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teachers

The Lutheran Teacher in the Ministry of the Church



Both in the Old and the New Testament, God declares His children to be His priests and ministers, without distinction of age or sex. Thus the Holy Spirit says in Isaiah 61:6 -

"But ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord; men shall call you the Ministers of our God."

In 1 Peter 2:9, He calls the Christians "a royal priesthood," and in Rev. 1:5-6 says of Christ that He -

"...loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father."

And in Rev. 5:10 -

"And hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth."

Applying this also to infants, Luther says they come out of baptism "lauter Priester und Pfaffen" (all of them priests and preachers).

Yet, only those whom the Christians choose to perform their priesthood in behalf or in the name of all, are public ministers of God, and are in the ministry of the Church.

You teachers are both private and public ministers of God. Your private ministry is not necessarily something that you must perform only in a private place, such as the home, or in conversation with a person; it simply means a service for which you have no special call from your fellow Christians. Thus, when you speak in a voters' meeting, or at a conference or convention, you are performing your private ministry, although you speak publicly. On the other hand, your public ministry is not necessarily something that is performed in a public place. Whether you teach in a secluded classroom or render musical service in public worship, you are performing a public ministry because you have been chosen to render such service in behalf of all the members of your congregation. The term "public" means all the people, before all the people, or in behalf of all the people.

To understand the Lutheran teacher in the ministry of the Church - for that matter, any public servant of the Church - it is well to review the meaning of the Church and the ministry of the Church, and then proceed to the ministerial offices of the Church, including the office of the teacher.

The Church

First, then, let us consider the Church. The word "church" is a collective noun, like the word "conference," and denotes two or more persons that gather together for church purposes, just as "conference" means two or more persons that come together for conference purposes.

The Church of which we speak here is "the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints," which transcends all organizational and denominational lines, and embraces all true Christians. At the same time, any part of this one universal Church, any number of local Christians, and if there were only two or three, who gather together in the name of the Lord to carry out their God-given ministry jointly, are the true Christian Church, with the same authority and obligation as the Christian Church at large.

Nor is the Church restricted to organized local Christian congregations. Any number of Christians who are members of local congregations and gather together for church purposes other than those of a congregation, are truly the Christian Church. An example is your teachers' conference, which is not a local congregation, but it is a gathering of Christians, met in the name of the Lord, to perform a part of their ministry, although not to do the work of a congregation. As we shall later see, you as a conference are exercising the highest office of the Church in that you appoint certain persons to teach or apply the Word of God in behalf of all. The same is true of the personnel in the Lutheran Building, which hails from many local congregations, but is the true Christian Church, and in its daily devotions is exercising the highest office of the Church, the teaching and preaching of the Word of God; but it would not think of performing the entire ministry of a congregation, although it has the authority. So it is with a District convention or a convention of Synod. The point is that the "holy Christian Church" is not an organization, but "the communion of saints," and is not restricted to organized local congregations, as though there were no Church outside of them, or that no other group had the same authority and obligation.

The local Christian congregation, as a fixed group of Christians who gather together regularly and perform the ministry of the Church so far as it is possible, is, of course, the true Christian Church. It is the most logical and most practical grouping of Christians for church purposes.

The members of "the holy Christian Church" are holy in the sight of God, not because they are personally holy, but because the Lord has declared them perfectly holy and righteous for the sake of Jesus Christ, in whom they believe as their Redeemer and the propitiation of their sins. That makes them saints. Hence the name "holy Christian Church, the communion of saints."

Personally, and so long as they live in the flesh, these saints are still very imperfect, unholy, and unrighteous. Some are strong in faith, some weak. But, fortunately, membership is not made contingent upon the degree of faith. Christ simply says: "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved." This means that also the weak in faith are completely justified. The important thing is the right kind of faith; and, of course, the Lord wants the right kind of faith to be strong; for a weak faith is dangerous and easily extinguished.

Addressing imperfect believers, regardless of the strength or weakness of their faith, the Holy Ghost characterizes them through St. Peter (1 Pet. 2:9) as follows:

"Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar (i.e. purchased and owned) people."

