because the preachers have not been besmeared and shorn by the suffragan bishop, for these men have not been consecrated to the office of preacher but to the holding of private masses and are priests of Baal and Jeroboam, etc. Whoever has been called is ordained and should preach to those who have called him; that is the ordination of our Lord God... (Martin Luther, letter of September 12, 1535, WA Br. 7:2242; quoted in Susan C. Karant-Nunn, *Luther’s Pastors: The Reformation in the Ernestine Countryside* [Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1979], p. 56)

Ordination indeed was first instituted on the authority of Scripture, and according to the example and decrees of the Apostle, in order to provide the people with ministers of the Word. The public ministry of the Word, I hold, by which the mysteries of God are made known, ought to be established by holy ordination as the highest and greatest of the functions of the church, on which the whole power of the church depends, since the church is nothing without the Word and everything in it exists by virtue of the Word alone. (Martin Luther, “Concerning the Ministry,” *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 40 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958], p. 11)

...they [the papists] boast that with their chrism and consecration they produce clerics in the holy church, that is, a far, far higher and holier estate than baptism bestows. To compare a cleric who is consecrated and anointed with chrism, with other baptized, ordinary Christians is like comparing the morning star with a glimmering wick. So baptism, in which we have been washed by Christ’s own blood and anointed with his Holy Spirit for eternal life, as opposed to the rancid chrism, or oil, which was originated by human beings apart from God’s word and command, is made to shine like dirt in a lantern when compared with the sun. Yet they are not anointed with such chrism for eternal life but for private masses. For this purpose the tonsure and special dress, and the name “cleric” [*clericus*] come to their aid, as though they alone belonged to Christ. Likewise they have, as they imagine, the sign, the spiritual mark in the soul, which no

ordinary Christian is supposed to have except the consecrated priest alone. ...how disgracefully you [papists] are here blaspheming the blood of Christ and the anointing of the Holy Spirit in our holy baptism and in exchange are foisting upon us your empty, disgraceful, abominable private consecration, directed toward saying private masses, by means of your earthly and temporal chrism which is nothing but a human trifle and possesses neither the commission nor the command of God!

I want to excuse the dear, holy fathers, and they should be excused, that they, too, consecrated or ordained with chrism and called those who had been consecrated clerics or priests [*die Pfaffen odder Priester*]. For they did not in this way consecrate private clerics nor anyone for private masses; rather, when they called someone to the true Christian office of the ministry or care of souls [*Pfarramt odder seelsorgen*], they wanted to adorn and portray such a calling for the community [*die gemeine*] with such pomp to distinguish them [i.e., the priests] from others who had not been called, in order that everyone might be sure and know who was supposed to exercise this office and who had the mandate to baptize, preach, etc. For basically consecration should not and cannot be anything other (if it is carried out rightly) than a call or a conferring of the office of the ministry or of the office of preaching [*ein beruff odder befelh des Pfarrampts odder Predigampts*]. The apostles without chrism merely laid their hands on the heads and prayed over those whom they called to the office [*amt*] or sent out, as happened to St. Paul and Barnabas, Acts 19 [13:3] and as St. Paul instructs Timothy not to be hasty in laying hands upon someone [I Tim. 5:22]. The dear fathers augmented such ceremonies by the use of chrism and the like. They meant well. But man's religious zeal and good intention always turn out in such a way that afterward offense, error, and idolatry result if the spirit of the fathers does not accompany and remain with them, as has happened in many other instances. In this case, too, this good intention of the fathers and their consecration developed to the point where baptism and Christ were weakened and obscured by them, and there no longer remained a consecration to a calling or to the ministerial office, but it became a private consecration, ordaining private clerics for the private mass, and now at last it has resulted in a real division and distinction between true Christians and the devil's clerics. ...

I say that the chrism and the bishop will not make clerics out of us. We do not want them to make us clerics nor do we want to receive this [chrism] from them. I repeat, if we are not true clerics beforehand without a bishop and chrism, then the bishop and his chrism can never make clerics of us. ...the Holy Spirit in the New Testament diligently prevented the name *sacerdos*, priest or cleric, from being given to any apostle or to various other offices, but it is solely the name of the baptized or of Christians as a hereditary name with which one is born through baptism. For none of us is born as apostle, preacher, teacher, pastor through baptism, but we are all born simply as priests and clerics. Afterward, some are taken from the ranks of such born clerics and called or elected to these offices which they are to discharge on behalf of all of us. With regard to this matter, this is the foundation which no one can overthrow. And if the papal consecration would want to do what is right, it ought to do nothing other than call such born clerics to the office of the ministry and not produce new, holier, and better clerics than baptized Christians are. ... However, that the fathers have called those who had been consecrated "priests" [*sacerdotes*] and that the name thus became common usage – one should, I say, excuse them for that and for many other matters. If their consecration and ordination had been retained, then the name would have done no damage, for they consecrated pastors. But the abomination [i.e. the papacy and the papal system] retained the name, because it was so glorious, and abandoned the fathers' consecration; in exchange for it, it set up its private consecration and therewith disgracefully devastated and destroyed our true priesthood and baptism. (Martin Luther, "The Private Mass and the Consecration of Priests," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 38 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971], pp. 185-89)

...the ministry, the office of the word and its calling, or the call to the pastoral office or the care of souls (which they call consecration or ordination), this they [the papists] certainly suppose that they alone possess; indeed, they would take an oath by their king of parasites [i.e. the pope] that no one could effect conversion in the sacrament without their consecration and chrism, or as they say, produce it, no matter how holy or great he might be. For, as they boast, the angels in heaven, even Mary herself, do not possess such power as a consecrated priest has... The power to produce it [i.e., the sacrament] or to effect conversion [belongs to the priest] even if he is not holy, yes, is the worst whoremonger, adulterer, murderer, thief, heretic, simoniac on earth; chrism has such great power. ... However, ...the chrism bishops with their consecration do not call a pastor or a preacher; rather, they produce nothing but performers of the private mass in order to destroy the institution and command of Christ in the holy sacrament... As far as the pope and his bishops are concerned, they have completely neglected the call or the office of the ministry or the office of preaching under the

papacy and possessed none of them. In addition, they have abolished and destroyed the office; for no consecrated private priest has been allowed to administer the sacrament to the community or preach, as Christ's command and institution demand; rather, he had to stand there and by committing outrageous sins had to undertake the celebration of the sacrament contrary to Christ's command and ordinance... In short, just as the furious sacrilege of the papacy has destroyed baptism, sacrament, the preaching of the gospel, so it has also destroyed *ministerium* and *vocatio*, the call and the true consecration to the office of preaching or the office of the ministry, with its disgraceful private chrism.

But here Christ was present with his miraculous power and has, nonetheless, in the face of the accursed sacrilege, continually preserved the office and the call to the office of preaching among his saints. For the parishes or preaching offices have at all time been bestowed outside of and beyond the chrism by princes, lords, cities, also by bishops themselves, abbots, abbesses, and other estates, and by such bestowal the call and the true consecration to the ministry or office have remained. In addition, these called pastors, who had received such a feudal tenure and office, were also presented, that is, they were directed to the private bishops to be invested or inducted, although this did not constitute the call or feudal tenure but was a confirmation of such a call and was not necessary. For the called pastor would also have been able to perform the office of his ministry without such a confirmation, even as the Maccabees, although apart from this they were native and called priests, nevertheless humbled themselves for the sake of peace and permitted themselves to be confirmed in their calling by the followers of Antiochus and Demetrius, kings in Syria, who were nothing but heathen and their enemies [II Maccabees 13:23 ff.; 14:23,26]. Such humility we have also tendered until now to our present-day Antiochuses and Demetriuses, namely, that they should have the power to confirm our pastors in their calling, even though they may be our enemies, in order that they might not be able to complain that we were proud and would do or permit nothing for the sake of peace and unity. However, because such humility does not count among them, and they simply want to have us bound by an oath and compelled to submit to their chrism and other abominations, and beyond that want to kill and torture us, from now on it is not going to be as easy for them. Let them keep their abomination and chrism; we shall see to it that we get pastors and preachers on the basis of baptism and God's word without their chrism, ordained and confirmed by our election and call. ...

If the private consecrators or bishops do not want to regard our called pastors as consecrated, that is indeed up to them; we are no longer going to beg them to do so; let them heed this warning. Even the pope himself has ordered in his spiritual statutes (though they were taken from the ancient fathers), that one should regard the consecration or ordination performed by heretics as a true consecration and not reconsecrate those who had been consecrated by heretics. Now we Lutherans are not heretics; this the papists themselves must admit. For that reason they should regard our consecrating and ordaining as valid (even according to their own papal statute and command)... For we have, God be praised, the word of God in its purity and certainty, as the pope does not have it. However, where God's word is pure and certain, there everything else must be: God's kingdom, Christ's kingdom, the Holy Spirit, baptism, the sacrament [of the Lord's Supper], the office of the ministry, the office of preaching, faith, love, the cross, life and salvation, and everything the church should have, as Christ says: "We will come to him and make our home with him" [John 14:23]; "And lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age" [Matt. 28:20]. ... If they claim that the heretics who consecrated in this way were bishops and that is why the pope and the fathers have allowed their consecration to be valid, this is true. They were bishops, not princes or lords; but as St. Jerome and St. Paul prove, bishop and pastor were one and the same thing. Such heretics and other bishops, too, often did not have as large a parish or, as one now calls it, bishopric, as at the present a pastor has at Torgau, Leipzig, or Grimma. For every separate city had a bishop, even as they now have pastors. St. Augustine, who was consecrated or ordained a preacher by his pastor or bishop, Valerius, and after his death became bishop in his stead, did not have a larger parish than our parish at Wittenberg, if indeed it was as large. ... And the same little pastor or bishop, St. Augustine, consecrated and ordained many pastors or bishops in his little parish..., who were sought and called by other cities, as we ordain and send them out of our parish at Wittenberg to other cities which want them and do not have any pastors among them. For ordaining should consist of, and be understood as, calling to and entrusting with the office of the ministry; Christ and his church, wherever it is in the world, have and must have this power, without chrism and tonsure, just as they must have the word, baptism, the sacrament [of the Lord's Supper], the Spirit, and faith. (Martin Luther, "The Private Mass and the Consecration of Priests," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 38 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971], pp. 192-97)

For ordination is nothing else than choosing from the Church those who are to teach, baptize, bless the Supper, and share alms with the needy. Those who taught, baptized, and blessed the Supper were called "bishops" or "presbyters."

Those who distributed alms to the needy were known as “deacons.” The functions of these men were not so specialized that it was sacrilege for a deacon to teach, to baptize, or to bless the Supper. On the other hand, these duties are for all Christians, for the keys belong to all (Matt. 18:18). But the administration of these things was put into the hands of certain men that there might be those who knew that it was their special duty to superintend ecclesiastical affairs, and that there might be those to whom matters could be duly referred if anything came up. (Philip Melancthon, “Loci Communes” [1521], *Melancthon and Bucer* [edited by Wilhelm Pauck] [Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969], p. 146) (*In his treatise on “The Bondage of the Will,” Martin Luther described the 1521 edition of Melancthon’s Loci Communes as “an unanswerable little book which in my judgment deserves not only to be immortalized but even canonized” [Luther’s Works, Vol. 33 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), p. 16].*)

It should be known that those who have been called and chosen by the voice of the church and administer the office even without the laying on of hands are true ministers and may teach and administer the sacraments. For by this rite a special character is not imprinted on the ordained, nor does the power of the church or the right to teach the Gospel and administer the sacraments depend on this rite, nor does this rite render the ministry of the ordained efficacious, for the ministry is efficacious and a power for salvation to everyone who believes because of its divine institution. The custom of laying on the hands is added as a public declaration of the called persons; it also makes ordination more solemn and brings to remembrance certain duties. (David Chytraeus, “Comments on Exodus 29”; quoted in C. F. W. Walther, *Church and Ministry* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987], p. 264)

What is the nature of the ministry of the church? It is not civil government, by which political affairs, or the matters of this world, are administered. Lk 22:25-26; 2 Ti 2:4. Nor is it spiritual power lording it arbitrarily and, as it were, by naked power over the church of God in matters of faith. 2 Co 1:24; 1 Ptr 5:3. Nor is it a business or a tricky way for indulging greed. 1 Ti 3:2-3,8; 6:5; 1 Ptr 5:2. But it is a spiritual, or ecclesiastic, office, instituted and ordained by God Himself for discharging and performing necessary functions of the church, so that pastors, or preachers, are and ought to be ministers of God and of the church in the kingdom of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. 1 Co 4:1; Cl 1:25; 2 Co 4:5. *What, then, is the office of ministers of the church?* This office, or ministry, has been committed and entrusted to them by God Himself through a legitimate call: I. To feed the church of God with the true, pure, and salutary doctrine of the divine Word. Acts 20:28; Eph 4:11; 1 Ptr 5:2. II. To administer and dispense the sacraments of Christ according to His institution. Mt 28:19; 1 Co 11:23. III. To administer rightly the use of the keys of the church, or of the kingdom of heaven, by either remitting or retaining sins (Mt 16:19; Jn 20:23), and to fulfill all these things and the whole ministry (as Paul says, 2 Ti 4:5) on the basis of the prescribed command, which the chief Shepherd Himself has given His ministers in His Word for instruction. Mt 28:20.

Is it right to ordain and admit to the ministry of the church those who have been called, without prior appropriate and solemn examination, as is generally done among papal suffragans? By no means. For 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. The older councils therefore decreed many things regarding examination of those who are to be ordained; these things are found in Gratian, Distinct. 23, 24, and 81. And canon 4 of the 4th Council of Carthage, at which Augustine was present, decreed thus: Let one who is to be ordained be ordained when he has, in an examination, been found to be rightly instructed. And the canon of Nicaea, Distinct. 81, 2 says: If any are promoted [to be] presbyters without examination, church order does not recognize them, because they are ordained contrary to the rule. (Martin Chemnitz, *Ministry, Word, and Sacraments* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981], pp. 26-27)

For what reasons is it so very important that a minister of the church have a legitimate call? One must not think that this is done by human arrangement or only for the sake of order; but there are many weighty reasons, consideration of which teaches many things and is very necessary for every minister of the church. I. Because God Himself deals with us in the church through the ministry as through the ordinary means and instrument. For it is He Himself that speaks, exhorts, absolves, baptizes, etc. in the ministry and through the ministry. Lk 1:70; Heb 1:1; Jn 1:23 (God crying through

the Baptist); 2 Co 2:10, 17; 5:20; 13:3. It is therefore absolutely necessary that the minister as well as the church have sure proofs that God wants to use this very person for this His ordinary means and instrument, namely the ministry. Now, a legitimate or regular call provides these proofs; for in this way every minister of the Word can apply to himself the statements of Scripture [in] 2 Co 5:19; Is 59:21; Mt 10:20; Lk 10:16; 1 Th 4:8. II. Very many and necessary gifts are required for the ministry. 2 Co 2:16. But one who has been brought to the ministry by a legitimate call can apply the divine promises to himself, ask God for faithfulness in them, and expect both, the gifts that are necessary for him rightly to administer the ministry (1 Ti 4:14; 2 Ti 1:6; 2 Co 3:5-6) and governance and protection in the office entrusted to him (Is 49:2; 51:16). III. The chief thing of the ministry is that God wants to be present in it with His Spirit, grace, and gifts and to work effectively through it. But Paul says, Ro 10:15: "How shall they who are not sent preach" (namely in such a way that faith is engendered by hearing)? But God wants to give increase to the planting and watering of those who have been legitimately called to the ministry and set forth doctrine without guile and faithfully administer whatever belongs to the ministry (1 Co 3:6; 15:58), that both they themselves and others might be saved. 1 Ti 4:16. IV. The assurance of a divine call stirs up ministers of the Word, so that each one, in his station, in the fear of God, performs his functions with greater diligence, faith, and eagerness, without weariness. And he does not let himself be drawn or frightened away from his office by fear of any peril or of persecution, since he is sure that he is called by God and that that office has been divinely entrusted to him. V. Finally, on this basis the hearers are stirred up to true reverence and obedience toward the ministry, namely since they are taught from the Word of God that God, present through this means, wants to deal with us in the church and work effectively among us. ...

Does the church have free power to call to the ministry whomever it wishes? The Lord of the harvest has prescribed a certain form and rule through His apostles, which is, as it were, a kind of heavenly instruction as to what kind of people they should be, both in doctrine as well as in conduct, or life, who are to be chosen and called for the church ministries. 1 Ti 3:2 ff; Tts 1:6 ff. And the church should recognize in the fear of God that this norm or instruction is to be followed if it wants a call both to be called [divine] and to be divine.

If a legitimate call consists in the things that have been said so far, what, then, does the public rite of ordination confer? This rite is to be observed for very weighty reasons. *The first reason* is that, because of those who run and have not been sent, a call ought to have the public testimony of the church. But that ceremony or rite of ordination is nothing else than the kind of public testimony by which the call of that person who is ordained is declared before God and in His name to be regular, pious, legitimate, and divine. *Second:* By that rite, as by a public designation or declaration, the ministry is committed in the name of God and of the church to him who has been called. *Third:* By this very thing also, as by a solemn vow, he who has been called becomes obligated to the church in the sight of God to render the faithfulness in the ministry that the Lord requires in His stewards, regarding which He will also judge them. 1 Co 4:2. *Fourth:* The church is reminded that it is to recognize that this pastor has divine authority to teach, and to hear him in the name and place of God. *Fifth,* and this is most important: That rite is to be observed for this reason, that the whole church might, by common and earnest prayers, commit to God the ministry of him who is called, that He, by His Holy Spirit, divine grace, and blessing, might be with his ministry.

