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Augsburg Confession XIV: Does It Answer Current Questions on the Holy Ministry?

Naomichi Masaki

Questions regarding the ministry occupy an important place in our church. Martin Luther lamented that, though the preaching office (*Predigtamt*) originated in Christ, by the sixteenth century it had been corrupted. The task of the church was not to abolish but to restore it to its proper place.¹ What had been restored through the Reformation, however, was undone once again through the Thirty Years' War, pietism, rationalism, and romanticism. Then, in the nineteenth century, there arose a confessional revival that brought with it liturgical renewal. As always, doctrine, confession, and liturgy go together. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) is an heir of this movement. Our church seeks God-pleasing solutions to its understanding of the preaching office. The changing trends in the American religious scene, however, have affected our church's theological thinking and practice, especially in the area of seminary education.²

Current questions on the ministry revolve around LCMS convention resolutions from the past twenty-five years. While the 1989 Convention's decision to adopt the Lay Worker Study Committee's recommendations may be seen as key in the development of laity carrying out word-and-

¹ WA 12:35, 2–18; LW 53:11. The corruption of the *Predigtamt* and the *Gottesdienst* lies in the replacement of Christ as the doer and the giver with what we do (LC V, 7) or what the church performs. Such a thought Luther applies both against Rome and against the enthusiasts/Anabaptists.

² E.g., see Charles R. Foster, et al. eds., *Educating Clergy: Teaching Practices and Pastoral Imagination* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006). Part three of this book (187–325; esp., 237–238) identifies the influence of five traditions of seminary education in nineteenth- and twentieth-century America: the mainline Protestant seminaries, the Bible schools and evangelical seminaries, the African American seminaries, the U. S. Roman Catholic seminaries, and the rabbinical seminaries. Also revealing is how the independent discipline of practical theology was added to the traditional categories of Bible, history, and theology by the early twentieth century, to form the fourfold curriculum of theological education in the mainline Protestant seminaries.

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sacrament ministry,³ their substance may be traced back to 1981 in the Commission on Theology and Church Relations' (CTCR), *The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature*.⁴ The Lay Worker Study Committee identifies this CTCR document and C. F. W. Walther's theses on the office of the holy ministry as its theological foundation.⁵ The publication of *The Ministry* could have been an attempt to justify earlier practice.⁶ The 1992 Convention changed the direction of the 1989 decision by providing "ordination for certain laymen involved in word and sacrament ministry,"⁷ and the 1995 Convention established a concrete procedure for such

³ See LCMS, "Resolution 3-05B: To Adopt Recommendations of Lay Worker Study Committee Report as Amended," in *1989 Convention Workbook* (St. Louis: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1989). The report of the Lay Worker Study Committee is found in LCMS, *1989 Convention Workbook*, 69–73. See also LCMS, "Alive in Christ—the Ministry of the Laity," in *1986 Convention Workbook* (St. Louis: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1986), 93–95.

⁴ The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Commission of Theology and Church Relations (CTCR), *The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature* (St. Louis: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1981); hereafter *The Ministry*.

⁵ LCMS, *1989 Convention Workbook*, 71. "Prior to making any recommendations in this area, the committee reviewed the Synod's understanding of the doctrine of the ministry. This included the Commission on Theology and Church Relations document *The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature* and also C.F.W. Walther's 'Theses on the Ministry,' which were appended to that report. On the basis of this review, the committee adopted the following summary of the doctrine of the ministry as the overarching guide for the recommendations that follow in this report."

