

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

Cover painting:

Jesus Washing Peter's Feet by Ford Madox Brown.
Tate Gallery, London/Art Resource, NY.

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The Office of the President
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
1333 South Kirkwood Road
St. Louis, Missouri 63122

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Book design by Paul T. McCain
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IN COMMEMORATION OF
THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD

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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

COMMENTATORS' RESPONSES TO THE CONVOCATION

Right Reverend Paul Kofi Fynn

President, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana
Ghana, West Africa

I WANT TO THANK DR. BARRY, FIRST OF ALL, for the opportunity given to me to be one of the commentators at this convocation. It is really an honor for me as a representative of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana, and of the confessional Lutheran churches in Africa, to be chosen to comment on the presentations and discussions that have taken place.

This problem of Church and Ministry, or the relationship between the laity and the clergy, is not peculiar to the United States. It is present also in Africa, and for that matter throughout the whole world. Where the Word of God is taught and preached in its truth and purity, there Satan always tries hard to stage a *coup d'état*.

It has been beautifully stated in all the papers presented and in the responses given to them that God has instituted the Office of the Holy Ministry and the church, the Priesthood of all Believers. The Office of the Public Ministry has been created by God and, as Dr. Johnson has stated, "all Christians, whether ordained or not, have the same Baptism, the same Gospel and the same faith. There are no spiritual distinctions among the people of God. Conse-

quently, they share a common priesthood and are called upon to exercise priestly responsibilities." That is, Christians are called upon to carry out the same task of preaching and teaching the Gospel.

The essayists used images such as cars, golf, and marriage to explain this beautiful relationship. I would like to sum up with a similar picture. It is something that everyone has in his or her home. It is simple and yet we don't take note of it: a pair of scissors. The blades of a scissors face opposite directions and yet they work together to achieve one purpose. They are used to cut materials for sewing, and in hospitals, homes, schools, and offices to cut paper. The two halves of a scissors are always together, performing their duties or functions together. In the same way, the Holy Ministry and the Priesthood of Believers are interdependent, yet dependent—depending on each other to proclaim the Gospel. What holds them together at the center is Christ. Without Christ, they will fall apart. Christ unites them and makes them move.

Problem Areas

The beautiful relationship between the Holy Ministry and the Priesthood of Believers has often been abused, resulting in problems, tension, conflicts and controversy, as described by the presenters. These problems do not come from the Scriptures and our well-thought-out Lutheran Confessions themselves. But customs and traditions in America and other countries have invaded our beloved Lutheran Church and imposed their own secular, pagan ideas and expectations on the Pastoral Office. Our own selfish interest also creates problems. These are factors that contribute to the challenges we face. The problem begins right here at the conference. We are discussing the clergy and the laity. But how many laymen are here with us?

Another way this relationship has been abused has to do with how the pastors are regarded. For instance, in Ghana, priests are

regarded as chiefs and this certainly goes to their heads. In fact, the pastor becomes a boss and a village chief. He is the banker, the cashier, the school teacher, the judge, the preacher, the mechanic, the driver(s), the builder—you name it. The “chief” mentality creates problems.

Similar thinking can be found here in the United States. The pastor is often seen as a boss who does everything in the congregation. He decides where the altar should be. He is the liturgist. He leads the worship. He reads the lessons. He practically does everything. There is one thing he does not do in the congregation, and that is take the offering. Maybe the congregation does not trust him with the money.

It is as if the whole congregation is in a boat. The pastor alone paddles the boat while the members sit in it, smoking a pipe and drinking coffee. If anything happens to the pastor while on the sea, the whole boat will sink and the people will perish. The pastor teaches them to be lazy and to sit. They then become comfortable Christians.

I do not blame them. The fault lies in our ordination vow. It reads: “Brothers and sisters in Christ, you have heard the confession and solemn promise of (name) called to serve in the congregation. I ask you now, in the presence of God: Will you receive him, show him fitting love and honor, and support him by your gifts and fervent prayer? If so, answer: We will with the help of God.” Once they love him, give him gifts and pay him, they then feel they have performed their Christian responsibilities. So, they sit.

