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CONTENTS

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ARTICLES

<i>What Can Presbyterians Learn from Lutherans?</i> D. G. Hart	3
<i>Philip Jacob Spener and the Demise of the Practice of Holy Absolution in the Lutheran Church</i> Gerald S. Krispin	9
<i>Liturgy and Pietism—Then and Now</i> John T. Pless	19
<i>Map of the Kingdom of Piety</i> Valentine Ernst Loescher, Translated by Matthew C. Harrison	29
<i>Oscar Feucht's Everyone a Minister: Pietismus Redivivus</i> Brent Kuhlman	31
<i>The Lutheran Confessions on the Holy Ministry with a Few Thoughts on Hoefling</i> David P. Scaer	37
<i>The Nicene Creed and the Filioque: A Lutheran Approach</i> David Jay Webber	45

REVIEWS 53

- REVIEW ESSAY: *Martin Luther: The Christian Between God and Death*. By Richard Marius. Review by Mark Sander
- The Genesis of Doctrine: A Study in the Foundation of Doctrinal Criticism*. Alister E. McGrath.
- Shattering the Myths of Darwinism*. Richard Milton.
- Baptism: My Adoption into God's Family*. Gaylin R. Schmeling.
- The Divorce Culture*. Barbara Dafoe Whitehead.
- The Complete Text of the Earliest New Testament Manuscripts*. Edited by Philip W. Comfort and David P. Barrett.
- The Undertaking: Life Studies from the Dismal Trade*. Thomas Lynch.
- BRIEFLY NOTED

LOGIA FORUM 63

- Luther and Longfellow • Creative Worship a la 1732 • Vieker Installation • Rebuking Pietism
Emotions from Philosophy to Pietism • A Pious Walk • Beatitudes a la Pietism
Prostituting the Office • Liturgy Video Available • The Spirit of Christmas

ALSO THIS ISSUE

<i>A Call for Manuscripts</i>	18
<i>Map (Kingdom of Piety)</i>	28

The Lutheran Confessions on the Holy Ministry With a Few Thoughts on Hoefling

DAVID P. SCAER

DEFINING OUR SITUATION

CHURCH BODIES DO THEOLOGY WITHIN their own traditions. Historical quarrels are rehearsed and their outcomes affirmed. Martin Stephan with J. A. A. Grabau on one side and Vehse on the other are Charybdis of ecclesiastical authoritarianism and Scylla of proletarianism, through which the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) has traditionally located her position.¹ Problematic for any definition of ministry today are the multiple meanings attached to the words *ministry* and *minister* so that their meanings cannot be directly determined from such phrases as ordained minister (ministry), lay minister (ministry), commissioned minister (ministry), and minister (ministry) of music. All are unceremoniously grouped as professional workers. Ultimate non-meaning is reached with the protestant decree that “everyone is a minister.” With this the parishioner no longer feels unfairly confined to the pew. Pulpit, lectern, and altar are within his or her reach.² No longer is the chancel the holy of holies, but “the friendly of friendlies.” Any meaningful distinction between clergy and congregation other than a functional one is lost. What the people do individually, the pastor does as a salaried worker of the church. The people are amateurs. He is a professional. The repercussions of such a view are enormous. One young man contemplating seminary said, “Why should I study for the ministry, if I am already a minister?” A professional minister is accountable to all other ministers as corporate stockholders who through boards supervise him and to whom he is accountable. He now provides annual reports as a corporate executive and can be removed if the directors determine that the company’s needs are not being met. Reversed is the New Testament idea of the pastor accountable to God for the church.³

Ministry is *the* issue today. Shortly after Dr. Robert Preus had been removed as Concordia Theological Seminary president (1989), the interim executive brought the matter up for faculty discussion, but without agreed result. In the wake of the LCMS 1989 convention resolution to authorize lay preachers, the 1992 convention assigned its Commission on Theology and Church Relations the task of preparing a paper on the call and the ministry. The immediate past president of CTS made setting straight matters on the ministry one of his goals for his short tenure and

placed it on the faculty study agenda for 1994–1995, though it seemed that the results were predetermined. Ours is the third conference in the last three months (as of this writing) to take up the topic. It was also the topic of a joint meeting of the Council of Presidents and the seminary faculties in August 1996. We are here not approaching a new issue. Clearly Lutherans are troubled.

Perhaps the issue is as much political as it is theological, since it has to do with who will run the church. In these terms we are speaking of a business and no longer a church. No more can the church be defined as a human organization than the ministry can be defined as simply another occupation. Simply put, the church is not a business and her clergy are not employees, *pace* the IRS, but Christ’s ministers.⁴ We confess *Una sancta catholica et apostolica ecclesia* as an article of the faith. The church receives her holiness from Christ, and she is established and maintained by his ministry given by him to his apostles.

Only with great peril can we ignore the ecumenical perspective. Membership in the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) assumes women as pastors. Churches in the LWF ordain women and have no agreed biblical or theological reasons for it. We see the same process afoot in the LCMS where a doctrine of ministry is being crafted to fit nomenclature already in place in the *Lutheran Annual*. When the ministry is defined by and in regard to the church and not Christ, its distinctive character is lost. The self-consciously conservative Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) finds no specific biblical command for the pastoral office and logically has ordained her male parochial school teachers.⁵ Logic fails in her not ordaining women teachers.⁶ In the Roman Catholic Church in America, women’s ordination is supported by a majority of its bishops and people.