⁶ The aforementioned Lay Worker Study Committee report claims that one of their assignments by the LCMS President was to give specific attention to the question: "what's the basic scriptural and ecclesiastical rationale for lay ministry?" LCMS, *1989 Convention Workbook*, 69. David Luecke gives a good historical overview of the practice of lay ministry in the LCMS in "Lay Leadership Education in the LCMS Today," *Issues in Christian Education* 38 (Spring 2004): 6–11. Luecke mentions lay ministry programs in the Districts of Michigan (1980), Alaska (1983), Pacific Southwest (1988), Mid-South (1997), California-Nevada (1995), Ohio (1998), Kansas (1999), Southeastern (2000), Atlantic (2001), Iowa West (2001), Southern and Nebraska (post 2001). He identifies Oscar Feucht as the leading figure in the 1950s to promote lay ministry training institutes, which became reality through the 1959 Convention and the Lutheran Lay Training Institute at Concordia College, Milwaukee in 1961. Brent Kuhlman traces the thinking of Feucht in the ecumenical movement of 1950s and 1960s in the World Council of Churches in "Oscar Feucht's *Everyone a Minister: Pietismus Redivivus*," *Logia* 8 (Reformation 1999): 31–36. See also John R. Stephenson's "Reflections on the Holy Office of the Ministry for the Scandinavian Diaspora," *Logia* 15 (Epiphany 2006): 43–47, for further historical and theological critique of Feucht's understanding of *diakonia* in the New Testament.

⁷ See LCMS, "Resolution 3-08: To Provide for Ordination of Certain Laymen Involved in Word and Sacrament Ministry," in *1992 Convention Workbook* (St. Louis: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1992).

ordinations.⁸ The 2001 Convention, however, reversed this and returned to the 1989 Convention position on the basis that the 1995 resolution did not work.⁹ Although the training of laity for service that supports the pastoral ministry is valuable and increasing in LCMS districts, also growing are training programs that prepare laity to carry out specific functions of the pastor (i.e., preaching and administration of the sacraments), which obscure the Lutheran understanding of the ministry.¹⁰

As the LCMS position on the ministry has vacillated recently, parishioners continue to ask questions. *The Lutheran Witness* recently included a Q & A column entitled “Who may consecrate the elements?”¹¹ Some pastors seek help on how best to clarify parishioners’ questions on Augsburg Confession XIV (CA). Even some LCMS laity has expressed apprehension when the church contravenes CA XIV. At the 2005 LCMS Nebraska District Theological Conference, which discussed questions about the priesthood of all believers and the pastoral office, examples abound:

- “Is every man a minister?”
- “What is the relationship of vocation with regard to both the priesthood of all believers and the office of the ministry? How are they the same? Different?”

⁸ See LCMS, “Resolution 3-07A: To Establish the Procedure by Which Laymen licensed to Perform Functions of the Pastoral Office Be Called and Ordained into the Ministerium of the LCMS,” in *1995 Convention Proceedings* (St. Louis: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1995), 121. One of the “Resolved” says: “That any layman who is licensed to perform pastoral functions under the guidelines of said Res. 3-05B be required (if he wishes to continue preaching and leading in public worship) to apply for admission into the pastoral ministry of the Synod in accordance with the following process”

⁹ LCMS, “Resolution 3-08B: To Address Needs and Opportunities for Pastoral Ministry in Specialized Situations,” in *2001 Convention Proceedings* (St. Louis: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 2001), 139. One of the “Resolved” says: “That the Synod authorize its districts to continue training lay deacons as directed by the spirit of the 1989 Wichita Res. 3-05B in which trained lay ministers serve under the supervision of an ordained pastor.” Another “Resolved” maintains: “That this convention rescind 1995 St. Louis convention Res. 3-07A (requiring such licensed laymen to complete a seminary program for ordination).”

¹⁰ See note 8 above.

¹¹ *The Lutheran Witness* 125 (February 2006): 28. After describing the decision of the LCMS at its conventions concerning lay ministers, the answer in this Q & A column concludes: “Ultimately, it is the congregation, the priesthood of believers, that is responsible.”