These are the people who, on Judgment Day, will stand at the right side of Jesus, and hear the unspeakably sweet invitation:

"Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matt. 25:34.

When Christ will separate the sheep from the goats, the wheat from the chaff, no mistake will occur, for Scripture says:

"The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal: The Lord knoweth them that are His." 2 Tim. 2:19.

But many will be surprised. In the visible company of Christians on earth, there are also sham Christians, deluded by a false faith, and this includes also public servants of the Church, who may have done great things for the kingdom of God. Concerning such delusions, Jesus has warned us, saying:

"Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works?

"And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." Matt. 7:22-23.

Only the members of "the holy Christian Church" are the ministers, priests, and kings of the Lord, and only they have a commission of the Lord to perform His work. In a Christian congregation, where there may also be unbelievers and hypocrites, we are compelled to judge by outward appearance, and to assume that all professing Christians are true believers unless or until they expose themselves as unbelievers, and are banned from the Church; hence, so far as we know, all members of a Christian congregation are ministers, priests, and kings of God, and have the ministry of the Church.

The Ministry of the Church

This leads us to a discussion of the Church's ministry. The priesthood of the individual Christian is not something which the Lord has commanded, but something which He has created. He converts a sinner, and He has made a priest of God.

"We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."
Eph. 2:10.

Having created a priest, king, and minister of God, however, the Lord gives him a commission and His commands, for here is one who can assist Him in performing His work among men. Much of what is commanded him, the Christian can do individually and privately, but much of it he can do only by joining his fellow Christians. The latter includes everything that Christians do or have done to them as a Church. This group or joint service by or for him is what we call the ministry of the Church. Both the joint and the individual service are comprehended in the commission and commands of the Lord which are given the individual Christian. Hence, the ministry of the Church is commanded by the Lord.

What do we mean by the ministry of the Church? Since it is being demonstrated before your eyes right along, it is hardly necessary to explain. What are the individual Christians of our congregations, Districts, and Synod doing jointly? We have no time to enumerate, nor is it necessary. Let me name only one thing as an illustration: The parents train their children in the home. That requires no ministry of the Church, except for its promotion. But the children are also given a Christian schooling. That requires the erection and maintenance of a building, the calling and salarizing of teachers, the supervision and promotion of schools, and the training of teachers, - all of which the individual Christian cannot do.

The ministry of the Church is a public ministry. This is already indicated by the phrase "of the Church," meaning a group ministry, in contradistinction from an individual ministry. But it is public chiefly because it is a ministry performed in behalf of all, and because it requires the election of any number of fellow Christians to carry out this ministry in behalf of all. What you have been called to do as teachers, is the business of every man, woman, and child of your congregation. They have the duty and right to do it. But the men, women, and children cannot all do it, and so you have been called by them, through the voters' assembly, to do it in their behalf. That is what we call a public ministry.

The Church has one ministry, one commission of the Lord, for the work it is doing; but this ministry has the two general purposes of making disciples of all nations and then of taking care of them spiritually; of adding saints to the Church and of perfecting the saints. But this is a unified process, as we see in the Great Commission. It says "teach all nations, baptizing them," but also "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Yet, we have those who declare publicly that the only business of the Church is to do mission work, when everybody knows that by far the largest part of the public ministry is devoted to the care of the Church itself. In this care lies also the work of Christian education in all its forms, from the pulpit to the kindergarten. The ministry has also a single objective, and that is to save immortal souls.

Nor is the ministry of the Church a second ministry of the Christians. No, the Christians have but one ministry. The public ministry of the Church is the priesthood of believers carried out jointly and in behalf of all. It might, therefore, be called the public function of the priesthood. There have been Lutheran synods that have denied this, and claimed that the public ministry has no connection with the priesthood of believers. One of these was the Iowa Synod.

In his famous colloquy with the Iowa Synod, Dr. C. F. W. Walther made these two significant statements:

This office or public ministry "is essentially nothing but the general priesthood of believers made to function in behalf of all by divine command...The Church possesses it (the power of the keys) in the spiritual priesthood of its individual members."