In my last conversation with Dr. Robert Preus, on November 1, 1995, on the way to the Buffalo Airport, we discussed an article in the *Concordia Journal* endorsing lay readers at the weekly communion. He simply said that we have never done this before. His argument was one of tradition, an argument used by Paul in regard to women preachers (1 Cor 11:16) and one more associated with the Church of Rome than with ours. But it is still valid. Ministry and church are not abstract doctrines only, but we actually see *something happening*, and sometimes that *something* is different. Roman Catholicism has caught the Protestant contagion and given up its tradition also. Authoritarian priests and ministers are replaced by friendly masters of ceremonies who are assisted by lay men and women reading the Scriptures and distributing the sacrament. Priest and minister are addressed by first

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names, “Father Joe” and “Pastor Mike.” “He’s not my pastor. He’s my friend.” Removing the distinction between clergy and people was once only common among Pentecostal churches. A confessional allegiance and conservative theology have not prevented these practices from becoming ritualized in our own congregations. Traditional practice is surrendered under the guise that what happens in a church service is really only an adiaphoron, a matter of indifference. The position of the minister is trivialized and the mystery of the church lost.

NEARLY RECENT EVENTS

The 1970s adoption of the practice of the ordination of women in the churches later comprising the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the same adoption by Seminex graduates found support among Lutherans in three commonly accepted theses: (1) the ministry is the possession of all Christians and not simply ministers; (2) ordination is simply a custom, albeit an apostolic and ancient one; and (3) congregations have a sovereign right to ordain and may exercise it without regard to other congregations of their fellowship. The ordination of Seminex graduates arose first as a political issue to challenge LCMS restrictions about candidates for its ministry, but it raised the theological issues of how one became a minister and by whose authority this was done. If congregations *separately* and their members *individually* are in possession of the ministry, and if ordination is merely a church custom without significations, there would have been no *theological* but only *procedural* reasons to deny them membership in the LCMS. After one congregation was determined to have the right to ordain a pastor without synodical approval in the 1950s and 1960s, the LCMS resolved that henceforth non-synodically approved candidates would no longer be allowed to serve its congregations as pastors. In principle a congregation had the right to ordain, but by common consent it was exercised by the Council of Presidents acting on the advice of seminary faculties—so it was argued. Synodical regulation was substituted for a theology of ministry and ordination. Those who ordained Seminex graduates could be removed for infractions against the *Handbook*.⁷ Differences over biblical interpretation, especially regarding historical questions, but not the ordinations as divinely instituted rites, were seen as disruptive.⁸ Ministry has again come into view in a former church president’s veiled criticism of his successor’s stated agreement with the pope that women are prohibited from the ministry because of Christ’s selection of male apostles.⁹ This criticism fails to recognize that behind the Word of God is a substantive reality from which that Word takes its form. *God is not arbitrary!* Laws do not exist for the sake of themselves. Consider that the gospel, the message of salvation, derives its reality from incarnation and atonement and is more than a bland declaration that God forgives. The “thou shalt not” concerning women in the ministry is only the reverse of allowing only men to occupy this office, behind which is a multifaceted reality encompassing the near-total reality of Christian truth, including the created order, the origin of sin, the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ as a man, his choosing men as his apostles, and the doctrine of the Holy Trinity (Father-Son). Adam was the first preacher and Eve was the first church. Reversing this arrangement was the first sin (Gn 3:17). These internal relationships between these fundamen-

tal doctrines are either denied or ignored as inconsequential in the discussion of prohibiting women from holding the ministry, so it is no coincidence that those churches ordaining women inevitably see God in feministic terms. He or she is as much Mother as Father. Here is the modern gnosticism. It should be made clear that our Augsburg Confession showed a wide fundamental agreement with Rome on such doctrines as God, the Trinity, and the ministry. Finding agreement with Rome in opposing the ordination of women is as appropriate as finding agreement on the doctrine of God (Ap 1). Arguing from the male apostolate is proper within the context of our Confessions, which see the ministry as contained in the apostolic office. Opposing women’s ordination on the basis of Christ’s selection of his apostles is confessional. Allowing only specific biblical prohibitions against women ministers to determine our position is a type of un-Lutheran biblicism that leaves us at the mercy of the interpreters. In addition, such naked prohibition would also place the doctrine of the ministry in the category of the law. The ministry, like the apostolate and the sending of Christ, *belong to the gospel and not the law (order)*.¹⁰ Such is the position of our confessions,¹¹ *contra* Hoefling, as we shall soon see.

JOHANN WILHELM FRIEDRICH HOEFLING— STILL CONTEMPORARY

In the same conversation mentioned above, Dr. Preus suggested that I present a paper on the nineteenth-century German-Lutheran theologian Hoefling’s doctrine of the ministry. While I was enthusiastic about the topic, carrying my enthusiasm over to a remotely known theologian with a weakened reputation was another matter. Hoefling set forth his position in his *Grundsätze evangelisch-lutherischer Kirchenverfassung*.¹² Perhaps the best introduction to his position is the summary in the excellent index prepared by Walter W. F. Albrecht for Francis Pieper’s *Christian Dogmatics*.¹³

1. No express command for ministry can be shown.
2. Ordaining elders (pastors) was only of temporary and local significance.
3. The ministry is sanctioned by God.
4. Finding a divine command for the ministry is reintroducing Old Testament legalism.
5. Functions of the apostles are not biblically defined.
6. In the apostolic era the office of a presbyter (elder, pastor) was one of governing.
7. Those opposing this position hold a strongly “Romanizing” doctrine of the ministry.¹⁴
8. The ministry is nothing more than the means of grace.