Whence is the rite of laying on of hands taken, and what does it mean? The rite of laying on of hands was common in the Old Testament when something was to be put solemnly in the sight of God, as it were, and committed to Him in a special way. Gn 48:14,20; Lv 1:2,4; Mk 10:16. And since public functions were at times entrusted to certain persons by laying on of hands (Nm 27:18-20; Dt 3:28; 34:9), therefore the apostles, in the ordination of ministers, out of Christian liberty retained and used that common rite as a thing indifferent [and] helpful in teaching many things. Acts 6:5-6; 13:3; 1 Ti 4:14; 5:22; 2 Ti 1:6. And thus also the ancient church observed the act of ordination without anointing and without other superstitions, simply with laying on of hands (Dist. 23 of the Council of Carthage). Therefore we also in our churches observe the same rite. For through laying on of hands the person called is set before God, as it were, so that there might be a public and outward testimony that the call is not only a human matter, but that God Himself calls, sends, and appoints that person for the ministry, though by regular and legitimate means. Moreover, by this solemn act he that is to be ordained is obligated and, as it were, consecrated to Christ for the ministry. Besides, by that rite, as in the sight of God, the church is entrusted to the minister and, on the other hand, the minister to the church, through whose ministry, namely, God wants to teach, exhort, administer the Sacraments, and work effectively in us. But the laying on of hands in ordination is observed chiefly because of the common prayers of the church, that they may be made with greater diligence and warmer desire. For it is, as it were, a public reminder of the difficulty of the ministry, which cannot be made able except by God. 2 Co 3:5-6. Therefore that minister is presented to the Lord of the harvest through laying

on of hands, and the church, reminded of the institution of the ministry and of the divine promises attached to it, reminds God of His promises and asks that by their power He would graciously be with the present minister with His Spirit, grace, blessing, efficacy, working, governance, and direction. And Paul and Moses testify that these prayers of the church are not in vain. 1 Ti 4:14; 2 Ti 1:6; Dt 34:9. And thus the act of ordination publicly shows forth the whole doctrine of the call of ministers and sets it, as it were, before [one's] eyes. (Martin Chemnitz, *Ministry, Word, and Sacraments* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981], pp. 29-30, 35-37)

Finally, we need to add something about this question: If a lawful call consists of these things which we have mentioned, then what does the rite of public ordination confer? For in the popish church this rite is performed without any consideration of a call. And if someone is ordained, they think it is enough, so that he has authority to teach, absolve, [and] administer the sacraments, though he lacks a lawful call. On the contrary there are those not only among the Anabaptists who reject this rite entirely but who sometimes also in other places debate very sharply about these things. For from time to time cases of this kind occur in which a man has a call and is prohibited from going to a more illustrious church in which he might receive the rite of ordination. Therefore the question is: Is his ministry annulled? Some say yes; other say no, since the rite of ordination is not necessary, so long as the call is lawful.

Nevertheless, because of those who run and have not been sent, a call ought to have the public witness of the church. And the rite of ordination is nothing else than such a public testimony by which this call is declared, in the sight of God and in His name, to be lawful and divine. And by that rite, as by a public designation or announcement, the ministry, with the consent and approval of the whole church, is entrusted to one who is called. Thus Paul, although called immediately, still is sent to Ananias, who was to lay hands on [him], that it might be evident to the church concerning [his] call, Acts 9:17; and later, Acts 13:3, when he was to be sent among the gentiles, he was made a regular teacher of the gentiles, again by the laying on of hands. And this rite was used so that his call might be publicly declared lawful; nor would others similarly glory in it. Therefore, thus if this rite was done in the case of him who had been directly called, how much more is it fitting to do it in the case of those who are mediately called?

Therefore, although ordination does not make a call, yet, if, a man has been lawfully called, this rite is a declaration and public confirmation that the call which preceded is lawful. Also, by this very rite as by a solemn vow and obligation, he who has been called is bound before God, under the testimony of the church, to render the faithfulness in the ministry which God requires in His stewards, 1 Cor. 4:2. But that rite is observed mainly so that the whole church may, with common and ardent prayers, commend to God the ministry of the one who has been called. And that those prayers offered with such a rite are not in vain, Moses testifies, Deut. 34:9. Joshua is filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moses had placed his hands on him, cf. 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6.

We must confess that there is in the Scriptures no command of God that this rite of ordination must be used, nor is there a promise that through this rite God will bestow grace, as in Baptism and the Lord's Supper. But the free and impartial use of it was introduced into the church by the apostles, not because they wanted in any way to bind grace to this rite regarding which they had neither command nor promise. Yet it has its foundation in the Word of God, Gen. 48:14. Jacob, about to bless the two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, holds out his hands and puts them on their heads. In Num. 27:18 and Deut. 34:9, when Moses designates Joshua as [his] successor, before the temple [and] in the sight of all the people, he lays [his] hands on him and by this rite indicates that he has been lawfully chosen by God, so that after his [Moses'] death he may lead the people. And in Mark 10:16 Christ engages in the laying on of hands when He blesses the little children who were brought to Him. To be sure, when He sent out the apostles to preach, Matt. 10:5 and Luke 9:2, He did not use the external rite but was present with them only with [His] Word and grace. And later again, Matt. 28:19, He simply says, "Go into all the world...teach...and I am with you." Nor does He add any rite; nevertheless, John 20:22-23, when He gave the authority to loose and to bind sins, He "breathed on them." There is no doubt that the apostles had reasons why also they themselves did not breathe, as Christ had done. For they certainly did not have a command, and lest anyone think that the Holy Spirit was bound to such a practice, just as the Holy Spirit proceeds in the substance of the Son, they rather retained the rite of the laying on of hands, received from the patriarchs, by free use in the church, Acts 13:3; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6. ...

We in our churches simply and plainly retain the laying on of hands and according to the analogy of Scripture hold that these three things especially are indicated: 1. By this public rite we testify that though this act is mediate, yet it is truly divine, for the person is presented to God and it is pointed out that the person has been sent through lawful means by God Himself. For it is not our work but God's which we do; through us He calls and ordains this person. And

he who is thus called is presented to God. In a sense he is delivered over to God for the ministry, just as when of old in the Old Testament hands were laid on the sacrifices, they were then devoted, as it were, to the service of God alone. 2. By this laying on of hands it is also brought to the attention of the church that it must also be instructed that God through this person and his ministry wills to teach, exhort, and console them, administer the sacraments, [and] to loose or bind sins. In sum, God wills to be efficacious through this man and lead people to eternal life. And just as God says to Moses, Num. 27:[18-]20, "Lay your hands on Joshua and you will give him a part of your glory," that is, the authority with which you have hitherto been adorned you will give to your successor, so also is authority publicly given before the church to him upon whom the hands are laid. 3. By the public prayers we are promising ardent prayers. James 5:16, "The prayer of a righteous man avails much," that is, it is efficacious and active. Therefore, in order that the godly might be encouraged to ardent prayers, the burdens of the office are to be shown to them as far as it concerns the flesh, Satan, and the world; and the more men understand that the grace of God and divine aid are necessary for this task, the more fervent they are in their prayers. Therefore the people are to be brought into the presence of God, as it were, and God through their prayers is admonished: You, O God, have established the ministry and You have promised that You will be present with Your grace. We bring before You this man who has been lawfully called through the instrumentality of Your church to administer the Word and the sacraments. And thus we pray that You, according to Your promise, may will to be present with Your Spirit and Your grace. Prayers of this kind are not vain, as the above examples show, Deut. 34:9; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6. (Martin Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989], Vol. II, pp. 704-06)

Is ordination necessary for conscience' sake? It certainly is necessary, but not because of any necessity of purpose or means (as though the purpose in view could only be accomplished by this means); for also without ordination Paul and Barnabas (Acts 9:24), as well as Aquila and Priscilla, Frumentius and Aedesius, could effectively administer the office of the ministry. It was therefore an unnecessary and purposeless anxiety that caused the Bohemian Brethren to deal with the question whether an ordination is legitimate if an elder chose an elder but not a bishop; therefore, they cast lots to decide the question, as the Moravian Comenius relates. Nevertheless, it (ordination) is necessary according to the necessity of an apostolic and positive (not moral) command: "Separate to Me Barnabas and Saul" (Acts 13:2) and the ancient apostolic custom (1 Tim. 5:21). There is also a necessity that accrues from the benefit that the examined and unexamined teachers of the church may be distinguished and no one may raise the accusation that the Lutherans often use certain scholars who are not yet ordained with the laying on of hands as vicars, permitting them to hear confession, feed the sick, and administer Holy Communion. Nor should anyone think that the case of a pastor and a reporter were one and the same. ... Thus the solemnization of a marriage by a pastor is not absolutely necessary. Nor is a bridal wreath necessary, though it is beneficial to use this ornament. Nor is the crowning at Frankfurt something without which the Roman emperor could not exist; yet it serves to enhance the glory of the emperor. Who then is the opponent of good order who superciliously despises this custom? He is neither peaceful, because he goes counter to the church, nor conscientious, because he regards the means that serve to calm consciences as worthless; but he is an obstinate ass. (Johann Conrad Dannhauer, *Liber conscientiae apertus, sive theologiae conscientiae*, pp. 1005-06; quoted in C. F. W. Walther, *Church and Ministry* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987], pp. 265-66) (See E. W. Kaehler's comments on this statement by Dannhauer in section 20 below.)

Students of theology in certain places, as in the congregations at Württemberg, sometimes also here in Swabia, administer the sacraments. ... Ordination is used in a wider and in a narrower sense. In its wider sense it denotes the call itself; in its narrower sense it designates the solemn attestation before the congregation. The call is necessary, but ordination (in its narrow sense) is an adiaphoron. Nevertheless, though it is not commanded, it has examples (serving as patterns), and thus more than other matters it receives the nature of necessary things. (Hieronymus Kromayer, *Theologia positivo-polemica*, pp. 1059-60; quoted in C. F. W. Walther, *Church and Ministry* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987], pp. 366 & 266) (See E. W. Kaehler's comments on this statement by Kromayer in section 20 below.)

Our church teaches according to God's Word, [namely,] that God has commanded the whole, true, holy, Christian church to preach His precious Gospel and to make it known. Wherever, therefore, [even only] a small congregation of believing Christians, that is, a true church, is found, there also such a congregation has the command to preach the Gospel. But

if it has this command, then thereby it naturally also has the power, even the duty, to ordain ministers of the Gospel. From where these ministers are to be taken the church cannot be in doubt, since pastors and teachers are gifts that properly belong to the church. It consists not only of true spiritual priests, but the Lord gives to it also without fail men who are especially equipped with the necessary gifts for the administration of the ministry, and so He offers them to the church for [its] service. (C. F. W. Walther, *Church and Ministry* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987], pp. 52-53)

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.” (Kurt E. Marquart, *Ministry and Ordination: Confessional Perspectives* [Fort Wayne, Indiana: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 1983], p. 20)

It appears that the practice of Lutheranism at this time [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. (J. A. O. Preus, *The Second Martin* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1994], pp. 364-65)

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” (*tum publice coram altari a reliquis ministris cum oratione et impositione manuum testimonium accipies et auctoritatem coenae tractandae* [WA Br 6, 43-44]). (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)

19. The Public Ministry of the Word and ecclesiastical fellowship

TESTIMONIES FROM THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS:

...the pope is not the head of all Christendom “by divine right” [*de iure divino*] or on the basis of God’s Word, because that belongs only to the one who is called Jesus Christ. Instead, the pope is only bishop, or pastor, of the church at Rome and of those who willingly or through a human institution (that is, through secular authority) have joined themselves to him in order to be Christians alongside him as a brother and companion but not under him as a lord – as the ancient councils and the time of St. Cyprian demonstrate. ...it is obvious that the holy church was without a pope for over five hundred years at least, and even today the Greek church and many churches that use other languages have never been under the pope and still are not. There is no need for it. And it is useless. The holy Christian church can survive quite well without such a head. It would have been much better off if such a head had not been raised up by the devil. The papacy is not necessary in the church, because it exercises no Christian office, and thus the church must continue and endure without the pope. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that the pope wanted to renounce his claim; suppose that he were not the supreme head of the church “by divine right,” that is, by God’s command. Suppose instead, in order that

the unity of Christendom might be better preserved against sects and heretics, that there must be a head to whom all others adhere. Now such a head would be elected by the people, and it would remain incumbent upon their power and choice whether to change or depose this head. This is virtually the way the council at Constance handled the popes, deposing three and electing the fourth. Now just suppose, I say, that the pope and the see of Rome relinquished their authority and accepted this view (which, of course, is impossible because he would have to suffer the overthrow and destruction of his entire government and position with all his laws and books; in short, he cannot do it). Even if he could, Christianity would not be helped in any way, and there would be even more sects than before, because they would not have to submit to such a head on the basis of God's command but rather as a matter of human good will. ... Therefore 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. (SA II, IV:1,4-9, K/W pp. 307-08)

...we confess that hypocrites and evil people are mixed together in the church and that the sacraments are efficacious even though they may be dispensed by evil ministers, because the ministers act in the place of Christ and so do not represent their own person. This accords with that passage [Luke 10:16], "Whoever listens to you listens to me." The ungodly teachers must be avoided because they no longer act in the person of Christ but are Antichrists. Christ says [Matt. 7:15], "Beware of false prophets," and Paul says [Gal. 1:9], "If anyone proclaims to you a gospel contrary to what you received, let that one be accursed!" Moreover, Christ has also warned us in his parables on the church [Matthew 13:24-50] that when offended by the personal conduct of either priests or people, we should not incite schisms as the Donatists wickedly did. (Ap VII/VIII:47-49, K/W p. 183)

In regard to the condemnations, criticisms, and rejections of false, impure teaching (particularly in the article concerning the Lord's Supper), which had to be expressly and distinctly set forth in this explanation and thorough settlement of the disputed articles so that all would be able to protect themselves from them, and which can in no way be avoided for many other reasons: it is likewise not our will or intention thereby to mean persons who err naively and do not blaspheme the truth of the divine Word, much less whole churches, inside the Holy Empire of the German Nation or out. Instead, it is our will and intention thereby to condemn only the false and seductive teachings and the stiff-necked teachers and blasphemers of the same, whom we will by no means tolerate in our lands, churches, and schools, because they contradict the expressed Word of God and cannot coexist with it. We do this so that pious hearts may be warned against them, since we have no doubt at all that many pious, innocent people, even within the churches, are to be found who up until now have not come to agreement with us in everything. They walk in the simplicity of their hearts, do not understand the matter correctly, but take no pleasure in the blasphemies against the Holy Supper as it is celebrated in our churches according to Christ's institution and about which is unanimously taught according to the words of his testament. It is further hoped that when they are correctly instructed in this teaching, they with us and our churches and schools, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, will give themselves over to and turn toward the infallible truth of the divine Word. As, then, it is the obligation of theologians and ministers of the church to remind and warn those who err naively and ignorantly about the danger to their souls (lest one blind person is led astray by another [cf. Matt. 15:14]), for this reason we also herewith testify in the presence of almighty God and the whole of Christendom, that it is not at all our disposition or intention to cause any hardship for or persecution of poor, oppressed Christians by this Christian accord. (Preface 20, K/W pp. 12-13)

...Your Imperial Majesty graciously summoned an imperial diet to convene here in Augsburg. The summons indicated an earnest desire...to deliberate "and diligently to consider how we may act concerning the dissension in the holy faith and Christian religion and to hear, understand, and consider with love and graciousness everyone's judgment, opinion, and beliefs among us, to unite the same in agreement on one Christian truth, and to lay aside whatever may not have been rightly interpreted or treated by either side, so that all of us can accept and preserve a single, true religion. Inasmuch as we are all enlisted under one Christ, we are all to live together in one communion and in one church."
...Your Imperial Majesty graciously, most diligently, and earnestly desired, in reference to the most humble compliance with the summons and in conformity to it, as well as in the matters pertaining to the faith, that each of the electors,

princes, and estates should commit to writing, in German and Latin, his judgments, opinions, and beliefs concerning said errors, dissensions, and abuses, etc. ... Wherefore, in most humble obedience to Your Imperial Majesty, we offer and present a confession of our pastors' and preachers' teachings as well as of our faith, setting forth on the basis of the divine Holy Scripture what and in what manner they preach, teach, believe, and give instruction in our lands, principalities, dominions, cities, and territories. If the other electors, princes, and estates also submit a similar written statement of their judgments and opinions, in both Latin and German, we are quite willing...to discuss with them and their associates – as far as this can be done in fairness – such practical and equitable ways as may unite us. Thus, the matters at issue between the parties may be presented in writing on both sides; they may be negotiated charitably and amicably; and these same differences may be so explained as to unite us in one, true religion, since we are all enlisted under one Christ and should confess Christ. All of this may be done in consequence of Your Imperial Majesty's aforementioned summons and in accord with divine truth. We, therefore, invoke God Almighty in deepest humility and pray for the gift of his divine grace to this end. Amen! If, however, our lords, friends, and associates who represent the electors, princes, and estates of the other party, do not comply with the procedure intended by Your Imperial Majesty's summons, so that no charitable and amicable negotiations take place among us, and if they are not fruitful, we on our part shall not have failed in anything that can or may serve the cause of Christian unity, as far as God and conscience allow. (AC Preface: 1-4,6,8-13 [German], K/W pp. 30,32)

...Colossians [3:14], "Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which is the bond of perfection." ...Paul...is obviously talking about love for our neighbor. ...he is 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. (Ap IV:231-34, K/W pp. 155-56)

...God be praised, a seven-year-old child knows what the church is: holy believers and "the little sheep who hear the voice of their shepherd." (SA III, XII:2, K/W pp. 324-25)