A third problem is this: The relationship between clergy and laity is abused because of a misunderstanding of servanthood. We are called upon to serve. As pointed out by all the papers, the disciples were thankful to be “slaves” of Jesus. Surprisingly, however, when it comes to service, pastors in the United States often become masters. The Ministry is viewed as a profession. There seems to be

much worry about benefits and salaries. It looks like we think of the Ministry in the world's terms. In Ghana, I am afraid our pastors are nearly slaves. They receive little or no support or benefits from the congregations. Our situation in Ghana certainly presents many problems. But we do easily understand that ministry means service to God. We are not mistaken that our pastors have a profession with benefits. Our pastors, evangelists and the laymen walk several miles on foot to share God's message with the dying and with unbelievers.

Qualifications for the Holy Ministry

Another area of concern is this: The presenters mentioned that the priests in the Old Testament were put into office by God, while in the New Testament, our Lord put the apostles into office and they, according to His will, placed others into office. But unfortunately, the presenters did not explain to us how the priests and the apostles received their training. What kind of training did they have? What kind of qualifications did they have? What kind of degree, diploma, certificate (if any) did they obtain?

In addition, the presenters did not share with us how pastors are called. As we talk about the involvement of the laity, we should not overlook the training and qualifications of a pastor (1 Tim. 3:1-7).

For instance, in Cote d'Ivoire, a missionary met an Ivoirian and within two months the missionary ordained him, because the person spoke good French. This gentleman turned the whole church upside down. On another occasion, a layman preached in my church and condemned all women. When asked why he preached like that, he said that on the way to church that morning, he had fought with his wife.

If laymen are to hold key positions in the church and we are to avoid turning our beloved church into a pentecostal church, then

laymen must be trained, have qualifications and thoroughly understand the Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. The laymen should be well-equipped before they are asked to carry out teaching and preaching in the church. Due to materialism and the rush for gold, fewer and fewer people are now entering into the Holy Ministry. Instead of entering into the Holy Ministry, laypeople are looking for and seeking big cars, big houses, big money, big husband, big wives—everything big. Therefore, the position of the laity and what we expect of them should be carefully looked into, since the churches will soon be using more and more laymen to carry out the Ministry of the church.

Recommendations

Let me conclude by making the following recommendations:

1. That studies on the issue of Church and Ministry, as well as the qualifications, training, duties and the expectations of the laity, be organized by the CTCR for the lay and clergy in Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod congregations;
2. That there be a team ministry between district presidents and seminary faculty to help arrest the situation;
3. That pastors be encouraged to include the issue of Church and Ministry in their teachings, both in their confirmation and in their adult Bible classes; and
4. That the whole idea of call, commissioning, ordination, and the ordination vows be revisited.

Once again I take this opportunity to thank Dr. Al Barry and the organizers of this important conference. God bless you all.

Dr. J.A.O. Preus, III

Professor, Concordia Seminary
St. Louis, Missouri

FIRST OF ALL, I WANT TO THANK ALL THE SPEAKERS and reactors. This has been a great convocation! But, what can I offer you, at the end of two-and-a-half jam-packed days of theological reflection on the Church and the Ministry, that would be of any value to you? What can I possibly say that has not already been said? In twenty minutes, I cannot really add much to this discussion. Nor can I hope to offer an adequate summary of everything that has been said here. So, I will not try to do that.

Rather I will address my brief remarks primarily to the task of helping us look ahead a bit, to what follows from this convocation. I will discuss how we can take what has happened here out into the church and the world. Specifically, I will ask you to reflect with me on the important matter of theological discourse by asking the question, "If we have learned better in this convocation what to say about Church and Ministry, then, how should we go about saying it?" How can we carry on clear and persuasive theological conversation about this question (or any other theological question, for that matter), particularly with those with whom we disagree? This is the question I would like to address with you this morning.

The church today, including The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, lives and works in an increasingly pluralistic world. Unlike the nineteenth and much of the twentieth century when we found

ourselves dealing almost exclusively with other Christian traditions (first, Protestants and later, Roman Catholics), we now function in the midst of a mind-numbing array of religious options. These range from other-world religions (such as Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism) to New Age religiosity and sectarian spirituality. In the midst of this cacophony of competing voices, Christians are becoming increasingly eclectic in their religious faith and piety. At the same time, they are identifying less and less with the theological position of any particular tradition or denomination. This “post-denominational” spirit results further in a de-emphasis upon any particular and specific truth claim. People are increasingly cutting themselves off from their history, from what has theologically defined them. To put it bluntly, people today, even in our own churches, don’t know and don’t care about their theological tradition. They will simply believe what they want to.