Hoefling’s view that the ministry is only of significance in the New Testament times was typical of the earlier eighteenth-century German Rationalism, which saw nothing permanent in the commands to baptize and celebrate communion. The ministry is an abstraction that takes form in the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments. Ministry does not have to do with a once-and-for-all divinely instituted office, but is the “function of preaching the gospel,” or what Hoefling called “a special application of universal preaching of the gospel.”¹⁵ Through the ministry God’s gracious dealing in the gospel comes to expres-

sion and belongs by divine right to all Christians and accordingly finds its basis in the universal priesthood. Hoefling opposed understanding the ministry as an institution in order to avoid making the gospel a new law and making the ministry another means of grace.¹⁶ This was Rome's error. His idea of the church as invisible did not allow for the ministry as an institution. Criticism of his position that ministry was an office (*Amt*) belonging to all Christians led Hoefling to make a distinction between the office in wider and narrower senses. What was the common Christian possession (wider sense) was exercised by certain persons (narrow sense) for the sake of order and to distinguish between various gifts of the Spirit.¹⁷ Recently two scholars noted that Hoefling's position was strikingly similar to that of August Pieper (which is also the current WELS view) and of Schleiermacher.¹⁸ A contemporary LCMS view that the ministry in AC v is simply the means of grace also bears a marked resemblance to Hoefling's views and is in a sense already repudiated by Pieper.¹⁹ By establishing ministry in the divine necessity for order, Hoefling, who opposed the idea of ministry as an institution as Romanizing legalism, introduced a legalism of his own. In the end Hoefling fell into the trap of the very legalism he wanted to avoid. Common among us is the view that if the church authorizes this or that person, ordained or not, to preach and celebrate the sacraments, all things are in *order*. Hoefling's view that the minister is supervisor of others is also common today and also seems to have been borrowed from Schleiermacher.²⁰ Ministry in the narrow sense has chiefly an administrative function. Hoefling can rightfully be called the father and the archheretic; Schleiermacher, the grandfather of all functional views of the ministry.²¹ A functional view has no support in our Confessions, which place the establishment of the ministry in Christ's call of his apostles.

THE AUGUSTANA, THE APOLOGY, AND THE TREATISE

The proper understanding of ministry in AC v must be grounded in (1) the article itself; (2) its place in the Augsburg Confession; (3) Melancthon's Apology and Treatise, which offered interpretations of the Augsburg Confession; and (4) Luther's principles and practices. At first glance the German title of AC v, *Predigtamt*, suggests an office with the function of preaching. Article xiv on the proper calling of ministers, *rite vocatus*, addresses not the establishment of the ministry, but filling of this office *rite vocatus*.²² The matter of the general priesthood's right to choose its preachers is specifically handled not in the Augsburg Confession, but in the Treatise (69), without specifying the method.²³

The strategic location of the article on ministry (AC v) in the middle of the Augsburg Confession's first discussion on justification (AC iv and vi) cannot pass unnoticed. Since God justifies the world through the preaching of the ministry, it is a necessary office through which the church is established and maintained. As faith is perfected, that is, brought to its perfect conclusion in good works, so the office of the ministry is perfected, that is, brought to its perfect conclusion in the preaching of the gospel. The *raison d'être* for the ministry is the world's justification. It is not a self-contained office, but one established for salvation through preaching.

Article iv sets forth the heart of the Reformation doctrine by stating that justification happens not by works but freely through

faith on account of Christ, but it leaves it to Article v to show how this faith is obtained. "In order that we may obtain this faith [the faith that justifies us before God, Article iv], the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments was instituted" (AC v, Latin). Though Maurer is right in holding that "the emphasis in AC v falls entirely on the effect of preaching in creating faith,"²⁴ still a specific office is here in view.²⁵ The article on

In the end Hoefling fell into the trap of the very legalism he wanted to avoid.

ministry flows naturally out of the article on justification and is a continuation of it. The passive "was instituted" (*institutum est*) implies that God has instituted the ministry as an office with particular functions to perform.²⁶ The confession does not speak of functions derived from the congregation and accumulated into an office representing believers from whom it derives its authority, as in Hoefling's position. Rather, God establishes the office. AC xxviii, 7–10 and not AC v sets forth the biblical evidence on how the ministry was instituted, identifying Christ as its institutor. The fifth article of the Augsburg Confession was accepted by the Roman Catholic Confutation with no attempt to refute it. The parties agreed that the office was a divine institution, necessary for preaching the gospel and administering the sacraments, though they disagreed on the shape and purpose of the ministry.²⁷ With the condemnatory clause the Lutherans had distanced themselves from the Anabaptists who with their inner experience of the Spirit had made the ministry along with the sacraments unnecessary. Functionalists with their general view of ministry hold to a ministry *in abstracto* in AC v, the title *Predigtamt* notwithstanding.²⁸ They prefer the title "Means of Grace," which has no support within the article and would better fit in any event Article XIII on the sacraments, which are widely defined to allow for rites other than baptism and the Lord's Supper.

AC xxviii, 7 understands the ministry of the apostles and bishops as one, a point of agreement for Roman Catholics and Lutherans. The Treatise, intended as an addition to the Augsburg Confession, takes this argument one step further and places pastors on the same level as bishops and hence recognizes the ministry of pastors as also that of the apostles. The distinction between the titles of pastor and bishop is of human origin without a divine mandate. Each possesses the same office of preaching the gospel, but each is assigned different functions. Thus the Treatise (65) allows pastors to perform ordinations, though this was the bishops' customary function.²⁹ The office of the ministry is included in the institution of the apostolic office and derived not from the *una sancta*. Nor is it simply an abstraction, as Hoefling held.³⁰ This ministry perpetuates the function of the apostolic office in remitting sins through gospel preaching.³¹

AC xxviii is not a separate article, but like the fourteenth article is a commentary on the fifth.³² The bishops' power to administer the keys³³—forgiving and retaining sins and administering

the sacraments—was given to the ministry by Christ's bestowal of the Holy Spirit on the apostles. John 20:21–23 is cited to explain under what circumstances the ministry was instituted. Note should be made of Justus Jonas's "The Office of the Keys and Confession," which was substituted in the now commonly used catechism for Luther's "How the Plain People Are to Be Taught to

The preaching office (Predigtamt) is an extension of the apostolate and not of the una sancta.

