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# Christ's Ambassadors

A Confessional Perspective on the  
Missionary Office of the Church

KLAUS DETLEV SCHULZ



SOME MIGHT FIND THE ATTEMPT to interpret the Lutheran Confessions missiologically a dubious undertaking. After all, enough skeptics have raised their concerns against such an endeavor.<sup>1</sup> Some readers, however, will recall Werner Elert's famous defense of Reformation theology, and of Luther's thought in particular, when he pleads for an understanding of the more profound missionary structure of his theology, rather than to look to it for advice on how to run a missionary society.<sup>2</sup> This is precisely the point: Missiology as the so-called handmaiden to theology (*ancilla theologiae*) devotes a dominant part of its task to draw missiological insights from theological texts that are not explicit, but at first actually often seem quite worthless for missions. This approach has been adopted by missiologists for all major disciplines in theology where implicit references to missions in many texts and statements have to be brought to light by the method of deduction. It thus stands to reason that the Lutheran Confessions should not be exempted from a similar undertaking<sup>3</sup>—especially in view of the numerous successful attempts that have been made to highlight the inherent impetus and dynamic for mission work in Luther's theology.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, upon an investigation of the Lutheran Confessions, a multitude of theological ideas and reasoning emerge that prove invaluable for any Lutheran missiology.<sup>5</sup> Only a small part of this wealth can be highlighted in this essay as we confine ourselves to the task of establishing from the Lutheran Confessions the missionary obligation of the church as it culminates in the missionary office. May this brief perusal ease the intransigence of a few who seem to insist on the alternative of *either* confessional theology *or* mission theology, rather than recognizing a *both/and* relationship.

Before we commence with our examination itself, allow me to add that while it is true that the Lutheran Confessions address controversial issues during the Sixteenth Century and thus function as a *Notbuch* of sorts for specific situations, we may nonetheless note that their claim stretches beyond temporal and geographical confines. This can be demonstrated today all over the ecumenical world where former daughter churches, planted by Lutheran missionaries, in their quest towards independence have

officially subscribed to what the fathers confessed in the Sixteenth Century.<sup>6</sup> May this global *reditus ad confessionem* apply for all Lutheran mission endeavors, as reviews and examinations continue to extol the Lutheran Confessions' missiological value.

## THE UNIVERSAL GOSPEL AND THE MISSIONARY OBLIGATION OF THE CHURCH

The basic premise or window to a missiological reading of the Lutheran Confessions is the programmatic statement in the Preface to the Book of Concord where the fathers, united in their efforts to lay down foundational statements for the concord of the Lutheran Church, raise their vision universally and jointly profess "to do and to continue to do everything that is useful and profitable to the increase and expansion of God's praise and glory, to the propagation of that Word of his that alone brings salvation . . . and to the needed consolation and instruction of poor, misguided consciences."<sup>7</sup> What is foremost in the confessors' mind is the "propagation of the gospel" (*propagatio verbi ipsius*) among the spiritually poor and confused, which not only serves the purpose to counteract mendacious calumnies and religious controversies, but becomes above all a matter of bringing salvation. This joint accord with the universal propagation of God's word as it is believed and confessed provides the center stage for all further statements made in the individual confessions that corroborate, as well as provide further insight, into the confessors' unflinching commitment to the proliferation of God's word.

The obligation of the church to proclaim God's word is embedded in the soteriology of the Lutheran Confessions, that is, what is believed of the condition of mankind and how it is overcome by what Christ did for the world. His sacrificial death on the cross and the fallen state of the world are both confessed as universal and world-embracing events, which in turn accounts for the church's responsibility for the universal preaching of the gospel. The Third Article of the Augsburg Confession, "The Son of God," understands his suffering, death, and burial as "a sacrifice not only for original guilt but also for *all* actual sins of men" (AC III, 3; Tappert, 30). In Melancthon's article on justification in the Apology, Christ's sacrificial death "is a price and propitiation, for the sins of the whole world."<sup>8</sup> "After the whole world was subjected," Christ came and "took away the sin of the whole world" (Ap IV, 103; Tappert, 122). Therefore, while in the hamartiological motif of

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the Lutheran Confessions the whole world (*totus mundus*) is condemned under sin, Christ alone (*solus Christus*) is placed as its counterpart.

