

Church and Ministry

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The Collected Papers of
The 150th Anniversary Theological Convocation
of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Edited by Jerald C. Joerz and Paul T. McCain

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Jesus Washing Peter's Feet by Ford Madox Brown.
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SOLI DEO GLORIA

IN COMMEMORATION OF
THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Keynote Address

Challenges in Church and Ministry in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

A.L. Barry 1

Presentation I

God's Character and the Calling of God's People: Contextual Relations

Dean Wenthe 25

Response by Jeffrey Gibbs 59

Response by Arleigh Lutz 68

Presentation II

The Office of the Pastoral Ministry: Scriptural and Confessional Considerations

John Johnson 77

Response by Kurt Marquart 100

Response by William Diekelman 113

Presentation III

The Pastor: God's Servant for God's People

James Kalthoff 123

Response by Leopoldo Heimann 163

Response by Diethardt Roth 168

Response by Richard Warneck 177

CONTENTS

Presentation IV

Contemporary Issues Regarding the Universal Priesthood

Raymond Hartwig	185
Response by Masao Shimodate	219
Response by Edward Kettner	225
Response by Cameron MacKenzie	233

Commentators' Responses to the Convocation

Paul Kofi Fynn	241
J.A.O. Preus III	246
Lance G. Steicke	253
George Wollenburg	261

FOREWORD

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—Missouri Synod's 150th Anniversary, the faculties of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, together with the district presidents and vice-presidents of our Synod and the Synod's Commission on Theology and Church Relations, attended a theological convocation devoted to the topic of the doctrines of Church and Ministry, specifically the doctrine of the Office of the Holy Ministry and the doctrine of the royal Priesthood of all Believers.

What made this event unique was the fact that it was scheduled shortly after the International Lutheran Council (ILC) met here in the United States. Thus, we were privileged to have as participants in our convocation the leaders of all of our partner churches around the world, as well as leaders from a number of other Lutheran churches who had gathered for the ILC meeting. Our partner churches were invited to send one theologian from their church body. Hence, the convocation took on a most welcome international flavor, as we were able to listen to the reaction of many of our friends from around the world to issues of concern to our church. Their participation in this conference was extremely beneficial to us and very much appreciated.

One of the most important goals of this convocation was that it not simply be an end in itself, that is, a convocation for the sake of having a convocation. Instead, the publication of the papers as a book, along with a study guide, was considered an essential aspect of this effort. I would like to encourage the pastors of our church to study these essays carefully and then to lead their congregations in a study and discussion of these important issues.

— Dr. A.L. Barry

Presentation III

**THE PASTOR:
GOD'S SERVANT FOR GOD'S PEOPLE**

Dr. James Kalthoff, President
The Missouri District
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

SEVERAL MONTHS AGO, DR. A.L. BARRY, PRESIDENT of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, began the publication of a newsletter to pastors of the Synod's congregations. He named it *The Noble Task*, taking as his key the New International Version's translation of 1 Tim. 3:1: "Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task."

Those who hold the Office of the Holy Ministry have a "noble task." However, it may not seem so "noble" today—especially since pastors no longer enjoy the status and public image they once had. The "noble task" has become tarnished by the "disinformation" of the world's media and by the public sins and foibles of many famous, as well as not-so-famous persons holding the Office.

At the risk of understatement, I honestly believe that being a pastor in our day in America is one of the most challenging, yet undervalued vocations among most people in our country. The range of duties is nearly astounding as we examine them closely. The prestige that the Office of the Holy Ministry once had is long gone. Joseph Stowell has observed:

A brief look at American history reminds us that in the early days of our country, it was the local minister who held the highest level of prestige. He not only pastored the church, but also served as a teacher of the school and as such was looked at as the prime authority in the community. We no longer hold that status. The secularization of our culture has devalued the position of spiritual leadership to that of a civil servant for marriage and funerals, to be little more than the local holy man who basically deals in nonessentials and irrelevancies. Just watch the surveys of the most prestigious positions in America, and you'll note that clergy never even make the list. Add to this the growing cynicism toward our kind from our self-inflicted wounds of public failure and you begin to understand why we are so marginalized in terms of influence.¹

A pastor today is faced with ministry to a group of multigenerational persons who are divided not only by age, but also by attitudes, lifestyle, and personal preferences.

Stowell has written in this regard:

When my grandparents passed the torch of their generation on to my parents, and when my parents passed the torch of their generation to me, there were some differences, but nothing major. We sang the same hymns, worshiped in the same forms, lived in a similar social setting, and basically affirmed the same perspectives regarding lifestyle and mind-set. As I am passing the torch of my generation on to my children, I am very much aware (and sometimes painfully so) of what a phenomenal difference there is between my generation and theirs. The gap, or should we say the "gulf," is measured in musical styles and preferences, perceptions of truth, perspectives on material goods, purity, commitment, and a host of other issues. This makes doing church in our day a far more difficult task. Take, for instance, the phenomenal upheaval in terms of ministering to people through music. The continuum is broad from people who are comfortable worshiping through the forms of traditional church music to others who have no identity with that form but whose cultural context is more in tune with contemporary styles of worship—idioms resembling the music that they have been brought up with

and have learned to relate to. If you're a pastor I don't have to convince you about the struggle.

Churches are full of older folks, middle folks, boomers, busters, and teenagers. Teenagers and young adults have grown up in a fractured, video-oriented society where there is little tolerance for cognitive contemplation. A world where deep-seated needs for experience, involvement, and sound bites drive the nature of both their existence and expectations. And then there are the older folks who just want it the way it's always been.²

Yet, despite the decline in prestige and the complexity of serving multigenerations, the expectations of congregational members for the person holding the Office of the Public Ministry have never been higher. I have found in my personal ministry as a district president that many times I am called upon to be a peacemaker between a pastor and leaders of a congregation who are extremely dissatisfied with the pastor's leadership and performance. The congregations expect vibrant, dynamic leadership that will prove itself with the evidence of a congregation's growth in membership, in worship attendance, in the offerings, and in community influence.

As a result of such expectations, pastors feel they are being pulled in so many directions that they feel stressed out and inadequate for what was thought of as "the noble task." Not measuring up to expectations, many of them fall under harsh criticism by their members. Then comes discouragement.

Not too long ago, I had a pastor in my office who wanted to receive a call elsewhere because, in part, his congregation's leadership wanted a more vibrant and visionary pastor with the preaching skills of a Billy Graham and the corporate skills of a CEO. Many of the leaders were of the opinion that the pastor did little or no work and could never be found when wanted or needed. Their congregation was declining in membership, yet they were in an area of fast population growth. Key supporters were leaving and

the offerings were dwindling at a fast pace. The pastor admitted he did not have the gifts and abilities they were requesting. He felt he was gifted in preaching, teaching, visiting the sick, and counseling, but was not very good in administration and also lacked visionary leadership. We add his name to those whom President Barry spoke of yesterday when he said: "We have a bundle of disheartened, downtrodden pastors out there. They crave . . . encouragement."³

The discouraged feelings of a great number of our pastors engaged in "the noble task" is due in part, I believe, to the severe judgment from parishioners who feel the pastors have not fulfilled the "expectations" of the congregation. A few years ago, Fred Kling, a minister in the Presbyterian Church U.S.A., did an analysis of statements about clergy expectations from six major denominations. The expectations of "the noble task" were these, although not in the order of priority:

1. Maps out objectives and plans the overall church strategy and program
2. Teaches and works directly with children
3. Leads public worship
4. Ministers to the sick, dying, and bereaved
5. Counsels with people facing the major decisions of life—marriage, vocations
6. Fosters fellowship at church gatherings
7. Teaches and works directly with young people
8. Talks with individuals about their spiritual development
9. Visits new residents and recruits new members
10. Supplies ideas for new activities and projects
11. Works with congregational boards and committees
12. Recruits, trains, and assists lay leaders and teachers
13. Manages the church office—records, correspondence, information center
14. Preaches sermons
15. Follows a definite schedule of reading and study
16. Promotes and creates enthusiasm for church activities

THE PASTOR

17. Maintains a disciplined life of prayer and personal devotion
18. Cooperates with social, legal, medical, and educational workers
19. Helps manage church finances
20. Administers Baptism and Communion; conducts weddings and other sacred rites
21. Participates in denominational activities
22. Teaches and works directly with adults
23. Counsels with people about their moral and personal problems
24. Cultivates his or her home and personal life
25. Participates in community projects and organizations
26. Mixes socially to develop contacts
27. Maintains harmony, handles troublemakers, averts or resolves problems
28. Assists victims of social neglect and injustice
29. Speaks to community and civic groups
30. Visits regularly in the homes of the congregation.⁴

Thus ends the list. When we survey all these expectations, do they not make our heads swim? Is it a wonder that we have a high rate of burnout among clergy today? Is it little wonder that fewer men in our Synod desire to train for the Ministry?

Some time ago, I was talking with a son of one of our pastors. I asked him why he had not followed in the footsteps of his father into the Ministry. He quickly replied: "When I saw the demands made on my father's time and the continual onslaught of 'alligators' in the congregation taking him to task, I knew I couldn't take it!"

There can be no doubt that the Office of the Holy Ministry is one of high demands, duties, and expectations. The purpose of this essay is to allow the Scriptures, Lutheran Confessions, and the teaching of our church fathers to help us evaluate and supply God-given duties and expectations of the one who holds the Office of the Public Ministry. In this presentation, we shall also take a look

at some misunderstandings and misconceptions of both clergy and laity concerning the task, responsibilities, duties and expectations of this office. My hope is that this examination will also help alleviate some of the excessive pressure our pastors feel because of inappropriate expectations on the part of many of today's congregation members. I also have a goal to help God's "royal priesthood" grow in their respect for those who are "the called and ordained servants of the Word" and to have our pastors better understand what is being billed in our day as "the ministry of the laity."

The Pastor, Called to Be God's Servant Jesus, the Pastor's Pattern for Servanthood

For our purposes we will begin with the New Testament's concept of the Ministry, which begins with Christ as teacher and pattern. One mother's expectations for her sons entering the Ministry presents us with an antithesis. Matthew, Mark and Luke tell us about the time when the mother of James and John came to Jesus with the request that "one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your Kingdom" (Matt. 20:21). This brought some indignation from the other disciples. Jesus uses this as an opportunity to teach. He says,

You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many (Matt. 20:25–28).

At another time, on the night of His betrayal and before the Passover meal, Jesus wrapped a towel around Himself and washed His disciples' feet. The disciples, especially Peter, simply could not understand why the Lord would demean Himself to do what a

household slave was supposed to do for guests. Putting aside the basin and towel, Jesus teaches them the concept of ministry as servanthood. Listen to His words from John's gospel:

Do you understand what I have done for you? . . . You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them (John 13:12-17).