Confess" in the Small Catechism.³⁴ Jonas's insertion belongs to our heritage, not to our confessional subscription. But its use of the John 20 citation is similar to AC xxviii and the Treatise.³⁵ All three documents—AC xxviii, the Treatise, and Jonas's "The Office of Keys and Confession"—work on the premise that Jesus' commission to the apostles embodies the institution of the ministerial (pastoral) office. In giving the Spirit to the apostles, Christ established the office of the ministry to forgive and retain sins, a position also held by Chemnitz.³⁶ The preaching office (*Predigtamt*) is an extension of the apostolate and not of the *una sancta*. The latter is the foundational presupposition for the functionalist view of Hoefling, which makes no essential distinction between the ministry and the church.

MELANCHTHON'S EXEGESIS

Melanchthon settled on John 20 to make his case for the ministry, though later Lutheran theologians added Matthew 28:16–20.³⁷ The John 20 citation was probably favored by Melanchthon over Matthew 28 simply because John specifically refers to the apostolic authority to remit and retain sins with a special bestowal of the Holy Spirit. The relationship to justification, the central question of the Reformation, is obvious. Through the office of the ministry justification is transmitted to the people.³⁸

At this juncture a few exegetical comments may be in order. J. A. T. Robinson follows C. H. Dodd in seeing a parallel between John 20:21–23 and the commission to Peter in Matthew 16:18–20, but not between John 20 and Matthew 28:16–20.³⁹ Raymond E. Brown sees parallels to both Matthean citations.⁴⁰ Matthew's and John's apostolic commissions are strikingly similar.⁴¹ Melanchthon in the Treatise sees the commissioning of Peter as the establishment of the ministry. The rock on which the church is built is the ministry of the confession of Peter.⁴² "*Super hanc petra*" *id est, super hoc ministerium.*" In both Matthew 28 and John 20 the resurrected Lord confers on his disciples a commission to care for the church in his stead.⁴³

This apostolic ministry according to AC xxviii belongs to the bishops, and according to the Treatise to *ministers who, as the apostles did, speak in Christ's stead remitting sins*. This is made explicit by Melanchthon in Ap vii, 28, 47, in which Luke 10:16 is cited.⁴⁴ Though Melanchthon did not use Matthew 28 to establish the

ministry, note should be made of the Latin version of AC xxviii. After the John 20 citation, it adds Mark 16:15 ("Go and preach the gospel to the whole creation.") This is similar to Matthew 28:19, as Raymond Brown notes.⁴⁵ Both the disputed ending of Mark and Matthew 28:16 limit the audience addressed by Jesus to the eleven. Also significant is Melanchthon's use of Luke 10:16 to establish the ministry as a divine office, the occupants of which speak in the name of Christ, and to whom the people listen (AC xxviii, 22). Since Luke 10:16 speaks of sending of the seventy(-two) and not the twelve, the suggestion is that the office of the ministry, while being derived through the apostles, was directly established by Christ. Melanchthon's failure to make use of the commissioning of the twelve for the specific function as witnesses (Mt 10:2–4; Mk 3:14–19; Lk 6:13–19) may suggest that he considered this unique apostolic function to be untransferable,⁴⁶ but he does place the origin of the ministry in the commission given to Peter. "Therefore Christ addresses Peter as a minister. The ministry of the New Testament . . . exists wherever God gives his gifts, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers."⁴⁷ Ministers include the "apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers," an allusion to Ephesians 4:11.⁴⁸

ONE MINISTRY: APOSTLES, BISHOPS, AND PASTORS

The dependency of the twenty-eighth article of the Augsburg Confession on the fifth article is seen that both articles center on the ministry's task to preach and administer the sacraments. Originating in the ministry of the apostles is that of the bishops. Ministry is not a derivative of the *una sancta* as held by Hoefling. Rather, the ministry's origin is in Christ's commission to the apostles. Ministers now exercise Christ's office of proclaiming forgiveness in his place, but, as Chemnitz contends, always in such a way that it remains his ministry and office, and not ours.⁴⁹ Hoefling, like all functionalists, does not see the ministerial office contained in the call to the apostles and may even be reluctant to claim that Christ held it. Dietrich Bonhoeffer reflects the confessional reality:

Above there is the office of proclamation and below there is the listening congregation. In the place of God and of Jesus Christ there stands before the congregation the bearer of the office of preaching with his proclamation. The preacher is not the spokesman of the congregation, but, if the expression may be allowed, he is the spokesman of God before the congregation. He is authorized to teach, to admonish and to comfort, to forgive sin, but also to retain sin. And at the same time he is the shepherd, the pastor of the flock. This office is instituted directly by Jesus Christ Himself; it does not derive its legitimation from the will of the congregation but from the will of Jesus Christ. It is established *in* the congregation and *by* the congregation, and at the same time it is *with* the congregation.⁵⁰