So, a pluralistic culture brings to the forefront the question of the identity of a particular tradition. And, contrary to what many people today think, the matter of identity, namely, “who are we?” is an important one because more than anything else, a church’s identity shapes, not only its present, but its future as well. If we do not know who we are, we do not know where we are going, what we are all about, what we stand for. Consider for a moment how we would tend to regard a person who suffers from amnesia or someone who is afflicted with Alzheimer’s disease. Such a person cannot remember who he is. Why? Because he cannot remember his past. And because he cannot remember his past, he cannot discover his purpose for the present, and he cuts himself off from his rightful future.

Well, what is our Lutheran identity? Historically, it has been defined by ecumenical creeds and ecumenical confessions as deposited in the Book of Concord. These constitute our confessional heritage. They shape our mission. They provide the norm

and touchstone for our faith (what we believe) and our life (the shape of our worship and piety). The Book of Concord sets forth our theological position as well as our theological agenda by making the Gospel the alpha and omega for all that we say and do. We may be rightly proud of the doctrine of the Confessions, most of all because at the center of it all stands the doctrine of the Gospel. We may be certain that, as true expositions of Scripture, they give all glory to Christ and full comfort to sinners. We may proclaim them in a loving and kind way, inviting others to join us in confessing these beautiful articles of faith.

A distinctively Lutheran, confessional approach to the theological task, of course, finds its definitive expression in the Formula of Concord. What does such an approach look like? Well, Luther's goal was to call the church back to the one, biblical-creedal faith, not to be distinctively "Luther-ian." Likewise, Walther's goal was to be orthodox, just plain orthodox, not distinctively "Walther-ian." To be distinctively "Luther-ian" or "Walther-ian" over and above historic orthodox Christianity is to be sectarian. So, to be distinctively Lutheran and confessional is to be no less and no more than "historic Christianity." This was the goal of the Formula of Concord.

In many ways, it is not only a Formula *of* Concord, it is also a Formula *for* Concord. That is, it provides an excellent model for dealing with theological controversies as well as for going about the task of doing theology and carrying out theological discourse and dialog in our day and age, just as it did in the 16th century. I would like to discuss five ways in which the Formula of Concord can help us, not only to say what we say right, but also to say it well; that is, not only to let it guide us in the content of our conversation, but also in the course of our discourse.

First, the formulators of the Formula focus on issues and not on personalities. They insist upon dealing with others on the basis

of the *status controversiae* rather than superficial labels or personal or political issues. In focusing on the issues, they do not adopt a simplistic or reductionistic approach. Rather, they recognize the complexities and nuances of a problem that requires disciplined and deep theological thinking. They do not caricature positions; they present a fair-minded description of the opponent's position.

Fair-mindedness involves a *sic et non* (yes and no) approach to theological dialog. It means saying "yes" to what there is in the other person's position that is good and right and wholesome and in accordance with Scripture. But, it also means saying "no" to what there is in the other's position that is bad or wrong or unwholesome or not in accordance with Scripture. Both *yes and no*, not *yes or no*. The Formula of Concord shows us a way to carry on theological dialog and debate that is critically discerning or appraisingly critical; seeking the truth wherever it may be found (even among those who are otherwise wrong) and exposing error wherever it may be found (even among those who are otherwise right).

Second, the Formula of Concord highlights the importance of the issue at hand. It consciously avoids dealing with logomachies or with arguing for the sake of arguing. It avoids useless or inappropriate contention. It avoids bickering about matters that are not at issue or only marginally related. Instead, when dealing with a given issue, the Formula shows how it affects the core of the church's proclamation; how it impacts the preaching and hearing, the administering and receiving of the Gospel.

Third, the Formula sets forth the biblical truth and, in so doing, avoids extreme positions on both sides of an issue. In particular, it rejects the approach that counters an error merely by stating the opposite position (Article IV). Saying the opposite of an error can still be (and often is) error. This has been a particularly disturbing aspect of the debate about Church and Ministry in our

circles. Dr. Johnson's essay did a good job of pointing out the necessity of maintaining the tension between Church and Ministry, while avoiding the errors. Unfortunately, many of us have fallen into the trap of countering a position we find wanting (whether it be too much or too little emphasis on Church or Ministry) by putting forward a position that is the opposite. However, the Formula shows us that there never is and never will be a substitute for that difficult, narrow way of letting the Scriptures decide issues for us and, on that basis, formulating positions that stand against the extremes that tempt on both sides.