...no church should condemn another because the one has fewer or more external ceremonies not commanded by God than the other has, when otherwise there is unity with the other in teaching and all the articles of faith and in the proper use of the holy sacraments, according to the well-known saying, "Dissonantia ieiunii non dissolvit consonantiam fidei," "Dissimilarity in fasting is not to disrupt unity in faith." (FC Ep:X, K/W p. 514)

...all Christians must beware lest they become participants in the ungodly teachings, blasphemies, and unjust cruelty of the pope. Indeed, they ought to abandon and curse the pope and his minions as the realm of the Antichrist, just as Christ commanded: "Beware of false prophets" [Matt. 7:15]. Paul also commanded that ungodly teachers are to be shunned and denounced as accursed [cf. Titus 3:10], and in 2 Corinthians 6[:14] he says: "Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what fellowship is there...between light and darkness?" To dissent from the consensus of so many nations and to be called schismatics is a grave matter. However, divine authority commands all people not to be accomplices and defenders of ungodliness and unjust cruelty. Thus, our consciences are sufficiently absolved. For the errors of papal rule are manifest, and the Scriptures cry out with one voice that those errors are the teaching of demons and of the Antichrist [cf. 1 Tim. 4:1]. (Tr 41-42, K/W pp. 337-38)

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. He repeated his belief regarding this article with great ardor shortly before

his death in his Last Confession, in the following words, when he wrote: "I regard them all as being part of the same cake" (that is, as sacramentarians and fanatics), "as indeed they are. For they do not want to believe that the Lord's bread in the Supper is his true, natural body which the godless person or Judas receives orally just as well as St. Peter and all the saints. Whoever (I say) does not want to believe that should not trouble me...and should not expect to have fellowship with me. That is final." (FC SD VII:33. K/W p. 598)

...heretical groups and sects...in many instances...insinuated themselves secretly, as is the way with such spirits, into those places and at those times especially where the pure Word of the holy gospel was given neither space nor place, where those who teach and confess it correctly were being persecuted, where the deep darkness of the papacy still reigned, and where unfortunately the poor, simple people, who were forced to cling to the public idolatry and false faith of the papacy, accepted in their innocence whatever called itself gospel and was not papist. Thus, we could not refrain from giving public witness to the contrary before all Christendom that we have absolutely no part of, nor anything in common with, these errors, whether they are many or few, but reject and condemn them altogether as incorrect and heretical, and contrary to the writings of the holy prophets and apostles and to our Christian Augsburg Confession, which is completely based on God's Word. (FC SD XII:7-8, K/W pp. 656-57)

TESTIMONIES FROM THE WRITINGS OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGIANS:

It is by your silence and cloaking that you cast suspicion upon yourself. If you believe as you declare in my presence, then speak so also in the church, in public lectures, in sermons, and in private conversations, and strengthen your brethren, and lead the erring back to the right path, and contradict the contumacious spirits; otherwise your confession is sham pure and simple, and worth nothing. Whoever really regards his doctrine, faith and confession as true, right, and certain cannot remain in the same stall with such as teach, or adhere to, false doctrine; nor can he keep on giving friendly words to Satan and his minions. A teacher who remains silent when errors are taught, and nevertheless pretends to be a true teacher, is worse than an open fanatic and by his hypocrisy does greater damage than a heretic. Nor can he be trusted. He is a wolf and a fox, a hireling and a servant of his belly, and ready to despise and to sacrifice doctrine, Word, faith, Sacrament, churches, and schools. He is either a secret bedfellow of the enemies or a skeptic and a weathervane, waiting to see whether Christ or the devil will prove victorious; or he has no convictions of his own whatever, and is not worthy to be called a pupil, let alone a teacher; nor does he want to offend anybody, or say a word in favor of Christ, or hurt the devil and the world. (Martin Luther, Statement to George Major, in F. Bente, "Historical Introduction to the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church," *Concordia Triglotta* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921], p. 94)

...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. Therefore doctrine and life should be distinguished as sharply as possible. 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). Life belongs to us; therefore when it comes to this, there is nothing that the Sacramentarians can demand of us that we are not willing and obliged to undertake, condone, and tolerate, with the exception of doctrine and faith, about which we always say what Paul says: "A little yeast, etc." On this score we cannot yield even a hairbreadth. For doctrine is like a mathematical point. Therefore it cannot be divided; that is, it cannot stand either subtraction or addition. On the other hand, life is like a physical point. Therefore it can always be divided and can always yield something. ... 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 – love, an apostle, an angel from heaven, etc.! ... If they believed that it is the Word of God, they would not play around with it this way. No, 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. Therefore let us leave the praise of harmony and of Christian love to them. We, on the other hand, praise faith and the majesty of the Word. Love can sometimes be neglected without danger, but the Word and faith cannot. 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. Yet when it is deceived, it does not suffer any hardship that can really be called a hardship; that is, it does not lose Christ, and therefore it is not offended but keeps its constancy in doing good even toward those who are unthankful and unworthy. 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. (Martin Luther, "Lectures on Galatians" [1535], *Luther's Works*, Vol. 27 [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964], pp. 37-39)

And he who is troubling you will bear his judgment, whoever he is [Galatians 5:10b]. With this sentence Paul acts as a judge seated in tribunal and condemns the false apostles; he gives them the exceedingly hateful name "troublers of the Galatians," even though the latter regarded them as very godly teachers who were far better than Paul. At the same time he wants to arouse the Galatians by means of this horrible sentence which he pronounces on the false apostles with such assurance, so that they will avoid them as the deadliest pestilence. It is as though he were to say: "Why do you listen to those pests, who do not teach you but only trouble you? The doctrine they give you is nothing but the troubling of the conscience. Therefore no matter how great they are, they will have their condemnation." From the words "whoever he is" it is evident enough that the false apostles were men who appeared to be very good and saintly; and perhaps there was among them some outstanding pupil of the apostles, a man of great prestige and authority. For Paul does not use such powerful and meaningful words without reason. He speaks the same way in the eighth verse of the first chapter: "Even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed." And there is no doubt that they were deeply offended by this violent language of the apostle and thought to themselves: "Why does Paul sin against love? Why is he so stubborn about such a trifle? Why is he so precipitate in pronouncing a sentence of eternal condemnation on those who are just as much ministers of Christ as he is?" He does not hesitate on account of any of this, but with confidence and assurance he goes ahead to curse and condemn those who offend against the doctrine of faith, even though in their outward appearance they are saintly, learned, and highly esteemed men. In a similar way we today regard those men as excommunicated and condemned who say that the doctrine of the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ is uncertain or who do violence to the words of Christ in the Lord's Supper. 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. And when that happens, our love will not be of any use to us. We can be saved without love and concord with the Sacramentarians, but not without pure doctrine and faith. Otherwise we shall be happy to observe love and concord toward those who faithfully agree with us on all the articles of Christian doctrine. In fact, so far as we are concerned, we shall have peace with our enemies; and 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. By his example Paul teaches us to be as firm as he is when he predicts with complete assurance that they will bear their judgment on account of a matter that seemed not only trivial but even wicked to the false apostles and their disciples; for both groups thought they were teaching in a proper and godly way. Therefore, as I often warn you, doctrine must be carefully distinguished from life. Doctrine is heaven; life is earth. In life there is sin, error, uncleanness, and misery, mixed, as the saying goes, "with vinegar." Here love should condone, tolerate, be deceived, trust, hope, and endure all things (1 Cor. 13:7); here the forgiveness of sins should have complete sway, provided that sin and error are not defended. But just as there is no error in doctrine, so there is no need for any forgiveness of sins. Therefore there is no comparison at all between doctrine and life. "One dot" of doctrine is worth more than "heaven and earth" (Matt. 5:18); therefore we do not permit the slightest offense against it. But we can be lenient toward errors of life. For we, too, err daily in our life and conduct; so do all the saints, as they earnestly confess in the Lord's Prayer and the Creed. But by the grace of God our doctrine is pure; we have all the articles of faith solidly established in Sacred Scripture. The devil would dearly love to corrupt and overthrow these; that is why he attacks us so cleverly with this specious argument about not offending against love and the harmony among the churches. (Martin Luther, "Lectures on Galatians" [1535], *Luther's Works*, Vol. 27 [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964], pp.

40-42)

For it is certain that whoever does not rightly believe in one article of faith, or does not want to believe (after he has been admonished and instructed), he surely believes no article with an earnest and true faith. And whoever is so bold that he dares to deny God or to accuse him of lying in one word, and he does this maliciously in opposition to that about which he was once or twice admonished and instructed, he also dares (and he certainly does it, too) to deny God in all of his words and to accuse him of lying. For this reason we say that everything is to be believed completely and without exception, or nothing is to be believed. The Holy Spirit does not let himself be divided or cut up so that he should let one point be taught and believed as trustworthy and another as false – except in the case where there are weak believers who are willing to let themselves be instructed and are not stubbornly opposing his truth. Otherwise, if this attitude should obtain that it does not harm anyone if he desires to deny one article of the faith because he still regards all the others as true (although basically this is impossible), then no heretic would ever be condemned, indeed, there could not even be a heretic on earth. For it is characteristic of all heretics that they start by denying one article of the faith; after that, all the articles must suffer the same fate and they must all be denied, just as the ring, when it gets a crack or a chink, is totally worthless. And if a bell cracks at one place, it does not chime any more and is completely useless. (Martin Luther, “Brief Confession Concerning the Holy Sacrament,” *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 38, p. 308)

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 [the “Wittenberg Articles,” a doctrinal statement drafted in 1536 by Saxon and English theologians], 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. (Martin Luther, Letter to Francis Burchart [1536], *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 50 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975], pp. 140-41)

For there are two kinds of churches stretching from the beginning of history to the end, which St. Augustine calls Cain and Abel. The Lord Christ commands us not to embrace the false church; and he himself distinguishes between two churches, a true one and a false one, in Matthew 7:15, “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing,” etc. Where there are prophets, there are churches in which they teach. If the prophets are false, so also are the churches that believe and follow them. We have been unable up to now to get the papists to willingly prove why they are the true church, but they insist that according to Matthew 18:17 one must listen to the church or be lost. Yet Christ does not say there who, where, or what the church is; only that where it is, it ought to be listened to. We confess and say that as well, but we ask where the church of Christ is, and who it is. We are concerned non de nomine, “not with the name” of the church, but with its essence. (Martin Luther, “Against Hanswurst,” *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 41 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966], p. 194)

20. Comprehensive explanations of the Public Ministry of the Word

E. W. KAEHLER:

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 ...). ... 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 is ordinarily bound until the end of time to the preaching office. That is proved not only by the divine institution of the

preaching office in general (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor 12:28-29; Eph 4:11), but also from the command of Christ that the office of the apostles should endure until the Last Day (Mt 28:19-20): "Go and teach all people...and teach them to obey everything that I have commanded you." Thus the congregation must establish the preaching office in its midst and be bound to it until the Last Day. This last statement is speaking of things under normal circumstances [*ordentlicher Weise*]. But in these last troubled times it can happen that the public preaching office can easily be taken from the congregations, and there are emergencies in which the order of the holy office neither can nor should be kept. In such true emergencies every Christian can preach the word, absolve, baptize, yes, also administer the Lord's Supper; and indeed, when this is done such things are as valid and effective as when they are performed by an ordained pastor. Everyone, however, who deviates from the order should know why he does it. The reason for such is nothing else than that which God's word itself gives, that love is the fulfillment of the law. Whoever does not know his reason and acts haphazardly sins against his conscience and misuses his Christian freedom. It should also be noted that in emergencies one may deviate only as long and as far from God's order as long and as far as the emergency lasts. Deviating from the order without need in the name of love would be based on nothing but self-will and despising of divine order and of the majesty who instituted such order. ...

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. From the apostolic instruction in 1 Corinthians 14:40 that everything should occur in the church in an honorable and orderly fashion (*κατά ταξίν*), the order was created in the old Lutheran church especially in large parishes that certain persons should be appointed exclusively for certain functions of the holy office. And so there were afternoon preachers, assistant preachers, deacons, archdeacons, subdeacons, so-called catechists, etc. etc., who in part only preached, or only baptized, buried, comforted, held confession, administered the holy supper, etc. These are pure orders that were also known by other names in the ancient church. And even now in the larger churches it is often necessary and salutary to establish such grades in the functions [*Verrichtungen*] of the preaching office. This also occurs in many of our churches in America when alongside the head or senior preacher there are one or more assistant preachers who have divided themselves into caring for different functions of the office. Now, such order did not first become necessary during the historical development of the church. Rather, this was sanctioned already in the apostolic age by the apostles themselves and introduced into the church. The apostle [Paul] in Ephesians 4 mentions, along with prophets and teachers, pastors. They were set over a certain flock of the church (1 Pt 5:1-2), and did not only teach but also administered the holy sacraments and carried out care of souls. There were also teachers who simply explained the doctrine to the people and who later became the catechists (Rom 2:20; Heb 5:12). The apostles included all grades under the name of the episcopate or the presbyterate, which is the same thing. And when the congregation commits the care of different parts of the preaching office to different people, they really confer in reality to each one the office of the keys because each one opens up heaven through the part of the ministry of the word that he administers. The congregation then also confers the office of the word, the preaching office itself.

It is of the highest importance firmly to hold that there is no command of God concerning which and how many grades or orders there should be in the holy office. If an order of these grades of the ministry were *de iure divino*, as the antichristian papacy teaches, we would naturally be bound to such grades as were introduced in the early church by the apostles. From the letters of Paul, however, which were written to different congregations, we can see that in the time of the apostles not all churches had the same number and type of grades and orders. They were free. It only remained that when they were established consideration was given to order, benefit, and upbuilding. If, however, it was free in the apostles' time, then it must also be so now. ... 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. ...

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. ...we know now that anyone who discharges an essential part of the office of the word can only do this because the entire office of the word has been conferred to him. He really occupies the entire preaching office. ... What we have in mind here is whether the office *sensu strictiori*, that is, the office of the word and sacraments, is contained in the office of lay-elder, which has certainly become a separate offshoot of the preaching office. Also, for example, we are concerned with whether the school teacher, who indeed administers a part of the holy office, is authorized for the carrying out of the entire ministry. ...we can answer the question whether such a person can also *legitime* administer the office of the word in the strict sense with a...resolute *no*. The Holy Scripture teaches that there are ministries in the church that are necessary for its ruling and therefore belong to the preaching office in the wider 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. The most important verse in question here, however, is 1 Timothy 5:17: "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially (μωλιστα) those who labor in word and doctrine." Here two classes of elders are put forth. There are those who labor in word and doctrine and occupy the ministry of the word in the narrow sense. There are also those with whom this is not the case whose ministry was different, namely, which was for the ruling of the congregation introduced for the censure of morals and the preservation of discipline in the church, Romans 12:8. When it is clear that the ministry of the word κατ' εξοχην 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. ...

It is well to notice that the command to shepherd the church with God's word and to lead her to salvation does not apply to everyone who occupies an office in the church. It applies only to those who proclaim the gospel. The essential difference between lay-elders and teaching-elders was established fundamentally by the Lord himself. The school diaconate takes a middle position between the teaching ministry of the teaching elder and the above diaconate insofar as laboring in doctrine is one of its chief duties. But its ministry is confined only to a part of the congregation even if it is the most precious part. On the other hand the teaching presbyter is a bishop, that is, an overseer of the adults as

well as the young. ... To watch over discipline must remain the matter of the bishop. The school teacher is placed under him not only in matters of office but also as the caregiver of his soul. ... When someone merely gives external help in the administration of the holy supper, this demonstrates that the one helping has the preaching office as little as the sacristan helping in baptism demonstrates the same. An external helping with the ministry of the word in the strict sense indeed does not happen outside of or in addition to the word. It should be counted among the true functions of the ministry [*Ministeriums*]. But this helping concerns itself with a highly unessential part of the holy ministry. He who examines and authorizes the communicants holds the office of the word precisely in the narrow sense. ...the whole helping diaconate is connected with the ministry of the word and therefore is to be placed under it as an offshoot of the same. ...

Whoever is to administer an essential part of the office of the word should be ordained or at any rate set apart for the ministry of the word. Anyone who administers an essential part of the holy office must have the office of the word. But since a layman, even when he occupies an ecclesiastical office of lower order, is in no way authorized according to divine order to administer the public preaching office in the narrow sense, such a one must be called to this in a special way. We say therefore...: He should be ordained, or at any rate set apart for the ministry of the word. With the above we are far from assigning to ordination an absolute or divine necessity... Rather, along with the entire orthodox church we recognize ordination as an *adiaphoron*. ... Also in agreement with the church of God, however, we hold it to be relatively necessary. Ordination is an ecclesiastical order sanctioned by ancient apostolic practice which serves to clarify and publicly confirm that the call to the ministry of the word that has come before is legitimate. ... Whoever omits ordination without need is a schismatic. He separates himself from the orthodox church of all time. ... If we do not wish to deny, for example, that the administration of the holy supper by a non-ordained layman called only for a time by an entire congregation in an emergency is effective and legitimate, still we must determinedly stress that only the most difficult of emergencies would permit this. If a congregation in ordinary circumstances calls an unordained person, she despises ecclesiastical order. 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 (ἀφορισάτε) Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them’” (see Rom 1:1). 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. The Strassburger theologian Dannhauer writes concerning ordination: “Is ordination necessary on account of conscience? It is most certainly necessary: not on account of a necessity of its goal and means (as if the intended goal could only be accomplished through this means). ... Still it is necessary on account of an apostolic and positive (not moral) command: ‘Set apart,’ Acts 13:2, and an ancient apostolic practice (1 Tim 5:21). Likewise [it is necessary] according to the need to be able to distinguish between the proven and unproven teachers of the church and for showing reverence to the ministry. Therefore no one can complain that Lutherans often use students who have not yet been ordained as vicars and allow them to hear confession, visit the sick and administer the sacrament to them. [This is our practice] so that no one might think that a pastor and an attendant are the same thing.” Kromayer seems to contradict [the statement that only ordained men should work in the office of the word] when he writes: “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.” 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.” (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], pp. 37-45 [translated by Mark D. Nispe] (This essay was originally published [in three parts] in *Lehre und Wehre* [edited by C. F. W. Walther], Vol. 20, Nos. 9, 11, and 12 [Sept., Nov., and Dec. 1874].)