Preaching, according to the fifth article of the Augsburg Confession, refers not to a personal expression of faith in the private lives of Christians, but to the public, officially sanctioned proclamation, a distinction some times not clearly made.⁵¹ Article v uses *docendi*, the Latin equivalent of the Greek διδάσκω, meaning to teach in an official way, and used in the New Testament of

the official proclamation of the gospel by apostles and pastors, for example, in Matthew 28:19. The Larson *Concordance* shows that the words *teachers* and *teach* refer to the official proclaimers and proclamation of the preached word.⁵² Particularly instructive is the German rendition of the thirteenth article of Ap XIII, 9, 10. Tappert provides this translation of the Latin version: priests "are called to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments to the people." The German version, unavailable in Tappert, provides this:

If one wants to call the sacrament of orders [*Ordens*] a sacrament of the preaching office [*Predigtamt*], so there is no difficulty in calling ordination a sacrament. For God has established the preaching office [*Predigtamt*] and attached [to it] wonderful promises.⁵³

The German *Predigtamt* is the equivalent to the Latin *docendum evangelium*, the teaching of the gospel. Even the possibility that ordination may be called a sacrament rules out the possibility that this is a reference to activity which all Christians speaking of Christ carry out in common. Ordination is attached to an officially sanctioned preaching office and not functions common to all Christians.

OFFICE PRECEDES FUNCTIONS

Though the office is not derived from the functions, the absence of the functions suggests that the office may no longer be present. Where sinners are not hearing the justifying word, then the function of the ministry is not being carried out and one may also conclude that the office is absent. On the other hand, the office of the ministry is not present merely because someone proclaims that it is or is carrying out its functions. To demonstrate that works flow from faith, Luther in his *Freedom of the Christian Man* uses the analogy of a bishop and his functions.

A bishop, when he consecrates a church, confirms children, or performs some other duty belonging to his office, is not made a bishop by these works. Indeed, if he had not first been made a bishop, none of these works would be valid. They would be foolish, childish, and farcical.⁵⁴

Functions originate in the office and the office is not constituted by the aggregate of its functions. Luther's analogy is paralleled by Apology VII, 48, where the German version offers this clear statement: "Of course false teachers should not be received or heard; because they do not stand in the place of Christ, but are antichrists."⁵⁵

The ministry is carried out in the *congregatio sanctorum*, but may not be identified as their activity or as a derivative of it, as Schleiermacher and later Hoefling held.⁵⁶ In line with this, the reformers did not envision the laity as public leaders of the Eucharist even in emergencies.

FALSE PRIESTS WITH A TRUE MINISTRY

Article VIII of the Augsburg Confession makes explicit reference to those priests who administer the sacraments in the *congregatio sanctorum*, and thus a connection is made back through the seventh article to the fifth. AC VIII begins by addressing the question

of unbelievers' being mixed in among believers, but its major purpose is to uphold the value of sacraments administered by what the German version calls impious priests, "false Christians and hypocrites," who are contrasted with believers (*Gläubige* [Latin: *vere credentium*]). For the people the real problem is not whether someone in the congregation was really a believer, but whether the priest at the altar was. The reference of the Latin version of AC VIII to the Donatists' refusal to agree to the ministry of evil men shows that the term *ministry* refers not to a general activity common to all Christians, but to the ministers: *ministerio malorum in ecclesia*. This is reaffirmed by the German text, which uses the term "priest" in place of the Latin "evil men" in reference in their sacramental duties: "the sacraments are efficacious even if the priests [*die Priester*] who administer them are wicked men (that is, unbelievers)." Article VIII of the Augsburg Confession holds that the lack of faith in the administrators of the sacraments does not detract from their efficacy or validity. This was a practical question for those who discovered that their priests were impostors. Such people

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might opt for rebaptism from the ever-willing Anabaptists. They would have raised questions about the salvation of deceased family members, who had received the sacraments from unbelieving priests.⁵⁷ This would have been a pressing issue at a time of still high infant mortality and when baptism was seen as an absolute necessity for salvation.

Article VIII's citation of Matthew 23:2, with its reference to the scribes and Pharisees sitting in the seat of Moses, provides further interpretation of the fifth article. *Seat* refers to a position of authority, as when Roman Catholics speak of the pope occupying St. Peter's chair. To speak *ex cathedra*, which means speaking from the chair, is to promulgate a doctrine in an official way. Jesus' admonition to listen to the scribes and Pharisees who sit in the seat of Moses is his own recognition of the validity of their ministry despite their unbelief and immoral conduct. The ministry of the priests rests not on faith but upon Christ's institution.

MINISTRY AS THE KEY ARTICLE IN THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

The articles of the Augsburg Confession on Baptism (IX), the Lord's Supper (X), Confession (XI), Penance (XII), and the Use of the Sacraments (XIII) discuss issues first raised in Article V in conjunction with the institution of the office of the ministry and elaborated in Articles VII and VIII.⁵⁸ There is no thought of a disembodied preaching and sacramental activity, namely, means of grace without clergy, or of assigning these functions to those who do not hold the office. The connection between the office and its functions are as necessary as that between the person of Christ

and his works, or between faith and works. The ministry cannot be the ministry without its functions, but it does not come into existence because its functions are being carried out. The function no more creates reality than does tying apples to a tree make it an apple tree. As shown above, Luther asserted that one becomes a bishop by consecration and not by performing the works of bishop. Unless he was first made a bishop, everything he did would be foolish. Because Article xv of the Augsburg Confession, the one on liturgical practices, entitled "Church Usages," shows a remarkable resemblance to Article xiv, "Order in the Church" or "Ecclesiastical Order," each can serve to interpret the other. Both

articles develop and thus depend on previous articles. They do not introduce new subjects, but speak of regulating practices already in place. Article xiv does not establish the ministry, but speaks of setting aside persons to carry out baptism, the Lord's Supper, and confession and absolution, matters brought up in previous articles. Similarly, Article xv speaks about the liturgical forms in carrying out these functions. Just as the fifteenth article is not the first one to establish the sacraments, neither is the fourteenth the first one on the office of the ministry. For the Augsburg Confession, the Apology, and the Treatise, "ministers function in the place of Christ" to their congregations.⁵⁹ **LOGIA**