Fourth, the Formula engages in biblical exegesis. The Formula's approach begins with a discussion of the biblical evidence and then proceeds to examine the tradition of the church. This is one of the things that has been most unhelpful about much of the debate over Church and Ministry. I think we have come a long way during this convocation, and I wish to commend Presidents Barry and Johnson—and especially Wenthe—for their excellent work in this regard. But, we need to go further. This is particularly true for the international confessional churches, who share our devotion to Scripture, but perhaps are not as familiar with the particular Missourian history as formulated in the Walther/Löhe dichotomy. It would help us all, both in Missouri and those outside of it, if we would follow the Formula's pattern of always beginning our discussion with the biblical evidence, followed by an examination of the early church fathers, before proceeding to an examination of the various, local traditions of our churches.

Fifth, and finally, the Formula affirms the catholicity of the confessional Lutheran Church by self-consciously placing itself within the tradition of the wider, historic Christian theology. The Apology especially seeks to show how its doctrine stands in continuity with the theology of the early church. The confessors were throughout intent on refuting the charge of "sectarian." The Cata-

log of Testimonies was appended to the Formula in order to show that its Christology stands in continuity with the historic Christian faith. This commitment tells us that it is neither prudent nor appropriate to engage in theological discourse, whether about Church and Ministry or about any other theological issue, without taking into account what the church has always, everywhere confessed.

Among other things, this strongly implies that these conversations must take place, not only within earshot of the international Lutheran confessional churches, but also and especially, with the strong and significant input of the wider church, including particularly our partner churches from around the world. This means we must avoid isolationism and parochialism just as much as we must avoid unionism and liberalism. We must say “no” to both extremes. This convocation was blessed with excellent participation from our partners around the world.

If we in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod ever act as if we have a corner on the truth, or as if we are the teachers to whom the rest of the international Lutheran confessional churches must simply listen, we will be acting in a way that is less than wise and less than respectful. That is why I am so pleased that there is such significant representation from the international Lutheran churches who call themselves confessional. And that is why, in addition to whatever else may or must be done when this conference is over, we must also take care to allow this discussion between church leaders and theologians to continue. There are few things that we could do better to ensure the future vitality of this confessional witness and way than to invest in the kinds of lively discourse this convocation has fostered. I hope it will not be 150 years before we do something like this again!

I would like to make one, final comment on what has happened here. It has become clear to me that the key to leading us

beyond the impasse in the Church and Ministry debate is to understand both offices, that of the Priesthood of all Believers and that of the Public Ministry, as offices of the Gospel. Understanding them both in this light, the one as the Gospel Office, the other as the Office from the Gospel, enables us to exalt both to the high position that the Lord who instituted them both has given them.

Since they are both offices of and from the Gospel and both are Christ's gracious institutions, it is inconceivable that we should treat them as if they were at odds with one another, or in competition with each other. Because they are both "Gospel doctrines," any one-up-one-down handling of them is not only unseemly, and not only bound to produce further friction in our church, but it is a heresy that, at all costs, must be avoided as we value our salvation.

For too long, people have divided themselves into camps: Church vs. Ministry. If one good thing were to come out of this convocation, it would be that we all recognize that both Church and Ministry are Christ's Gospel gifts and seek ways to exalt them both, in our speaking and in our acting, and to lift both of them to the lofty and blessed place given to them by the Lord of the church and the Ministry.

Dr. Lance G. Steicke

President, Lutheran Church of Australia
North Adelaide, South Australia

LIKE THE TWO PREVIOUS SPEAKERS, I am very grateful to President Barry and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod for this convocation. My sincere thanks for everything that has gone on here—to the presenters of the papers and the discussions. I am going to take that as a given and not elaborate on it anymore. I am very thankful for everything that has been presented here.

My task and the task of the responders this morning is to “reflect on what we saw and heard.” I am going to add one additional term of reference to that and indicate what I did not hear.

First of all, I affirm what has been presented here so strongly and clearly. The Office of the Public Ministry and the Priesthood of Believers are gifts of God; they are givens. They are not the creation of human beings, but they are gifts of God. Theology is for proclamation, someone said during the course of this symposium. It is not an academic exercise. We are not here purely and simply to discuss theology for theology’s sake. It is for the sake of the Gospel. It is for the sake of the mission of the church. And I appreciated very much, toward the end of President Barry’s presentation, the emphasis on the Gospel. I also appreciated my vice-president and seminary lecturer’s emphasis on mission and the purpose presented yesterday afternoon. Why is the Office of the Public Ministry given to the church? It is given for the sake of the Gospel.