CHARLES PORTERFIELD KRAUTH:

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.) ... A minister, New Testament Bishop, Presbyter, Elder, or Evangelical Pastor, is a man legitimately called by God, through the Church, to teach the word publicly in the Church; to administer the sacraments, and to maintain sound discipline and good government. (1 Cor. iii. 5; 2 Cor. iii. 6, vi. 4; Rom. xv. 16; 1 Cor. iv. 1; Acts xx. 28; Phil. i. 1; 1 Tim. iii. 2; Titus i. 7; 1 Tim. iv. 14; 1 Tim. v. 17; Eph. iv. 11.) ... In the New Testament, our Lord did not continue, nor institute a peculiar *order* of priests. The New Testament priesthood, like its kingdom, is *common to all regenerate persons*. Its sacrifices are purely *spiritual*. They are in no sense propitiatory. They consist of prayer, praise and self-consecration. A New Testament priest is not, *as such*, a minister; nor a minister, *as such*, a priest. When our Church calls ministers "priests," it uses the word "priests," as *synonymous* with "presbyter"; or regards ministers, simply as *the public representatives* of a priesthood common to all. This representative priesthood confers no mediatorial power. This power to become a minister by vocation has its root in the common priesthood as the power to bear office by election, as a ruler in a free State has its root in a common citizenship. (Rom. xii. 1; Phil. iv. 18; Heb. vii. 27, 28, ix. 11-28, x. 12, xiii. 15, 16; 1 Pet. ii. 5-9; Rev. i. 6, v. 10, xx. 6.) ...

Our Lord before His ascension instituted the office of the Apostolate, having within it all the powers of the future ministry. The Apostolate had *extraordinary* and incommunicable powers and functions. It also had ordinary and communicable powers and functions, which were to be transmitted and perpetuated in and through the ordinary ministry to the end of the world. (Mark iii. 13, 14; Matt. x. 2; Luke vi. 13; Acts i. 2-25; Rom. i. 5; 1 Cor. xii. 28, 29; Eph. ii. 20; 2 Pet. iii. 2; Rev. xxi. 14; 1 Tim. ii. 7; 2 Tim. i. 11; 2 Pet. i. 1; 1 Tim. i. 18; 2 Tim. i. 13; 2 Tim. ii. 2; Matt. xxviii. 20; 2 Cor. v. 19.) ... To the extraordinary and incommunicable powers and functions, which were to be confined to the Apostles themselves, were these in conjunction which follow: Their vocation was immediate, in no sense derived from men nor through men. Their commission was unlimited as to locality. To an Apostle the field was the world. They were endowed with an extraordinary measure of miraculous gifts and of Divine Inspiration. They could bear official testimony as eye-witnesses to what was necessary to authenticate the Divine mission of our Lord. They were under Christ the supreme authorities in the rule of the Church, and represented it in its totality, both in the powers received, and in the power exercised for it. These were their exclusive powers and functions, in which none shared with them while they lived, and to which none were their successors when they died. (Matt. x. 2; Luke vi. 13; Gal. i. 1; Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15; Luke xxiv. 47, 48; Acts i. 8; Matt. x. 1; Luke ix. 1; Mark vi. 7; Matt. x. 20; Luke xii. 12; Mark iii. 15; Acts ii. 4; Matt. xix. 28; Rev. xxi. 14; Acts i. 8, 22, x. 41, xxii. 15; 1 Pet. v. 1; 1 Cor. ix. 1.) ... In addition to the special powers and functions, the Apostles had the *ordinary* ones common to the whole ministry, to wit: the preaching of the Gospel, conferring the sacraments, administering discipline and ordaining others to the ministry. In each and all of these they were but fellow-presbyters, ministers, pastors, and bishops with other ministers. (Acts i. 20, v. 42, xx. 24; Rom. i. 15; Eph. iii. 8, vi. 19; 1 Cor. iv. 1; Matt. xxviii. 19; 1 Pet. v. 1; 1 Cor. iii. 5; 2 Cor. xi. 23; Col. i. 7, 23-25; John xxi. 16.) ... In their extraordinary powers and functions the Apostles had no *successors*. In their ordinary ones 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. (1 Tim. i. 18, iv. 14, v. 22; Acts xiv. 23; 2 Tim. ii. 2; Titus i. 5.) ...

The deacons, were in order of time, antecedent to the Elders as a distinct class, and in consequence of the great increase in the number of disciples, were first appointed to relieve the Apostles from the burden and distractions connected with distribution to the widows from the common fund, which had been placed at the control of the Apostles. (Acts vi. 1.) The office itself was proposed by the Apostles; the Apostles defined its functions; determined the proper character of those who should be chosen to it; and suggested the method of choice. The multitude concurred and approved; chose persons for the office; placed them before the Apostles, who ordained them by the laying on of hands with prayer. (Acts vi. 2-6.) The persons thus appointed are not called “deacons” in the Acts, but the name was suggested by the daily *ministration* (*diakonia*) to the wants of the widows; by the desire of the Apostles no longer to “serve (*diakonein*) tables,” but to devote themselves “to the ministry (*diakonia*) of the word.” The word “deacon,” in the history of its rise involves, by antithesis, a two-fold diaconate, the diaconate of the word [i.e. the ministry of those who are called “to teach the word publicly in the Church; to administer the sacraments, and to maintain sound discipline and good government”] which is incommunicably the diaconate of the Apostles and of the pastors, and the 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 not a part of the people to do the work pertaining to the people in common, but 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. The particular work assigned to the seven deacons, first chosen, was simply a determination of this general conception, produced by the specific nature of the case. The distribution of a common fund in alms, or the service of poor widows is not the whole generic idea of the diaconate, though it was its whole actual function at first. Had that been its whole idea, it would have terminated with the state of things at Jerusalem, out of which it rose. The service of the poor is therefore only a specific, though most important, and, in some circumstances, a primary part of the diaconate, under the generic idea of aiding the pastorate in every desirable way, and leaving it unembarrassed in its greatest work. (Acts vi. 1-6; Phil. i. 1; 1 Tim. iii. 8-12.) 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. Philip’s preaching was not done under his commission as a deacon. (Acts vi. 1-6; Phil. i. 1; 1 Tim. iii. 8-12.) Deacons are not ministers in the specific or stricter sense, nor are they essential to the organization of every congregation. A congregation, now, like the congregation at Jerusalem in its first stage, can exist as an organization without deacons – the powers ordinarily entrusted to deacons remaining still vested in their original depository, the ministry of the Word [i.e. the ministers who are called “to teach the word publicly in the Church; to administer the sacraments, and to maintain sound discipline and good government”]. Congregations may be so small as not to require a diaconate, and in any case if they cannot obtain deacons conformed to the Scriptural requisitions, it might be better for them to have none. (Acts vi. 1.) 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 Sacraments, 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, and are called by the fathers the minister’s angels, his eyes, his hands, his lips, his heart and his soul. The deacons who were faithful in their office were looked to in the Ancient Church as the best source of supply for the future pastors.

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. The order still exists in the Syrian Church, and in recent times a successful effort to establish an office under this name, with special adaptation to institutions of mercy, has been made in Germany, and other parts of the Protestant world. In modern usage in the Lutheran Church of Germany, the deacons are ordained, assistant, pastors, conjoined under various limitations with the chief pastor. If there be several in one church, the first among them is sometimes called Arch-deacon, the others are called Sub-deacons. In Sweden men of the same office are called Comministers or Chaplains. ...

Presbyters, or Elders, was a designation originally of age, subsequently of office, in which latter sense it was employed first in the Jewish Synagogue, and then in the Christian Church. (Matt. xvi. 21; Acts ix. 30.) Though in the Christian Church the presbyter had features in common with the elder in the Synagogue, yet no identification is to be assumed which is not clearly taught in Holy Scripture or proved by satisfactory evidence, for here, as in all other cases, Christianity acted under the guidance of God's Spirit, and purified, exalted and conformed to its own life and needs what it adopted. The Apostles, because of the fewness of their number, and the wide nature of their commission could not long supply all the pastoral wants of the growing Church. As the members of the Christian Church were multiplied first in Judea, and afterwards in Gentile cities, a necessity arose for local organizations. To this end the office of the Christian eldership, retaining such features of the Jewish eldership as were conformed to the wants of the Church, was instituted by God, through the Apostles. (Acts xi. 30, xiv. 23.) Certain persons chosen or approved by the people, and examined, approved and ordained by the Apostles, were constituted pastors under the name of Elders or Bishops. (Acts xi. 30, xiv. 23.) The organization of a body of Christians so as to constitute a permanent congregation or local Church, consisted in the definite union of the body or mass of the people, with its divinely constituted spiritual representatives and executive organs, the ministers of Christ or Christian elders. A permanent Christian congregation was a single communion of the people and elders united in common confession of a pure faith, the use of the sacraments, the worship of God, under a common government and discipline. ... (Acts xiv. 23, xx. 28; Philip. i. 1.) ... The Presbyters were called and ordained solely to labor officially as pastors of particular communions in defined localities. They had not the absolute right of official teaching, administration of sacraments and discipline everywhere, which was a distinctive part of the commission of the Apostles, nor did they officially journey from place to place, which was the work of the Evangelists. (Acts xiv. 23, xx. 17-27; Titus i. 5; Acts xxi. 8; Eph. iv. 11; 2 Tim. iv. 5.) ... To the Elders were committed in permanence as the ordinary and abiding ministers of the Christian Church, the ordinary communicable, and permanent powers of the Apostolate. In this they were co-ordinate with the Apostles, while the Apostles lived, and to them, when the Apostles were gone, the Christian Elders as a *body*, succeeded. The whole body of truly Christian ministers on earth are the successors of the Apostles, in all respects in which the Apostles could have successors. (Acts xiv. 23; 1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6.) The names given to the work of the Christian presbyter mark its nature. It is a serving and ministry, a ministering of the word in preaching and worship and of the Sacraments, for Christ and His saints, for the reconciliation of men with God. It is an episcopate, an office of superintendence and oversight, of visitation, and pastoral care. It is a stewardship of the mysteries of God, and of His grace. It is its work to provide that all things be done decently and in order in the Church. To Presbyters are given the name of Bishops, or overseers, superintendents, Elders, ministers, ministers and servants of God, of Christ, of the Lord, of righteousness, and of the Gospel. They are called teachers and preachers, they that are over, and that rule, and have the rule over the Church. In figurative language they are workers in the vineyard, and in the field, in sowing and in harvest, husbandmen, shepherds, inviters to the marriage and the great supper, fishers of men, stewards, ambassadors, witnesses, and heralds. ...

The New Testament speaks of but one official, distinctive class of Christian elders or Presbyters: it gives no hint of official distinctions within this class. All Presbyters are identified with Bishops, and are constantly spoken of as one body, and as having a common ordination both to rule and teach. (Acts xiv. 23, xv. 2, 4, 6, 22, 23, xvi. 4, xx. 17, 28; Phil. i. 1; 1 Tim. iv. 14; Tit. i. 5; Jas. v. 14; 1 Pet. v. 1.) The Elders, in all cases in which their functions are described in full, are represented as needing the gifts, and conjoining the duties of rule and teaching. (Acts xx. 28; 1 Tim. iii. 1-7; 2

Tim. ii. 24, 25; Tit. i. 5-9; 1 Pet. v. 2-4.) ... The true interpretation does not preclude the idea, if the idea be rendered otherwise probable that as the special gifts of ministers developed themselves, or as the special wants of the Church might suggest, some Presbyters should devote themselves, or be expected by the Church, in her freedom, to devote themselves more largely to one department of official duty, and others to another. But these would be voluntary, and individual, special providential differences rising within one office. The choice between certain proportions of functions implies the general ordination and right to exercise both. Still less does the true interpretation exclude, but on the contrary naturally involves, the idea of great differences in the ability, willingness and fidelity of men ordained to the same office. (1 Cor. i. 14, 17; 1 Tim. i. 3, v. 22, vi. 3; 2 Tim. iv. 1-5; 2 Pet. ii. 1.) (Charles Porterfield Krauth, "Thetical Statement of the Doctrine Concerning the Ministry of the Gospel" [First Article], *Lutheran and Missionary*, Vol. XIV, No. 12 [Dec. 31, 1874], p. 1; "Thetical Statement of the Doctrine of the Ministry (Second Article)," *Lutheran and Missionary*, Vol. XIV, No. 13 [Jan. 7, 1875], p. 1; "The Doctrine of the Ministry Thetically Stated (Third Article)," *Lutheran and Missionary*, Vol. XIV, No. 15 [Jan. 21, 1875], p. 1)

HENRY EYSTER JACOBS:

What is the special office and calling of the Church? To administer the Word and Sacraments. The Church saves only by bringing the saving Word. *Whence has it this authority and commission?* From the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, who has entrusted it with the Power of the Keys. Matt. 16:19—"I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." 18:18—"What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and what things soever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." John 20:23—"Whosoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." "This is a power or commandment from God of preaching the Gospel, of remitting and retaining sins, and of administering the Sacraments" (Augsburg Confession, Art. XXVIII). *Does not this power belong, however, to a class or order within the Church?* As will be seen later, there are no classes or orders within the Church. The Christian Ministry is not an order but an office. It is an instrumentality whereby the Church acts. In other words, it is the executive of the Church in performing this work. This is proved as follows: 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. "Just as the promise of the Gospel belongs certainly and immediately to the entire Church, so the Keys belong immediately to the entire Church, because the Keys are nothing else than the office whereby this promise is communicated to every one who desires it" (Schmalkald Articles, 343). *Can the Church, at its will, dispense with the ministerial office?* By no means. But it is for the Church to call, appoint and ordain those who are to exercise the functions of this office.

Explain the call or appointment by the Church. 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 large 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. *What inevitably results?* The Gathering of believers into local congregations and their further organization into congregational unions or Particular Churches, according to the necessities or the peculiar circumstances of the time or place. As the Church assumes a more settled form in the lands in which it is planted, and extends its missionary, benevolent and educational operations, a form of external organization, know as "the Representative Church," inevitably follows. United activity always means attention to details of organization, which, however, according to the New Testament conception, must be in accord with the principle of Christian Liberty. *How is the organization effected?* Generally in accordance with what has been gradually developed in the experience of the Church. The Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles show the first beginnings of this process in response to needs that were then felt. But not even the practice of the Apostolic Church is a rule which is absolutely obligatory on the Church of succeeding periods. "The Apostles commanded to abstain from blood (Acts 15:29). Who observeth that now-a-days? And yet they do not sin who observe it not" (Augsburg Confession, Article XXVIII). Nevertheless the highest respect is paid to what has been found serviceable in the past, and no break

with historical antecedents is justifiable, unless a rule or practice is clearly recognized as having survived its usefulness. "We cheerfully maintain the old traditions made in the Church for the sake of usefulness and tranquility; and we interpret them in a more moderate way to the exclusion of the opinion which holds that they justify" (Apology, 224). *What matters may be particularly classed under the head of Church Traditions?* All regulations for its government, the constitutions of congregations and Church Bodies, the mode of calling and inducting its ministry, the times and forms of public service, the lessons, the hymns, the prayers, the ceremonies connected with the administration of the Sacraments and other ministerial acts, etc. ...

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. *Is the designation of a special class of men to fill this office simply a matter of convenience?* It is not within the liberty of the Church to dispense with the office. For it rests upon a divine institution. 1 Cor. 12:28—"God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then divers kinds of healings, helps, governments," etc. Eph. 4:11—"And he gave some to be apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering." The form and mode of office may vary. Some of these forms are but temporary and belong only to the period of the founding of Christianity; but the permanency of organization under bearers of an office pervades all that has been written concerning the Apostolic Church. A ministry is indispensable to the establishment, growth and proper administration of the Church. *Is this classification of offices absolute for the Church of later times?* No; for the Acts and the Epistles show that the organization of the Church gradually progressed, according to its needs, and had no divinely formulated Constitution, transmitted by inspiration, to be inflexibly adhered to for all time. Modifications and combinations of offices, on the one hand, and, on the other, a separation of duties and offices arose, as the Church passed from its missionary to its settled form, and as provisional plans were succeeded by more permanent adjustments. ... *What was the ultimate result?* The Apostles as such had no successors; for they were for all lands and ages. When the period of extraordinary was succeeded by that of only ordinary gifts of the Spirit, there was a merging of a number of these offices into one, that of the local pastor, teacher, preacher and chief presbyter or president of the congregation. The Church, in its freedom, from time to time instituted other offices, to administer the duties connected with its common and united interests. *Is there no distinction in the New Testament between Presbyters and Bishops?* None whatever. Paul sends for the presbyters of Ephesus (Acts 20:17), and speaks of them as "bishops" (v. 28). According to Phil. 1:1, there were a number of bishops in the church at Philippi. 1 Tim. 3 and Titus 1, in enumerating the duties of church officers, know only bishops and deacons. Nowhere is there any co-ordination of bishops, presbyters and deacons. The testimony of Titus 1:5-7 is very clear. After declaring the necessity to "appoint elders in every city," and enumerating the qualifications of the bearers of the office, Paul continues, "For a bishop must be blameless." The allusion would be without any meaning if the presbyterate were regarded a different office from the episcopate. ...