NOTES

1. See my "Augustana v and the Doctrine of the Ministry," *Lutheran Quarterly* 4, no. 2 (Winter 1992): 403-423, for a discussion of the these divisions. A functional understanding of the ministry sees it as being established in AC xiv. This is the Protestant view. Those who see it as an office with functions see its establishment in AC v. This view is called Catholic or episcopal and some times Romanizing, an adjective that Hoefling used of those who hold that the ministry is an office.
2. For a defense of both male and female lay readers see "Lay Readers in Public Worship," *Concordia Journal* 21, no. 4 (October 1995): 400-414. Its author opines that this function belongs to the universal priesthood of believers, a position that could find support in Hoefling's view of church and ministry.
3. "Obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account. Let them do this joyfully, and not sadly, for that would be of no advantage to you" (Heb 13:17).
4. John N. Collins has prepared excellent studies on ministers as representatives of Christ and not the congregation. His more popularly written *Are All Christians Ministers?* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992) is based on his scholarly dissertation, *Diakonia: Re-interpreting the Ancient Sources* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).
5. While the great WELS theologian Adolf Hoenecke saw the ministry as an office distinct from the universal priesthood of all believers and inherent in the apostolate, WELS does hold the functionalist position now. See John F. Brug et al., *WELS and other Lutherans* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1995), 23: "The WELS continues to teach that Scripture sets up no particular form of the church or of the public ministry as specifically instituted by God. God has not given his New Testament church such ecclesiastical, ceremonial directives." More telling is this comment by the authors: "There are some [in the LCMS] who hold a position like that of the WELS."
6. Adjustments in the definition of ministry are still being made in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to accommodate women's ordination. Some women are dissatisfied with the functional view used to support their place in the ministry, since they rightly see it as common to all. "Open Letter: Turning Down 'Stirring Up,'" *Lutheran Forum* 24 (May 1990): 8-9.
7. It should be pointed out that our Confessions see the wider association of churches as divinely established. The "our churches teach" of the Augsburg Confession are territorial churches, for example, Electoral Saxony, and not separate congregations. More telling is that Luther and not the congregations to which the candidates were sent did the ordaining. Ministers have an association with one another as they do with the churches. In both fellowships the unity of faith is evident. Extreme congregationalism in which each congregation is seen as sovereign was not known to the Reformation and New Testament churches. Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: Die Erhaltung der Kirche* (Stuttgart: Alwer Verlag, 1987), 3: 280. Luther's ordination practice is worth noting. In spite of his suggestion that the Bohemians establish a ministry among themselves through ordination, candidates for the ministry were examined and ordained by him and Bugenhagen in Wittenberg and not in the congregations, as they were considered ill equipped to do this. Though Luther articulated the doctrine of the general priesthood, the congregation did not participate in the ordination but offered prayers for the ordinand. From 1537 until his death in 1546, 738 candidates from both German and non-German parts of Europe were ordained in Wittenberg, with Latin being used for non-Germans!
8. AE, 5: 249. Luther in his Genesis lectures placed ordination on the same level as baptism as an activity in which God works. "Thus the imposition of the hands is not a tradition of men, but God makes and ordains ministry. Nor is the pastor who absolves you, but the mouth and hand of God."
9. *Lutheran Forum* 30, no. 4 (Lent 1996), 14. "Please permit a parenthetical question while we're discussing this dimension of the *sola scriptura* principle: Ought not Lutherans, including both ELCA and LCMS, remind our Roman Catholic dialog partners, and some in Missouri who use similar arguments, that the supposed implications drawn from Jesus' choice of a male apostolate are *not* sufficient basis to deny

ordination to women. Personally, I would find that far more helpful and responsible than the actions of a Lutheran church body president who commended the Pope for his conclusions on that issue, while completely ignoring his unacceptable theological rationale."

10. AC xxviii, 5-6. "According to the Gospel the power of the keys or the power of bishops is a power and command of God to preach the Gospel, to forgive and retain sins, and to administer the sacraments." John 20:21-23 is given as support for this view.

11. Tr 9: "According to John 20:21 Christ sent his disciples out as equals, without discrimination, when he said, 'As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.' He sent out each one individually, he said, *in the same way in which he had himself been sent*" (italics added.)

12. Johann Wilhelm Friedrich Hoefling, *Grundsätze evangelisch-lutherischer Kirchenverfassung* (Erlangen: Theodor Blasing, 1950). See especially Holsten Fagerberg, *Bekenntnis, Kirche und Amt in der deutschen konfessionellen Theologie des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Uppsala: Lundequistiska, 1952), 271-285.

13. Franz Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 4 vols. (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950-1957), 4: 445-49. Fagerberg agrees with Pieper but makes no use of him, though he is quite knowledgeable.

14. Cf. *Lutheran Forum* 30, no. 4.

15. Hoefling, 79. See also Fagerberg, 275.

16. Pieper notes that Hoefling finds any command or imperative for the ministry legalistic. *Christian Dogmatics* 3: 445.

17. Fagerberg, 276-282. "There are two reasons for a special ministerial office: 'the common divine command for order' and 'the special capacity [*Weisung*] which places in order the differing charismas in relationship to the differences of individual callings in the congregation for the benefit of the congregation.'" Translation by the present writer. Pieper makes a distinction between ministry in the wider and narrower sense (*Christian Dogmatics* 3: 439). Collins questions whether in the New Testament the word *διακονία* is used of the possession of the means of grace which Christians have in common. Pieper, who distances himself from Hoefling on the idea that the ministry arises from the universal priesthood, makes no mention that his views on ministry in a wider and narrower sense bears a close resemblance to Hoefling's distinction.