It is given so that the Gospel might be taught, preached, proclaimed to the members of the church and to the world. It is given for purposes of Gospel and mission. Why does the Priesthood of Believers exist? Why does the church exist? They are there to live their life of vocation, a salt and leaven, and witness to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the people of this world. Focal and central to everything in the Office of the Public Ministry and the Priesthood of Believers is Jesus Christ. He is both the motive and the purpose “of and from the Gospel,” to quote my predecessor here in these presentations.

On to a few comments on what I didn't hear or didn't hear enough of. Now I know it has been said a number of times that everything has been exhausted. I'm not quite sure that it has. I recall only one passing reference to saints and sinners—most unusual for a Lutheran theological gathering. There was no emphasis on that traditional classic emphasis, saints and sinners. I ask myself the question (and I made this statement at the International Lutheran Council meeting last week), “Do we have difficulty as theologians, as church leaders, in dealing with our people as saints?” We can deal with them fairly easily as sinners, but perhaps the saint side of that equation comes fairly hard to us. I think of St. Paul in 1 Corinthians, where right at the beginning he writes “to the saints of God who are in Corinth.” He exalts that and then for the rest of the letter he deals with them, of course, as sinners and very much so. But he deals with those people in their sinfulness as the saints of God. Do we deal with people only as sinners? With respect to our problem pastors, or problem congregations or people, do we deal with them as saints who now have a particular problem or a particular sin? And so I leave that question and that thought hang in the air. To church presidents, to church leaders and to district presidents, I ask the question as I ask myself the question, “Do we need to hear confession, confession of sins, and pronounce the

Absolution much more than we do—and perhaps a lot more than we exercise episcopate and church discipline?”

Moving from that, as a transition to the next point, to what I didn't hear enough of or very little of, there were very few specific references to the role of presidents. The role of presidents is crucial when we are dealing with the Office of the Public Ministry and the Priesthood of Believers. Pastors feel (and this is certainly the case in my church and I gather in yours, according to feedback that I have heard these days) that often presidents—presidents who have hands-on responsibility—are unfair in their dealings in problem situations. Either they side with the pastor or they side with the congregation. The perception is that very rarely do they come in (I am not talking about reality) even-handedly trying to deal with the situation in a fair, impartial way. But they are perceived to be taking sides. I ask presidents and church leaders, do we support pastors who take a stand, who are faithful in their ministry even though that stand on the basis of Scripture and the Confessions may upset people? So, rather than have an upset congregation or members of the congregation, we feel we need to take the pastor to task for taking a firm stand. Pastors need an advocate, someone said here at this symposium. Do we see to it that pastors do have an advocate (not necessarily ourselves); that pastors are provided with a pastor during their difficult days?

In connection with the role of a president, I also ask the question: Do we function as bishops in the sense of our teaching roles? I won't go into nomenclature. I happen to prefer the title “bishop,” but that's an aside and not significant. The traditional role and the role in many churches, not necessarily Lutheran churches, is that of the bishop as a teacher and therefore as a unifying factor in the church. We, in the Lutheran Church of Australia, have recently moved to a situation where our Commission on Theology will refer many of their statements to the presidents of the church or the

Council of Presidents for implementation. The statement will not be released to the church at all. It is given to the presidents. If the presidents do not take it up and run with it, it goes into the filing basket. I think that is a good model for theology and church life, theology and the episcopate. The theologians, together with church leaders, prepare the theological statement. The bishops or presidents are responsible for teaching—teaching the pastors, teaching the people of God, putting it into practice. And that, I submit, is a good relationship between theology and practice, between theologians and church presidents.

I did not hear too much, or very little, at this workshop so far as references to women are concerned. And yet it is a major agenda item in churches around the world, also Lutheran churches. I refer not only to the question of ordination of women, although that is one issue, it seems to me. I side with one speaker at this meeting, I think, that when we look at the Office of the Public Ministry and the Priesthood of all Believers, there should at least be more than a passing reference to the vexed question of the ordination of women. I asked myself as I sat here in this meeting, what would have happened if I would have brought a woman theologian from the Lutheran Church of Australia? We have two women on our Commission on Theology. We have one woman lecturer at Luther campus, responsible primarily for the teacher-training part of that program.