An Office of Servanthood

The pastor is called into the Office of the Public Ministry. We could call it "the office of public servanthood," for that is what the word "Ministry" means. Shortly after Jesus' Ascension, Peter suggests that it was time to elect a replacement for Judas, whom he described as being "one of our number and shared in this ministry" (*diakonia*, service; Acts 1:17). The apostles designate their task as being engaged in "prayer and the Ministry (*diakonia*) of the Word" (Acts 6:4). St. Paul wrote to Timothy: "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the Ministry" (*diakonia*; 1 Tim. 1:12 NKJV).

It is interesting to note that the word *diakonia*, etymologically, means "through the dust." Originally, it could well have connoted the activity of a household slave or servant in ancient times who hastily moved back and forth across the dirt floors to serve his or her master or who at least ran errands through dusty streets for the master. Closely connected to the word *diakonia*, is the word *doulos* or "slave." The apostle Paul presents himself to the Roman Christians as a "slave" of Jesus Christ. To the world this was a demeaning title, but to him it was an honorable one.

A servant serves another. A pastor is first and foremost a servant of God. It is God who has called him into service. He is one “under orders” from God and his responsibility to God outweighs every other consideration.

Various Views of the Pastor’s Servanthood

Currently among the Lutheran denominations in America, we have approximately three views concerning how a pastor’s “servanthood” is lived out through his call from God.

There is first of all what could be called “the functional view” of the Office of the Public Ministry. In this view the Ministry is seen as a logical outgrowth from the doctrine of the Priesthood of all Believers. The Augsburg Confession’s statement, “God instituted the Office of the Ministry, that is, provided the Gospel and the Sacraments” (AC V, 1) is taken to mean that the Office does not flow from Christ’s command, but from the needs of the church to proclaim the Gospel and administer the Sacraments in an orderly manner. Not Christ, but the church has established various and equal offices to administer the Gospel and the Sacraments in the congregation. The offices of pastor, teacher, director of Christian education, deaconess, etc., have been established by the church for reasons of expediency. This view has led the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod into the practice of “ordaining” teachers as well as pastors. They see pastors and teachers as having different but equal functions of ministry for the purpose of dispensing the Means of Grace. This is not the view of the Ministry of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, but occasionally one does find some aspects of it among its clergy and laity.

The second view of the Ministry I choose to call “the aristocratic.” According to this view, Christ has established an apostolic office and order, which exists alongside the congregation being served. In our circles, the best-known persons who are generally

thought of as holding this view were J.A.A. Grabau and Wilhelm Löhe. Conrad Bergendoff has stated, for example, that Löhe taught the “autonomy of the Ministry, speaking of the divine rite of the order which did not come from the Priesthood of all Believers but was constituted by Christ, maintained itself in a ministerial succession, and existed parallel with the congregation it served.”⁵

The third view of the Office of the Holy Ministry is what I call “the conferral view.” It was the one held by C.F.W. Walther and is the official public doctrine of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

In 1852, Walther authored his well-known book *Kirche und Amt*, translated into English as *Church and Ministry*. In it he presented nine theses concerning the church and ten theses regarding the Office of the Public Ministry. The first three theses on the Ministry strongly upheld the divine institution of the Office. In his first thesis, he states: “The Holy Preaching Office or the Pastoral Office is an office distinct from the Priesthood of all Believers.”⁶ The second thesis offers further clarification: “The Preaching Office or the Pastoral Office is not a human institution but an office that God Himself has established.”⁷ We quickly see this as an obvious rejection of the functional view of the Ministry, which was mentioned earlier. The third thesis focused on the congregation’s duty to establish this God-instituted office in its midst: “The Preaching Office is not an arbitrary office, but one whose establishment has been commanded to the church and to which the church is ordinarily bound till the end of time.”⁸

In thesis four, Walther rejects the “the aristocratic view” of the Ministry. He says: “The Preaching Office is not a special or, in opposition to that of ordinary Christians, a more holy state, as was the Levitical priesthood, but it is an office of service.”⁹

Thesis seven reveals how the Office is conferred. “The Holy Preaching Office is the power, conferred by God through the con-

gregation, as the possessor of the priesthood and all church power, to exercise the rights of the spiritual priesthood in public office in the name of the congregation.”¹⁰

Thesis eight states that the Pastoral Office is the one office instituted by God and affirms that all other offices in the church stem from it. “The Preaching Office is the highest office in the church, and from it stem all other offices in the church.”¹¹ He goes on to say,

Every other public office in the church is part of the Ministry of the Word or a helping office that supports the Preaching Office. . . . Therefore, the offices of Christian day-school teachers . . . and others are all to be regarded as ecclesiastical and sacred, for they take over a part of the one church office and support the Preaching Office.¹²

In thesis nine, Dr. Walther shows the extent of the authority of the Public Ministry.

To the Preaching Office there is due respect as well as unconditional obedience when the pastor uses God’s Word. But the minister must not tyrannize the church. He has no authority to introduce new laws or arbitrarily to establish adiaphora or ceremonies. He has no right to inflict and carry out excommunication without his having first informed the whole congregation.¹³

Thus we see that Walther, and we believe rightly so, walked the middle road between the functional and the aristocratic view, while maintaining and upholding the doctrine of the universal Priesthood of all Believers. Walther wanted to assert the Scriptures’ teachings concerning both the Ministry and the Priesthood. This view, supported by the writings of Luther and the orthodox Lutherans, has been adopted by the majority of Lutheran bodies in North America today.

Controversy Regarding the Various Concepts of Ministry

Controversy over the Office of the Holy Ministry erupts from time to time among us whenever we see an upsurge of either the functional or the aristocratic view of the Ministry. We see the functional view causing controversy, for example, in “team” ministry. As a district president, I have had to deal with situations where auxiliary offices such as “director of Christian education” (or DCE, in popular terminology) were held to be a Ministry of the Word, slightly different, but parallel to and equal with the Pastoral Office. To cite a similar incident not involving a “called” worker, a Sunday school superintendent in a local congregation resented the “interference” of the pastor because she felt he was keeping her from fulfilling the duties of this congregational office. Or in another instance the “minister of music” was perturbed at the pastor for informing her that a piece of music she had selected was not proper because it contained doctrinal error and therefore told her she could not use it. “The pastor needs to keep his nose in his own business and out of mine! He has his duty and I have mine!”

Dr. Edwin Lehmann, former president of the Lutheran Church—Canada recently wrote the following in a paper that he presented to the Alberta-British Columbia District church workers conference:

On the surface, the controversy over whether the Ministry is primarily a function or an office is of little relevance to those who are not pastors. In reality, however, it has many implications. It would be easy for teachers, directors of evangelism, even assistant pastors, to think that a functional understanding of the Ministry would be to their advantage. After all, they perform certain functions; in many cases, functions the pastor is not well qualified to carry out. There is, however, a dangerous downside to this line of thinking. Whenever our worth or legitimacy depends on the things we are able to do, we are setting ourselves up for disastrous consequences when either we are not able to do something as well as we would like, or

someone else comes on the horizon who can do it better. Where is our legitimacy then? Much better to grant that a pastor has worth because of who he is: God's called servant—regardless of how well he can carry out certain functions. Much better to grant that a teacher or a deaconess or a director of Christian outreach or a director of parish services, or an assistant pastor, for that matter, have worth and legitimacy because of what God has made and called them to be, rather than what they are able to do. One does not have to be a "head pastor" to be instrumental in sharing the Gospel. One does not even have to be a pastor to have a legitimate vocation. Luther's reminder is very appropriate: "Although we are all equally priests, we cannot all publicly minister and teach. We ought not do so even if we could."¹⁴

In this same presentation Dr. Lehmann remarks:

The fact that a significant proportion of the laity, and a growing number of other full-time church workers have been influenced by the functional understanding [of Ministry] may well be a contributing factor in the conflicts between pastors and people, and among members of multiple staff in a congregation.¹⁵

When the aristocratic view of the Ministry intrudes into a congregation's life—controversy also soon follows. Who of us has not experienced this? Here is a new pastor who comes into a congregation and immediately, without any consultation with or permission from the congregation or its officers, begins to change everything around—from the type of worship the congregation is used to, to the placement of the baptismal font. After all, he is the pastor and in charge of these things too! The thinking of such pastors is that whatever they say and do is necessarily right because they have a divine call and thus their opinions are to be heeded, no matter what the issue might be. He can even give orders in matters the church has always considered to be *adiaphora*. After all, "*Ich bin Herr Pastor!*" "I am lord pastor!"

One of the controversies that a few district presidents of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod have encountered involves a certain concept connected with this “aristocratic view” of the Office of the Public Ministry. A number of them have reported instances where pastors have made statements to the effect that whenever they are serving before the altar they should be looked upon as being “the ecclesiastical embodiment of Christ.” When a pastor is serving before the altar, it is sometimes said, he “becomes the Christ.”

How do we respond to something like this? The Office of the Holy Ministry was instituted by Christ. Pastors are called to speak God’s Word. In fact, in the church there ought to be not only respect for, but also complete obedience to, the pastor when he relays God’s message. Every sermon he gives should not be, “This is what I think!” but rather, “This is what God has said.” Over Christian radio broadcasts we often hear the disclaimer: “The views and opinions of this program do not necessarily reflect the views of this station.” Such disclaimers should never be thought of in connection with a pastor’s sermon.

The pastor is to relay only God’s message. But the pastor does not become Christ as he serves in the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. He does not have any authority in the congregation besides that of the Word, certainly no authority apart from the Word. And if he would leave the Office of the Public Ministry, nothing would set him apart from any other Christian. Concerning this Luther has written:

And he who has not such an office is not a priest because of his office but a servant of 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.¹⁶

Holy Scripture teaches that pastors represent Christ. This is clearly the view of the apostle Paul who wrote: "We are therefore Christ's ambassadors" (2 Cor. 5:20). An "ambassador" is a person who represents something or someone else, *e.g.*, a nation, a king, a president. While this expression can be misapplied, what it says is clear in context.