In his "Kirche und Amt," Thesis VII, he says:

"The holy ministry is the authority conferred by God through the congregation, as holder of the priesthood and of all church power, to administer in public office the common rights of the spiritual priesthood in behalf of all."

"Ministers perform publicly, in behalf of all, the very offices which the Church...and therefore every truly believing Christian, has as an original possession."

It is common in our Synod, and perhaps generally, to refer only to pastors as ministers and to their office as the "holy ministry." We speak of ministerial and teacher training. A pastor writes me: "Will you kindly write me about the relationship between the Holy Ministry and the teaching profession?" (Holy Ministry capitalized.) A teacher who has been striving for years to have the teachers recognized as ministers, wrote me: "My son is preparing for the ministry. I need not tell you why he is not entering the teaching profession."

The fact is, a pastor is a minister, he is in the holy ministry, but so are all teachers, professors, and other called servants of the Church. The public ministry, as we have seen, is an office of the Church, and when the Church elects anyone to perform this ministry, or any part of it, that person is a minister of the Church and of God, and is in the holy ministry. What we can do about our language usage, I do not know, except to correct it wherever we can; but it is wrong to confuse the public ministry with the pastor's office in the sense that only his office is a public ministerial office.

The Offices of the Ministry

In the address of Dr. Walther at the installation of Professors A. Biewend and Geo. Schick, he undertook to prove that a professorship at one of the colleges of the Church is not a man-made affair, but a divine institution, although Scripture says nothing about a professorship, and that such a professor has a divine call and the office of God, even if he teaches no religion direct, but only the common branches of learning, such as the languages, world history, mathematics, science, and art.

He set forth a number of Scriptural facts that are extremely helpful in arriving at a correct understanding of the various offices of the ministry. In arguing for the need of many and varied ministerial offices, he said:

"God has really instituted but one office, namely, the office of gathering, building, governing, providing for, and preserving His Church on earth in His name...

"This office has, therefore, not only such a large sphere of duties, and duties and obligations of such a divergent nature, but demands also such a variety of great gifts, that no single man is capable of performing all its works alone, even within a limited sphere. Just as the mediatory office of the Messiah is divided into three separate offices, the prophetic, the high-priestly, and the kingly, so the office of the Church is divided into offices requiring the most divergent and the most manifold gifts of the Spirit."

Walther is here speaking of the ministry of the Church as the office of the Church - the one office which God instituted, and which "is divided into offices requiring the most divergent and the most manifold gifts of the Spirit." He is not speaking of the pastorate, except as one of those many divisions or parts of the one divinely-instituted office of the Church. This rules out three erroneous conceptions of the pastorate: 1. That only the pastorate is the holy ministry. 2. That only the pastorate is divinely instituted. 3. That all other offices of the congregation or Church are branches of the pastorate.

That Walther is here speaking of the office or ministry of the Church as the one office which God instituted, is evident also from the following statement in the same address:

"The Lord established this office, and gave it to His Church, when He presented the keys of heaven to Peter, and later said to all His disciples: 'All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.'"

The multiplicity and variety of church offices, to carry out this one ministry, were especially great in the early Christian Church. First of all, to multiply Himself, as it were, the Lord Jesus Christ sent John the Baptist to prepare the way for Him, and twice sent out seventy disciples to preach, teach, and perform miracles. These offices were temporary. Then, to perpetuate and extend His ministry in the immediate future, after His ascension, He prepared and sent out His apostles, and also gave the early Church a great "diversity of gifts," which are named in Eph. 4:11 and 1 Cor. 12, and elsewhere. The apostolate and the special gifts of the Spirit were discontinued, and so were all the early church offices which the Lord established directly or through His Church.

Not discontinued was the ministry or office of the Church. What offices were established since, were indeed offices established by the Lord, but indirectly through the Church. This already began in apostolic times, when, outside of the apostolate, the Lord gave a variety of servants, whose offices were established by the apostles and the Church. Not only did some 120 brethren elect a substitute for Judas Iscariot, but the multitude in Jerusalem also elected and ordained seven deacons; and most local churches evidently established the office of elders, by recommendation of the apostles. Anyway, it is certain that the Lord established directly only the office of the apostles, though in every case it is said that the Lord gave the various kinds of servants and thus the various kinds of offices -

"...for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Eph. 4:12.