I also missed references at this assembly to the role of a pastor's wife. Now I know we are dealing with the Office of the Public Ministry and with the Office of the Pastor and not the pastor's wife. But I'm not quite certain that the role of the wife can be eliminated entirely from that discussion. Elvin Janetzki, who is referred to here, did a survey a number of years ago amongst our clergy and one of the questions was, "To whom do you go, first of all, when you have a difficulty or problem?" The vast majority of pastors said,

their wife. Long before the district president, a member of the congregation, a specialist, counselor, or whatever, they go to their wife. What do we do as a church (we do very little in Australia) so far as equipping those wives to be good responders to the pastor in that particular situation?

Still in reference to women, President Barry referred in his paper to standing in laymen's shoes. We need to learn to try to stand in laymen's shoes and see things from that perspective, and I would add specifically in laywomen's shoes. They are over half of the church, over half of the Priesthood of all Believers, and a very vital and important part led pastorally and administratively primarily by men. The challenge to us, I believe, is to learn to be able to minister to them and their special needs in a special way. So we somehow need to stand in their shoes also, and perhaps take special measures to see that pastoral care and counseling is provided for them in certain sensitive areas.

There was no strong reference at this meeting, I felt, to the pastor's ministry of Word and prayer. I am now talking about the pastor's ministry to himself. Let me share with you something that one pastor of our church challenged me with a few years ago. He said, "I believe that our church, the Lutheran Church, ought to be, and ought to be seen to be, a church of Word and prayer." He submitted that we do lip service to that and not much more. He threw out the challenge, "Why shouldn't it be that we virtually decree that two hours per day is spent by the pastor in purely a Ministry of Word and prayer, studying the Word and praying?" He said that this would serve as an excellent role model for the church. And so from 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. every morning every member of the Lutheran Church of Australia knows that you do not disturb the pastors at that time; that's their hardest work. Unless there is an absolute life-and-death issue, that is the time when you just do not disturb them. And that would be saying to

the church, we take this matter of word and prayer (Acts 6:4) very, very seriously?" He said, "Why should we, the Lutheran Church of Australia, not have special conventions of pastors and elders and leaders that devote the entire agenda to how you go about a Word and Sacrament Ministry, showing that we take this dimension of our life very seriously." There was no strong reference to that particular aspect at this meeting.

I commend the references to Lutheran dialectics and tensions that were presented here, but I missed any reference to the tension between loyalty and standing firm on the one hand, and flexibility on the other. Loyalty and rigidity have perhaps been seen to go hand-in-hand in confessional Lutheran circles in the past. It need not necessarily be so. There can be standing firm, standing very firm and solid on the Word of God and the Confessions and yet having a flexibility at the same time, a pastoral flexibility. And I believe that that is a challenge that stands before us.

There were not enough references at this meeting, I believe, to the many, many very fine marriages in existence. I am referring to marriages of pastors and people, the Office of the Public Ministry and the Priesthood of all Believers. We have some wonderful pastors in our church. In going around the church and reporting to district synods and conventions, I make a point of saying that we should thank God for the wonderful pastors that God has given us. And I know you have them in the States too, and in other countries. But in the States—I've seen them, I've heard them, I've heard your reports—we have some wonderful pastors, some pastors who are committed to the Word and the Confessions, committed to the Gospel, committed to pastoral care, committed to an effective Ministry of the Gospel. We have wonderful relationships between pastor and people. We have some wonderful congregations. The danger is that we let the problem pastors and the problem congregations so monopolize the agenda that we become depressed and

think that that is the total picture. I recall one of our Council of Presidents meetings where we were discussing pastors with problems, and at the end of it, I think when we were all feeling very depressed, somebody asked the question, "Does anybody have any good pastors in his district?" Ninety-seven percent of them are. We have about three percent that are problems. Unfortunately, our focus as church leaders is often on the three percent or whatever your percentage is. So I repeat, we have some wonderful pastors, we have some wonderful congregations, we have some wonderful marriages. Let's thank God for them.

Radical equality and individualism were the two trends that were highlighted by President Barry and some subsequent speakers. There was no reference—apart from, I think, one of my predecessors reporting here this morning—to a third basic trend that impacts Church and Ministry: the breakdown of traditional structures and loyalties, family, parents, home, denominations, the whole question of authority. How do you maintain and promote a confessional Lutheran church when people are not interested in "Lutheran Church" or "Anglican" or whatever else it might be—when people are not interested in confessional Lutheranism? That is going to be the big agenda item before us in the future and the thing that we really have to address. I conclude with a few basic points.