Our Lutheran Confessions likewise teach that pastors represent Christ. Dr. William Weinrich has written:

In the Apology, in the article "On the Church," Melancthon discusses the question of the validity of the Sacrament administered by unworthy ministers. He writes that Sacraments administered by such ministers are true Sacraments because "they do not represent their own persons but the person of Christ, because of the Church's call, as Christ testifies, 'He who hears you hears me'" (Luke 10:16). The reference to Luke 10 makes it virtually certain that the confessor thought of the minister as the voice of Christ rather than any kind of physical image of the Savior. In the words of the minister one hears the words of Christ, and therefore, the one who hears must receive in faith the very spoken words of the minister.¹⁷

This particular confessional truth needs clarification at the present time. In relation to this, another writer has remarked: "We Lutherans should know from the Lord's Supper controversies that there is a big difference between saying that a pastor represents Christ to the congregation and saying he is Christ to the congregation."¹⁸

It is time for us to put a halt to this kind of careless and very misunderstood description that some of our pastors have been appropriating to themselves! Again, they represent Christ; they do not become Christ when they are carrying out the duties of their office. Jesus Christ is Lord, but His servants do not appropriate to themselves that title or even seek that kind of recognition. On Paul's first missionary journey, he healed a crippled man. The mir-

acle created quite a stir among the locals. They brought forward a priest of Zeus to offer sacrifices to the missionaries! “Men, why are you doing these things?”, Paul cried. “We are only men, human beings like you” (Acts 14:15 EB). They did not see themselves as in some way having become, in that moment, the Divinity they served, but rather mere men, just like everyone else. Likewise, it is true of pastors today, they represent Christ, it is true, but they are men, like everyone else in every way.

God’s Servant, Not a People Pleaser

The pastor is called to be God’s servant. He is not called to be a people-pleaser, but to please God through faithful servanthood. The pastor is called by God through the congregation to do what God has called him to do.

In his *Ministry, Word and Sacraments: An Enchiridion*, Martin Chemnitz writes in answer to the question: “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 Cor. 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 Tim. 4:5) on the basis of the prescribed command, which the chief Shepherd Himself has given His ministers in His Word for instruction. Mt. 28:20.¹⁹

The pastor’s duties are: (1) preaching and teaching God’s Word in its truth and purity; (2) administering the Sacraments according to their institution by Christ; and (3) forgiving the sins of the penitent and the retaining the sins of the impenitent.

A Steward of the Mysteries of God

As a servant of God, a pastor is also called to be a “steward of the mysteries of God” (1 Cor. 4:1 RSV). Paul in this passage uses the word “mysteries” to cover all that God has revealed through His Word, as spoken by the prophets of the Old Testament and as given in that final revelation through “the Word made flesh,” our Lord Jesus Christ. These mysteries certainly include what Paul calls “the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27), which in our day we find in the Holy Scriptures—which we as Lutherans affirm are the only source and norm for teaching and preaching in the church—and in the Holy Sacraments whose institution and administration are normed by the same Holy Scriptures. When Paul writes in his day “You are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets” (Eph. 2:20), he certainly has in mind not only the teaching of the apostles and prophets of his day who were receivers and eyewitnesses to God’s revelation in Jesus Christ, but also the Old Testament prophets who wrote of His coming. The written Word of God, then, as we have it in the canon of Scripture is the source and norm of the “mysteries of God,” of which pastors in the church are to be “stewards.” The heart of “the mysteries” is the Gospel, *i.e.*, the good news of what God has done for sinners through Jesus Christ that they might have forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. To Jeremiah, God gave this word of encouragement: “Let the one who has my Word speak it faithfully” (Jer. 23:28). That same word of encouragement must constantly be in the heart and mind of a pastor called to be the servant of God.

A pastor must remember that his authority lies in the written Word of God, in “the whole counsel of God” and in the “apostles’ doctrine” (Acts 2:42). It does not extend to every matter that may come before the congregation. Decisions regarding organizational structure, building plans, furnishings, and even liturgical ceremonies are recognized by the Confessions to be in the area of adi-

aphora, and these are to be decided by the congregation, not the pastor. The pastor can certainly give his advice and opinion, but he cannot speak with the authority with which he proclaims the Word of God.

Distinction Between Law and Gospel in Preaching of the Word

In his work as God's servant, a pastor will be most careful to distinguish properly between Law and Gospel. When speaking God's message, Dr. Martin Luther emphasized how important the proper distinction between Law and Gospel is to preaching when he wrote:

Therefore place the man who is able to nicely divorce the Law from the Gospel at the head of the list and call him a Doctor of Holy Scripture, for without the Holy Spirit the attainment of this differentiating is impossible.²⁰

This most important aspect of his Pastoral Ministry must be observed not only when he is publicly preaching and teaching, but also when he is taking care of individual souls in private counseling. To impenitent sinners, the Law is to be preached in all its severity, but to sinners who sorrow over their sins and are burdened in their consciences because of their sin, the Gospel is to be proclaimed in all its sweetness. The servant of God will ask for wise discernment as to which, whether Law or Gospel, is to be applied in a given circumstance. By the preaching of the Law, people are led to see their wretched, sinful condition before God and how they are subject to His eternal wrath on account of sin. By the preaching of the Gospel, people are led to see that God, for the sake of the innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, forgives sin and opens heaven's gates to them—and all this without any merit or worthiness in them, but on account of the merits of Christ! What a marvelous message we are given to proclaim!

Our emphasis so far has been on the pastor as God's servant. Now, I wish to proceed to the second part of this presentation where it will be shown that he serves God by serving God's people. It is interesting to note in the Scriptures how Christ identifies with people. This concept is in keeping with our Lord's saying:

I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. . . . I tell you the truth whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me (Matt. 25:35-36, 40).

We see this truth also implicit in the account of the conversion of Saul, the persecutor of the church. When Christ appeared to him, He asked the question: "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" (Acts 9:4). When Saul asks "Who are you, Lord?" the Lord replies, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting" (Acts 9:5). He was persecuting the church; he was thus persecuting Christ. The principle I desire you to see is this: Christ is intimately bound up with His people and thus the pastor serves Christ by serving the people who belong to His church. But his service also goes out to all who are not in Christ's church—to all human beings who are by nature under sin and death, but who have been redeemed by Christ.

The Pastor, Called To Be a Servant for God's People

In our introduction, we mentioned how many pastors today are very disheartened due to the overwhelming expectations their congregations have of them. Their basic calling is simple. They are to preach the Word and administer the Sacraments. Yet, people expect much more of ministers today than they did just several years ago. Already at the turn of the twentieth century, a professor in the Anglican Church wrote:

The authority of the preacher was once supreme. He bearded kings and bent senates to his word. He determined policies, ruled fashions, and prescribed thought. And yet, he has proved unable to maintain the position he was so able to take. He could not insure against the reaction which has now set in as severely as his authority once did. That reaction has long been in force; and to-day, however great may be his vogue as a personality, his opinion has so little authority that it is not only ignored but ridiculed.²¹

In 1980, Willmar Thorkelson wrote:

Lutheran pastors, like other clergy, may no longer enjoy the status with the public they once had, but the expectations of lay Lutherans for their ministers has never been higher. And the future may require continued change in direction and emphasis of Pastoral Ministry, although its functions will remain basically the same.²²

New Emphases on Goals and Performance

In recent years, with the advent of the “baby boomer” generation, there has been a new emphasis on professionalism in the Ministry. Such professional expectations of the pastor have increased as the educational level of the average parishioner has increased. The idea of professionalism has meant that higher expectations have been set for pastors by congregations. A corporation mentality has entered the church. Congregations are now into such things as performance evaluations of pastors and other professional church workers. And the Synod and district presidents are asking questions of pastors concerning how they view their ministry, where their ministries have moved, what goals they have set for themselves in the year ahead—questions that flow from more of a corporation mentality.

Generally speaking, the focus on Pastoral Ministry before World War II was on preaching, teaching and the availability of the pastor to lead in services, weddings, funerals, and special occa-

sions. Since then, there has been a great expansion in the expectations parishioners have of their pastors, such as counseling, training of lay leadership, community involvement and leadership, organizational skills, etc. In addition, congregations are looking for the pastor to spearhead and promote all kinds of parish activities and to be an entertainer with a good sense of humor. In our day of television and mass entertainment, to which our people are accustomed, he is challenged in sermons even to be able to hold the congregation's attendance beyond fifteen minutes, and to do this week after week. These are high expectations indeed, and he will be roundly criticized if he does not live up to them.

In his opening essay to this convocation, President Barry pointed out that two of the reasons why we have so many problems relating to pastors over against congregations and congregations over against pastors is the rampant, radical equality (called "egalitarianism") and rugged individualism pervading the culture of America. These tendencies are only increasing, certainly not decreasing, as we move into a new century and new millennium. In response to this Dr. Barry states:

In various combinations. . . radical equality and individualism . . . present great challenges for us even yet today when it comes to Church and Ministry. For instance, Christians who are unprepared, uncertified and uncalled can too easily begin to assume the public role and responsibilities of the pastor. If they are not satisfied with his "performance," or if he has frustrated them by telling them something they do not wish to hear, they may start thinking about "firing" him and "hiring" another. Or interestingly, they may begin to conceive of the church according to the model of a business where they own stock but where they have little or no active involvement unless they want to.

To defend against such egalitarian, individualistic, and "corporation" mentality, I know of pastors who have read their call docu-

ments before the congregation as a means of defense against this way of thinking in regards to the Office of the Public Ministry. “Here is what you called me to be and do!” is his pronouncement. Then comes the careful reading:

1. We authorize and obligate our called minister “to administer to us the Word of God in its full truth and purity as contained in the sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and as set forth in the confessional writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as found in the Book of Concord; to administer the holy Sacraments in accordance with their divine institution.”

2. We authorize and obligate our called minister to discharge “the functions of a pastor in an evangelical manner,” in particular “to visit the sick and the dying” and “to admonish indifferent and erring” members; To guard and promote faithfully the spiritual welfare of the members of this congregation. . . . To serve the congregation as an example of Christian conduct; to endeavor earnestly to live in Christian unity with the members of the congregation, and fellow workers. . . .²³

There is nothing here about goals or quotas or being “a chief executive officer!” he concludes with relish.

Certainly, not one of us would disagree with what is mentioned in the document called “Supplement to the Diploma of Vocation for Pastor.” This document is, I believe, absolutely correct. A pastor is indeed charged with the spiritual feeding and leading of the flock committed to his care and keeping.

The Shepherd of God’s People

This charge is implied in the title most often used for a minister of the Gospel in the church. He is a “pastor,” *i.e.*, a “shepherd.” This is what Christ called Himself: “I am the Good Shepherd....” (John 10:11). Peter calls Him “the Chief Shepherd” (1 Pet. 5:4). The shepherd image has profound significance for our comprehension

of Christ's own work, and therefore also for our understanding of what it means with respect to the Office of the Ministry.