These reflections have also found a place in the Formula of Concord's article on election, in which the universal significance of the Christ event is demonstrated most clearly. For "it is not God's will that anyone should be damned but that all men should turn themselves to him and be saved forever" (FC SD II, 49; Tappert, 530). Christ "testifies to all men without distinction that God wants all men who are laden and burdened with sin to come to him" (FC SD XI, 70; Tappert, 627).

Within this universal framework of Christ's life and death, the Formula of Concord affirms the missionary obligation of the church. After the statement that the whole world has been subjected to sin and that the proclamation of repentance and the promise of the gospel extends "over all men" [*promissio evangelii est universalis*], the commission immediately follows that "Christ has commanded to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins in his name among all nations." In a series of biblical citations the Great Commission is underlined: "It is Christ's command that all in common to whom repentance is preached should also have this promise of the Gospel proclaimed to them (Luke 24:47; Mark 16:15)" (FC SD XI, 28; Tappert, 620-621).

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### ***A silent possession of doctrines or of the sacraments does not constitute the church.***

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If we move to Luther, the same can be said: From the promise of God's grace flows the missionary obligation of the church. In his Smalcald Articles under the title "The Gospel" we read: "God is surpassingly rich in his grace: First, through the spoken word, by which the forgiveness of sin . . . is preached to the whole world" (SA III, IV; Tappert, 310). In an even more graphic explanation of the Third Article in his Large Catechism, Luther joins the missionary proclamation with the gospel: "In order that this treasure might not be buried but put to use and enjoyed, God has caused the Word to be published and proclaimed, in which he has given the Holy Spirit to offer and apply to us this treasure of salvation. . . . Where he does not cause the Word to be preached and does not awaken understanding in the heart, all is lost" (LC II, 38, 43; Tappert, 415, 416). With this in mind Luther prays his famous mission prayer: "Dear Father, we pray Thee, give us thy Word, that the Gospel may be sincerely preached throughout the world" (LC III, 54; Tappert, 427).

Furthermore, world evangelization is not an impossible task to perform. Melancthon's world ecumenical and missionary perspective on the *sparsi per totum mundum* expresses a belief common to all the reformers that there are "true believers and righteous men scattered throughout the world" who are devoted to preaching the good news of Christ (Ap VII, 20; Tappert, 171; Ap VII, 10; Tappert, 170).<sup>9</sup> In this way mission becomes a concern of all

Christians, which Luther assigns to the *Gemeine* that has been gathered by the Holy Spirit and is used by him "to teach and preach the Word" (LC II, 53; Tappert, 417).<sup>10</sup>

The universal claim of the gospel therefore remains inseparable from what is said of the church. The precise nature of the church's mission is brought out in all clarity in the Augsburg Confession, which defines the church as the "assembly of saints" where "the Gospel is preached in its purity and the holy sacraments are administered according to the Gospel" within their midst (AC VII, 1; Tappert, 32). It is important to note here that when the mission of the church is referenced elsewhere in the Lutheran Confessions to the preaching of the gospel or of the word, the terms *gospel* and *word* are used as generic terms that embrace four basic forms: the actual proclamation of the word, baptism, holy communion, and absolution. Consequently, if we speak of the church's mission, we should single out its four basic forms, which originate in the institution and commandment of the crucified and resurrected Christ. The church faithfully commits her mission to the Lord by performing among unbelievers these four actions: preaching the word, baptizing, celebrating holy communion, and absolving the sins of contrite confessors.<sup>11</sup>

What is also implied here is that a silent possession of doctrines or of the sacraments does not constitute the church, but she actually exists where the actions of teaching, preaching, and distributing the sacraments to people are performed. For as Luther says in the Large Catechism, "Where Christ is not preached, there is no Holy Spirit to create, call, and gather the Christian church" (LC II, 45; Tappert, 416). Baptism and holy communion are therefore neither pious nor optional acts, but effective means of the universal salvific will of God "intended to awaken and confirm faith in those who use them" (AC XIII, 1; Tappert, 35). In, with, and under the church's preaching and the administration of the sacraments, the gathering of saints throughout the world takes place and the holy church of God is being built.