"And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." Eph. 4:11.

St. Paul wrote this to the Ephesians, all of whose public servants are simply called "the elders of Ephesus" in Acts 20. St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. 12, about the numerous gifts of the Spirit, and there finally makes the statement:

"And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."

Here "pastors" and "evangelists" are omitted, not that St. Paul wanted to contradict or revise his statement to the Ephesians, but he is on the theme of the diversity of gifts and offices, and is emphasizing that these were given by the Lord, as He says in Verse 4 of that chapter: "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." To the elders of Ephesus, he says directly, even if they might have been chosen by the congregation, that the Holy Ghost had made them overseers of the flock, "to feed the Church of God." Acts 20:28.

Whether, therefore, the Lord established an office directly or through His Church, according to His will, it was in every case the Lord who established the office, and the office was a divine institution. Whether He chose the incumbent directly or through His Church, according to His will, it was in every case the Lord who gave or placed the gift, and the person so given or placed was a public minister of God and of His Church. And precisely so it has always been, and so it is today.

None of our present-day public ministerial offices existed in the days of the apostles or in the early Christian Church, but they are historical developments. Luther says that also of the "Predigtstuhl," or the pulpit in his day, meaning the pastorate, or at least the idea of one man preaching to the congregation, since it was not so in the early Church. But so it is with all our ministerial offices of

the Church. Such offices are indeed divinely established, but by the Church of God and according to needs. The needs increase with the growth of the Church, whether that be a local congregation or the Church in general, just as at Jerusalem, where the new office of deacons was established, "In those days when the number of disciples was multiplied." Acts 6:1. We have offices in larger congregations today which they did not need when they were small, when a single public servant, a pastor, with some help from members, could carry out the entire ministerial work, including the teaching of a school. Because our Synod has grown to such proportions, we have many offices today that the fathers a hundred years ago did not need.

Whatever the offices established by a Christian congregation or the Christian Church in the name of the Lord, to carry out the divinely-instituted and permanent office of the Church, they are parts or branches of that one office of the Church, and therefore offices of God, instituted by the Lord through His Church. If the trunk and roots of a tree are oak, then also the branches, twigs, and leaves are oak; if the body is human, then all its members are human.

That there are differences in church offices, no one disputes. Even Scripture recognizes that fact. When the office of deacons was created, the apostles, who at first had attended to everything, including the "daily ministration" of bodily needs, said: "It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God, and serve tables." Acts 6:2. It is noteworthy, however, that, while this office was to set the apostles free to give themselves "continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word" (V. 4), Scripture does not refer to it as an auxiliary office of the apostolate, though it was a real help to them. Rather, it was a function of the public ministry first performed by the apostles, and now given over to other church servants. The Bible knows nothing of auxiliary offices to some other office, though one office certainly is an aid to another office, or to all offices. We often say erroneously that a congregation maintains a school in order to aid the parents; while the fact is, a congregation maintains a school to carry out its own God-given obligation regarding the children, but thereby certainly aids the parents. The purpose of an office may not be to aid another office, but it aids that office nevertheless. To return to the thought of differences, St. Paul, in 1 Cor. 12, speaks not only of a great variety, but also of the differences, of gifts or offices, and finally says, "But covet earnestly the best gifts." There is a difference between ministerial offices, but it does not lie in the degree of divinity of an office, and certainly not in the nature of its institution, but only in the kind of service rendered.

The reason given by the apostles for the election of deacons indicates that the ministry of the Church embraces higher as well as lesser functions. Luther and the Confessional Writings speak of these functions as higher and lesser "offices," not meaning higher or lesser church positions in this case. The highest function, they say, is the teaching and preaching of the Word; lesser functions are baptizing, distributing communion, and everything else outside of the teaching and preaching of the Word. Luther, for example, makes the statement:

"Hence, whoever is given the office (or function) of preaching (or teaching the Word), is given the highest office (function or charge) of Christianity. He may thereafter also baptize, celebrate Holy Communion, and assume all soul service; or, if he prefers, he may devote himself wholly to preaching (or teaching the Word), and leave baptizing and other lesser offices to others - as did Christ, and Paul, and all apostles, Acts 6." - St. Louis Ed., X, 1547-1549.