The image of "shepherd" is rich in the Old Testament. This is the most frequently used comparison employed in reference to the exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt: the shepherd leading forth his flock. The word is also used in the Old Testament of anyone in a leadership position in Israel, whether king, prince, judge, elder, priest or prophet. Psalmists and prophets use this imagery as they look back to the former deliverance and forward to the new redemption under the Shepherd-Messiah. Ezekiel denounces the false shepherds of his time and declares that in the future, God Himself will become their Shepherd (Ezekiel 34). Isaiah and Jeremiah describe the Shepherd who is to come (Isaiah 40; Jer. 23:3, 31:10).

In light of this Old Testament background, our Lord's reference to Himself as Shepherd takes on great depth of meaning. Frequently, in the synoptic Gospels, the image of shepherd and sheep is used (e.g., Matt. 15:24; Mark 6:34; Luke 12:32). John is most vivid in portraying Jesus as "the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep" (John 10:11).

In the book of Acts and the epistles we find the designated leaders of congregations called "pastors," *i.e.*, "shepherds." I find it quite interesting to note this imagery in Acts where Paul is meeting with the "presbyters" of Ephesus. As he was leaving them, he tells them: "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers" (Acts 20:28 RSV). Note the word "flock," and that where we would expect the word "shepherd" we find "overseer" (*episkopos*, *i.e.*, "bishop"). Paul speaks of the ascended Christ as One who "gave some to be . . . pastors and teachers" (Eph. 4:11). The better translation here may be "shepherds who are teachers."

The Shepherd Seeks the Lost Sheep

The shepherd imagery pertains to far more than just those sheep who are already under the shepherd's care—those who are within the range of his immediate oversight and protection. It is the lost sheep the Shepherd seeks. It is the scattered sheep He would gather in. Although there is a great difference between those who are in and those who are outside the fold, those who are without are His “other sheep” (John 10:16). We must never forget that the shepherd's deepest concern is for those farthest away. Thus a pastor will also be busily engaged in the work we call “evangelism.” It is only as evangelism is motivated by pastoral compassion that it can be truly Christian evangelism. It is only as shepherds care about the sheep outside that they can begin to understand the needs of the people within. I have had pastors tell me, “I do not have the gift of evangelism.” To them I respond with the words of Paul written to the young pastor Timothy: “Do the work of an evangelist; discharge all the duties of your office” (2 Tim. 4:5).

Shepherds, Not Lords

Pastors are shepherds and not lords. There were a few such pastors in the days of the apostles who conceived themselves as being “lords.” For example, Peter writes: “To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder . . . be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers . . . not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock” (1 Pet. 5:1–3).

The apostle John encountered one such pastor and wrote of him:

I wrote to the church, but Diotrefes, who loves to be first, will have nothing to do with us. So if I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, gossiping maliciously about us. Not satisfied with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church (3 John 9–10).

One certainly can identify in Diotrephes, whoever he was, the tendency of lordship over the flock, rather than that of gracious and kindly shepherding.

A key to the pastor's or shepherd's work is to love the flock over which God has placed him. It is interesting to note that Jesus asked Peter "Do you love me?" before He gave him the commission "feed my lambs" and "feed my sheep"—for it is first from love of the Good Shepherd that there flows love and care for the sheep of His pasture.

The Shepherd and the Royal Priesthood

For a faithful pastor, love also means having respect and consideration for the prerogatives of the sheep. In this context I direct our attention to a doctrine that is dear to all Lutherans. I'm referring to the doctrine of the Priesthood of all Believers, the rights and privileges of that priesthood, and its relationship to the Pastoral Office.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, as noted previously, has always taken into account this doctrine of the Priesthood of all Believers in its discussion of the Office of the Holy Ministry. This has been a strength of our Synod down through the years. The Synod in its 1851 convention approved a set of theses on Church and Ministry prepared by C.F.W. Walther. This convention subsequently approved these theses as the Synod's statement and unanimous confession. Thesis seven on the Ministry is very significant for our consideration and bears repeating here. Permit me now to quote it for you:

The Preaching Office [*Predigtamt*] is the power conferred by God through the congregation as the possessor of the priesthood of all church power, to exercise the rights of the spiritual priesthood in public office on behalf of those who possess them together.²⁴

Pastors need to recall this truth repeatedly as they function among God's people. God has conferred their office to them through the congregation to whom Christ has originally given the Keys. The Office of the Keys is entrusted to pastors for "public" administration of them. But every Christian, as a priest of God, may use the Keys in private by sharing the Gospel with unbelievers and by absolving a brother or sister who confesses sin to them. This clearly is the teaching of Scripture and the Confessions. In our day, we occasionally hear of controversy brought on by some pastors who are insisting that the work of the Great Commission of Matthew 28, that of "making disciples of all nations," was only given to the apostles and that therefore lay persons should not assume this responsibility belongs also to them. Or that only pastors may carry out the Great Commission. The great Lutheran theologian Hermann Sasse has written concerning this:

That the great freedom of the Reformation is truly the freedom of the Gospel is shown by the fact that the Office of the Keys is given three times in the New Testament: in Matthew 16 to Peter, in John 20 to all the apostles, in Matthew 18 to the whole church. These three bestowals of the Office may not be separated. One may not be selected as the chief one, and then played off against the others. 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. . . Office and congregation belong inseparably together.²⁵

In its original context, the Great Commission given by Jesus, “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing . . . and teaching them” (Matt. 28: 19–20) was indeed originally spoken only to the eleven apostles. But in the context of the whole New Testament we see that every Christian, as a member of the Priesthood of all Believers, has the responsibility to “declare the wonderful deeds of Him who has called [them] out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Pet. 2:9 RSV).

We see this priesthood at work when we read in the book of Acts: “On that day [the stoning of Stephen] a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. . . . Those who had been scattered preached the Word wherever they went” (Acts 8:1, 4). For the spread of the Gospel, it is the matter of “both/and”—Public Ministry and the royal Priesthood of all Believers in Christ. Yet at the same time, I would like to suggest that the fulfillment of the Royal Priesthood’s responsibilities lies not in things that laypersons do at the church to “assist” the Public Ministry, such as serving as lay lectors to read the lessons, or assisting with the liturgy, etc. It lies in their being witnesses to Christ by word and deed to relatives, friends, neighbors in the context of their family, their workplace, their social life and their community involvement. A colleague of mine has written:

Christians telling the Good News and pastors telling the Good News do not stand in some sort of competition with one another. While both have the same Good News to tell, the Lord has provided a sphere where each tells it. The individual Christian tells the Good News privately, that is, in his family and with his friends—or when he is in a situation where there are no Christians to be found. The pastor tells the Good News publicly, by God’s command and institution, as the called spokesman both for the Lord and the congregation. You might detect areas of overlap between these two spheres. But if we are telling the Good News in the Name of Christ

for the sake of the people who need it—not to build a reputation for ourselves—we will have no problem with the vocations into which the Lord has placed us. Laypeople will not climb into the pulpits, and pastors will not leave the telling of the Good News to laypeople while they themselves act like corporate CEOs [Chief Executive Officers]. We maintain cooperation between pastors and people in telling the Good News not by blurring necessary distinctions between Church and Ministry, but by continuing to observe these distinctions.²⁶

Extremes To Be Avoided

In this connection, I would like to suggest that in the church there are two extremes to be avoided: (1) that laypersons must be involved in all aspects of the worship life of the congregation, such as reading the Scriptures, leading the liturgy, having the general prayers, having an occasional sermon, etc.; and (2) the “staff-driven” approach seen so often in larger congregations where all key decisions are left basically to the pastors and other professional church workers while laypeople pursue other interests.

In summary, I wish to encourage the pastors in our churches to cultivate a healthy respect for the Priesthood of all Believers, and the Priesthood to have a deep respect for the Office of the Public Ministry. Mutual respect will go a long way to the alleviation of many of the problems we face in Church and Ministry today.

Obedience to Pastors

This brings me to a very unpopular truth that in our individualistic society is often frowned at by the world and also by members of Christian congregations: people do owe obedience to pastors. The holy writer says to Christians: “Obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account” (Heb. 13:17 RSV). Such obedience, however, is not absolute; it pertains to obeying them when they

proclaim God's Word in accord with the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. If pastors depart from this source and norm of preaching and administration of the Sacraments, the Royal Priesthood has the right to admonish and correct. On the other hand, congregations have a responsibility to honor and uphold the preaching, teaching and administration of the Sacraments, which are in accord with the Holy Scriptures. Paul writes this word of encouragement to the Christians of Thessalonica:

We beseech you, brethren, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves (1 Thess. 5:12,13 RSV).

One of the Synod's district presidents, Dr. George Wollenburg, has called our attention to the imagery used by some of the old Lutheran dogmaticians to reflect on the scriptural teaching of the Priesthood of all Believers. When the church as the bride of Christ commits to her servant (*i.e.*, the pastor) the Keys, they come with a manual. It is the book written by the bride's husband. He determines how the servant is to serve the bride. The ordination vow of a pastor, reiterated every time he is installed in a new congregation, is highly significant in our Synod. For here the church in effect says: This is how Christ wants you to serve, how He wants you to be a pastor. You can only serve us this way, according to Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions. And even if at some later point the church seems to change its mind and demands some different teaching or ministerial activity, the biblical way is the way the pastor is to keep on going because he is God's servant.

Martin Franzmann has written:

The hard thing is to march: to be good, not clever; to be faithful, not brilliant; to be honest, not urbane; to be the rough wool blan-

ket that keeps the faithful people warm, not the flapping scarf of changeable silk that men admire. No one has promised us that confessing the truth will make us happy, but we shall be blessed—of this we may be sure.²⁷

True Christian love, *agape* love, means “speaking the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15), even when groups large and small in the congregation may not like it!

The Pastor and His Relation to Other Members of the Staff

The pastor as servant to God’s people includes yet another aspect often bypassed in presentations such as this. I am referring to the service he renders to his fellow-servants who are called to auxiliary positions in the congregation that aid and support the one Ministry of Word and Sacrament. As our congregations grow larger, additional staff—teachers, directors of Christian outreach, directors of Christian education, deaconesses, etc.—are called for special supportive work to the Office of the Public Ministry. It is no secret, that in many cases, multiple staff ministries in our churches are not healthy. Many times a district president is called to help strengthen relationships between professional church workers who have almost reached, or have reached, the breaking point.

Quite often the problem stems from the “authoritarian” style of the senior pastor or from a lack of respect the one who holds the auxiliary office has for the pastor.