Where a regularly called pastor cannot be had, is it never proper for a layman to preach or teach publicly in the Church? "When a Christian is among heathen ignorant of the Christian faith, then, according to his ability, he can teach others and propagate Christian doctrine at the promptings of love and necessity. But where a church has been established, let no one, without an ordinary call, undertake the holy office" (Hollaz). Similar occasions may occur temporarily in communities in a Christian land, not adequately provided with a ministry, or churches. Lay activity may very properly supply the deficiency, but not as a permanent matter. Where a congregation results and the provision has its sanction, the ministry springs up in virtue of the call that is given. *How about the preaching of theological students?* "There is a distinction between preaching exercises and the regular office of preaching. The sermons of students are exercises in which they modestly offer to the Church services that are hereafter to be rendered, but do not claim for themselves the regular office of preaching" (Hollaz). This is not, however, a completely satisfactory statement. The preaching of students is justifiable only upon the ground that it is in response to a regular call of the congregation or its representatives for a temporary service. The distinction is between a call for a more permanent and one for a merely temporary discharge of ministerial functions. ...

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. This limitation, however, must be made: Such call must always carry with it the appointment to distinct work. For the ministry is an office, not an order. ...

What is Ordination? The formal induction into his office of one who has been called to the ministry. It is the solemn, public ratification and attestation of the Call. *Does Ordination make one a minister?* The Call is all that is essential. Ordination is important but not essential. One called but not ordained is in reality a minister; only, for the sake of good order, he should hold his rights in abeyance until ordained, or the Call may be conditioned in explicit terms upon his ordination. As it is not the inauguration of the President of the United States but the votes of the people, that gives him the title to his office, so it is not ordination, but the being *rite vocatus*, i.e., the Call in due form and order, that decides one's claims as a minister. *Is not Ordination a divinely prescribed ceremony?* No. ... *What is the ordinary form of Ordination?* Prayer with the laying on of hands (1 Tim. 4:14; 5:22; 2 Tim. 1:6). *What is the chief thing in Ordination?* Not the laying on of hands, but the prayer which accompanies it, or, rather, the word of God which the prayer appropriates and pleads with God. This is the "prophecy" of 1 Tim. 4:14. In 2 Tim. 1:6, the words "laying on of hands" are used by *synechdoche* for the entire ceremony including the prayer and prophecy. Hands are laid on the person ordained, simply to designate the individual to whom the promises of the Gospel concerning the ministry are applied, and to whom the office is entrusted. *What is the exact estimate of such ceremony in the Lutheran Church?* "We declare that the rite of Ordination ought by no means to be omitted, but that except in case of necessity, it should always be employed in constituting the ministry of the Church, both on account of the ancient custom of the Apostolic Church and that nearest the times of the Apostles, in which, by prayers and the laying on of hands, the presbytery ordained ministers elected by the Church, and as it were consecrated them to God; and on account of certain salutary ends. Although Paul was immediately called, nevertheless he is sent to Ananias, who imposes his hands, that his call may be manifest to the Church (Acts 9:17), and, afterwards (Acts 13:3), when he is to be sent to the heathen, he is again appointed a teacher of the Gentiles by the laying on of hands; this rite being employed in order that his call might be declared publicly to be legitimate, and others might not boast in like manner of it. But if this was done in one who had been immediately called, how much more appropriate in those whose call is mediate" (Gerhard, VI, 97, largely from Chemnitz). ...

Are there different grades of ministers of the Word? It has been shown above that the New Testament does not recognize any distinction between bishops and presbyters. "In 1 Cor. 3:6, Paul makes ministers equal and teaches that the Church is above the ministers. Hence superiority or lordship over the Church is not ascribed to Peter" (Schmalkald Articles, 340). 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. ...

What other ministers are there beside the ministers of the Word [i.e. “those commissioned by the Church to preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments”]? Deacons, or the executive aids of pastors, chiefly in the external administration of the Church. While 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, nevertheless, the general principle of the more thorough organization and division of labor is the same in both classes of passages. Acts 7 and 8 clearly show that “the seven” preached as well as attended to the secular responsibilities of the infant Church. The qualifications of deacons required by 1 Tim. 3:8-13, show that their duties were not purely secular. *What were the Deaconesses of the early Church?* 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.” 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. (Henry Eyster Jacobs, *A Summary of the Christian Faith* [Philadelphia: The United Lutheran Publication House, 1905], pp. 403-05, 419-21, 430-33, 435-37, 444-45)

Addendum: Additional resources pertaining to the Church, its marks, and its unity

St. Paul says in Colossians 3[:3] that our life is not on earth but is hidden with Christ in God. For if Christendom were a physical assembly, one could tell by looking at every single body whether or not it is a Christian, a Turk, or a Jew, just as I can tell by looking at someone’s body whether it is a man, a woman, or a child, black or white. Again, with regard to a worldly assembly, I can tell whether a person has assembled together with others at Leipzig or at Wittenberg, or wherever. But I cannot tell at all whether or not he believes. Therefore, whoever does not want to err should remember clearly that Christianity is a spiritual assembly of souls in one faith, and that no one is regarded as a Christian because of his body. Thus he should know that the natural, real, true, and essential Christendom exists in the Spirit and not in any external thing, no matter what it may be called. For any non-Christian can have all these other things, but they will never make him a Christian; true faith alone makes Christians. Thus we are called “believers in Christ,” and on the day of Pentecost we sing, “Now let us pray to the Holy Ghost above all for true faith.” This is the way Holy Scripture speaks of the holy church and of Christendom. It cannot speak about it in any other way. Beyond that, there is a second way of speaking about Christendom. According to this, Christendom is called an assembly in a house, or in a parish, a bishopric, an archbishopric, or a papacy. To this assembly belong external forms such as singing, reading, and the vestments of the mass. Here, above all, bishops, priests, and members of religious orders are called the “spiritual estate” – not because of faith, which they might not have, but because they are blessed with external anointing, wear crowns and special vestments, say special prayers, do special works, hold mass, stand in the choir, and seem to perform all such external worship. Although the little words “spiritual” or “church” are violated here when they are applied to such externals, since they refer only to the faith which makes true priests and Christians in the soul, this manner of speech has spread everywhere – to the not unimportant seduction and error of many souls who think such external glitter is the spiritual and true estate of Christendom or of the church. There is not a single letter in Holy Scripture saying that such a church, where it is by itself, is instituted by God. ... If they [the papists] can show me that a single letter of Scripture speaks of it, I will recant all my words. I know that they will not do me that favor. Canon and human laws do call such externals “church” or “Christendom.” But that is not the point right now. 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, or as the Apostle is accustomed to speak of an “internal” and “external” man [Rom. 7:22-23]. (Martin Luther, “On the Papacy in Rome Against the Most Celebrated Romanist in Leipzig,” *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 39 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970], pp. 69-70)

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 made unto salvation" [Rom. 10:10]. (Martin Luther, 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)

...we correctly confess in the Creed that we *believe* a holy church. For it is invisible, dwelling in the Spirit, in an "unapproachable" place (1 Tim. 6:16); therefore its holiness cannot be seen. God conceals and covers it with weaknesses, sins, errors, and various offenses and forms of the cross in such a way that it is not evident to the senses anywhere. Those who are ignorant of this are immediately offended when they see the weaknesses and sins of those who have been baptized, have the Word, and believe; and they conclude that such people do not belong to the church. Meanwhile they imagine that the church consists of the hermits, monks, etc., who honor God only with their lips and who worship Him in vain, because they do not teach the Word of God but the doctrines and commandments of men (Matt. 15:8-9). Because these men perform superstitious and unnatural works, which reason praises and admires, they are regarded as saints and as the church. Anyone who thinks this way turns the article of the Creed, "I believe a holy church," upside down; he replaces "I believe" with "I see." Such forms of human righteousness and self-chosen holiness are actually a kind of spiritual sorcery, by which the eyes and minds of men are blinded and led away from the knowledge of true holiness. But we teach that the church has no spot or wrinkle (Eph. 5:27) but is holy, though only through faith in Jesus Christ; in addition, it is holy in its life, in the sense that it refrains from the desires of the flesh and practices its spiritual gifts. But it is not yet holy in the sense of being delivered and rescued from all evil desires or of having purged out all wicked opinions and errors. For the church always confesses its sin and prays that its trespasses may be forgiven (Matt. 6:12); it also "believes in the forgiveness of sins." And so the saints sin, fall, and even err; but they do so through ignorance. For they do not want to deny Christ, to lose the Gospel, to cancel their Baptism, etc. This is why they have the forgiveness of sins; and if through ignorance they err in doctrine, this is forgiven, because at the end they acknowledge their error and depend solely on the truth and grace of God in Christ. This is what Jerome, Gregory, Bernard, and others did. (Martin Luther, "Lectures on Galatians" [1535], *Luther's Works*, Vol. 27 [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964], pp. 84-85)

By no means is the Word to be considered as lightly as the world considers it, and as some foolish spirits, deceived by the devil in regard to the Sacrament or other heresies, represent it to be. They tell us that one is not to quarrel so violently over one article and disrupt Christian love because of it. Nor should we consign one another to the devil because of it. But, they say, one might well yield and surrender a bit and keep up fraternal and Christian unity and fellowship with those who err in an unimportant point – as long as one agrees with them otherwise. No, my good man, for me none of that peace and unity one gains by the loss of God's Word! For in that case eternal life and everything else would already be lost. In this matter we dare not budge or concede anything to please you or any man; but all things must yield to the Word, be they friendly or hostile. For the Word is given not in order to achieve external and secular unity and peace but life eternal. Word and doctrine are to create unity or fellowship. Where they are one and the same, the rest will naturally follow; if not, no unity will abide anyway. Therefore do not speak to me of love or friendship when anything is to be detracted from the Word or the faith; for we are told that not love but the Word brings eternal life, God's grace, and all heavenly treasures. We will gladly keep the peace with them in an external way, as we should do with everybody in the world, even with our worst enemies ... but in doctrine and Christian fellowship we want to have nothing to do with them. Nor do we want to consider them brethren. They are enemies, because they knowingly insist on their error; and we intend to fight against them in our spiritual struggle. Therefore nothing but a satanic, seductive, and sinister strategy is involved when we are called upon to yield a bit and to connive at an error for the sake of unity. In this way the devil is trying cunningly to lead us away from the Word. For if we adopt this course and get together in this matter, he has already gained ground; and if we were to yield him a fingerbreadth, he would soon have an ell. (Martin Luther, Sermon on Ephesians 6:10-17, quoted in *What Luther Says* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959], pp. 1411-12)

We may not take it amiss that it [the church] is God's institution. 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." It was not essential that it was established in Jerusalem by the preaching of the apostles, but by that means the Kingdom of Heaven was established upon earth and showed itself in Jerusalem as the first congregation.

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. If we could move toward the ideal, this oneness [of the Church] would manifest itself everywhere, where God's Word is. Concerning the external reality one confesses the local congregation as an appearance of the holy, universal Christian Church. Were the internal reality to reveal itself it would show itself to be at one with [and] in the holy, universal Christian Church by faith in Christ. There are difficulties... We have in the introduction to the Book of Concord a hint to disentangle the matter. 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. (Ulrik Vilhelm Koren, quoted in *Norwegian Synod Report, Minnesota District, 1904*, p. 41 [translated by Charles J. Evanson]) (*An alternate translation of a portion of Koren's statement can be found as follows in Bjarne W. Teigen, "The Church in the New Testament, Luther, and the Lutheran Confessions," Concordia Theological Quarterly, Vol. 42, No. 4 [Oct. 1978], p. 392: "We must not make a mistake of what is God's institution. He has not directly instituted the local congregation. What God has instituted is what stands in the Third Article, that we believe 'a holy Christian church.' ... It is of the highest importance that one recognizes the local congregation as a manifestation of the holy Christian Church."*)

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. (Bjarne W. Teigen, "The Church in the New Testament, Luther, and the Lutheran Confessions," *Concordia Theological Quarterly, Vol. 42, No. 4 [Oct. 1978]*, pp. 390-91)

For the Lutheran Church, 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. One must be clear as to what this means. Other churches have "an order by which the Lord wills the church to be governed," as Calvin put it. This is true of all Catholic churches, both of the East and of the West, and of all Reformed churches. Their differences have to do only with what that order must be – the universal monarchy of the pope, the episcopal-synodical government of the church as in the Eastern churches and Anglicanism, a ruling senate of presbyters among whom there must be no differences of rank, or the autonomy of the individual congregation as in Congregationalism and among the Baptists. These are just a few notable options, all of which claim to represent what the New Testament requires for the polity of the church. Luther's entire greatness and the boldness of his basic theological principle of the strict separation of Law and Gospel become evident when one sees how, beyond all these possibilities, he goes his lonesome way: Christ gave his church no such law prescribing one right organization, government, and polity (*de constituenda ecclesia*). Any way of organizing things may do, so long as the means of grace are going on and are not frustrated. (Hermann Sasse, "Ministry and Congregation," *We Confess the Church* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986], pp. 70-71)

...the Lutheran church can tolerate all constitutions of outward church government (insofar as adiaphora are concerned) even as since the time of the Reformation in the various Lutheran lands episcopal, presbyterial, consistorial, and congregational (communal) constitutions have existed. In the last of these, which is at the same time an expression of the recognition of Christian liberty, the congregation exercises the supreme judgment. This we also have adopted and thus declare, not only in theory, but also in practice, that the congregation has the highest and final judgment, in which we follow the example of the holy apostles who, when a decision was to be made, "called the multitude together" (Acts 1, 6, 15). That the Lutheran church can tolerate every kind of constitution is proved by her confession as well as by her history. This is not to say that every kind of constitution is equally good and suitable, but that we have a witness in this that the Lutheran church does not separate itself on account of a difference in constitution, namely as long as the doctrine remains pure. With the sects the opposite is the case. Because they do not distinguish strictly between what is commanded in the Word of God and what is left free, they look not so much to purity and unity of doctrine as to uniform constitution. Thus the Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Methodists, Albright Brethren, and Presbyterians have separated solely on account of their church constitutions and consider difference in external form divisive of church fellowship to this day. *What is the best and most suitable church constitution?* It is the one preferred also by Luther, the communal constitution, for it follows the example of the apostolic church. (C. F. W. Walther, "The True Visible Church," *Essays for the Church* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992], Vol. I, pp. 194-95)

I must confess that I have a kind of horror of a real representative constitution (*einer eigentlichen Repraesentativverfassung*) [i.e. a church constitution according to which ecclesiastical power is exercised largely by the synodical "representatives" of the congregations and not by the congregations themselves]. I do not find it in Holy Scripture. Now, it is true that we Christians may exercise our liberty as regards our constitution, but I cannot rid myself of this opinion: the more freedom a church government in a free state like ours affords, the more efficient it will be, provided that the Word is preached in all its power in the congregations. On the other hand, everything coercive that does not flow immediately from the Word easily causes opposition by refusal to comply, and lays the foundation for frequent separations. Hitherto I have not viewed a synodical organization as a concentration of ecclesiastical power. I thought that it was only to exhibit the ecclesiastical union of the separate congregations, unite its resources and forces in a war upon the oncoming ruin in doctrine and life, and for carrying on operations for the common welfare of the Church, for preserving and advancing unity in faith and love, for aiming by way of commendation for the greatest uniformity possible in liturgy, for making a well-ordered disposition of the ministry possible, for setting up a court of arbitration for preachers and congregations to which recourse might be had, or not, etc. I was of the opinion that all matters pertaining to the internal administration of individual congregations should not be subject to the disposing and judicial power of the Synod. (C. F. W. Walther, Letter to Wilhelm Sihler [1847]; quoted in W. H. T. Dau, "Waltheriana," *Theological Monthly*, Vol. II, No. 5 [May 1922], p. 129)

While it must be acknowledged that the formation of congregations is God's ordinance and God's work and that affiliation with an orthodox congregation is the absolute duty of every individual, God's Word, on the contrary, nowhere unconditionally ordains or requires the association of individual congregations into a synod or larger church body. It is not therefore sinful, where circumstances or the interests of the concerned congregations warrant it, for individual congregations to do without this association. Even less will this result in their exclusion from the Lutheran Church. On the contrary, each such congregation possesses of itself, and can properly exercise, the ecclesiastical authority Christ has granted to his whole church. But while, on [the] one hand, over against a false conception of the church, we must emphasize the rights and power Christ has given the individual congregation, on the other hand, we must also beware of a false sense of independence, putting all the emphasis on the autonomy of the individual congregation, and of considering the association of individual congregations at any time and in any form if not precisely sinful, then very dangerous and harmful, and in any case unnecessary and unhelpful. An association like this is certainly within the sphere of the freedom of each congregation, and the congregation must consider its situation with an eye to judging where the affiliation would be helpful and serviceable to itself and other congregations. If under the given circumstances this is found to be the case, then association is a duty for the congregation. Just as little as are individual Christians, congregations are not supposed to use the freedom granted them at whim or by fancy but for what is profitable. If congregations do not associate, they sin against charity, cause offense and schism, and impede in manifold ways the building up of Christ's kingdom among themselves and beyond their own circle. ...an association like this is beneficial,

indeed relatively necessary, and therefore a duty of individual congregations... (Herman Amberg Preus, *Vivacious Daughter* [Northfield, Minnesota: The Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1990], pp. 47-48)