In view of this, mission belongs to the very essence of the church, particularly when one is mindful of the important Lutheran premise that the mission frontier runs right through the midst of the church, where faith in Jesus Christ meets unbelief. This is based on the definition of the church as the *corpus permixtum*, where "many false Christians, hypocrites, and even open sinners remain among the godly" (AC VIII, 1; Tappert, 33), as well as on the stark reality that also the believers are "daily under the dominion of the devil, who neither day nor night relaxes his effort to steal upon [them] unawares and to kindle in [their] heart unbelief" (LC I, 100; Tappert, 378).

Thus a well-advised approach for the church is that she should place her trust in the reality and the effectiveness of word and sacrament. They are not only the means to renew the faith of those who have forgotten it or become estranged from it, but also to awaken faith in those who have not yet heard it.<sup>12</sup> By implication, therefore, the church's goal in mission is not only to cater to her own needs, but also to keep her focus on the world. A church is a church of Christ insofar as she willingly submits herself to him and allows herself to be used as his instrument of proclaiming the gospel to the entire believing and unbelieving world. The activities of preaching and administering the sacraments are not a hindrance or impasse to the church's outreach but essential to the

divine mission in which she stands. In fact, the Lutheran Confessions' strongest argument for missions is that conversion occurs where the means of grace are preached and administered.<sup>13</sup>

#### THE MISSIONARY OFFICE AS THE CULMINATION OF THE CHURCH'S MISSION

At this juncture one should note, however, that further details in mapping out the missionary dimension of the entire church are absent from the Lutheran Confessions. If a mission scholar were to be on the lookout for the phrase "royal priesthood of all believers" to elevate every Christian's mission service beyond his personal witness and vocation to newer and higher levels, he would be sadly disappointed.<sup>14</sup> One may attribute this absence to the fact that—as already mentioned—the Lutheran Confessions are a *Notbuch* wherein not all aspects of the Lutheran belief have been given attention. After all, the Lutheran Confessions have nothing in common with the voluminous *Summa* of earlier and the *Systema* of later dogmaticians. More important, however, is the fact that the doctrine of the ordered office remains in the forefront of the confessors' minds, as will be shown later on.

Beforehand, though, it would be helpful briefly to address and explain those responsibilities that have actually been given to all believers. Melancthon establishes that the church retains "the right of electing and ordaining ministers" by divine right "when the bishops are heretics or refuse to administer ordination." "For wherever the church exists, the right to administer the Gospel also exists" (Tr 67, 72; Tappert, 331, 332).<sup>15</sup> In conjunction with this, Melancthon further concedes to the church—although restricted to an emergency situation (*casus necessitatis*)—that in certain situations "even a layman absolves and becomes the minister and pastor of another" (Tr, 67; Tappert, 331).

It is worthwhile to recall here Luther's application of this emergency situation to a mission setting. In his treatise *The Right and Power of a Christian Congregation or Community to Judge All Teaching and Call, Appoint, and Dismiss Teachers, Established and Proved from Scripture* of 1523, he establishes that if a Christian were to find himself alone in the midst of a heathen world, the *rite vocatus* is not applicable; and in such a case every Christian has the right and obligation to assume the preaching office and witness in those areas:

when he [the Christian] is in a place where there are no Christians, he needs no other call than the fact that he is a Christian, inwardly called and anointed by God; he is bound by the duty of brotherly love to preach to the erring heathens or nonchristians and to teach them the Gospel, even though no one call[ed] him to this work . . . In such circumstances the Christian looks, in brotherly love, upon the needs of poor perishing souls, and waits for no commission or letter from pope or bishop. For necessity breaks every law and knows no law; moreover, love is bound to help when there is no one else to help.<sup>16</sup>

Just as important, however, is Luther's defense of those rules applicable to a normal situation where ordinary circumstances prevail. If the Christian should find himself in a place where there are other Christians, the *rite vocatus* applies. The Christian is

obliged to stand back and assume the preaching office only upon the consent, choice, and call of the congregation.<sup>17</sup>

From the above an important question must be asked whether missions should be allowed to be reduced to the *missio extraordinarium* where Christians in remote and foreign areas single-handedly apply the call of the church to themselves and assume the duty to proclaim the gospel among the heathen. This cannot be the case. The missionary obligation of the church remains an unrelenting service to the universal call of the gospel (*vocatio universalis*), which cannot be left to erratic occasions or pure chance events when a Christian happens to find himself in an extraordinary situation. Nor may the mission of the church be