In this regard one of our respected colleagues has written:

A view of the Pastoral Office that emphasizes its divine institution does not have to translate into an authoritarian style of dealing with a co-worker. Quite the contrary. The more certain the pastor is that his call is from God, the more prepared he should be to humble himself as a servant. For, with his call being from God, no one can legitimately despise him for reaching out to those who are in need of support and encouragement. And for the co-workers, working

with someone else who is secure in his call, should actually make it possible to be more confident, not less so, in carrying out assigned responsibilities. Much, therefore, centers around how the pastor sees himself. If he is one who occupies a position, he will want to defend it. If he is in charge of certain responsibilities, he will want to make sure they are done right. But if he sees himself as a steward of that which God has entrusted to him, he will want to discharge that trust. Because that trust is in the Gospel, such self-understanding will place priority on forgiveness, acceptance, reconciliation and encouragement, rather than on self-preservation, rejection, conflict and rebuke.²⁸

A key to good team ministry is, once again, a Christlike servant attitude. He had His co-workers—apostles-in-training—around Him, and to them He said: “I am among you as One who serves” (Luke 22:27).

Some conflicts in team ministry stem, in part, from a wrong view of the Office of the Ministry. I have found that some of the commissioned ministers of religion have a functional view of ministry in which they see the pastor as having a call to do specific things, while the co-worker is on an equal status, called to fulfill his specific duties outlined in his or her call. There is no responsibility toward the pastor, but only toward the congregation. Each works in his sphere of responsibility, with accountability given to a certain board and/or the congregation itself. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod’s view of the various offices in the church is given in Walther’s *Church and Ministry*, in Thesis eight: “The Preaching Office is the highest office in the church and from it stem all other offices in the church.”²⁹ A pastor has the call also of *episcopus*, *i.e.*, oversight over the whole congregation, including over those who function in auxiliary offices directly related to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament, or to other church offices of administrative function. It is, therefore, natural to assume some accountability of the auxiliary offices to the one who holds the Office of

the Public Ministry in keeping with the pastor's responsibilities for oversight of the Ministry in a given place and time. He is to be attentive to all persons serving the congregation.

Although this is our position, pastors must refrain from an authoritarian style in working with co-workers. To them he must be a "shepherd" and a "servant." In their book on team ministry, the sainted Ervin Henkelmann, and Stephen J. Carter discuss a deteriorating team ministry led by a senior pastor with an authoritarian style. Listen to their helpful commentary:

Apparently he fails to see himself as a servant of God and the people. They [the other ministers of religion on the team] should be able to learn from his humility, personal caring for them, willingness to listen, and cooperative spirit. Then he would be leading by serving rather than lording it over them like the Gentile rulers. God's Word has also taken root in the hearts and lives of the teaching ministers and lay leaders. They will be more faithful to the Word and better stewards of the mysteries of God if they are encouraged by his example of service. As he shares leadership with them, they are more likely to accept their God-given responsibility to lead in assigned areas. The team will function to God's glory. Christ will be honored as the Suffering Servant who possesses all authority, and Pastor Schmidt will be revered as the spiritual leader of the congregation and a loving minister of Jesus Christ.³⁰

A wise pastor indeed is he who, with God's help, ministers to his called co-workers in a humble, sensitive, loving, respectful, and caring way—even to those with whom he has differences of personality and opinion. He will be open to their thoughts, ideas, and suggestions, as well as their constructive criticisms—and indeed, will regularly ask for them. He also needs to have enough confidence in the co-worker to allow him to use and expand in the use of spiritual gifts and natural abilities. Such a working relationship can be summarized by that small but wonderful word "trust."

Being a servant to co-workers certainly means that the pastor will take the lead in establishing relationships around the Word of God. Staffs need to meet regularly (daily, if possible; weekly at the least) to study God's Word together and to discuss parish planning and ministry concerns. Good communication must be constantly stressed and adhered to. To summarize, let us note again that the Pastoral Office has been created by Christ. Through the course of the years, the church has added various assisting offices to the Pastoral Ministry for the life and well-being of the church. All such offices embrace the full aspect of servanthood represented by the Pastoral Office ordained by Christ Himself. While we cannot say that Christ has instituted the myriad of offices we have in our churches today, they are to be seen as extensions of the Pastoral Office and should be accorded respect and honor. Such an understanding and actions based upon it will lead to greater harmony and unity in congregations with multiple staffing.

The Pastor and His Care of the Individual Soul

There is one final aspect of the pastor as God's servant with which I would like to conclude this paper: the pastoral care of the individual soul. So often our discussions concerning the servanthood of the pastor have to do with public acts such as preaching to the multitudes, administering the Sacraments to the members of the congregations in the setting of public worship, and teaching Bible classes. As a servant, our Lord certainly ministered to the multitudes. Huge crowds flocked to hear His preaching in the open air. He preached to congregations large and small gathered in the synagogues of His day. But a good share of His ministry was spent ministering also to individual souls, giving them the spiritual care they needed. I think of Jesus' dialog with Nicodemus, the Pharisee; or of His discussion with the Samaritan woman at the well; or of His miracle of the healing of the man born blind; or of His visits

to the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus, which were certainly filled with words pertaining to their spiritual nurture and care. The apostle Paul hints at both public proclamation of the Word and individual ministry when he says: "I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance to God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20: 20–21 RSV). Paul was not only a public preacher of the Word, but one who shared that Word in a personal visitation program "from house to house."

One of the most frequent criticisms I hear of pastors is that they neglect to make personal calls on the members of the congregation. I do not place the fault for this entirely on the pastors. Congregations have a multitude of meetings the pastor is expected to attend. The pastor's work also involves administrative tasks, preparations for sermons and Bible studies, preparations for weddings, funerals, etc., coupled with his need to spend some worthwhile time with his family. Responsibilities such as these have contributed to the demise of pastoral visitation. Almost 50 years ago a German wrote of the "bureaucratizing of the Pastoral Office." He said, "One does not solve this problem by expanding the rights of the laity [that is, pretending that they are the ones who provide the real ministry in the congregation] but only by once again making bureaucrats into pastors."³¹

Frederic Greeves in his book on soul care observes:

In the United States . . . the minister is regarded as a "counselor." Even to visit the church office of an American minister is to be reminded of the professional character of the pastor's work. Am I wrong in thinking that the problem which faces ministers in North America is that they are primarily consulted as psychologists? . . . When people turn to the Ministry for counsel, that is a matter for gladness; but what if they turn for psychological rather than for

spiritual counsel? What if their very eagerness to be helped with needs of one kind forms a hindrance to the satisfaction of needs of a deeper kind? In England, it is not uncommon to meet devoted Christian ministers who confess that many weeks, even years, pass with little private conversation with men and women about the things of God. This is a state of affairs which our Christian fathers would have deemed unthinkable.³²

In our day, I see a great need to stress both with pastors and with the laity that part of the pastor's servanthood includes the proclamation and application of God's Word for "the cure of souls." In German, this duty is expressed with the word *Seelsorge*, for which there is no single-word equivalent in English. In *Sorge* there is a reminder of deep concern for souls and of compassionate actions to which such concern leads.

The scope of such individual pastoral care was described by St. Augustine in this way:

Disturbers are to be rebuked, the low-spirited to be encouraged, the infirm to be supported, objectors confuted, the treacherous guarded against, the unskilled taught, the lazy aroused, the contentious constrained, the haughty repressed, litigants pacified, the poor relieved, the oppressed liberated, the good approved, the evil borne with, and all are to be loved.³³

Martin Bucer, a theologian of the Reformation period who was very much influenced by Luther, liked to describe Protestant, evangelical care of souls in terms of Ezekiel 34:16: "I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the crippled, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will watch over." In his exegesis of this text Bucer gave a fivefold analysis of the meaning of the care of souls:

to draw to Christ those who are alienated; to lead back those who have been drawn away; to secure amendment of life in those who

fall into sin; to strengthen weak and sickly Christians; to preserve Christians who are whole and strong, and urge them forward in all good.³⁴

Every synodical or district president can recall specific complaints about a pastor's neglect of this responsibility of his calling. Dietrich Bonhoeffer has written this about the spiritual care of souls:

The mission of spiritual care falls under the general mission of proclamation. Caring for the soul is a special sort of proclamation. The minister should proclaim wherever possible. The minister is the pastor, that is, the shepherd of the congregation which needs daily care (2 Tim. 4:2). "Preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching." Caring for souls is a proclamation to the individual which is part of the Office of Preaching. . . . Spiritual care . . . comes down "from above," from God to the human being. . . . In spiritual care, God wants to act. In the midst of all anxiety and sorrow we are to trust God. God alone can be a help and comfort. The goal of spiritual care should never be a change of mental condition. The mission itself is the decisive element, not the goal. All false hope and every false comfort must be eliminated. I do not provide decisive help for anyone if I turn a sad person into a cheerful one, a timid person into a courageous one. That would be a secular—and not a real—help. Beyond and within circumstances such as sadness and timidity it should be believed that God is our help and comfort. Christ and His victory over health and sickness, . . . misfortune, birth and death must be proclaimed. The help He brings is forgiveness and new life out of death.³⁵

In the care of souls, the pastor will use "the whole counsel of God" in the Holy Scriptures. He must watch very carefully that he rightly divides the Law and the Gospel in every situation. This is one of the most difficult tasks of pastoral care, but it is one of utmost importance. The Formula of Concord states:

We believe and confess that these two doctrines [Law and Gospel] must be urged constantly and diligently in the church of God until the end of the world, but with the due distinction, so that in the Ministry of the New Testament the proclamation of the Law with its threats will terrify the hearts of the unrepentant and bring them to a knowledge of their sin and to repentance, but not in such a way that they become despondent and despair therein. Rather, since “the Law was our custodian until Christ came, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal. 3:24), and hence points and leads not away from but toward the Christ who is the end of the Law (Rom. 10:4), the proclamation of the Gospel of our Lord Christ will once more comfort and strengthen them with the assurance that if they believe the Gospel, God forgives them all their sins through Christ, accepts them for His sake as God’s children, and out of pure grace, without any merit of their own, justifies and saves them (FC SD VI, 24–25).

Bonhoeffer writes in his book on the care of souls that

particular attention must be paid to Law and Gospel in spiritual care . . . The Law must be preached just so that the Law does not lead to despair. The Gospel must be preached just so that the Gospel does not lead to false security.³⁶

It is in the care of souls and actual situations pertaining to individuals that Confession and Absolution can occur in an informal way. This takes place best, in our day, when the pastor visits individuals and listens carefully to their expressed feelings of guilt, their anxieties, their failures, and their bouts with unbelief and doubt. I know of some pastors who regard our confessional stance on Confession and Absolution so highly that they have re-instituted regular times when people may come for confession at the church. This is often misunderstood by the laity of the church, yet it may be a step to restore private confession to the prominence that it once held in the Lutheran Church immediately following the Reformation. A pastor who visits his people, listens to, and shows concern

for the souls of each of his members opens up doors for the personal pastoral care that every child of God needs in some way. And Confession and Absolution will often take place in such an informal setting of pastoral visitation.