- “Is God’s word efficacious when spoken by a lay person? Or is it only effective when spoken by a pastor?”
- “As members of the priesthood of all believers all Christians are supposed to bear witness to Christ. So why do I have to go to the seminary to be a pastor?”
- “Should laity be administering the sacraments?”
- “I am a DCE and view my call to public ministry as part of the ‘pastoral ministry’ and do present Christ to the people through the word and study of the sacraments. I think some discussion could be done on ‘Pastor,’ ‘DCE,’ public ministry roles.”
- “Is a layperson preaching or administering the sacraments contrary to the Scriptures? CA XIV?”
- “Why have we created the vocation of lay minister? If the office of the ministry is to be done by a pastor, why give these duties to lay people?”
- “Are all Christians to witness and share their faith verbally or is verbal sharing only for clergy?”
- “Is evangelism and missions given to the priesthood of all believers or only to the clergy?”
- “Why has there never been an emergency Lord’s Supper? Why should only ordained pastors consecrate and distribute the Lord’s Supper?”
- “Is it wrong to have laymen serving as pastors – word and sacrament ministry – when there are pastors available, in other words, when there is no extraordinary circumstance?”
- “Since everyone is the same, priesthood of all believers, why can’t women serve as district presidents?”
- “If a pastor is pastor to the entire church how can some DELTO vicars/pastors be limited to a specific congregation?”
- “What is an emergency?”
- “A godly man has little formal theological training but is interested in completing DELTO training at a later date. But a congregation is vacant and needs pastoral care. So the District President ‘authorizes’ him to do all the functions of the pastoral office in that place. Is this *rite vocatus*? Why or why not?”

These indicate the importance of working diligently and carefully so that the LCMS may clearly confess the doctrine of the office of the holy ministry.¹² This situation prompts us to ask: Why is CA XIV absolutely

¹² The systematic departments of both LCMS seminary faculties have acknowledged a fundamental agreement concerning the doctrine of the office of the holy ministry during

vital? Does it really matter that a called and ordained man preaches, teaches, absolves, baptizes, and consecrates the Lord's Supper, and does CA XIV provide an answer?

Before we look at CA XIV, a discussion of some documents and individuals from the history of the LCMS is paramount. We will examine these sources afresh, especially Walther. There are also pragmatic concerns. We cannot address the doctrine the ministry today without considering the scope of expectations that parishioners may have for their pastors. As we reflect on the pastoral office through CA XIV, we will be sensitive to the context in which we live and are called to serve.

I. The Separation of Office and Functions: The Ministry *in abstracto* and *in concreto*

The 1989 Lay Worker Study Committee Report offers this view of the ministry:

*In accordance with AC XIV every congregation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, by virtue of its synodical membership, has agreed to fill the divinely instituted office of public ministry in its midst with a pastor(s) (or vacancy/interim pastor) from the clergy roster of the Synod. Under his spiritual supervision, various functions normally carried out by the one who holds the office of public ministry may be delegated to and carried out by other ordained or commissioned ministers, consecrated lay workers, or lay leaders. Such delegation shall be done by the pastor under the authority granted by the congregation in his call and/or by action of the congregation itself in order to fulfill the mission and ministry of the congregation.*¹³

CA XIV is indeed acknowledged but this report endorses an entirely contrary position. Functions of the office of public ministry are delegated to those outside the office: "commissioned ministers, consecrated lay workers, [and] lay leaders." This rests in the authority of the congregation, which may appear on the surface to reflect Walther's Thesis VI on the *Predigtamt*.¹⁴ If a pastor simply performs functions of the pastoral office as

two joint meetings at Terre Haute, Indiana in the 2005–2006 academic year. See Joel P. Okamoto, "The Office of the Holy Ministry," 97–111 above.

¹³ LCMS, 1989 *Convention Workbook*, 71; emphases added.

¹⁴ Hence, the conclusion of the aforementioned question in *The Lutheran Witness* (February 2006): 28 "Ultimately, it is the congregation, the priesthood of believers, that is responsible." For Walther's references, see Theses 6 and 7 in Part Two of *Church and Ministry*. Walther's theses here describe the congregation "as the possessor of all churchly power or the keys." According to Walther, it is God who

a result of the congregation's delegation, when the pastor returns it to a parishioner, then, it has simply come full circle.