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### *The missionary obligation of the church remains an unrelenting service to the universal call of the gospel.*

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reduced to every Christian's private and personal witness. In view of this, the church responds to the divine call for mission in foreign places by calling and ordaining individuals into the preaching office. The words of the late Lutheran theologian Peter Brunner are instructive here:

Every Christian has been entrusted and ordered to the personal missionary witness in the surroundings of his home and in his civic sphere. But not every Christian is under the command to go to foreign parts of the world and apply all his physical and spiritual reserves to the service of the gospel among the heathen. Due to Christ's commission and for the sake of saving the lost, there must be those who will leave their home country as messengers of Christ and sacrifice all their strengths for the purpose of bringing the gospel to the heathen world. This missionary service may not be left to coincidence.<sup>18</sup>

As a result, the church not only places pastors in existing congregations, but also sends missionaries into those foreign lands where through the proclamation of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments churches are brought into existence. Contrary to the fallacy that with the end of the apostolic office organized mission work has been terminated as well, the church views the *ministerium verbi* as given to her in order to respond appropriately to the call for universal proclamation.<sup>19</sup> Just as Christ ordered his disciples to preach, teach, and baptize in remote heathen lands, so too the church applies the commission to her ministry by calling and sending individuals who in accordance with AC xiv will "publicly teach or preach and administer the sacraments" on a regular and consistent basis (AC xiv; Tappert, 36).<sup>20</sup>

This deeper and more concentrated meaning of the missionary obligation of the church is rooted in the Augsburg Confes-

sion itself. There, in the ordering of its individual articles, the inextricable connection between the gospel and the missionary obligation is truly apparent. For it is not without theological and missiological significance that the article on the office of the ministry follows that on justification and is situated before the article on the church: "In order that we may obtain this faith, the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments was instituted" (AC v, 1; Tappert, 31). The *propagatio verbi ipsius* is thus qualified in such a way that through the action of proclamation, the *viva vox evangelii*, and administering the sacraments by a man ordained into the office of the ministry, the Holy Spirit works the saving faith among those who hear the gospel. The emphasis on justification and the saving faith in turn rests upon the fact "that since the fall of Adam all men who are propagated according to nature are born in sin" and that the son of God, Jesus Christ, through his suffering, crucifixion, death, and burial became "a sacrifice not only for original guilt but also for all actual sins of men" (AC II, 1; Tappert, 29; and AC III, 3; Tappert, 30). This sequence lays out the divine plan of salvation, the so-called salvation history (*Heilsgeschichte*) in which the functions of the office of preaching and administering the sacraments become pivotal for the believing community, the church, as well as for all those who due to their unbelief still fall under the curse of sin.

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***By virtue of this regular call the  
missionary becomes the public  
servant of the church.***

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Therefore, the *ministerium verbi* or *ministerium ecclesiasticum* as it is formulated in Augsburg Confession v cannot be confined (as is often erroneously assumed) to the historic and institutionalized office of the pastor.<sup>21</sup> What stands out here is first of all the "functional, non-institutional nature of the ministry,"<sup>22</sup> which allows the *ministerium verbi* to be applied also to the missionary, who, just like the pastor, teaches, preaches publicly, and administers the sacraments. On the basis of these functions performed by the missionary, a "functional succession" exists between that of the missionary and the apostles (LC II, 45; Tappert, 416). Just as the apostles themselves were ministers by Christ's commission, so too the missionary will consider himself a representative of Christ by preaching, teaching, and administering the sacraments in his name and by his authority.<sup>23</sup> In contrast to the apostles, however, the missionary's office and the pastor's are mediately received through the *rite vocatus*, albeit *de jure divino*.<sup>24</sup>