Concluding Thoughts

Throughout this essay, we have expanded the thesis that the pastor is called to be God's servant for God's people. Although our focus has been on the pastor as servant of God's people, I think we can readily see that every Christian, whether a pastor or a layperson, is to follow Paul's injunction: "Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1 KJV).

It is this Christ, the Chief Pastor of the church, whom Paul followed. And, he followed Him along the path of servanthood. May God enable all who have a call to serve Him in the Pastoral Office to be His servants always by serving His people with Word and Sacrament. Whether it is in public teaching and preaching to two or three or a multitude, or whether it is through a faithful sharing of "the mysteries of God" with the individual soul who needs a shepherd's care and concern, may the Holy Spirit enable us to be faithful to the call of God. We have this ministry by the grace of God, and like the apostle Paul, let us serve faithfully in all humility and say with him: "To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach . . . the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. 3:8 NKJV). With such humble understanding of the grace of God and the unfathomable depths of the treasures he has in the Word and Sacraments, a pastor will be formed more and more into being God's servant for God's people.

Notes

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2. Ibid., 19.
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5. Conrad Bergendoff, *The Doctrine of the Church in American Lutheranism*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 31.
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8. Ibid., 191.
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10. Ibid., 268.
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13. Ibid., 303.
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20. Edwald M. Plass, *What Luther Says: An Anthology* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), 2:732
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- (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1907), 28.
22. Kadel, 1.
 23. Supplement to Diploma of Vocation for Pastor (Ordained Minister), 1.
 24. Walther, *Church and Ministry*, 268.
 25. Hermann Sasse, *We Confess the Church*, trans. Norman Nagel (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986), 78.
 26. Schurb, 76.
 27. Martin H. Franzmann, *Ha! Ha! Among the Trumpets* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1994), 84.
 28. Lehmann, 21.
 29. Walther, *Church and Ministry*, 289.
 30. Ervin F. Henkelmann and Stephen J. Carter, *How to Develop a Team Ministry and Make It Work* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1985), 30–31.
 31. Hans Asmussen, quoted by Armin H. Moellering in “Some New Testament Aspects of the Ministry Identified and Applied,” *Concordia Journal* 14 (July 1988), 232.
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 33. Augustine, *Sermo CCIX*, cited in J.T. McNeill, *A History of the Cure of Souls* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1951), 100.
 34. Martin Bucer, *On the True Cure of Souls and the Right Kind of Shepherd*, quoted by Frederic Greeves, *Theology and Cure of Souls*, 11.
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RESPONSE TO PRESENTATION III

Dr. Leopoldo Heimann, President
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil
Porto Alegre, Brazil

Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep" (John 21:16).

Introduction

The apostle Paul said to Timothy: ". . . discharge all the duties of your ministry" (2 Tim. 4:5). Melancthon wrote: ". . . the Ministry of the New Testament is scattered through the whole world and is found wherever God gives His gifts, apostles, prophets, pastors, doctors . . . given . . . for the edification for the Body of Christ" (Treatise, 67; my translation of the Portuguese translation of the Book of Concord). In view of this perspective of the Pastoral Ministry, I wish to comment on the essay by Dr. James Kalthoff: "The Pastor: God's Servant for God's People."

The Author and the Essay

Even if I did not know who the author is, after hearing and reading this essay, I would know with certainty that the author is a pastor-theologian, a Lutheran pastor, a pastor of the Missouri Synod. Theology can be a blessing to the church as long as it is proclamation. Dr. James Kalthoff's essay is proclamation.

The essay was presented according to the teachings of the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, within the historical context in which The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod lives. It was written by a pastor, teaching what the Lutheran Church believes, teaches and confesses.

The essay was written in a concise and exact style, clear and easy; avoiding academic, complex and pompous sentences. Anyone who reads and listens also understands what Dr. Kalthoff is saying. It is a pastor speaking and writing with the presupposition that his reader or listener really does understand the message about the church and the Pastoral Ministry. It is a gift of the Holy Spirit.

Emphases of the Text

1. *The Pastor's Image.* In the church as well as outside of it, the pastor, at the end of this millennium, has lost his image. His prestige, his respect and his authority are being contested in today's world and also in the church. The church has to put the pastor back into the place where Christ, the Lord of the Church, wants him to be. I was fourteen years old and a young student at our seminary in Porto Alegre. One day the president of the church visited the seminary. That day after school, I did not play soccer with my colleagues. I went to my room and wrote to my parents, "Today I have seen the President." It was the greatest emotion of my life, at the time. What a good image of the pastor!

2. *Ministry Is Service.* There might be theological divergence about "functional," "aristocratic" or "conferral" ministry, but there is convergence as to the ministerial function—it is service! *Diakonos* and *doulos*, *diakonia* and *douleia* all speak of serving, of acting in favor of the other or for the other, in order to help the other. The pastor serves God and men. Ministry is service. Ministry is not for the lazy or the "tired." It is challenging and difficult work that requires persons who wish to serve their Lord and His church.

3. *Laymen and Pastors.* The church is one of the great orders of God's creation. Within the church, the same Creator has installed two smaller orders in order to accomplish the purposes of the church: the Priesthood of all Believers and the Pastoral Ministry. For a long time the layman was somewhat ignored in the Lutheran Church. There was a strong "pastorcentrism." Today, the church wants the pastor and the layman (Priesthood and Ministry) to be together and with each other as God's team, doing the work of the church—including the public worship service. And that reality is a blessing to the Lutheran Church. It is the concept of the AC VII and VIII on the church.

4. *Counselor/Pastor.* The pastor is not only a teacher of and preacher to people. He is also a counselor and comforter to the individual person. He is the one who cares for the souls (*Seelsorge*). The Christian/sinner is not the multitude. He is a person. To let the individual person get lost in the multitude is dangerous. Jesus is our example: He left the multitudes to take of the individual. The pastor has to be more of a spiritual counselor.

Other Topics and Suggestions

I have read and heard the essay "The Pastor: God's Servant for God's People." I listened to the two essays yesterday. From a Latin American and Brazilian perspective, and as a man from the Third World, I would like to suggest an emphasis on these topics:

1. *Relationship between Old Testament and New Testament.* What is the relationship between the function of the Levitical priesthood in the Old Testament (including prophets) and the Pastoral Ministry in the New Testament? What is the relationship between the election of God's people in the Old Testament (Israel) and the people of God in the New Testament (new Israel). More clarification is needed as we seek together to appreciate the Christ-centered connection between the Old and New Testaments.

2. *"Suffering Servant."* The minister was presented as "servant" and "pastor" or "shepherd," having Jesus as example or model for both. Christ as "Suffering Servant" (Old Testament) should be included as a model for the "servant-pastor" because of the consolation and promise for the servant of God: "He shall see the fruit of the travail of His soul and be satisfied" (Is. 53:11).

3. *Members' Support of the Pastor.* The pastor, despite his being regarded as a "man of God," is no genius or superman. And yet the profile of the pastor, according to the Pastoral Epistles, is in a sense that of a superman. The pastor does everything in order to shepherd the people of God. It would be good to show what the people of God can do for the Ministry, the pastor himself and his family—visiting, comforting, etc. The Bible says much about this.

4. *Preparation of the Sermon.* The public worship service is the spiritual feast of the week for the members, for the people of God. The sermon has a special place during this service. Statistically, 88 percent evaluate the whole worship service on the basis of the sermon. The sermon needs more preparation and less improvisation. As pastors, we need to study the text more carefully and to address the real-life-situation of the people.

5. *The Pastor's Call.* The author speaks much about the call of the pastor. I hoped to find more about the meaning of the "legitimate call" or "regular call" (AC XIV), as well as more about whether a call is for a determined time or indeterminate time. I also looked for something about the difference between vocation, call, ordination and installment (installation).

6. *Service of Women.* In preparation for the Theological Convocation, it was mentioned that there would be a word about the ministry of women. I thought that it might appear in Dr. Kalthoff's or Dr. Johnson's essays. I missed it. This would have been the appropriate moment. The Lutheran churches need and expect a clear and convincing answer.

7. *Joy in the Ministry.* Despite the responsibilities and difficulties involved in the Pastoral Ministry, I would have liked to hear something about the need, importance, privilege, blessing, joy and reward of the servant of God who consecrates his life for the people of God! A pastor needs to hear: You are important! You are needed! You are doing the most important work in the world: Preaching salvation in Jesus Christ! As pastor, you are always in the minority. But never forget this: With God, you are always in the majority. Go ahead! In Christ, you are victorious (you are a winner).

Conclusion

1. *Gratitude.* As chairman of the International Lutheran Council, I thank The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod for the invitation extended to the presidents and theologians of the Council churches to the Theological Convocation. I thank Dr. James Kalthoff for his direct and clear teaching on the Pastoral Office that a pastor is a *doulos tou Christou*.

2. *Acceptance.* Whether any suggestions are accepted or not, I want the 617 pastors of my church in Brazil, and all pastors of the ILC churches to read this essay in their language.

3. *Encouragement.* Luther in the Preface to the Small Catechism says:

Our office . . . involves much fatigue, danger and temptation . . . little reward and gratitude from the world. But Christ Himself wants to be our reward, if we work in truthfulness (my translation from Portuguese).

RESPONSE TO PRESENTATION III

Dr. Diethardt Roth, Bishop
Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church, Germany

DEAR FATHERS AND BROTHERS IN CHRIST: It is an honor for me to be invited. Thank you very much, President Barry. My name is Diethardt Roth. I am the bishop of the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany. I am the successor of Bishop Schöne. This is my first time in America and the first time to speak in English at a theological convocation. Please excuse some German-English.

Dr. Kalthoff has delivered an enlightening lecture and there has been a clear first reaction to it from the chairman of the International Lutheran Council, Dr. Leopoldo Heimann. For that reason I fear that it will be very difficult for me to say anything at all that is wise and helps us further. I would very much like to thank Dr. Kalthoff for sharing his ideas with us on the interrelation of the Pastoral Ministry and the Priesthood of all Believers, and on the problems that have currently arisen as these two entities work together.

In the significant essay *Ministry and Congregation* (July 1949) that Hermann Sasse wrote to Lutheran pastors, he said:

One of the most grievous events in the history of the Lutheran Church in the 19th century was the fact that the two great church-

men Wilhelm Löhe and Ferdinand Walther went separate ways after the great theological leader of the Missouri Synod had, in 1851, a most promising meeting with Löhe in Neuendettelsau. . . . No one could imagine that out of the laborious work of organizing these congregations on the fringes of civilization would come the great churches in whose hands, so far as it lies in human hands, today rests the future of Lutheranism. So also no one could foresee the consequences of the break between Walther and Löhe, between Missouri and Iowa.¹

Herman Sasse states that the task of this century

cannot be to repeat the formulations of both sides and to take up the discussion where it came to a stop a century ago. Rather our task is again to think through what at that time remained unresolved. For this task we have the help of what the church has experienced since then and of what may have been given of deeper insight into the teachings of Holy Scripture.²

In recent years this matter has undergone intensive examination by SELK's Commission on Theology. In 1997 it published a report on this topic titled *The Office of Pastoral Ministry in the Church*. This report comments on many issues.