...the holy Christian people are externally recognized by prayer, public praise, and thanksgiving to God. Where you see and hear the Lord's Prayer prayed and taught; or psalms or other spiritual songs sung, in accordance with the word of God and the true faith; also the creed, the Ten Commandments, and the catechism used in public, you may rest assured that a holy Christian people of God are present. For prayer, too, is one of the precious holy possessions whereby everything is sanctified, as St. Paul says [I Tim. 4:5]. The psalms too are nothing but prayers in which we praise, thank, and glorify God. The creed and the Ten Commandments are also God's word and belong to the holy possession, whereby the Holy Spirit sanctifies the holy people of Christ. However, we are now speaking of prayers and songs which are intelligible and from which we can learn and by means of which we can mend our ways. The clamor of monks and nuns and priests is not prayer, nor is it praise to God; for they do not understand it, nor do they learn anything from it; they do it like a donkey, only for the sake of the belly and not at all in quest of any reform or sanctification or of the will of God. (Martin Luther, "On the Councils and the Church," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 41 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966], p. 164)

Our adversary says that mere bread and wine are present, not the body and blood of the Lord. If they believe and teach wrongly here, then they blaspheme God and are giving the lie to the Holy Spirit, betray Christ, and seduce the world. One side must be of the devil, and God's enemy. There is no middle ground. Now let every faithful Christian see whether this is a minor matter, as they say, or whether God's Word is to be trifled with. Here you have the fanatics and their spirit. I have often said, no ungodly man can have a high regard for God's Word. These fanatics demonstrate forthrightly that they regard the words and works of Christ as nothing but human prattle, like the opinions of academic hairsplitters, which ought fairly to yield to love and unity. But a faithful Christian knows clearly that God's Word concerns God's glory, the Spirit, Christ, grace, everlasting life, death, sin, and all things. These, however, are not minor matters! You see, this is how they seek God's glory, as they boast everywhere. Neither does it help them to assert that at all other points they have a high and noble regard for God's words and the entire gospel, except in this matter. My friend, God's Word is God's Word; this point does not require much haggling! When one blasphemously gives the lie to God in a single word, or says it is a minor matter if God is blasphemed or called a liar, one blasphemes the entire God and makes light of all blasphemy. There is only one God who does not permit himself to be divided, praised at one place and chided at another, glorified in one word and scorned in another. The Jews believe the Old Testament, but because they do not believe Christ, it does them no good. You see, the circumcision of Abraham [Gen. 17:10 ff.] is now an old dead thing and no longer necessary or useful. But if I were to say that God did not command it in its time, it would do me no good even if I believed the gospel. So St. James asserts, "Whoever offends in one point is guilty in all respects" [James 2:10]. He possibly heard the apostles say that all the words of God must be believed or none, although he applies their interpretation to the works of the law. Why is it any wonder, then, if fickle fanatics juggle and play the clown with the words of the Supper according to their fancy, since at this point they are convicted of belittling God's words and concerns, and making them secondary to human love? Just as if God must yield to men, and let the authority of his Word depend on whether men are at one or at odds over it. How can one believe that these fanatics teach rightly and well, when they are clearly found to be entertaining such devilish ideas and advising things which make for the despising, blaspheming, and disgrace of God and our eternal death and destruction, and who yet think they have acted wisely and presented a salutary Christian teaching? But we poor sinners, who are altogether devoid of Spirit, have this to say out of the holy gospel against these holy Christians, "He who loves father and mother, wife and child, house and home, or even his own soul more than me is not worthy of me" [Matt. 10:37]. And again, "I have not come to bring peace on earth, but a sword" [Matt. 10:34]. And Paul, "What accord has Christ with Belial?" [II Cor. 6:15]. If we are to practice Christian unity with them and extend Christian love to them, we must also love and be satisfied with, or at least tolerate, their doctrine and behavior. Let anyone do that if he wishes. Not I. For Christian unity consists in the Spirit, when we are of one faith, one mind, one heart, Ephesians 4[:3 ff.]. This, however, we will gladly do: in civil matters we are glad to be one with them, i.e. to maintain outward, temporal peace. But in spiritual matters, as long as we have breath, we intend to shun, condemn, and censure them, as idolaters, corrupters of God's Word, blasphemers, and liars; and meanwhile, to endure from them, as from enemies, their persecution and schism as far and as long as God endures them; and to pray for them, and admonish them to stop. But to acquiesce in, keep silence over, or approve their blaspheming, this we shall

not and cannot do. (Martin Luther, "That These Words of Christ, 'This is my Body,' etc., Still Stand Firm Against the Fanatics," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 37 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1961], pp. 26-27)

According to Luther the true church is the communion of believers, "the living body of Christ." Its outward marks are the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments in accordance with the gospel of Christ. To the communion of believers and to no external organized church are entrusted the Word and the sacraments. ... According to the Lutheran view the church is the communion of believers where the pure Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered in accord with Christ's institution. The task of the church, therefore, is to see to it that the pure Word of God is preached and the sacraments are rightly administered. According to the Reformed view the church is the instituted visible church, under the care and government of which we are preserved "till we are divested of this mortal flesh and become like angels" ([John Calvin's *Institutes*, IV, 1,] 4). The task of the church, therefore, is to see to it that there be the right kind of church organization and church government and that church discipline be properly exercised. ... Calvin was convinced that the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments necessitated the divine appointment of definite ecclesiastical offices. The *extraordinary* offices of apostles, prophets and evangelists, Calvin maintains, "were appointed to continue for a time in the government of the church." The *ordinary* offices of pastors, teachers, elders and deacons were instituted to be of perpetual duration (ib. 3, 5). ... All these officers are not only to preach, govern, and care for the poor, but above all to exercise Christian discipline. The people are to choose, but the ministers chosen are to rule. ... Holiness, which is an attribute of the communion of the saints, i.e., the invisible church, is required by Calvin of the visible, instituted church. Church discipline is to bring it on. Therefore Calvin does not, like Luther, see the exercise of the power of the keys in the proclamation of the gospel but in church discipline. ... The cold, legalistic character of Calvin's Reformation left its imprint upon the Reformed churches. ... a marked nomism characterized both the church of Rome and Calvin's theocracy. The difference between Rome and Geneva was this, that *there* [in Rome] the infallible teaching office of the church dictated and enforced the rules which were to regulate the conduct of life; *here* [in Geneva] it was a false Biblicism, i.e., strictest adherence to the letter of the Bible as the supreme law of the sovereign God, which led Calvin to conform all acts and forms of life to the words of the Bible. Because the apostles appointed ministers, teachers, presbyters and deacons, it is therefore necessary [according to Calvin] that the church everywhere and at all times must do the same. (Ernst Heinrich Klotsche, *Christian Symbolics* [Des Moines, Iowa: Lutheran Literary Board, 1929], pp. 228-32)

ADDITIONAL QUOTATIONS

[1 Peter 4:10b.] *As good stewards of God's varied grace.* God did not give us all equal grace. Therefore everyone should pay attention to his qualifications, to the kind of gift given to him. When he is aware of this, he should use his gift in the service of his neighbor, as St. Peter explains further, saying: 11. *Whoever speaks, as one who utters oracles of God.* That is, if someone has the grace to be able to preach and teach, let him teach and preach. Thus St. Paul also says in Rom. 12:3-6: "I bid everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith which God has assigned him. For as in one body we have members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them." He continues: "If prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; he who teaches, in his teaching" (v. 7). He teaches the same thing in other places – in 1 Corinthians (12:12) and in Ephesians (4:7). Accordingly, God has poured out varied gifts among the people. They should be directed to only one end, namely, that one person should serve the other person with them, especially those who are in authority, whether with preaching or with another office. Now St. Peter says here: "Whoever speaks, as one who utters oracles of God." One should note very well that no one should preach anything unless he is sure that it is God's Word. Here St. Peter has stopped the mouth of the pope. And lo, the pope wants to be St. Peter's successor! How beautifully he lives up to that obligation! The apostle continues: *Whoever renders service, as one who renders it by the strength which God supplies.* That is, he who rules in the Christian Church and has an office or a duty to care for souls should not proceed as he pleases and say: "I am an overlord here. I must be obeyed. What I command must be carried out." God wants us to do nothing except what He assigns. It must be God's work and arrangement. Therefore a bishop should do nothing unless he is sure that God is doing it, that it is God's Word or work. For God does not want us to regard what He does with the Christian Church as jugglery. Therefore we must be so sure that God is speaking and working in us that our faith can declare: "What I have said and done, this God has done and said. I stake my life on this." Otherwise, if I am not sure of this, my faith is founded on sand. Then the devil will take me. Thus here it is earnestly forbidden to take orders from any bishop unless he is certain that God is doing what he does and he can say: "Here I have God's Word and command." Where this is not the case, he must be regarded as a liar. For God has ordained that our conscience must rest on solid rock. This pertains to the general rule. Here no one should follow his own opinion and do something concerning which he is not sure that God wants it. (Martin Luther, "Sermons on the First Epistle of St. Peter," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 30 [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1967], pp. 124-25)

Here we have the true significance of the keys. They are an office, a power or command given by God through Christ to all of Christendom for the retaining and remitting of the sins of men. ... Rely on the words of Christ and be assured that God has no other way to forgive sins than through the spoken Word, as he has commanded us. If you do not look for forgiveness through the Word, you will gape toward heaven in vain for grace, or (as they say), for a sense of inner forgiveness. But if you speak as the factious spirits and sophists do: "After all, many hear of the binding and loosing of the keys, yet it makes no impression on them and they remain unbound and without being loosed. Hence, there must exist something else beside the Word and the keys. It is the spirit, the spirit, yes, the spirit that does it!" Do you believe he is not bound who does not believe in the key which binds? Indeed, he shall learn, in due time, that his unbelief did not make the binding vain, nor did it fail in its purpose. Even he who does not believe that he is free and his sins forgiven shall also learn, in due time, how assuredly his sins were forgiven, even though he did not believe it. St. Paul says in Rom. 3[:3]: "Their faithlessness [does not] nullify the faithfulness of God." We are not talking here either about people's belief or disbelief regarding the efficacy of the keys. We realize that few believe. We are speaking of what the keys accomplish and give. He who does not accept what the keys give receives, of course, nothing. But this is not the key's fault. Many do not believe the gospel, but this does not mean that the gospel is not true or effective. A king gives you a castle. If you do not accept it, then it is not the king's fault, nor is he guilty of a lie. But you have deceived yourself and the fault is yours. The king certainly gave it. (Martin Luther, "The Keys," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 40 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958], pp. 366-67)

It is true that the keys were given to St. Peter; but not to him personally, but rather to the person of the Christian church. They were actually given to me and to you for the comfort of our consciences. St. Peter, or a priest, is a servant of the keys. The church is the woman and bride, whom he should serve with the power of the keys; just as we see in daily use

that the sacrament is administered to all who desire it of the priests. (Martin Luther, "A Sermon on the Festival of St. Peter and St. Paul," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 51 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959], p. 58)

So faith is necessary everywhere. You receive as much as you believe. And this is what I understand it to mean when our teachers say that the sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, not because of the mere fact that the sacrament is performed but because it is believed, as St. Augustine contends and as I have said previously. So also here. Absolution is efficacious, not by the mere fact that it takes place, no matter who finally does it and whether he errs or does not err, but because it is believed. ... Therefore contrition is not as necessary as faith. In this respect faith in absolution receives incomparably more benefit than does zeal in penitence. ... According to the prophet we ought to place our hope in Christ's word, not in our penitence. The Psalmist did not say, "Remember my contrition to thy servant, in which thou hast made me hope," but "Remember thy word...in which thou hast made me hope" [Ps. 119:49]. Again he says, "In thy word [certainly not in our own work] have I placed great hope" [Cf. Ps. 119:81]. In another psalm he says, "My soul is sustained by his word," etc. [Cf. Ps. 130:5]. And according to the Hebrew he says in Psalm 51[:4], "Against thee, only, have I sinned, ...wherefore thou wilt justify me by thy word." Therefore it is neither the sacrament nor the priest, but faith in the word of Christ spoken through the priest and his office which justifies you. What difference does it make to you, if the Lord should speak through an ass, either male or female, as long as you hear that word by which you may hope and believe? ... Formerly, in the time of Saul, the word of the Lord was considered precious [I Sam. 3:1]. Now his word comes to you even through most irresponsible, wretched, and unlearned men. Pay attention to the word and dismiss the outward appearance of the person. Whether the person errs or does not err, you shall not err if you believe God's word. (Martin Luther, "Explanations of the Ninety-five Theses," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 31 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1957], pp. 193-95)

There is surprisingly little about the office of the ministry in the Confessions, and where they do treat of it, the discussion of the subject is almost always incidental to the main theme. ... The doctrine of the ministry, or the office of the ministry, was incidental or secondary to the real controversy which is at the heart of the Confessions. The controversy which is at the heart of the Confessions could, from one point of view, be said to be the Word versus the ministry. The ministry, in the sense of the whole hierarchy, had come to occupy the central place in the life of the church which properly belonged to the Word, or the Gospel. Oversimplifications are always hazardous, but we will at least indicate the direction of the two points of view if we say that in Rome the ministry (i.e. the hierarchy) presided over the Word; in the Reformation view the Word presided over the ministry. In Rome the Word was an instrument through which the ministry functioned; in Luther the ministry was instrumental to the Word. They were servants of the Word. (Edgar M. Carlson, "The Doctrine of the Ministry in the Confessions," reprinted in *Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. VII [new series], No. 1 [Spring 1993], pp. 80-81)

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 does not require some other, some civil power for its establishment or its maintenance. It "is used and exercised only through the office of preaching" (A.C. XXVIII, 10), without external force. The Gospel which the church is committed to preach, the sacraments which the church is committed to administer are the power of the spiritual rule... Thus spiritual power is the office of the Word, the office of the Gospel, more exactly, "the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments" (A.C. V, 1). The ministry of the spiritual realm is completely circumscribed by the commission to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments. All additional statements of the Confessions do not add anything new to this delimitation but merely unfold it. To preach the Gospel always involves preaching the law and the Gospel. To forgive sins always involves administering the office of both keys, loosing and binding. Gospel without law would not be Gospel. Authority to forgive sins without authority to retain sins would not be authority to forgive sins. For Christ has given his church the twofold power, to loose and to bind. To preach the pure Gospel involves recognition and exposure of, and separation from, false doctrines as such. To serve the Gospel, furthermore, involves providing for the preservation of the preaching of the Gospel and for the calling and sending of ministers of the Gospel. (Edmund Schlink, *Theology of the Lutheran Confessions* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1961], pp. 229-30)

The pope's doctrine left us uncertain about salvation. Indeed, it was an act of piety to doubt whether you were in grace or not. This doubt Christ wanted to remove from us not only by His Word but also by these visible signs of His grace. Therefore He added such clear promises to these signs – promises that are applied to the individuals when they make use of these signs. ... 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. (Martin Luther, "Lectures on Genesis," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 3 [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1961], p. 124)

It was not without intention that Luke writes [2:16]: "They found Mary and Joseph and the babe in the manger," mentioning Mary before Joseph and both of them before the infant. ...Mary is the Christian church and Joseph the servant of the church, and this is exactly what the position of the bishops and priests should be when they preach the gospel. The church comes before the prelates of the church, as Christ, too, says in Luke 21 [22:26]: "He who wishes to be the greatest among you, must be the least." Nowadays this has been reversed, and one need not be astonished about it because they have rejected the gospel and exalted the babblings of men. The Christian church, on the contrary, keeps all the words of God in her heart and ponders them, compares one with the other and with Holy Scripture. Therefore he who wants to find Christ, must first find the church. How would one know Christ and faith in him if one did not know where they are who believe in him? He who would know something concerning Christ, must neither trust in himself nor build his bridge into heaven by means of his own reason, but he should go to the church; he should attend it and ask his questions there. The church is not wood and stone but the assembly of people who believe in Christ. With this church one should be connected and see how the people believe, live, and teach. They certainly have Christ in their midst, for outside the Christian church there is no truth, no Christ, no salvation. It follows that the pope or a bishop erroneously claims that he alone should be believed, posing as master; for all of them are in error and may be in error. Their teaching should rather be subject to the assembly of believers. What they teach, should be subject to the judgment and verdict of the congregation; to this judgment one should defer, so that Mary may be found ahead of Joseph and the Church preferred to the preachers. For it is not Joseph but Mary who keeps these words in her heart, who ponders them and keeps them or compares them [cf. Luke 2:19]. The apostle taught the same thing in I Corinthians 14[29-30] when he says: "One or two are to interpret scripture, the other shall sit in judgment, and whenever a revelation comes to him who sits, then the former must be silent." But nowadays the pope and his followers have become tyrants; they have reversed this Christian, divine, apostolic order and have introduced an altogether heathenish and Pythagorean order, so that they are able to talk, babble, and act foolishly according to their own whims. Nobody is permitted to judge or interrupt them, or to command them to be silent. In this manner, too, they have quenched the Spirit, so that one finds among them neither Mary, nor Joseph, nor Christ, but only the rats, mice, adders, and serpents of their poisonous teachings and hypocrisy. (Martin Luther, "Sermon on the Gospel for the Early Christmas Service, Luke 2[15-20]," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 52 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974], pp. 39-40)

...in all my writings I never wanted more than 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. ...no man can deny that St. Peter's saying is addressed to all Christians, be they young or old, men or women. Clearly, therefore, everything that is comprehended in [the physical priesthood] must be understood as given to all these Christians. For since all Christians are called priests when he says, "You are a royal priesthood" [I Pet. 2:9], and since it is also to be understood in the sense of the physical priesthood, which is consecrated and tonsured, as swordsman [Jerome] Emser teaches and constructs, we have to confess that all Christians are undoubtedly such physical priests. Otherwise, we are heretics and the devil's property, as Emser threatens. Perhaps this is why women wear veils and young maidens wear braids – so that no one can see that they are consecrated and tonsured. Well then, this is finished. But it still has one major fault. I shall be glad to humble myself and hear women and children preach. But how do we convince Emser, the cuirassier-eater, 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! ...