By virtue of this regular call the missionary becomes the public servant of the church; and through his ministry of baptizing, preaching, and teaching he legitimately represents the church's mission in faraway regions. Accordingly, an individual's appeal to his inner vocation or baptism would not serve here as an adequate legitimation. For when all Christians assume responsibility for their private and personal missionary witness in their

surroundings and civil sphere, they cannot claim thereby to stand under the authority and universal call of the church to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments in foreign lands among the heathen. Instead, the church, in faithful response to Christ's commission, and to the urgent need of salvation for the lost, selects individuals as Christ's ambassadors. Thereby the missionary obligation is not left to pure chance or coincidence, when, for example, a businessman happens to find himself on a foreign trip among the heathen. In principle, all the services of any "self-chosen" missionary remain questionable unless the nature of his ministry comes out clearly, namely, that of being called and commissioned by the church for the pure proclamation of the gospel and the right administration of the sacraments.<sup>25</sup>

What goal does the church pursue in her calling, ordaining, and sending individuals as incumbents of *ministerium ecclesiasticum*? The answer lies in God's salvation plan itself, which is, as already mentioned, "to call men to eternal salvation, to draw them to himself, convert them, beget them anew, and sanctify them through this means and in no other way—namely, through his holy Word . . . and the sacraments" (FC SD II, 50; Tappert, 531). This divine goal of bringing people to faith coincides with the act of planting a church. The ecclesiocentric goal of God's mission is affirmed by Luther, namely, that through word and sacrament the Holy Spirit creates, calls, and gathers the Christian church.<sup>26</sup> Not only is the church the instrument in God's salvation plan, but it also becomes the end result or goal of his mission to the world. The church thus sends, calls, and ordains individuals with the purpose and goal to bring people to Christ and gather them into a community. The sequence described here is as follows: After the proclamation of the gospel, baptism will follow, and at the place where baptism occurs a church will come into being. Baptized Christians will congregate to worship and to celebrate the Lord's Supper for the first time.

Despite the difference between the missionary's and pastor's geographical locality, in that the missionary collects a flock of Christ through the means of grace and the pastor is placed in the midst of an already existing believing community, the missionary has in common with the pastor that he also will assume the responsibility of shepherding his recently baptized members. As shepherd of his young flock, the missionary, however, does not lose his status as messenger of the church, but he continues his missionary role in reaching out to the unbaptized in the immediate surrounding. Through the acts of preaching and teaching, the Holy Spirit remains with the holy community, strengthening and nourishing it, but also incorporating new members into it who were before "entirely of the devil, knowing nothing of God and of Christ" (LC II, 52; Tappert, 417).

Ultimately, therefore, both the missionary and the pastor, as legitimate incumbents of the *ministerium verbi divini*, nurture their respective flocks through word and sacrament, although the explicit "sent" character of the missionary's office persists in that the missionary continues to reach out to the lost within the vicinity of his church or eventually targets a completely new area where no churches have been planted before. From the sequence described above, one may surmise that the office of the pastor evolves from that of the missionary.<sup>27</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Let us briefly recall what has been previously established. The important passages in the Lutheran Confessions on the *ministerium verbi divini* cannot be restricted only to the office of the pastor. This would relegate the missionary office to the royal priesthood of all believers, and consequently raise doubts about its nature and sphere of duties. Rather, the office of the ministry is and must be referenced to the universal claim of the gospel and God's desire to save the lost. Since the church's mission is single and confined to the proclamation of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments, she calls individuals into the office so that the means of grace can be administered worldwide. Based on his call, ordination, and commission, the missionary legitimately carries out his church's mission.

***The missionary office is there by divine necessity and not by the church's choice.***

In light of this, an obvious rejoinder might be that the Lutheran Confessions propose a clericalization of the church's mission.<sup>28</sup> There is some truth to this. The missionary office is there by divine necessity and not by the church's choice. For it is obvious that as long as word and sacrament remain the instruments in the mission of the church, the services of called and ordained men remain indispensable and final. The intention of this study, however, was to argue for the role of the missionary office within the total missionary service of the church. Admittedly, the service of the laity was only briefly touched, but the fact that mission belongs to the entire church remained the underlying premise. Regrettably, though, dramatic shifts are taking place in certain mission circles which, due to an unfounded latitudinarianism, are threatening to erode the important Lutheran distinction between the missionary service of the laity and of the ordained.<sup>29</sup>

One should stress emphatically that an abandonment of the missionary office will also destroy a clear definition of the royal priesthood of all believers. For one of its marks is that it supports equality, which prohibits anyone from elevating himself over the other and assuming a self-chosen authority. The priesthood of believers exists only in view of what is *common* to all, and its survival will be guaranteed especially when a person is chosen from its midst, ordained, and set apart for the missionary service to the divine word.<sup>30</sup>