To discuss this document in its entirety would go beyond the scope of this lecture. In addition to points that Brother Kalthoff listed in his lecture come two more areas that the Commission on Theology emphasized. The epistles of the New Testament, as well as the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, show us how the Office of Pastoral Ministry and the congregation are inextricably connected and nonetheless clearly distinguished from one another. They belong together because the means by which Gospel is preached and the Sacraments are administered to the congregation may not be absent from the congregation. In addition, the Office of Pastoral Ministry was created to serve in the congregation and has, therefore, the congregation as its focal point.

They are distinguished from one another, however, because the Word and Sacrament are not administered to the congregation in its own name, but rather in God's name, and because the service of the office-bearer is directed toward the congregation.

The Divine Service of the congregation that has gathered in the name of Jesus is the particular place where one can become most aware of how the Office of Pastoral Ministry and the congregation are related to one another. The missionary or pastor proclaims the Gospel to the congregation and administers to it the Sacraments. He confesses his sins, together with the congregation, makes intercession and prays fervently, praises and thanks, just as all witnesses to the Gospel do.

Sasse writes in the essay from which I quoted earlier:

How unimportant then becomes all that has grown onto this office through the modern overorganization of the church; one has only to think of the church politics with which modern bishops kill their own time and that of others. Each sermon then becomes more important than all those sessions which spend their time discussing big church resolutions. . . . Conversely, the more seriously we take the Holy Ministry, the more seriously we take the Christian congregation.³

Yes, let us take very seriously our profession and our call into essential matters of the Gospel. Let us concentrate on the tasks and service entrusted to us at our ordination. And let us teach that to the congregations.

Many of the deliberations of C.F.W. Walther, which Brother Kalthoff laid out for us, can be found in the ideas the theological commission has presented. Even a precise theological definition of the interrelation of the Office of Pastoral Ministry and the congregation cannot guarantee a problem-free working environment between the pastor, his staff and the congregation.

Keeping Brother Kalthoff's lecture in mind, I believe I can say that we in the SELK sometimes have problems in the parish that are similar to those that Brother Kalthoff has described. The declining image of the church and of its pastors, the burn-out effect among the clergy and the co-workers in the parish, despondency, ever-increasing demands upon the pastor's professionalism, unmet expectations and many more—all these are, and this is the first of three points in this connection that I would like to make, manifestations of the "holy possession of the sacred cross," as Luther called it in his work *On the Councils and the Church*.⁴

So that they can grow to conformity with Christ, the church's head, God's people, Luther writes:

must endure every misfortune and persecution, all kinds of trials and evil from the devil, the world, and the flesh (as the Lord's Prayer indicates) by inward sadness, timidity, fear, outward poverty, contempt, illness, and weakness, in order to become like their head, Christ. And the only reason they must suffer is that they steadfastly adhere to Christ and God's Word, enduring this for the sake of Christ, Matthew 5 [11], "Blessed are you when men persecute you on my account." They must be pious, quiet, obedient, and prepared to serve the government and everybody with life and goods, doing no one any harm. No people on earth have to endure such bitter hate. . . .⁵

We must constantly be aware of the fact that we are the *ecclesia pressa*, the church under the cross, and not the *ecclesia triumphans* (church triumphant). Keeping this in mind, a pastor should go about his work calmly and patiently—even in the face of temptation. The words of Martin Luther concerning the three things that make a theologian should be brought to mind here: *oratio, meditatio, tentatio* (prayer, meditation and spiritual struggle). In light of the questions, distress and problems in congregations today, the pastor should recall these words of Luther and practice them con-

stantly. Moreover, he should discover anew the power of prayer and then he will fight against misunderstanding through himself and others.

Philip Melancthon, whose 500th birthday we are commemorating this year, wrote down thousands of prayers that we still have today—more than from any other Reformer. The times are difficult; shouldn't we pastors learn the art of prayer anew and practice it often? Don't we sometimes lack the energy we need, because our prayer, along with the certainty of its being heard, has been found wanting among us?

The second point I would like to make is that, as Dr. Kalthoff's lecture has elucidated, controversies in the congregations that lead to mutual misunderstanding and condemnation clearly show us that we all are "*simul iustus et peccator*" (at the same time saint and sinner), that we all live under the Law and the Gospel. Of importance to us in our deliberation today is the fact that the first person to hear the Law and the Gospel is the pastor. His self-righteousness, his arrogance and his haughtiness are thereby revealed and shattered to pieces. But he is also comforted by the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, the pastor's work is to be christocentric, and in the same way the congregation is to see that all its doings are christocentric. The freedom of the Office of Public Ministry is threatened when the bearer of the Office becomes a functionary and tool of man and no longer a servant of Christ. In, with and under Jesus Christ the congregation comes together. Together with the whole Christian church on earth, it is called, gathered, enlightened, sanctified, and kept with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. It is the will of Christ that His congregation be seen in the world like a city on a mountain, and that it be "read" as if it were a letter that God has written to the world. We do not have to make ourselves to be this city and this letter, for God causes us to be this for the sake of

Christ Jesus, who was crucified and was raised from the dead. God chooses and calls His servants so that in the congregation, the Word of God may be preached and the Sacraments be administered. As Luther wrote,

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.⁶

God Himself desires that the Office of the Pastoral Ministry exist. At the same time, however, He desires to have as many members of the congregation as possible called into the service of witnessing to the Gospel. To this end, God bestows upon the congregation through the Holy Spirit many spiritual gifts, which His believers then combine with the various talents that God has given and continues to give them. It remains a challenge for us to discover these spiritual gifts and help to bring them to fruition in the work of the congregation.

There is yet a third issue in this context that I would like to touch upon: The causes of the problems that are currently arising between office-bearers in the church, the professional staff and the congregation. These problems are certainly of a theological nature, as Brother Kalthoff has shown in his lecture. There are also, however, socio-cultural and psychological factors that lie under the surface of these problems.

There is first the personality of the pastor with his problems. Then there is stress and severity on the job, which workers often carry into the congregation. Viewed as the manager of a service-oriented business, the pastor is quickly made responsible for everything that takes place in the congregation.

A society that is so deeply experience-oriented expects its pastors and the co-workers in its congregations to have the same orientation. As Erich Fromm puts it, from the perspective of society “[W]hoever doesn’t perform well as a marketing man is to be replaced.”

In regard to the psychological factors, I would like to refer to the anxieties that plague so many people—members of the congregations and their pastors included: fears about the existence of the church and the congregation, fears that often let man become the center of our thought and not the triune God and His ability to effect His purpose.

For the accomplishment of their goals and the doing of their work, both pastors and laity need a good theological education, as well as continued training. In light of modern problems that pastors face, the SELK is at present restructuring its seminary’s curriculum. Pastors today are said to need more competence in the following areas, broadly defined: theological-hermeneutical, context-analytical, mission-pastoral, personal-spiritual and dialog-self-critical. In this connection the commission for restructuring the curriculum stresses the importance of measures that enhance the personality of pastors while at the seminary—something that I gladly endorse. A good theological education of tomorrow’s pastors helps the church continue on course. Therefore, our seminaries are very important for the future of our churches. This is also true of continuing education and training, which must be offered on a regular basis in order to be able to reflect on and accompany aberrant tendencies in a prompt and critical fashion. All this is not intended only for the pastors of our church, but also for all the other co-workers and staff, be they professionals or volunteers. We always have to learn to practice good communication in our congregations as we together continue to study and discuss the treasures of Lutheran theology. There we give a sign to the world.

One area of activity in particular that you have emphasized, Brother Kalthoff, and that our churches have in common, is in my opinion *Seelsorge* (soul care). We are certainly not only a “come-church” but also a “go-church,” which reaches out to those within our congregations and to those who are unchurched. However, the larger the congregation, and the more spread out, the more difficult it is to approach *Seelsorge* adequately. Without having a notion of how to solve the problem, I would challenge the church nonetheless to reflect carefully on new ways to go about *Seelsorge*—ways that appropriately administer the Law and the Gospel. Pastors, co-workers and staff will almost never meet the expectations that are placed on them. But what is the church able to do to eliminate the “bad conscience” that results from these unmet expectations? And we also have to bear in mind that an integral part of the congregation is the pastor’s family, which in his pastoral duties he dare not neglect. Perhaps we should consider all the more what Wilhelm Löhe wrote: “Refrain from methodology and hold fast to the rule that all *Seelsorge* depends upon the individual case. Wait for opportunities and take advantage of them.”⁷ It was Löhe’s desire to assist the *Seelsorger* in concentrating on his work. The pastor should “equip the saints” for the *mutuum colloquium et consolationem fratrum*, the mutual comforting among brothers, so that in this way, through the power of the Holy Spirit, the congregation becomes a living organism.

There are many other aspects of Dr. Kalthoff’s lecture that are worthy of consideration with respect to the interrelation of the Office of Pastoral Ministry and the congregation. Moreover, Pastor Gottfried Werner made the following valid point in his book *Tröstet Euch der Ordination*:

The Office is Christ’s mystery. With Him and in Him we find ourselves always at the limits of our ability to comprehend. In the secure

realms of student cubicles and of the professors' desks we will certainly never be able to unravel the last of these mysteries. One has to do the Office, to be active in his pastoral duties. Only when we act concretely will we be able to approach this secret. But there will always remain one last incomprehensible rest.⁸

According to the judgment of many of its most able theologians, the Lutheran Church is not "done" understanding the Office and she never will be! If she were ever to understand it completely, the Office might begin to be understood as a part of the Law, as is the case in the Roman Catholic Church. It would then no longer be what it is and what it should be, namely, a consequence of the saving Gospel and an ever new creation of the Holy Spirit, whose continual vivification will never end until the close of the age.

Thank you for your attentiveness.

Notes

1. Herman Sasse, "Ministry and Congregation" in *We Confess the Church*, trans. Norman Nagel (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986), 69–70.

2. *Ibid.*, 74.

3. *Ibid.*, 82.

4. Martin Luther, *On the Councils and the Church* (1539), AE: 4:164.

5. *Ibid.*, 164–65.

6. *Ibid.*, 155.