18. John C. Wohlrahe, *Ministry in Missouri until 1962* (Privately published, 1992), and Erling Teigen, "The Universal Priesthood of All Believers," *Confessional Lutheran Research Society Newsletter* 25 (Advent 1991): 1-5. A further study should demonstrate Hoefling's obvious dependence on Schleiermacher.

19. *Christian Dogmatics* 4: 445. Pieper takes exception to Hoefling's denial of a special command for the ministry. Hoefling's other critic was A. F. C. Vilmar (*Die Lehre vom geistlichen Amt* [Marburg, 1870], 100-101).

20. Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Christian Faith*, trans. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), 2: 666-667. Cf. also the observations of Walter H. Conser, *Church and Confession* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984), 46. "For it was in the local congregation, composed of baptized and confirmed individuals, that most of the ministerial powers authority and powers of the church resided."

21. The similarity to the position of WELS theologian August Pieper can be noted. "The rights of the entire communion and the command to good order demand that within the congregation such functions of the ministry as cannot be carried out by all at the same time without disorder and also such functions for which all Christians are not equally capable be relinquished and turned over to capable persons so that they may carry them out in the name of the congregation." Taken from Wohlrahe, 22.

22. Wilhelm Maurer, *Historical Commentary on the Augsburg Confession*, trans. H. George Anderson (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986) 191-197. Maurer points out that "the legal form of a call makes little difference to Luther" (193).

23. "Finally, this is confirmed by the declaration of Peter, 'You are a royal

priesthood' (1 Pe 2:9). These words apply to the true church, which, since it alone possesses the priesthood, certainly has the right of electing and ordaining ministers." For a discussion of the call process see Robert D. Preus, *The Doctrine of the Call in the Confessions and Lutheran Orthodoxy* (Luther Academy: Monograph #1, April 1991), 33-48.

24. Maurer, 355.

25. *Ibid.*, 187. "That article [AC v] of course bears the inclusive title 'The Office of the Ministry' and although it focuses on the spiritual engendering function of that office . . . it also includes the call to it."

26. The similarity of language between the articles on the ministry (v) and the sacraments (xiii) must be noted. Of the former it is said "institutum est ministerium" and the latter "sacramenta instituta sint." The office of the ministry is no less divinely instituted than are the sacraments. Both have their origin in God and consequently both share in a similar necessity.

27. Leif Grane, *The Augsburg Confession: A Commentary*, trans. John A. Rasmussen (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1987), 78-79.

28. WELS theologian August Pieper says as much. "There is one office in the Church, the office of the spiritual priesthood. The public ministry is only another phase of this same priesthood." Quoted from Wohlrahe, 21.

29. The Treatise is Melancthon's and not Luther's work, but the latter followed the principles set forth in that document by ordaining with Bugenhagen candidates for the ministry, presumably in St. Mary's Church in Wittenberg. Though the Prussian bishops who had joined the Reformation cause might have assisted in the ordination of Nicholas von Amsdorf as bishop of Naumberg in 1542, Luther, with the superintendents, performed the act without them. Some do not find reference to ordination conferred by a pastor as a divine act in Tr 65: "Since by divine right the grades of bishop and pastor are not different, it is manifest that an ordination performed by a pastor in his own church is valid by divine right." The emphasis, so it is claimed, is on ordination as an act of the church and not the pastor. While the Latin makes it clear that the ordination by the pastor is divine: *manifestum est ordinationem a pastore in sua ecclesia factam jure divino ratam esse*, Melancthon reiterates his position in his *Loci Communes* of 1555. Since the ministry is necessary, the church has the right to choose qualified men as shepherds, his term for pastors, where those who are titled bishops refuse to do so. This of course is his argument in Tr 66-67. Ordaining these men is done by the pastors. "And from this it is clear that the ordination, if it occurs through our churches and shepherds, is right and Christian." Philip Melancthon, "Loci Communes 1555," in *Melancthon on Christian Doctrine*, trans. and ed. Clyde L. Manschreck, A Library of Christian Thought (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 265. A purely congregational ordination is not in view.

30. Eugene Klug is rightly concerned about the view that sees "this office of ministry as the continuation of the apostolate in the sense that it is conveyed or conferred in an unbroken line from the apostles upon their successors through ordination" (30-31). Still this office is Christ's (Maurer, 357). As Maurer says: "Christ is the first in the church to hold this office," and "it continues in the succession of apostles." There is "no apostolic succession in the sense of divine right" (190).

31. "Our teachers assert that according to the Gospel the power of the keys or the power of bishops is a power and command of God to preach the Gospel, to forgive and retain sins, and to administer and distribute the sacraments." AC xxviii, 5.

32. Robert D. Preus makes the same point: "Almost every reputable book or commentary on the Confessions sees a causal as well as organic relationship between AC v and AC iii and iv, AC xiv, AC vii and viii, and AC xxviii" (2). In support of his position Preus lists Norman Nagel, Frederick Mildenerger, and Edmund Schlinck.

33. The German word is *Predigtamt* and the Latin is *ministerium*. The translation for the German is "office of preaching" and for the Latin "ministry."

34. Justus Jonas was rector of the University of Wittenberg and Luther's colleague on the theological faculty. His name appears right after Luther's on the Smalcald Articles.

35. *A Short Explanation of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1943), 18-19.

36. Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, 4 vols., trans. Fred Kramer (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978), 2: 559.