Any affront against the missionary office will have to deal with its scriptural and confessional support. But there is also the historical argument. The organized mission movement of confessional Lutheran churches in the nineteenth century indeed culminated in the sending of specially called and ordained individuals. While it is true that Lutheran missions undergo changes, one confessional and historical conviction remains unshakable: as long as the mission of the church is defined as the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments in a community surrounded by unbaptized unbelievers and in geographically remote areas, the church must continue to call and ordain men for missionary service.<sup>31</sup> **LOGIA**

## NOTES

1. The missiologist James Scherer, for example, passes the following verdict: "However, the Lutheran Confessions make no statements whatever about mission theology or practice," although it then seems somewhat ironic that he chose for his title a quote from Luther's explanation to the Second Petition in the Large Catechism. *That the Gospel May Be Sincerely Preached throughout the World. A Lutheran Perspective on Mission and Evangelism*. (LWF Report 11-12, 1982), 3.
2. Werner Elert, *The Structure of Lutheranism*, trans. Walter A. Hansen (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), 391.
3. Within the LCMS I can only recall one author who has undertaken a worthwhile investigation into the Lutheran Confessions from a missiological perspective, namely, the late Robert Preus in his essay "The Confessions and the Mission of the Church," *Springfielder* 39 (June 1975): 20-39.
4. Since some of Luther's writings are contained in the Lutheran Confessions, defenses of Luther's theology often make reference to the Lutheran Confessions, for example, Alfred Koschade, "Luther on Missionary Motivation," *Lutheran Quarterly* 17 (1965): 224-239.
5. The most serious attempt to date already goes back many years to Franz Wiebe's "Missionsgedanken in den lutherischen Bekenntnisschriften," in *Lutherisches Missionsjahrbuch für das Jahr 1955*, edited by Walter Ruf (Neuendettelsau: Selbstverlag der Bayerischen Missionskonferenz, 1955): 15-71. I also refer to my dissertation, *The Missiological Significance of the Doctrine of Justification in the Lutheran Confessions* (Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1995).
6. It is quite astonishing that the Lutheran Church of Southern Africa (LCSA), which subscribed to the Lutheran Confessions in 1967, continues to include in its seminary's curriculum the history of the confessional Lutheran churches so as to kindle greater appreciation among the students for their confessional background and heritage. Also noteworthy is how the Batak-Church of Indonesia (HCBP), in order to qualify as a Lutheran Church, compiled in 1951 her own confessions, which included the positive affirmations of the Augsburg Confession, whereas its condemnations were contextualized against Islam, Roman Catholics, Adventists, and other contemporary religious groups.
7. Tappert, 13. See also the essay by Walter Meyer-Roscher, "Die Bedeutung der lutherischen Bekenntnisschriften für die gegenwärtige ökumenische Diskussion," *Lutherisches Missionsjahrbuch für das Jahr 1966* (Nürnberg, 1966): 19-34.
8. German text of Ap IV, lines 8-11: "Der Verdienst Christi aber ist der Schatz; denn es muß ein Schatz und edles Pfand sein, dadurch die Suende aller Welt bezahlt sein" (BSLK, 171).
9. The German text is far more descriptive of the "catholic church": "nämlich daß etliche Gottes Kinder sind hin und wider in aller Welt, in allerlei Königreichen, Inseln, Ländern, Städten vom Aufgang der Sonnen bis zum Niedergang, die Christum und das Evangelium recht erkannt haben" (BSLK 238, lines 45-50). Melancthon's idea of the "ecclesia per totum orbem dispersa" should be seen in light of the unity between the gospel and mission, in the sense that the gospel takes its unstoppable course into all regions of the world through the preaching and life of the church as it spreads globally. This concept is elementary to Luther's theology as well, and is later succinctly captured in Wilhelm Löhe's famous quotation: "For mission is nothing but the one church of God in motion, the actualization of the one universal church." Wilhelm Löhe, *Three Books about the Church*, trans. and ed. James L. Schaaf (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 69.
10. See also LC II, 61 (Tappert, 419). In using the terms *heilige Gemeinde* and *Christenheit* for his ecclesiology, Luther corroborates the expansive and universal ecclesiology of Melancthon's term *sancta catholica ecclesia*. Both join hands with the term *Gemeinschaft* or *Gemeine der Heiligen*. See also Ap VII, 8 (Tappert, 169) and LC II, 49 (Tappert, 417).
11. Ap XIII, 3-5 (Tappert, 211). The church cannot abandon any of these four actions in her missionary task. For as Wilhelm Maurer says, "There is no distinction in rank between preaching and administering the sacraments." *Historical Commentary on the Augsburg Confession*, trans. H. George Anderson (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 360. Thereby Lutheran mission, broadly speaking, finds itself between two Protestant mission movements. The evangelicals, on the one side, nar-