1. Tensions will always exist. Problems there will always be. Sin seems to be a part of our world. But has our focus been too much on the tensions, too much on the people of God and the pastor and the problems connected therewith and not enough on Jesus the Christ, the Lord of the Church?

2. Greater emphasis needs to be given, I believe, to the Christian vocation, the Priesthood of all Believers, and the Christian vocation. A failure to see that causes a blurring of the distinction between the two. And I quote from a recent statement of the

Lutheran Church of Australia's Commission on Theology titled "The Ministry of the People of God and the Public Ministry." We don't hesitate to use those two ministries. The introduction says:

In order to avoid confusion, church leaders and members need to learn the fine art of drawing distinctions. This is particularly the case in regard to the ministry of the people of God, commonly called the Priesthood of all Believers and the Public Ministry. The one is a vocation that belongs to every Christian. The other is an Office that has been instituted by Christ as a gift to His church. The second spells out the ministry of the people of God on the basis of Scripture: a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a body, a household, a servant, a spiritual house, etc. It goes on to refer to the corporate rather than the individualistic nature of it.

The next point is Baptism and then, still on the Priesthood of all Believers: God's people will exercise a ministry in every area of daily life. No part is excluded.

Then it talks about our vocation, as parents, as citizens, as husbands or wives, as children, as members of the congregation, as neighbors. And then it goes on the Office of the Public Ministry. So I believe we need greater emphasis on Christian vocation.

3. What has contributed to the loss of pastoral identity? What can we do to recapture it?

4. Do everything that we do for the sake of the Gospel.

5. I am one of those who has the privilege of having absolute joy in my forty-one years in the Office of the Public Ministry, sheer joy. I praise and thank God for that. I feel so sorry for those who are burdened down and depressed and do not have that joy. It is so important for all of us to be role models, I think, in that regard, and to show the joy of the Ministry so that it is captured by our pastors and captured also by the members of the Priesthood of all Believers.

Thank you and God bless!

Dr. George F. Wollenburg

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I WOULD LIKE TO BEGIN MY RESPONSE with a quotation from Dr. Walther's *Law and Gospel*, in which he discusses pastors' speaking to their congregations and preaching. It is a Latin phrase: *non tantum in rebus, sed etiam in phrasibus*.

It is not enough simply to speak the right substance; one must also speak in the right words. Otherwise, preaching leads to confusion and difficulty. (*Law and Gospel*, p. 277).

Reflecting on the essays and the responses from the responders, I will give my impression of the entire convocation rather than simply comment on the particular presentations. I have several questions that were raised by the essays and discussion on the first day. These questions have to do with the matter of whether Article V of the Augustana refers to an Office that is conferred upon an individual by ordination, that is, whether the Latin phrase *ministerium docendi evangelii et porrigendi sacramenta* or the German *das Predigtamt eingesetzt, Evangelium und Sakrament geben* are to be understood as exclusively applying to the Pastoral Office. I raise this for your consideration. In paragraphs of 26 and 27 of the Treatise, Philip Melancthon in reference to Ephesians 4:11 writes, ". . . the Ministry of the New Testament . . . exists wherever God gives His gifts, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers" (*pastores et doctores*; 26). Likewise, "This right is a gift given exclusively to the church"

(67). Ephesians 4:11 is then cited in support of the fact that this authority is a gift given to the church. Among the gifts given to the church, therefore, are *pastores et doctores*. Dr. Arthur Piepkorn, one of my sainted teachers, remarks in some of his comments that these words describe a single office and that Melanchthon includes himself as among the doctors or teachers of the church who is involved in the *docendi evangelii*. But he is not ordained.

Thus, the chief confessions of the Lutheran Church and the bulk of the Lutheran symbols have as their primary author a man who is unordained. The Augustana and the Apology—both of which clearly and unequivocally teach the Gospel to the church—are authored by a layman who never received holy orders. Melanchthon, according to blessed Dr. Piepkorn, would differentiate between the authority to teach the Gospel (*docendi evangelii*) and the authority to administer the Sacraments. The Augustana, it should be noted, is subscribed in its presentation only by unordained men. The question that I have then for our theologians is, how does this apply to our discussion of the almost absolute necessity of ordination in order to qualify for the *docendi evangelii* of Augustana V?