As Luther states in the same connection, the Roman Catholic hierarchy had turned all this around, despised the preaching and teaching of the Word, and given

it over to "chaplains, monks, and church beggars." They had placed it in sixth place among ministerial functions; and Luther and his contemporaries had to restore it to its rightful place as the first and highest function.

Since the office of the pastor embraces this highest function, as the first among other and lesser functions, the mistake has been commonly made of confusing function with position, and calling the pastor's office the highest office of the Church, at the same time denying it regarding the teacher's office, the first and primary function of which is also to teach and preach the Word, not always to children only (as if that were less important or effective than preaching to both adults and children), but quite commonly also to adults. The fact is, both offices have the highest function of the ministry, and both have also what Luther calls "lesser offices," such as baptizing, distributing Communion, leading the singing in public worship, directing a choir. The fact is further, all offices of the Church that have to do with the building and caring for the Church in the name of God, which is done only by means of applying the Word of God, have the highest function of the ministry. But no doubt everybody is agreed that those whose primary business is the direct feeding of the sheep and lambs of Christ, not only pastors and teachers, but also professors and every other kind of preachers or teachers of the Word, have the most important offices in the Church.

Yet, we must be careful about any kind of ranking when it comes to the matter of service to God and the Church; at least we should not exclude any one who "labors in the Word and doctrine," even if it is only the promotion of the Church's ministry by means of applying the Word and doctrine, since the application of the Word is but the proclamation and teaching of it. I am thinking there of our various synodical servants who do not directly serve a congregation, school, or college. When called as superintendent of schools in the Central District, I had to decide between the greater importance of teaching the Word of God directly to 50 children and doing other congregational work, and going out to further and promote the instruction and training of about 10,000 children and other congregational work by about 200 teachers. I was seriously troubled about the decision, but was finally persuaded that the second was the more important. Just that decision every other synodical servant has to make. Hence, for the address I have several times quoted, Dr. Walther chose the topic:

"What should comfort us when men who prepared themselves for the office of saving souls, yes, have already performed this office with great blessing, accept a teaching position at our institution of learning in answer to the call of the Church?"

We Christians still have enough of the world in us to be very rank-conscious, and always to think: Who comes first and who next? just as the very apostles of Jesus, who wanted a decision on the question: "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" and two of whom wanted to sit on either side of Him in His kingdom. The answer, as you know, was: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 18:1-3.

The Public Ministers of the Church

A public minister of the Church is anyone who has been chosen by his fellow Christians to perform any part of their ministry in their behalf. In a wider sense, it includes all those who do not labor directly in the Word and doctrine, such as the officers and board members of a congregation, or church secretaries, and even the custodian of the property; but in a stricter sense it means only those who hold a standing position in the Church, and in one way or another labor directly in the

Word and doctrine. For all practical purposes, we could simply say: All pastors and teachers of the Church, regardless of the particular position for which they have been called, and which they occupy.

The term "servant of the Word," which is the same as "minister of the Word," - except, as one pastor put it, "servant" is English, and "minister" Latin - is a term that is commonly used in our circles, and applies as well to those who preach and teach the Word directly to the flock as it does to those who foster such preaching and teaching. "Minister" is a generic term, and denotes a genus, while pastor, teacher, professor, and other titles name a species of the term "minister." All are public ministers, but one is a pastor, another a teacher, another a professor, another the president of Synod, and so on.

Essential it is that one has a call. The essence of the call is the election or choice by the Church, not the formality that goes with it: Not a written document or diploma of vocation, not installation (Dr. Walther was never installed in America, either as pastor or professor), not ordination, not special membership in Synod, not even the colleges or seminaries which have been attended. Scripture does prescribe qualifications, and it also limits women in their service to the Church, but if these directions of Scripture have been observed, it is only election by the Church that counts. It makes no difference whether the person-elect is notified formally or informally, and if it were by telegram, postal, informal letter, or word of mouth. This is not an argument against formality and formal documents and procedures, for they serve a valuable purpose and make for good order.