row the mission of the church down to only one of the gospel's forms, evangelization, and the ecumenical-conciliar movement on the other side, with a holistic understanding of missions, embellishes the church's mission with other concerns. It should be added, though, that there is no unanimity over the meaning of mission within these mission movements themselves. See David Bosch, *Transforming Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 389–400.

12. See *Together in God's Mission: A LWF Contribution to the Understanding of Mission* (Hannover/Neuendettelsau, 1988), 27.

13. "That the church's mission is single and confined to the proclamation of the Gospel and administration of the sacraments is clear . . . in our Confessions" (Preus, 30).

14. The classical Lutheran illustration of a Christian's missionary service is done by means of the triangle of three responsibilities: The responsibility (1) to confess and witness the word (1 Pt 2: 9; Phl 4–7); (2) to respond to his vocation in the secular world (Mt 5: 13–16; 1 Pt 2: 12); and (3) to assist in the *diakonia* of the church (Lk 10: 25–37).

15. See also the similar argumentation employed by Luther in his SA III, x on "Ordination and Vocation" (Tappert, 314).

16. *Works of Martin Luther*, Philadelphia Edition, 6 vols. (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1915–1932; reprint Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1982, 4: 80).

17. *Ibid.*, 4: 82. This important reservation is often left out in missiological writings, which quote only the first half. See Werner Raupp, ed., *Mission in Quellentexten* (Erlangen: Verlag der Evang.-Luth. Mission. Bad Liebenzell, 1990), 16.

18. Peter Brunner, "Das Heil und das Amt," in *PRO ECCLESIA* (Berlin und Hamburg: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1966), 1: 293–309, especially p. 303.

19. An explanation for the reformers' reluctance to support an organized overseas mission enterprise demands closer attention than this essay can offer. A few reasons must suffice here. There were those based on historical grounds: (1) The landlocked state of most Protestant countries; and (2) the dominance and control of church life by territorial churches made foreign missions almost impossible. (3) The numerous duties and obligations of the reformers within Europe allowed for no further commitments such as overseas mission. But there was also a theological reason: (4) Luther and all his followers believed that the apostolic office and the mandate for foreign missions had ceased. This belief must be understood in its context. Every Christian, however, was called to missionary witness even among the Turks when required to do so. See Raupp, 13.

20. It would have been helpful if Robert J. Scudieri had offered further insights into this question, beyond the truism he asserts that the church confessed as "apostolic" continues to do missions. *The Apostolic Church: One, Holy, Catholic and Missionary* (Lutheran Society for Missiology, 1996). Unanswered remains the important question whether all Christians are now called to perform the functions of baptizing, teaching, and preaching. I have already provided the answer in part from Melancthon and Luther that such can only be the case under the emergency situation (*casus necessitatis*), which falls away when a Christian finds himself in the midst of others as well as in the context of an ordered sending of individuals by the church through her mission societies. This must be said especially in answer to the call of the *Mission Blueprint* of the LCMS for "a clear and accurate portrayal of the nature of ordained and lay leadership in the church." *Mission Blueprint for the Nineties: A Report* (The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, April 16, 1991), 19.