An examination of two works the report mentions as foundational would further clarify the statement.¹⁵ First is the 1981 CTCR document, *The Ministry*, which interprets 1 Peter 2:9 as Christ's commission to all Christians to do ministry.¹⁶ It interprets Ephesians 4:11-12 as referring to special offices that equip the served for the work of serving.¹⁷ This is coupled with the notion of "ministry in the abstract" and "ministry in concrete"¹⁸ allowing a separation of the office from its functions.¹⁹ "Office

confers/transfers/commits (*übertragen*) the *Predigamt*, and he does it through the congregation in the way "prescribed by God." Thus, the quoted portion from the Layworker Study Committee's report describes the congregation as a subject that grants authority to the pastor to delegate various functions that he would normally carry out himself to certain lay workers; Walther, on the contrary, in his theses portrays the congregation not as the main actor but rather as an instrument through which God grants *Predigamt*. Walther says nothing about an option of delegating "various functions normally carried out by the one who holds the office of public ministry" to the non-ordained.

¹⁵ LCMS, *1989 Convention Workbook*, 71.

¹⁶ Concerning this prevalent misunderstanding of 1 Peter 2:9, see Thomas M. Winger, "The Priesthood of All the Baptized: An Exegetical and Theological Investigation," (STM thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1992). See also Winger, "The Office of the Holy Ministry according to the New Testament Mandate of Christ," *Logia* 7 (Eastertide 1998), 40; The Theological Commission of the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELK), 1997, "The Office of the Church: An Orientation," tr. Charles R. Schulz, *Logia* 10 (Holy Trinity, 2001): 17-30; Charles R. Schulz, tr., "Sermon by Dr. Martin Luther on Easter Tuesday, March 30, 1529, John 20:19-20," *Logia* 6 (Eastertide 1997): 39-46.

¹⁷ This view is opposed by Henry H. Hamann, "The Translation of Ephesians 4:12—A Necessary Revision," *Concordia Journal* 14 (January 1988): 42-49.

¹⁸ CTCR, *The Ministry*, 11. The language of "ministry in abstract" and "ministry in concrete" appears in a footnote here with a reference to E. W. Janetzki's essay, "The Doctrine of the Office of the Holy Ministry in the Lutheran Church of Australia Today," *Lutheran Theological Journal* 13 (November 1979): 68-81. Janetzki's writing does not employ the language of *in abstracto* and *in concreto*, but instead it borrows a distinction between "the ministry of the church" and "the ministry in the church" that Eric W. Gritsch and Robert W. Jenson suggested in their *Lutheranism: The Theological Movement and Its Confessional Writings* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 118. The CTCR in *The Ministry* interprets that Janetzki used "the ministry of the church" and "the ministry in the church" as the ministry *in concreto* and the ministry *in abstracto* respectively. The way the expressions of *in abstracto* and *in concreto* are presented in *The Ministry* indicates that such a distinction is an accepted mode of speech in the LCMS. This is understandable because such a reference is located in *The Ministry* after a quotation from Franz Pieper's *Christian Dogmatics*, where he explains the term *ministry* in a general, or wider, and in a special, or narrower, sense; Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), 3:439. Although Pieper himself does not employ the language

and functions usually go together, but may be separated. Functions of the office of the public ministry that are performed by others remain the responsibility of the office of public ministry and must be supervised by it.”²⁰

The second foundational document is C. F. W. Walther’s theses on the office of the holy ministry: *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt*. Commonly known as *Church and Ministry*, it was first published in 1852. Later editions appeared in 1865, 1875, 1894, and 1911. Translations by J. T. Mueller (CPH, 1987) and John M. Drickamer (CPH, 1981) used the third edition of 1875, not the 1852 edition. Only the 1852 edition stands “as our unanimous confession,” which was officially received by the LCMS at