In listening to the president of the Lutheran Church of Australia, I raise something in connection with this previous point that I had not intended to, although I had given it some thought. What does this have to say to us about the question of female theologians who are not ordained?

I found myself in agreement with Dr. Gibbs' response to Dr. Wenthe's essay, that it is prolegomenon to a discussion of the Holy Priesthood. Although the titles of the paper indicated that we might anticipate some discussion of what is entailed in the Royal Priesthood, almost nothing was said concerning the priestly nation and its place in God's economy. Dr. Wenthe has rendered a service to us in pointing out the nature and character of the priestly nation.

I would call your attention to both Exod. 19:6 and 1 Pet. 2:9. The tense of the verbs in Exod. 19:6 is future. The tense of the verb in 1 Pet. 2:9 is present. That which is promised in Exodus finds its fulfillment in the chosen race, the royal priesthood, the holy nation, the people who belong to God alone, that is, the church of the New Testament. It is also significant to note that God's Word to Israel in Exod. 19:6 indicates that Israel exists for the sake of the world. "You shall be to me a special treasure above all peoples, for all the earth is mine." It is through them that God will display His character to the peoples of the world and that also is the thrust of 1 Pet. 2:9, ". . . that you may declare the wonderful deeds of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (RSV). The Holy Priesthood exists for the sake of the world. They are a kingdom of priests. Through them God extends His royal sovereign rule over all peoples. That sovereign rule of God, His Kingdom, is extended over all the earth (dominion over all creation) as the Holy Spirit through the Gospel gathers the priestly people as the beginning of the new heaven and the new earth, the new creation. They are born as priests to mediate the presence of God in every realm of human life and endeavor. They are living stones of the priestly house, Jesus Himself being the chief cornerstone.

"House" in 1 Pet. 2:5 is to be understood in terms of family, the royal priestly house. What we did not discuss is what this priestly office entails and how the servants of the holy church, her ministers, oversee the Priesthood. We have traditionally given lip service to the Royal Priesthood, primarily as a polemic against Rome, but have never developed a thorough biblical theology of the Royal Priesthood. Therefore, when we discuss the subject of Church and Ministry we get bogged down in the same discussion repeatedly. We defend the ministerial authority over against the multitude or the Priesthood over against a papistic or a hierarchical ministry.

I am suggesting that we need to develop a thorough, a biblical theology of the Royal Priesthood. Neither "everyone a minister," nor the polemical thrust of everyone his or her own priest, is a biblical theology of the Royal Priesthood. I suggest that an outline for such a biblical theology of the Royal Priesthood and of their relationship to their ministers can be developed from the following statement: The ministers or servants of the Royal Priesthood are to discipline the Priesthood, to worship God, to live the holy life for the sake of the world, and to offer themselves in the priestly service of the Gospel in order to bring the unbelieving hordes as an oblation to God, having been sanctified by the Holy Spirit. I understand the word "discipline" to mean "to train by instruction and exercise." It would appear to me that merely to repeat the words that ministers are to preach and teach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments does not give us an adequate description of what the functions of the priestly nation's ministers are.

Finally, I have heard much about the divine call, holy ordination. However, little has been said in terms of what the fathers discussed concerning this matter. Thus, assurance that the call is from God is to be a remedy against an evil conscience. If he has been a faithful servant, he may confidently say to the Lord, "You called and sent me to this place. I am not responsible for the outcome; that is your responsibility. I will gladly serve you as best I can with the help of your Spirit and grace, but the outcome is not my responsibility." That is the intent of speaking of the divine call. The abuse of the divine call is to speak of tenure, to use it as job security.

Second, the divine call lays upon the one called the burden of obedience. God called you to this place. Here you are to remain, regardless of affliction, until God calls you to another place. To flee the cross by fleeing the place where God called you is to flee Jesus Christ.

I suggest that our seminaries need to be much more involved with the district presidents to discuss what is happening, *e.g.*, the strife that so often destroys both good pastors and God's people in a congregation. On the other hand, district presidents need to defend pastors who with integrity seek patiently, kindly, and lovingly to lead their congregations to be truly Lutheran in doctrine and practice. How this can be accomplished with seminaries and district presidents working together is perhaps one of the most important questions to which we need to find an answer.

Let me again express my deep appreciation for the brothers who presented the essays to this gathering. And I leave you with those thoughts as my comments on our days together.