21. August Kimme thus observes: "Hat man diesen Artikel erst einmal von seiner kirchlichen Verengung befreit, so entdeckt ihn als den Missionsartikel der lutherischen Reformation," "Kirche und ihre Sendung," in *Lutherische Beiträge zur Missio Dei* (Erlangen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), 100. This must be said in view of the total gospel ministry, which to Wilhelm Maurer also includes in AC v the common priesthood of all believers: "The preaching office does not exclude the general priesthood," 355. The royal priesthood's duty within the mission of the church, however, has been noticeably confined by David J. Bosch, 137–138 (also 168), who concludes his exegetical research on the Pauline letters as follows: "The missionary dimension of the conduct of the Pauline Christians remains implicit rather than explicit. They are, to

employ a distinction introduced by Hans-Werner Gensichen, 'missionary' (*missionarisch*) rather than 'missionizing' (*missionierend*). References to specific cases of direct missionary involvement by the churches are rare in Paul's letters. But this is not just seen as a deficiency. Rather, Paul's whole argument is that the attractive lifestyle of the small Christian communities gives credibility to the missionary outreach in which he and his fellow workers are involved. The primary responsibility of 'ordinary' Christians is not to go out and preach, but to support the mission project through their appealing conduct and by making 'outsiders' feel welcome in their midst."

22. Preus, 23.

23. These apostolic duties also continue with the *ministerium verbi*, AC xxviii, 5 (Tappert, 81–82), also Tr 9, 31 (Tappert, 321, 325). Peter Brunner correctly elucidates: "From the principles of the Lutheran Reformation there can be no doubt that the missionary who was sent to a certain land with foreign tribes by a church which is gathered around the apostolic gospel and the correctly administered sacraments, is a legitimate representative of Christ's messengers." "Vom Amt des Bischofs," in *PRO ECCLESIA* (Berlin und Hamburg: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1966), 1: 281.

24. AC xiv (Tappert, 36). The distinction between the apostle Paul and the missionary and pastor is, however, not as clear-cut. For despite his immediate call by Christ, the ecclesial character of the apostle's office lies in the fact that he too in all humbleness let himself be sent by a church and received from her his office, to which he held himself accountable (Acts 13: 3). See Georg F. Vicedom, *Die Rechtfertigung als gestaltende Kraft der Mission* (Neuendettelsau: Freimund Verlag, 1952), 10.

25. See here Walter Holsten, "Die lutherische Kirche als Träger der Sendung," in *Das Wort und die Völker der Erde. Beiträge zum lutherischen Verständnis der Mission* (Uelzen: Niedersächsische Buchdruckerei, 1951), 14.

26. LC 11, 45 (Tappert, 416). Shortly before, Luther explains: "In other words, he [the Holy Spirit] first leads us into his holy community, placing us upon the bosom of the church, where he preaches to us and brings us to Christ" (LC 11, 37; Tappert, 415).

27. Brunner, "Das Heil und das Amt," 1: 304.

28. See, for example, Bosch, 467–474: "It is true that Luther is to be credited with the rediscovery of the notion of the 'priesthood of all believers' . . . In the end, he still had the clergyman at the center of his church, endowed with considerable authority" (469).

29. A general consensus prevailed among mission circles on the definition of the missionary. An acceptable definition was supplied, for example, at the WCC's Seventh Assembly in New Mexico: "The missionary is a servant of the church, who leaves his own culture, to proclaim the Gospel in partnership with the Church if already present or with the intention to plant a church where it has not been planted before." See Peter Beyerhaus, "Missionar 1. (EV.)," in *Lexikon Missionstheologischer Grundbegriffe*, ed. Karl Müller and Theo Sundermeier (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1987), 278. Sadly, this definition has been abandoned by the World Area Secretaries of the LCMS Board for Mission Services, who now jointly operate missions with their own interpretation of the missionary: "Someone sent for a time, with authority, to empower others for ministry," *Missio Apostolica* 2 (November 1994): 66. The reason for this may lie in their heightened attempt to mobilize the laity for missions.

30. Leif Grane, *Die Confession Augustana* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980), 62.

31. This must also be said in view of the presence of Lutheran churches on all continents of the world, some of which the missionaries may serve to realize their goal of "self-missionizing." But it is the identification of "unreached people groups" or "hidden people" who have been for either linguistic, social, or political reasons untouched by the Christian message, which has led to a resurgence in cross-cultural missionaries being sent by evangelical mission organizations. The same can be said of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Mission Board, which has also made the targeting of unreached people groups its foremost priority in overseas missions. See *The Mission Blueprint for the Nineties: A Report* (The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, April 16, 1991), 10.