The call is essential because no individual Christian has a right to work in behalf or in the name of his fellow Christians without authority from them.

The Lutheran Teacher a Public Minister of the Church

In our efforts before the government to have the Lutheran teacher recognized and classified as a minister of the Gospel, we did not try to show that he is really a pastor, or a kind of pastor. No, we took his office just as it is, and let him be a Lutheran teacher, but argued that all the earmarks of his office and call, his special training, and everything else that goes with his service and standing in the Church, proves him to be a minister of the Church, or a minister of the Gospel, although he is not a called pastor. The government was convinced, and so classified him.

It is unnecessary to define the teacher's office to you. Suffice it to say that what the teacher has been called to do, is in all its phases a part of the congregation's or the Church's public ministry, even the Christian training in the common school branches. There is no doubt about his teaching of the Word of God; but many of our church servants, including some of our top men in Synod, have not known what to make of the teaching of the common school branches. So they have said: The teacher has a double office - divine in that he teaches the Word of God, secular or civic in that he teaches the common school branches; because the Church has only the duty to preach and teach the Word of God. Old Director J. C. W. Lindemann wrote a whole series of articles on the office of the teacher for the Lutheraner, which Dr. Walther rejected because Lindemann had based the office of the teacher on the office of parents instead of the office of the Church. Dr. E. A. W. Krauss, long a director of the Addison Seminary, argued for the double office of the teacher, divine and civic, in a paper at the St. Louis Mixed Conference, while Dr. Geo. Mezger argued that a teacher has a divine call for everything that the Christians ask him to do in their name and in the name of the Triune God. I could cite other, and some very surprising, cases of much later date. Just one other word: A pastor from Texas

said to me at the 1926 Convention of Synod that he would much like to open and teach a school, but regarded the teaching of the common school branches below the dignity of a pastor, and as something not commanded in Scripture.

The simplest answer to all this is: If the teaching of the common school branches is not a part of the congregation's or Church's ministry, how dare a congregation call a teacher in the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost "to accord them (the children) also a thorough Christian education in the common school branches of learning, according to a course of study adopted or approved by the congregation"? By what authority, incidentally, does a Christian congregation adopt or approve such a course of study? Is it taking the place of the State or the parents? If so, where does Scripture say that God has made a common education the business of the State or the parents? Furthermore, by what authority are our synodical colleges and seminaries teaching the common branches of learning, if it is not part of the Church's ministry?

The authority lies in the command of the Lord to His Church to teach and preach the Word, where He does not stipulate every detail needed to do this. There is practically nothing in the common branches of learning which is not needed for either the teaching and preaching or the learning and hearing, or in the study and use, of the Word. What is more, in a Christian school, college, or seminary, the Word of God is constantly applied, and therefore taught, and the common school branches become an integral part of the religious instruction and training.

The teacher's other activities, his work as organist and choir director, Bible class or Sunday school teacher, leader of the youth and other organizations, or his participation in some of the pastor's functions, are all clearly public ministerial work for which he has been called. The point is that he has been called by God through the congregation to render the service asked of him. That makes him a minister of God and of the Church of God.

Why does the Church hesitate to recognize him as such? In the first place, I think the Church does recognize him as a public minister, but it hesitates to call him a minister, because "minister" has come to mean "pastor." Then, as I have just pointed out, there is that matter of teaching the common school branches, which is misunderstood because we do not know our philosophy of Christian education. In general, there seems to be a fear of encroachment upon the pastor's office.

Another stumbling block is the status of the woman teacher. Dr. Geo. Stoeckhardt (L. u. W., 1897, and CTM, Oct., 1934), while naming the Scriptural limitations upon women, nevertheless calls the woman teacher a public servant of the Word - in other words, a public minister of the Word - who carries out a part of the public ministry. Yet, when I said this in the "Solemn Agreement," someone objected. When I asked whether it was Scriptural, the answer was: "I don't know. It may be Scriptural, but we should not say it." It seems to be the thinking of some that an office which can be performed by women is too foreign to the ministry of the early Church, and also that of today, to be recognized as or called a ministerial office of the Church. The fact is, however, that a woman teacher's call, even if temporary and a limited ministry, is just as divine as that of a pastor and a male teacher. Her office, too, is created by God through His Church, and she, too, is chosen by God through His Church.