37. E.g., Chemnitz, *Examination*, 2: 468, 680, 695. See my "The Relation of Matthew 28:16-20 to the Rest of the Gospel," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 55, no. 4 (October 1991): 245-266.

38. Forde, who defines the ministry as public function ("The Ordained Ministry," *Called and Ordained*, 102), includes justification in his definition: "[it] is the actual doing of divine election in the living present by setting bound sinners free through the Word of the cross." Though the Augsburg Confession sees an interdependency between justification and the ministry, it keeps them distinct.

39. *The Priority of John*, ed. J. F. Coakley (Oak Park, IL: Meyerstone Books, 1987), 316-317.

40. Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John, XIII-XXI*, Anchor Bible 29a (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1970): 1040-1042.

41. Though John's commissioning occurs in Jerusalem and not Galilee as does

Matthew's, the special commissioning of Peter occurs for John in Galilee (21:15-19) and corresponds to Matthew's commissioning of Peter in Caesarea Philippi (16:13), an area immediately bordering Galilee. Peter's commissioning before the crucifixion (Mt 16:17-19) and after the resurrection (Jn 21:15-19) happens within the company of the other apostles.

42. Tr. 25. The church is built "super autoritatem hominis, sed super ministerium apostolicum illius, quam Petrus fecerat, in qua praedicat Jesum esse Christum, filium Dei."

43. John's explicit reference to the forgiveness of sins must also be implied in Matthew's command to baptize, since for Matthew baptism involves confession of sins and repentance (3:1-6). In both Matthew and John the apostolic ministry involves a revelation of the Trinity. Matthew's ecclesiastical (liturgical) "Father-Son-Holy Spirit" is replaced by John's conception of God in action whereby the Father sends the Son and the Son gives the Spirit. A complete doctrine of the Trinity must incorporate both realities of what God is in himself (the ontological Trinity: Matthew) and of how he relates to the world (the economic Trinity: John). In placing the apostles in the ministry on the occasion of Peter's confession, mention is made of the Father and the Son. Only when the Spirit, who assists Jesus in his death, has completed his work is the Spirit given. The problem of Matthew's eleven disciples and John's ten disciples is resolved by the later appearance to Thomas, which raises the apostolic cadre to eleven (Jn 20:26-8). Whereas Matthew's citation obligates the eleven to speak all the words of Jesus, John designates the apostles as those who possess the Holy Spirit and thus represent Christ in forgiving and remitting sins as he represented his Father. This ministry is of the Holy Spirit and parallels Paul's admonition to Timothy to stir up within himself the gift given him through the laying on of Paul's hands. This gift is identified as the "spirit of power and love and self-control" (2 Tim 1:6, 7), which 'spirit' is none other than the Holy Spirit, as Chemnitz took it (2: 41).

44. Latin: "quia ministri funguntur vice Christi, non representant suam personam." German: "denn sie reichens an Christus statt und nicht für ihre Person."

45. Brown.

46. The sending of the seventy (seventy-two) in Luke 10:1-11 is problematic. There are no parallels in the other gospels, and these men are not identified, though later Hippolytus nominated each of them (*Ante-Nicene Fathers* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978], 5:254-255). The Lucan pericope is, however, strikingly similar but not identical to sending out of the twelve not only in Luke (9:1-6), but in Matthew (10:5-15) and Mark (6:7-13). In other words, their authority and responsibility are like that given the twelve, but for Luke they are clearly not to be equated with the twelve as apostles. In a chapel meditation, a colleague claiming to apply a hermeneutical principle of Luther stated the sending of the seventy was not applicable now because a specific reference to the current audience was missing. But Melancthon does in fact make this kind of specific identification with the ministry today. Here this reformer may have been extraordinarily modern in seeing that evangelist was establishing a ministry outside of the twelve in which ministers today belong. The list offered by Hippolytus may present its own problems, but by offering the names of otherwise known New Testament figures he attempted to solve the riddle and in some suggestions he may have been successful. There is the fear that those who see AC v as establishing the ministry as a distinct office may also hold to an unbroken line of apostolic succession. Melancthon's use of Luke's sending of the seventy may answer that concern.

47. Tr. 26.

48. Melancthon understands "prophets" in Ephesians 4:11 not as Old Testament figures, but as New Testament preachers.

49. Chemnitz, 2: 559. "Now this power of forgiving sin must not be understood to have been given to the priests in such a way that God had renounced it for Himself and had simply transferred it to the priests, with the result that in absolution it is not God Himself but the priest who remits sins."

50. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, ed. Eberhard Bethge, trans. Neville Horton (New York: Macmillan, 1969), 293-294.

51. John Stephenson, "The Rightful Celebrant," *Lutheran Theological Review* 2 (Fall/Winter 1990): 27. "There is no difference in content between pulpit proclamation of the Gospel and everyday confession of our Lord and His benefits."

52. Larson, *Concordance*, 516-521.

53. BSLK, 293.

54. Martin Luther, "Freedom of a Christian," AE, 31: 360.

55. BSLK, 246: "denn dieselbigen nicht mehr an Christus statt, sondern sind Widerchrist."

56. Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 2: 666.

57. This same issue has resurfaced in a reversed form in our time, perhaps also under the influence of Schleiermacher, with the suggestion that the level or sincerity of faith of the clergy is a contributing factor to the efficacy of preaching, since preaching is seen as an extension of faith. Sincere heartfelt sermons win more converts than those without such explicit enthusiasm. Schleiermacher, 2: 553.

58. Grane sees the same connection in these articles (80).

59. "ministri funguntur vice Christi"; "denn sie reichen an Christus statt und nicht fuer ihre Person." Ap vii, 48. See also Maurer's discussion of this, 190.