So that everyone may know that St. Peter's saying is addressed to all Christians...we shall include the text according to its order and logical arrangement. It is I Peter 2[:1-5] and reads as follows: "Put away all malice and all guile and all insincerity and hatred and all slander. Like newborn babes, seek the reasonable pure milk, that by it you may grow up; for you have tasted the kindness of the Lord. You came to him as to the living stone, rejected by men but in God's sight precious and chosen; and like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house, into a holy priesthood, and offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ," etc. What man is so dumb he does not see that these words are addressed to all people in common? Who are the people who should put away the enumerated vices and seek the reasonable pure milk? Indeed, can this be understood in terms of tonsure-bearers? He [Peter] speaks of seeking milk the way women customarily speak about their babies. A baby "seeks" when it desires its mother and milk. This is the way all Christians should seek their reasonable milk, namely, the evangelical teaching which is unadulterated by human teaching, which is pure and clean and comes from the true mother, the bride of Christ, the holy church. Now he [Peter] tells them they should themselves be built upon Christ into a holy priesthood. ...

St. Peter continues [I Pet. 2:6-10] "For it stands in Scripture, 'Behold, I am laying in Zion an extraordinary cornerstone, chosen and precious, and he who believes in him will not be put to shame.' To you who believe, therefore, he is precious, but for those who do not believe, 'The very stone which the builders rejected has become a principal cornerstone,' and 'a stone that will make men stumble, a rock that will make them fall'; they are offended by the word and do not believe him upon whom they are to be built. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were no people but now you are a people," etc. Tell me, can anyone be so crude as not to understand to whom St. Peter speaks here? ... He [Peter] names the people and the congregation very clearly, and he calls them all together a royal priesthood and commands them to preach the deeds of God who has called them. Now if this is also said of the Emserian priesthood, as our Emser teaches, all of us are certainly such priests. He may interpret "priests" as he pleases, but all Christians are nevertheless such priests through this passage. If all of us should preach, then the tonsure-bearers must keep silent, since they have a different, special priesthood above all Christians.

The two following passages are also to be understood in the same way. The first one is, "You did ransom us by your blood, and have made us a kingdom of God and priests," Revelation 5[:9-10], and the other one is Revelation 20[:6], "Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of his Christ." Both are said of the whole congregation and are to be understood in that sense as the words demand, without the aid of glosses. Moreover, these three passages are the only ones about priests in the New Testament. All the others call Emser's priests not priests but servants, guardians, and elders. Thereby the Holy Spirit teaches us that ointments, consecrations, tonsures, chasubles, albs, chalices, masses, sermons, etc., do not make priests or give power. Rather, priesthood and power have to be there first, brought from baptism and common to all Christians through the faith which builds them upon Christ the true high priest, as St. Peter says here. 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. It is therefore not true that there is more than one simple priesthood in the church; and the tonsure-bearers are not called priests in accordance with Scripture, as Emser lies. The name "priest" belongs to all of us, with all its power, rights, and the respect these robbers and thieves of God would like to tear away from us and claim only for themselves. But just as they called themselves "church" and we have taken away from them what they stole, so too did they make themselves priests. But this is now also taken away from them. (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], pp. 233-37)

But let us go on and show from the priestly offices (as they [the papists] call them) that all Christians are priests in equal degree. For such passages as, "You are a royal priesthood" (1 Pet. 2[:9]) and, "Thou has made them a kingdom and priests" (Rev. 5[:10]), I have sufficiently treated in other books. Mostly the functions of a priest are these: to teach, to preach and proclaim the Word of God, to baptize, to consecrate or administer the Eucharist, to bind and loose sins, to pray for others, to sacrifice, and to judge of all doctrine and spirits. Certainly these are splendid and royal duties. But the

first and foremost of all on which everything else depends, is the teaching of the Word of God. For we teach with the Word, we consecrate with the Word, we bind and absolve sins by the Word, we baptize with the Word, we sacrifice with the Word, we judge all things by the Word. Therefore when we grant the Word to anyone, we cannot deny anything to him pertaining to the exercise of his priesthood. This Word is the same for all, as Isaiah says, "All your sons shall be taught by the Lord" [Isa. 54:13]. They are taught by the Lord, who hear and learn from the Father, as Christ explains in John 6[:45]. And hearing is through the Word of Christ (Rom. 10[:17]) in order that the praise of Ps. 149[:9] may be realized: "This is glory for all his faithful ones." For whom? "Let the high praises of God be in their throats and two-edged swords in their hands, to wreak vengeance on the nations and chastisement on the peoples, to bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron, to execute on them the judgment written" [Ps. 149:6f.]. The first office, that of the ministry of the Word, therefore, is common to all Christians. This is clear, from what I have already said, and from 1 Pet. 2[:9], "You are a royal priesthood that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." ... The second function, to baptize, they [the papists] themselves have by usage allowed in cases of necessity even to ordinary women, so that it is hardly regarded any more as a sacramental function. Whether they wish or not we deduce from their own logic that all Christians, and they alone, even women, are priests, without tonsure and episcopal "character." For in baptizing we proffer the life-giving Word of God, which renews souls and redeems from death and sins. To baptize is incomparably greater than to consecrate bread and wine, for it is the greatest office in the church – the proclamation of the Word of God. 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. ... Yet I ask you, what is this splendid power of consecration, compared to the power of baptizing and of proclaiming the Word? A woman can baptize and administer the Word of life, by which sin is taken away, eternal death abolished, the prince of the world cast out, heaven bestowed; in short by which the divine majesty pours itself forth through all the soul. Meanwhile this miracle-working priest changes the nature of the bread, but by no other or greater word or power, and it has no other effect than that it increases his awe and admiration before his own dignity and power. ... It is of the common rights of Christians that we have been speaking. For since we have proved all of these things to be the common property of all Christians, no one individual can arise by his own authority and arrogate to himself alone what belongs to all. Lay hold then of this right and exercise it, where there is no one else who has the same rights. But the community rights demand that one, or as many as the community chooses, shall be chosen or approved who, in the name of all with these rights, shall perform these functions publicly. Otherwise, there might be shameful confusion among the people of God, and a kind of Babylon in the church, where everything should be done in order, as the Apostle teaches [1 Cor. 14:40]. For it is one thing to exercise a right publicly; another to use it in time of emergency. Publicly one may not exercise a right without consent of the whole body or of the church. In time of emergency each may use it as he deems best. (Martin Luther, "Concerning the Ministry," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 40 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958], pp. 21,23,25,34)

In the sacrament of penance and in the remission of guilt, pope and bishop do no more than the humblest priest. Indeed, if a priest is not available, any Christian could do just as much, even a woman or a child. ...it is not the work of the priest but the faith of the penitent which effects the forgiveness of sins. For if the pope and all the priests together were to give absolution to a sinner it would not be valid, nor would it help him at all unless the sinner believed it. The word stands firm, "He who does not believe will be condemned" [Mark 16:16]. ... If even Christ and God himself were to pronounce the absolution, without faith it would be of no avail. ... If, then, forgiveness depends entirely upon faith and not on the office or power of the priest; and if the pope can do as little toward the bestowal of faith as the humblest priest, and the priest as little as a woman or a child, I should like the pope to explain to me what he does in this matter that is more than an ordinary priest does? ...the heretical Donatists, who were overcome by St. Augustine, and who tried to make all the sacraments dependent upon the sanctity of the priests and not the faith of the penitents, were nevertheless more tolerable and better than the pope and his bishops who want to bind the sacraments to rank and power. For if a holy priest does no more in the sacrament than a sinful priest, how can a great high priest do any more than a lowly and insignificant priest, since holiness is far more important than power? ... For the keys are given only for the sake of the sacrament of penance, which is the common property of all Christians. No one has a greater or smaller part in it, save in proportion to his faith. I would like to ask another question, most holy father pope: Do you also have a sacrament of baptism that is different from what all priests and Christians have? By virtue of your exalted rank, do you do more when you baptize than does a priest, a layman, a woman, or a child? Speak up! Have you lost your voice? If you have another

baptism, then St. Paul condemns you in Eph. 4[:5], when he says, “One Lord, one faith, one baptism,” etc. But if the sacrament of baptism is the same among all Christians, so that in an emergency a layman, a woman, or a child may administer it – which happens every day – why should not the sacrament of the keys, i.e., penance or absolution, also be common property? Is it not also a sacrament just like baptism? And is your mass any different from that of all other priests? Can you give more of the body of Christ than our chaplain? Why, then, do you make an exception of the sacrament of the keys with your claim to do more in this sacrament than all the rest of Christendom? (Martin Luther, “Defense and Explanation of All the Articles,” *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 32 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958], pp. 50-52)

The material and substance of Baptism is water together with God’s Word. I do not say that it is mere water, but the Word of God is in and with the water, as when a priest, or a woman in an emergency, takes water and pours it over the one to be baptized with these words: “I baptize you in the name [of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit],” etc., not [in the name] of the pastor (or baptizer). (Martin Luther, “Sermon for the Second Sunday after the Epiphany” [1545], *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 58 [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2010], p. 222)

We observe the Lord’s Day, Christmas, Easter, and similar holidays in a way that is completely free. We do not burden consciences with these observances; nor do we teach, as did the false apostles and as do the papists, that they are necessary for justification or that we can make satisfaction for our sins through them. But their purpose is that everything be done in the church in an orderly way and without confusion, so that external harmony may not be disturbed; for in the spirit we have another kind of harmony. ... Most of all, however, we observe such holidays to preserve the ministry of the Word, so that the people may gather on certain days and at certain seasons to hear the Word, to learn to know God, to have Communion, to pray together for every need, and to thank God for His spiritual and temporal blessings. And I believe that this was the chief reason why the fathers instituted the Lord’s Day, Easter, Pentecost, etc. (Martin Luther, “Lectures on Galatians” [1535], *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 26 [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963], pp. 411-12)

The right to preach and administer the sacraments belongs basically to the whole church, but its public exercise [belongs] only to its legitimately called ministers. Nevertheless, every member of the church, as well as the whole church [together], has with equal right the keys and authority to teach, yet only for private application and not for public and solemn use, so that there may be no disorder by which the church would miserably be torn to pieces. When the congregation gathers publicly, then the keys are to be administered only by those on whom the whole congregation has conferred their exercise and use through the public call. (Salomon Deyling, *Institutiones prudentiae pastoralis* [1734], 3.4.7; quoted in C. F. W. Walther, *Church and Ministry* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987], p. 176)

[1 Peter 2:9b.] *That you may declare the wonderful deeds of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.* A priest must be God’s messenger and must have a command from God to proclaim His Word. You must, says Peter, exercise the chief function of a priest, that is, to proclaim the wonderful deed God has performed for you to bring you out of darkness into the light. And your preaching should be done in such a way that one brother proclaims the mighty deed of God to the other, how you have been delivered through Him from sin, hell, death, and all misfortune, and have been called to eternal life. Thus you should also teach other people how they, too, come into such light. For you must bend every effort to realize what God has done for you. Then let it be your chief work to proclaim this publicly and to call everyone into the light into which you have been called. Where you find people who do not know this, you should instruct and also teach them as you have learned, namely, how one must be saved through the power and strength of God and come out of darkness into the light. ... Thus we see that the first and foremost duty we Christians should perform is to proclaim the wonderful deeds of God. (Martin Luther, “Sermons on the First Epistle of St. Peter,” *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 30 [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1967], pp. 64-65)

The forgiveness of sin is of two kinds: The first is to drive sin from the heart and infuse grace into it; this is the work of God alone. The second kind is the declaration of the forgiveness of sin; this man can do to his fellowman. But here [in Matt. 9:2] Christ does both. He instills the Spirit into the heart and externally he declares forgiveness with the word, which is a declaration and public preaching of the internal forgiveness. All men who are Christians and have been baptized, have this power. For with this they praise Christ, and the word is put into their mouth, so that they may and are able to

say, if they wish, and as often as it is necessary: Behold, O Man! God offers thee his grace, forgives thee all thy sins; be comforted, thy sins are forgiven; only believe and thou wilt surely have forgiveness. This word of consolation shall not cease among Christians until the last day: "Thy sins are forgiven, be of good cheer." Such language a Christian always uses and openly declares the forgiveness of sins. For this reason and in this manner a Christian has power to forgive sins. Therefore if I say to you: Thy sins are forgiven, then believe it as surely as though God himself had said it to you. But who could do this if Christ had not descended, had not instructed me and said that we should forgive one another our trespasses? As when he says, John 20, 22-23: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained unto them." And at another place, Mat. 18, 19-20, he says: "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them." The word penetrates and performs it. (Martin Luther, "Sermon for the Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity" [First Sermon] [1525], *Complete Sermons of Martin Luther* [Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2000], Vol. 3.1, pp. 208-09)

...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. In fact, you will never pray successfully in private unless you have preached to yourself either the Creed or some other passage of Scripture that draws your attention to the goodness of God as the One who has not only commanded you to pray but has also added the promise that He will hear you. Through this private sermon, which you direct to yourself, your heart is impelled to pray. The same thing takes place publicly in our churches. We have no silent forms of worship, but the voice of the Gospel is always heard. Through it men are taught about the will of God. And to the sermons we add prayers or thanksgivings. Similarly in 1 Cor. 14[:13] Paul desires that the churches should first be taught and exhorted. Then thanksgiving or prayer may properly follow. Zechariah (12:10) promises that the Lord will pour out the Spirit of grace and of supplication. It is the Spirit of grace who gives instruction concerning the will of God and incites men to faith by praising the mercy of God. The Spirit of prayer follows Him, for those who know that God is reconciled and propitious call upon Him in danger with a firm hope of deliverance. Thus preaching and prayer are always together. (Martin Luther, "Lectures on Genesis," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 2 [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1960], p. 333)

This [first] epistle [to Timothy] St. Paul writes in order to provide a model to all bishops of what they are to teach and how they are to rule Christendom in the various stations of life, so that it may not be necessary for them to rule Christians according to their own human opinions. In chapter 1 he charges that a bishop keep true faith and love and resist the false preachers of the law who, beside Christ and the gospel, would also insist on the works of the law. ... In chapter 2 he charges that prayer be made for all stations of life. He also commands that women are not to preach or wear costly adornment, but are to be obedient to men. In chapter 3 he describes the kind of persons that bishops, or priests, and their wives ought to be, and also the deacons and their wives. He praises those who desire to be bishops of this kind. In chapter 4 he prophesies of false bishops and the spiritual estate which is opposed to that spoken of above, who will not be persons of that kind, but instead will forbid marriage and foods, and with their doctrines of men inculcate the very opposite of the things Paul has described. In chapter 5 he gives orders as to how widows and young women should be looked after, and which widows are to be supported from the common funds; also how godly bishops or priests are to be held in honor, and blameworthy ones punished. In chapter 6 he exhorts the bishops to hold fast to the pure gospel and to promulgate it by their preaching and living. They are to avoid senseless and meddlesome controversies which are only raised for gaining worldly reputation and riches. (Martin Luther, "Preface to the First Epistle of St. Paul to Timothy," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 35 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1960], p. 388)

...Christ, while on the cross, commends His mother to John, and also John to His mother, so that they might be inclined toward each other as are a mother and her son, and that they might love and in every way assist each other. John tells us too that he immediately took the mother of Jesus into his care and treated her as if she had been his own mother [John 19:26-27]. This narrative is generally regarded as an illustration of the fourth commandment, which says: "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." ... Although this explanation is not improper as far as it goes, it is still too narrow; for that which the Lord does and says here upon the cross dare not be regarded as done and said for only a few individuals. Christ intended His works and words to embrace the whole world, but especially the Christian Church. That, therefore, which Christ here says to Mary

and John alone, we must regard as a command for all Christians and for the entire Church. Since Christ hangs upon the cross and, by His death, saves us all from sin and death, we must be toward each other like a mother and her son, who in all things sincerely love, aid and advise each other. This is the meaning also of the command which the Lord so often repeats during the last Supper: "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you" [John 15:12]; "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you" [John 13:34]. The love between a mother and her children is the deepest and most sincere that can be found. The Lord uses the words "mother" and "son" with special reference to both parts of the Church, viz., to those who teach the Word and to those who hear. Even as a mother nourishes her infant and diligently cares for it till it is grown up and has become strong, so honest pastors also labor and take pains to teach the people and render them good Christians. Thus Paul calls his disciples, whom he had reared as with a mother's trouble and toil, children, 1 Cor. 4; Gal. 4; 1 Thess. 2.

The Church cannot be properly conducted unless they who exercise the office of the ministry have for her the affection of a mother. If they have not this love, the result will be indolence, indifference and unwillingness to suffer. The Lord very explicitly teaches this in the 21. chapter of John. He there commands Peter to preach, but not until He had three times asked him: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" By this question He meant to say: Unless thou lovest the lambs as a mother loves her children, whom she tries to rescue from the flames even at the peril of her own life, thou wilt never be fit for a preacher. In thy office as pastor, trouble, toil, ingratitude, hatred, envy and many a cross will be thy lot. Now, if the pastors have no motherly heart, no fervent love for the flock, these shall receive poor care indeed. On the other hand, again, they who have not received the command to preach, but stand in need of information and instruction, must deport themselves like sons, suffering themselves to be taught, led, nourished, and cared for in other ways, thus conducting themselves toward their teachers as a pious child conducts himself toward its mother. True, children's love for their mother is not as great as the mother's love for her children, even as the proverb says: *Amor descendit, non ascendit*, that is, love moves downward, not upward. Still, nature prompts pious children to honor their parents, and to serve them and yield to them in everything that they desire and need.