7. Wilhelm Löhe, *The Evangelical Minister*, (Stuttgart, 1852), 92.

8. Gottfried Werner, "Tröstet Euch der Ordination" *Theologische Hefte Concordia*, Nr. 1–0.j.

RESPONSE TO PRESENTATION III

Reverend Richard H. Warneck, Professor
Concordia Seminary
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AT EVERY POINT OF CONTACT WITH ST. PAUL'S MINISTRY, the reader is turned to Christ! For what cause preaching and teaching, shepherding, caring, except that people may know and trust Christ for the forgiveness of their sins and for eternal salvation? Royal indeed is such a servanthood ministry!

Would that it were so in the eyes of the church and the world. Alas! Our essayist, Dr. Kalthoff, has demonstrated how this generation in America holds pastors in low esteem. That should be a minor concern. We walk in the shoes of the servant apostle who expressed his own low rating and that of his partners too—men who were portrayed as a spectacle pitied by angels, derided by men, tromping off to the arena of persecution, like dead men, fools for Christ (1 Cor. 4:9–10). Such indignities and lowliness are the brand of royalty when their service is for Christ!

Yet, the Lord for whom we gladly become fools has little patience with “foolishness.” Much of what Dr. Kalthoff reports—rank confusion over Church and Ministry, unreasonable expectations placed upon Christ's men, or pastors satisfied to be and remain dysfunctional and even unfaithful in the performance of pastoral tasks—is altogether a kind of “foolishness.”

If that were not enough, the tensions heating up between congregations and pastors is another exhibit of "foolishness." Dr. Kalthoff appeals to the sainted Dr. Hermann Sasse who cools things when he observes that the Office of the Keys is not turf we should be fighting over, not when Peter, the apostles, and the church are all recipients of the Office of the Keys from the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Matthew 16, 18; John 20). This is to say, there are different callings according the Lord's giving of His gifts (1 Cor. 12:28-29; Eph. 4:11), but there shall be no contest, no conflict among those so gifted and called or appointed. To pastors who tyrannize the flock and to congregations who wield heavy clout over pastors from a position of bureaucratic or democratic autocracy, Hermann Sasse's words referenced by the essayist have special application: "Office and congregation belong inseparably together. The life of one is also the life of the other. If the Office falters, so does the congregation. If the congregation falters, so does the Office."¹

Dr. Kalthoff observes both the "aristocratic" and "functional" views of the Holy Ministry. It appears that the hierarchical view projects the Pastoral Office as if there were no other ministry. The functional view embraces every ministry exclusive of the Office of Pastor. Aristocracy is an abuse; functionalism is convenient neglect. We have censured the former. To the functionalists we say that exegetically, historically and confessionally the Pastoral Office is clearly identified in the New Testament, in the understanding and practice of the early church, and in the teaching of the Lutheran Confessions. Dr. Kalthoff notes that those who exercise the Pastoral Office are sometimes named bishops (1 Tim. 3:1; Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1) and sometimes elders (*presbyteroi*), or ruling elders (1 Tim. 5:17, 19; James 5:13). At other times they are called shepherds (1 Pet. 5:1-4; cf. 2:25), even shepherds and bishops in the same breath (Acts 20:28). Why, then, do functionalists refuse to get the point (cf. Ap. XIII, 11-13; Treatise, 67-72)?

Is the trend toward functionalism a rejection of the Pastoral Office, or is it a reaction to a much-dated treatment of Church and Ministry, specifically a 19th-century framing of the issues by Löhe, Walther and Höfling? For a bit of freshness, Dr. Herman Sasse suggests that some flexibility or even elasticity in the exercise of the Public Ministry of preaching the Word and administering the Sacraments may be permissible for the church, without either challenging or diminishing the Pastoral Office.²

In any case, the present situation certainly calls for clear definition of the Office of Pastor. The Synod's Nomenclature Study Committee is wrestling with definition of all ministries in the church. Our plea here is that Lutherans consider restoring to usage the terms "bishop" and "pastor" as synonyms, making it clear that the pastor of a Christian congregation is indeed the "bishop." The New Testament would have it so, and early church practice adopted the usage. Dare we suggest that to know the name is to comprehend the thing so named? We mean no disrespect to the sainted Dr. Feucht. Still, until we come to the point of saying, "everyone a minister, but not everyone a bishop," we shall continue to have confusion over offices in the church.

Such attempts at definition can, however, go too far. Dr. Kalthoff cites the case of the pastor who tells his people that when he is at the altar he is "Christ" to them. President Kalthoff presents good reasons for discouraging this practice. If any should teach that the pastor is the embodiment of Christ, let the caution of the early church be noted. Not only the true doctrine, but Christ's honor, His person, and the divine and human natures were at stake when the fathers fought Arianism and Docetism and variations of these two heresies. How can our Lord be honored if any man should name himself "the Christ" in the company of our Lord's Body, His church? Let us avoid any affront to our Lord and offense to Christians by refraining from this ill-advised practice.

Dr. Kalthoff devoted a substantial portion of his paper to exaggerated expectations placed upon pastors by ambitious congregations. No congregation should expect the pastor to accomplish what the Holy Spirit alone can do to strengthen and add numbers to the church (cf. Acts 11:21). But, there is work the pastor is called to do. Here I play the part of the devil's advocate. High expectations? Let pastors rise to them! Certainly, pastoring today is an improvement over former days when honoring the pastor was perceived as benign tolerance of his half-hearted effort and mediocre performance of duties. Expectations can be a stimulus to pastors. And much of the pressure can be alleviated when the pastor pursues his ministry for what it is, not only a noble task, but verily a good "work" in the literal sense of that term. That was Dr. Victor Bartling's interpretation of 1 Tim. 3:1. What does it mean to work, to really work in the Pastoral Ministry? One might recall a 19th-century vignette of the village men coming down the lane on their way to the mills before dawn. They saw in the window of the parson's study a candle burning brightly. We might imagine that when the men returned to their homes after dark, they saw the candle still burning, giving light to the parson's tasks.³

But many a hard-working pastor is abused by mean-spirited persons in our congregations. Dr. Kalthoff speaks to this sorry situation. And, seminary students returning from their vicarages report how their supervising pastors are, in many instances, "taking it" from unloving congregations. Persecuted pastors need support. They need help. Most of all, they need an advocate. To whom shall they turn? District presidents, this is a fervent plea! Upon hearing of a pastor abused, please go and counsel both the pastor and his family. Then admonish the congregation, saying in effect, "Missouri Synod congregations do not abuse their pastors!" The word is out that pastors are fair game. Let a counter word get out! Abuse, harassment and bullying of pastors will not be tolerated in

the Missouri Synod for reasons cited by President Kalthoff, namely, those given in the apostolic Word (1 Thess. 5:12-13; Heb. 13:7, 17).

And may we direct serious pastoral attention to a related issue? How has it happened in the Lutheran Church that certain parties consider it cricket to destroy good names and reputations in the interest of orthodoxy?

Now, pastors themselves may generate dissatisfaction and frustration among their people. The belligerent spirit of a misguided pastor daring his people to challenge his divine call, while he shirks his duty and responsibility, is another situation calling for admonition, repentance and correction. To be faithful as pastors, to fulfill our ministry, we are to be fruitful in our work, yes, productive! Recognize that our people are working where they are required to be alert, efficient and industrious. And, they must demonstrate a certain eagerness to effect the greatest good for their employer. Many work at honing skills. They are models for us. Perhaps the ordering of our pastoral duties could benefit by taking up a few of their work tools: for example, thinking ahead, setting goals, executing by plan and holding ourselves accountable.

In one area especially we may improve. So much preaching in our churches suffers from inadequate preparation. Our sermons may be doctrinally correct, true to the Scriptures, rightly dividing between the Law and the Gospel. Still, if sermons are manifestly dull and unpalatable for the hearer, preaching may be heading for obsolescence of a kind. The remedy is intense, dogged preparation week to week, giving just as many work hours to sermon composition and writing and practice delivery, as to study and exegesis. Both sides of the discipline deserve greater investment of our time, yes, our very lives!

Dr. Kalthoff encourages pastoral care of the individual. He suggests that contacts with congregation members at their homes or

elsewhere can be an open door to that blessed person-to-person Gospel Ministry, the administration of Holy Absolution. In this regard, Dr. Kalthoff's reference to Bucer's pastoral care may either get a chuckle or raise an eyebrow. The quotation from Bucer is typically pietistic. Something notable is missing. There is no mention of speaking the forgiveness of sins in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ! Thanks be to Luther and the confessors who enrich our pastoral care with encouragement to use this gift from our Lord—the Absolution!

Dr. Kalthoff's wise counsel regarding pastoral leadership of the church's ministry team addresses functionalism and seems to imply that when individual members of the team are bishops unto themselves, the result may be dysfunctionism. Dr. Lyle Schaller reminds us of how difficult and extremely demanding is the responsibility of the senior pastor in our large parishes. Therefore, we repeat our earlier plea, let the pastor be what he is by virtue of his call to the Office. Let him be the *episcopos*, the bishop! Let him be singularly accountable to congregational leaders for the fruitful labors of other members of the staff. And, let them be accountable to the bishop. Neither tyrants nor benign enablers, senior pastors are "Barnabases," or encouragers. Patiently and in Christian love, they dedicate themselves to helping each team member experience a joyful, fulfilling ministry.

Joy, yes, joy in the Ministry, is for pastors too! At the close of the pastoral theology course at Concordia Seminary, we encourage the candidates to go for the joy. If we love the Lord and His people with a love Christ inspires by His Spirit, then joy, unmistakable and sometimes unspeakable, is the happy result. As the Lord's servant, the apostle took his licks (cf. 1 Cor. 4:11–12; 2 Cor. 6:4–10; 2 Tim. 2:9–13). But, listen when he speaks about his ministry. It is all praise, thanksgiving and joy! What we may best do for pastors in the face of problems and difficulties is open their eyes to joy in

the Spirit working faith and new life through the Means of Grace.

This is our response. We commend Dr. Kalthoff's paper to you with the hope and prayer that church leaders here may share his concerns and join his efforts in behalf of a Lutheran Pastoral Ministry serving faithfully our Lord and His people.

Notes

1. Hermann Sasse, *We Confess the Church*, trans. Norman Nagel (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986), 78.

2. Citing Luther's position that Christ gave His church no such law prescribing one right organization, government, and polity (*de constituenda ecclesia*), Sasse says, "Any way of organizing things may do, so long as the Means of Grace are going on and are not frustrated." *Ibid.*, 71. Note, furthermore, Sasse's observation that the beginning of the Christian church was marked not by uniformity but by diversity.

3. cf. J. H. Jowett, *The Preacher His Life and Work* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1912), 116.