What is the relationship between the office of the pastor and the office of the teacher? The two are not identical, just as no other offices in the same congregation, District, or Synod are ever fully identical. The reason is that they have been arranged by the Church not to duplicate but to supplement each other, and to carry out different parts of the congregation's or the Church's public ministry.

It is not Scriptural to say that a congregation must turn its entire public ministry over to one man, a pastor, and then split it up into branches of the pastorate. Scripture knows of no such arrangement; nor does it know anything about a "head" of a congregation, or even about a primus inter paris (the first among others). Nor can it be argued that no business or industrial establishment could be run without a head, sub-heads, and foremen, and so the congregation or Church should have a head. Jesus, the true Head and Lord of the Church, said the very opposite.

"Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister (servant); and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." Matt. 20:25-28.

Criticising the Pharisees and scribes, He first urged respect for their office, but then condemned their works, haughtiness, and conceit, saying:

"The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. All, therefore, that they bid you observe, that observe and do. But do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not...All their works they do but to be seen of men. They make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms (places) at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted." Matt. 23:2-12.

The correct and Biblical thing to say is this: The Christian congregation is the Church, it has the Church's ministry to perform, and it must create one or more offices to do this. If one public servant suffices, well and good, just so the whole congregational ministry is properly carried out, including the Christian education of the children. This one man then has charge alone of carrying out the congregation's ministry. But he is a minister, a servant, a shepherd and overseer of the flock, not the head or boss of the congregation. No church servant is a boss or head, and if he is the president of Synod, or the president of an institution. The pastor has no legal power. He has the greater power of the Word of God, and that power must be obeyed. His authority from God and the Church is stipulated in his call.

When a congregation needs more than one public servant, it could call a second or third pastor, but it usually creates the office of a parochial school teacher, assigns to that office authority and duties formerly assigned to the pastor, adds certain duties, and calls one or more persons to carry out this office. The remarkable thing is that this office is frequently supplied with a number of servants, while the congregation still has only one pastor, and it often costs the congregation much more than the pastorate. But when the office of teacher is created, it means that the pastor is relieved of certain duties, formerly assigned to him. The ministry of the congregation is now divided into a pastor's and a teacher's office or offices. I have already said that the teacher is indeed an aid to the pastor;

but just so it may be said that the pastor is an aid to the teacher. The purpose, however, is not that one office aid the other, but that the ministry of the congregation be carried out more fully and more adequately.

The relationship between the two offices is simply this: Both are parts of the public ministry of the congregation. Both have their particular authority and obligations assigned to them, and have their particular and general responsibilities toward the congregation and toward God. Both work toward the same end. Both have the highest function of the ministry, namely, the preaching and teaching of the Word. Hence, there must be, or should be, a close-knit cooperation and brotherly harmony.

"Let each his lesson learn with care,
and all the household well shall fare."

In closing, a word on the right attitude for a Lutheran teacher to take. Do not pay too much attention to what people call you or your office. Be convinced in your own mind that you are a true minister of God and His Church, do with a whole heart what God has commanded you through the Church, and be certain of His rich blessing and reward. If the Church recognizes you officially as ministers, as it should and probably will, you are precisely what you are now, no more, no less. The Holy Ghost has led you to choose this calling, the Lord and His Church are asking you for your service, and you have accepted. Rejoice and be grateful!

As to the pastor's office and any other office of the congregation or Church, evaluate and respect them honestly and humbly for what they are. Remember that it is God through His Church who has created these offices and called men to perform them. Be especially close to your pastor, honor him, uphold him, aid him, love him, even if more honor and material benefits are his, "knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord," Eph. 6:8, and also knowing that such "good thing" is what you have been called and commanded to do. Honor with the Lord lies in service, not in position.

A. C. Stellhorn, 10-13-52