When this is the relation between mother and son, between pastor and congregation, then all is well. If, however, the ministers of the Church are lacking in motherly affection, or if the hearers are void of childlike fidelity, it is out of the question that things should go right and that God should be pleased. This we have sadly experienced in the case of the Pope, the bishops and the whole priestly rabble, for they have no such motherly love. They think that the office was given them merely that they might be great lords and live at their ease. Therefore, they not only take poor care of the sheep, but they even, to their heart's content, skin and butcher the lambs in life, property and soul, as we only too well see. Again, we frequently find the deficiency in the hearers, that they, like ill-bred children, do not properly provide for their pastors. This is the case, among us, with peasants, with citizens, and especially with the nobility, who deal so closely, stingily and niggardly with their pastors, that seldom one is found who willingly gives to the ministry as much as he should. And this is done in spite of St. Paul's pointed and earnest admonition, not to communicate sparingly of our carnal things unto them that communicate unto us spiritual things. Such ingratitude cannot fail to injure the cause of the Gospel, neither can God's punishment fail to come upon such perverse children. We should, therefore, carefully observe and take to heart this command of our Lord Jesus, who, upon the cross, shows such tender solicitude both for the teacher and the disciple, that is, for the whole Church. Teachers and pastors He exhorts to motherly love, and pupils and congregations to childlike faithfulness, gratitude and obedience. If both parties obey these blessed instructions of our dear Lord Jesus, all will be well and God will bless and give success. (Martin Luther, "Twelfth Passion Sermon," *Sermons on the Passion of Christ* [2005 reprint], pp. 99-101)

[1 Tim. 2:]11. *Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness.* I believe that Paul is still speaking about public matters. I also want it to 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. She has the command to speak at home. This passage makes a woman subject. It takes from her all public office and authority. 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]. Why, then, does Paul say here that he deprives them of the administration of the Word as well as of work? You should solve that argument in this way. Here we properly take "woman" to mean wife, as he reveals from his correlative phrase (v. 12) "to have authority over man," that is, over her husband. As he calls the

husband “man,” so he calls the wife “woman.” Where men and women have been joined together, there the men, not the women, ought to have authority. An exceptional example is the case where they are without husbands, like Huldah and Deborah who had no authority over husbands. Another lived in Abela [cf. 2 Sam. 20:14-21]. The evangelist Philip had four unmarried daughters, etc. (cf. Acts 21:9). He [Paul] forbids 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, because it happens by a man’s command. 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. She rules in the home and says: “Be quiet,” but she is not the master. This maxim was spoken against Greek women, who have been and now are more ingenious and clever than those in other countries. The Jews and Arabs do not honor their women in this way. The Turk considers women as beasts. Not so with the Greeks and us. Miriam seemed wise to herself; she rose up against her brother and her “man” (cf. Num. 12). They should be with all submissiveness. Then comes the teaching, and Paul does not entrust the ministry of the Word to her. He considers this the greatest thing that goes on in the church. You must always understand this with the condition that men are present. Paul says this that there may be peace and harmony in the churches when the Word is taught and people pray. There would be a disturbance if some woman wished to argue against the doctrine that is being taught by a man. The method of 1 Cor. 14 has now perished. I could wish it were still in effect, but it causes great strife. Where a man teaches, there is a well-rounded argument against a man. If she wishes to be wise, let her argue with her husband at home. [1 Tim. 2:]12. *To have authority.* That is, she ought not take over for herself the heritage which belongs to a man so that a man says to her: “My lord.” She wants her own wisdom to have priority, that whatever she has said should prevail and whatever the man says should not. We say: Paul is saying with power what is to be said. He is not speaking about real physical domination, but about the authority of the word, that she should be right and have the last word, that in the church her word ought to appear wiser and more learned and thus of greater authority than that of her husband. So also in the home. [1 Tim. 2:]13. *For Adam.* Paul skillfully arranges this example of his that he may not appear to be speaking off the top of his head. This is the way God has ordained it. The principal role belongs to the man. Adam was first, etc. Therefore the greater authority lies in the man rather than in the woman. (Martin Luther, “Lectures on 1 Timothy,” *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 28 [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1973], pp. 276-77)

[Genesis 31:]34. *Now Rachel had taken the household gods and put them under the camels litter and sat upon them. Laban felt all about the tent but did not find them. 35. And she said to her father: Let not my lord be angry that I cannot rise before you, for the way of women is upon me. So he searched but did not find the household gods. ... She pretends that she is suffering from menstruation, according to the custom of her sex. ... In her extreme need and danger, she suddenly finds a helpful strategy, and experience bears witness that women have great ability to devise strategy on the spur of the moment. Therefore Rachel is assisted by nature, or by the character and industry of women with which this sex has been endowed. Although it [the female sex] has not been destined by God for government of the state or church, where the greatest strength of character and wisdom is required, they [women] have nevertheless been ordained for the care of the home. For the longer they deliberate about important and difficult matters, the more they complicate and obstruct the business. But the first impulse of their nature in sudden dangers is usually excellent and very successful.* (Martin Luther, “Lectures on Genesis,” *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 6 [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970], pp. 59-60)

The wives of the greatest lords, such as kings and princes, take part in no governance, but alone the husbands. For God said to the woman, “You shall be subject to your husband, etc.” The husband has the governance in the house, unless he is...a fool, or unless out of love and to please his wife he lets her rule, as sometimes the lord follows the servant’s advice. Otherwise and aside from that, the wife should put on a veil, just as a pious wife is duty-bound to help bear her husband’s accident, illness, and misfortune on account of the evil flesh. The Law withholds from women wisdom and governance. St. Paul saw this in 1 Corinthians 7[:10], when he says, “I charge you – but not I; rather the Lord,” and in 1 Timothy 2[:12]: “I do not permit a woman to teach, etc.” (Martin Luther, Table Talk #6567; quoted in *Luther on Women* [edited by Susan C. Karant-Nunn and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks] [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003], p. 31)

[Zechariah 5:]7-8. *And behold, the leaden weight was lifted, and there was a woman sitting in the ephah! And he [the angel] said: This is Wickedness. ...the false teachers are not only greedy but also wicked and...they mislead the people.*

Therefore the woman is here sitting in the ephah and has the name *Impietas*, that is, godless teaching. For the sitting refers to the office of teaching, Ps. 1:1; Matt. 23:2: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat." But she is sitting in the ephah, that is, she is ruling among the greedy hypocrites; they are listening to her and clinging to her wicked teaching. ... And it is a woman. Why not a man? Because her teaching teaches what is neither human nor godly – for "man is the image of God," says St. Paul (1 Cor. 11:7) – but teaches according to fine tender reason: how that thinks and judges, so the teaching must be; let God's Word stay where it will! Now reason is indeed fine to look at, even as a woman is when compared with a man; but it is not good for teaching or having authority, even as a woman is forbidden to teach or have authority, 1 Tim. 2:12. Yet it teaches and has authority here in a hypocrite's life. For the woman is sitting in the ephah and is a fine doll to look at when compared with pure teaching, which offers the serious face of a man – one that is shaggy about its mouth and has a bristling beard; for it is not hypocritical but serious. Women, however, have smooth mouths, and the hypocritical preachers do, too. 8. *And he thrust her back into the ephah...* The angel thrusts the woman into the ephah... This means: through the Gospel hypocrisy is dethroned and brought to shame – for the angel represents Christ and all the teachers of the Gospel... 9. *Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, two women coming forward!* ... The wicked are indeed separated from the people of God, so that their ephah and their woman, that is, their teaching and life, no longer are tolerated among the godly, as Ps. 1:5 says: "The wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous." Nevertheless, they do not stop their teaching but at all times find teachers and students to further and carry on their error and deceit. ... The two women represent the office of preaching, or office of teaching, or all teachers and preachers, even as the two cherubim on the ark of Moses represent that also (Ex. 25:18). The fact, however, that there are two cherubim and two women, means that in all preaching or teaching, be it right or wrong, these two parts are regularly to be found, *mine et promissio*, "threat and promise," which we call Law and Gospel. For even the wicked could not maintain their teaching if they did not present a false law, that is, if they did not compel and incite the consciences with false terror and threats; and again, if they did not present a false gospel, that is, did not attract and occupy the hearts with false comfort and promises. For every teaching must be so constituted that it frightens and comforts the consciences by pretending that God commands and demands this or that and that He promises His grace and reward as a comfort to those who act in accordance with this teaching. Now in the true office of teaching and over the ark there are two cherubim in the image of men; but here in the false office of teaching there are images of two women on the ephah. For as I have said above, reason is a beautiful woman, but she is not to teach; she may indeed make a fine appearance, but she is not fit to preach. Man's image, however, is God's image and teaches properly, that is, God's Word is to do the teaching. There is, then, in the false office of teaching nothing but reason and whatever is in keeping with reason: it is the master and doctor and applies God's Word in accordance with its own conceit and pleasure. The two women, however, are they who teach nothing but reason or a law and a gospel of the flesh and not the law of the Spirit or of God and the true Gospel. ...this vision of the ephah is completely formed and fashioned after the vision of Moses which he saw on Mount Sinai, when he was to fashion the ark after this vision (Ex. 25:9), even as godless hypocrisy at all times tries to imitate pure teaching and truth and be like them. There we find the golden ark, here an ephah; on that we find a mercy seat, on this a leaden weight; there God is sitting on the ark and mercy seat, here a woman is sitting in the ephah, and she is wicked; there we find two angels with wings, here we find two women with wings; there the ark is standing at Jerusalem, here the ephah is moving to Babel. Everything is imitated and yet is different in the extreme. For the wicked wish to appear holy and also do have that appearance. But it is only an accursed and condemned thing; for they have no ark with the bread from heaven and the tables of Moses; in their consciences they have neither the true Law nor the true Gospel but only their own inventions – for the sake of their bellies. Again, not Christ is sitting there with His mercy, but the wicked woman; nor is the true office of preaching there, the golden cherubim, but rather a self-chosen office and way of teaching. (Martin Luther, "Lectures on Zechariah," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 20 [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1973], pp. 242-44, 246)

[1 Timothy 3:]11. *Their wives likewise must be serious.* The natural function of women, to have something flighty about them, they have by nature. After all, they are the weaker sex. All their members have by nature been afflicted with weaknesses. Therefore there is a greater need for them to learn to be serious, to have the sort of clothing and behavior that befits the honor of the wife of an elder and that is proper for the wife of a deacon. They should be examples for other wives. *Not slanderers.* This is where women are strong. Wherever two women are together, this most natural fault is also present. They like to talk about other people and about bad people. Here we must watch for the singular discipline that they be settled women. If they are unwilling to speak good about those who are absent, they should keep quiet

altogether. Here you see what *diabolus* [slanderer] means. When they come to visit a woman in childbed, they gossip about a third person. ... *Not given to wine*. They should not be lazy or sleepy, drunk with both sleep and drink. Rather, they should be temperate in their food and drink. They should rise early in the morning, not for the sake of dancing, merrymaking, eating, drinking, and dressing up, as if they were still young girls, but to cook and to serve their husbands. This is what we read in Titus (Titus 2:3-5). *Faithful in all things*. In German, *treu*. He tells us what this means. Whenever they have been established as the wives of deacons and have the duty of doling out something to the poor, they have the opportunity and situation for faithlessness and treachery to be able to use their mouths or hands for deceit. A man can do something for his own convenience, and his wife can help him in this. Also women are clever in swiftly bestowing favors on those they like and in slandering others, that is, both in word and deed. Paul is speaking about outward loyalty, which ought to be trustworthy in an office. They should speak evil of no one. They should not take away alms but increase them. Thus such a person receives the same treatment as widows do. She settles the younger women. Thus Paul is referring to greedy, deceiving, wicked women, who have piled up things to their own profit and have neglected other people. (Martin Luther, "Lectures on 1 Timothy," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 28 [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1973], pp. 298-99)

If you want to fast and pray with Anna, that is all right. But first of all, emulate her character and then her works. First be like Anna. But let us see how Luke treats her works and her character [2:36-38], in order that we correctly understand her example. In the first place Luke says [v. 36] that she was a prophetess, without a doubt a saintly, pious prophetess. Assuredly the Holy Spirit was in her, and so she was good and justified without any work; her subsequent works were also good and justified. You see that St. Luke does not wish to say that she became pious and a prophetess through works, but that she was, first of all, a pious prophetess and that good works came into being through her. ... Now let us see what Anna signifies, if we look at her allegorically. Simeon, as mentioned above [Luke 2:25-35], signifies the holy prophets who speak of Christ in Holy Scripture; thus Anna must signify those who stand by and hear and confess the message and apply it to themselves, as Anna did, standing there as Simeon spoke of Christ. Accordingly, Anna is nothing else but the holy synagogue, the people of Israel, whose life and history are written in the Bible. For Anna is found in the temple, that is, in Holy Scripture. Just as Mary signifies Christendom, the people of God after the birth of Christ, so Anna signifies the people of God before the birth of Christ. Anna is old and over a hundred years of age, close to her death, while Mary is young and in the prime of life; the synagogue at the time of Christ was at its end and the church at its beginning. Thus the saints living before the birth of Christ understood the prophets and believed them and were all preserved in Christ and his faith, as indicated by Christ himself in John 8[:56] where he says of Abraham: "Abraham, your father, desired to see my day. He saw it, too, and rejoiced"; and again Luke 10[:24]: "Many prophets and kings desired to see what you see and to hear what you hear"; again St. Paul writes in Hebrews 13[:8]: "Christ is the same today and yesterday and forever"; and a lot clearer yet in I Corinthians 10[:1-4]: "You must know, dear brethren, that our fathers were under the cloud and that all went through the Red Sea; and all were baptized under Moses in the cloud and the sea, and ate this spiritual food and drank this spiritual drink; for they drank from the rock which followed them: and this rock is Christ." St. Luke used the word *epistasa* here [v. 37], that is, Anna "stood over," or "next to," or "at," such happenings as took place with Christ in the temple. ... She "stood over" what happened; this means the same as that she placed herself at the spot; with great effort she pressed herself to the spot, in order to see him... ...God has redeemed the fathers of old through his word and their faith, preserving them from sin and the power of the devil, as they looked toward the Christ to come; they are represented by saintly Anna. For this reason Anna does not take the child into her arms, as did Simeon [v. 28], neither does she say anything concerning him, as did Simeon [vv. 29-32], but she stands close by and speaks about him to others. For the dear fathers of old and the saints did not prophesy concerning Christ as did the prophets, nor did they say anything concerning him. But they watched and stood by with strong faith, when the prophets made their announcements, and they carried the message to other people and to their children's children, as Luke says here [v. 38] of Anna. All her characteristic traits agree with Luke's account. In the first place, she is a prophetess, that is, she has the understanding of the prophets. Thus all the saints of old understood Christ to be in the passages of Scripture, and consequently they were all prophets. In the second place, her name is Anna, which in Latin is *gratia*, meaning "favor" or "grace." ... Anna means gracious or she who is favorably and graciously inclined. This signifies that the fathers and saints of old did not have such faith and promise of God by their own merit, but by the favor and grace of God, in whose sight they were "gracious" because of his mercy. In the same fashion all men are acceptable and lovely, not on account of their worthiness, but only by God's mercy. (Martin Luther, "Sermon on the Gospel for the

Sunday after Christmas, Luke 2[:33-40]" [1521], *Luther's Works*, Vol. 52 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974], pp. 123, 125-29)

Old Anna made the testimony of her prophecy known to the listeners in the synagogue [cf. Luke 2:38]. She was old at the time of Christ's birth, but Mary was young, for she refers to [symbolizes] the new church. Anna means "God's grace and compassion." She knew nothing except to praise the God of her husband. (Martin Luther, Table Talk #5840; quoted in *Luther on Women* [edited by Susan C. Karant-Nunn and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks] [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003], p. 77)

...the papists...come to the word "disciples" [Matt. 26:26] and say he [Jesus] has given the Sacrament only to his disciples. I never heard of this. Read the Acts of the Apostles! There you will find that disciples are not only the apostles, but all who would believe in Christ. Therefore it is written, "Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha" (Acts 9:36). In the word "disciple" we are all included. The uneducated heads must blush, that even a woman is expressly called a disciple. And without a doubt women were also at the Last Supper, like Mary Magdalene, Martha and Johanna, and freely ate with him, after they cooked the Passover meal and paschal lamb. It does not say that he gave it to the apostles or the priests but to his disciples. Stand on this! The evangelists speak very differently of the disciples and the apostles. Disciples are also those who cling to Christ, not only the apostles. At Antioch they began to call the disciples *Christians* (Acts 11:26), but not at Jerusalem. There they are called pupils, *disciples of Jesus Christ*, and so it is to this very day. But as the name of Christian and disciple is intended for all people – men and women – so the text also applies to all of us. Because their argument does not hold water, they even abandon the text and say, "Christ has made priests here." ... From the words of the text you should therefore conclude: Christ gave his disciples bread and wine. Now ask: What is a *disciple*? If they say an apostle or a priest, let them prove it. No, everyone – man or woman – who has accepted Christ's teaching is Christ's disciple. For the Greek word *disciple* means *pupil*; disciples are those who are trained, taught and who let themselves be taught. (Martin Luther, "Palm Sunday Afternoon," *The 1529 Holy Week and Easter Sermons of Dr. Martin Luther* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999], pp. 42-43)

We regard the Calvinistic-Reformed as an irregular ($\alpha\nu\omega\mu\alpha\lambda\omega$) part of the church universal and as a very corrupted ecclesiastical body (*systema*) with which we must not practice fellowship of worship, least of all in celebrating the Lord's Supper, because with regard to it they tolerate no little corruption. (Valentin Ernst Loescher, *Unschuldige Nachrichten von alten und neuen theologischen Sachen* [1709], p. 293; quoted in C. F. W. Walther, *The True Visible Church* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1961], p. 19)