of *in abstracto* and *in concreto* neither in his German original—*Christliche Dogmatik* (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 1920), 501-502—nor in the English edition, John Theodore Mueller does it in the corresponding section in his *Christian Dogmatics* where he, like Pieper, explains the term *ministry*. “Accordingly we speak of the Christian ministry in the abstract (*in abstracto*), that is, distinct from the persons who administer it, and in the concrete (*in concreto*), or as it is vested in called and ordained pastors, who perform its duties in the name of the local congregations.” John Theodore Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics: A Handbook of Doctrinal Theology* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1934), 563. About that same time, Mueller’s colleague, John H. C. Fritz, articulated this even clearer: “If rightly understood, we may distinguish between the ministerial office *in abstracto* (*Predigtamt*) and the ministerial office *in concreto* (*Pfarramt*). In the Fifth Article of the Augsburg Confession the ministry of the church *in abstracto* (*Predigtamt*) is spoken of. . . . The Fourteenth Article of the Augsburg Confession speaks of the ecclesiastical, or ministerial, office *in concreto* (*Pfarramt*).” John H. C. Fritz, *Pastoral Theology: A Handbook of Scriptural Principles* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1932), 28–31. Interestingly, in his explanation of both the ministry *in abstracto* and *in concreto*, Fritz relies completely on *The Augsburg Confession* of Matthias Loy by providing lengthy quotations from this work (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1908). Loy’s view on the ministry is summarized by Todd Nichol, “Ministry and Oversight in American Lutheranism,” in *Called and Ordained: Lutheran Perspectives on the Office of the Ministry*, ed. Todd Nichol and Marc Kolden (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990): 99–101. According to Nichol, Loy (1828–1915) was well aware of the questions on the ministry not only in his own context of the Joint Synod of Ohio and Other States, but also in the Missouri Synod versus the Buffalo and Iowa Synods as well as in Germany. Nichol characterizes Loy’s view on the ministry with an emphasis on “the priesthood of all believers,” and “a repudiation of hierarchical status for the clergy of the church.” The office exists “for the sake of order and the proper service of the community,” acknowledging that all believers possess the powers of the keys. Nichol also observes that Loy was open to women serving as pastors of the church when no men were available. This practice employed by Loy, according to Nichol, was a consequence of the possession of all the rights that the Christian priesthood possesses.

¹⁹ CTCR, *The Ministry*, 16, 35–36, 41–42.

²⁰ CTCR, *The Ministry*, 41.

its convention in 1851.²¹ This is important. Beginning with the second edition (1865, 194), including all the later editions, Walther quotes from Ludwig Hartmann's *Pastorale Evangelicum* (1697), which contends that CA V refers to the ministry *in abstracto* while CA XIV refers to the ministry *in concreto*.²²

The question is whether Walther includes this distinction to suggest that the functions of the office could be separated from the office itself. To pursue this question, we will briefly investigate three sources where the distinction *in abstracto* and *in concreto* appeared at the time of Walther: the correspondence between J. A. A. Grabau and Saxon pastors (1840–1845), Walther's second edition of *Die Stimme* (1865), and J. W. Baier's *Compendium Theologiae Positivae* that Walther enlarged (1879).

The Grabau-Missourian Correspondence (1840–1845)²³

²¹ "For this reason then at our synodical convention held in St. Louis in the fall of 1850 we entrusted the above-mentioned name [i.e., Walther] as the editor to put together this present book, and after it was presented to the synodical convention held the following year at Milwaukee partly verbatim and partly substantially, and after it had been examined and respectively revised, it was published in our name as our unanimous confession." C. F. W. Walther, *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Fragen von Kirche und Amt* (Erlangen: Verlag von C. A. Ph. Th. Bläsing 1852), vi–vii. Here, "we" designates "the members of the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other States." Walther, *Kirche und Amt* (1852), iii.

²² Mueller's translation reads: "This statement (AC 5 which Walther quotes immediately before these statements), of course, does not speak of the ministry of the Word *in concreto* or of the pastoral office but only of the ministry of the Word *in abstracto*, of which Ludwig Hartmann, among others, rightly reminds us in his pastoral theology: 'The ministry of the Word may be treated in two ways: first, in an abstract way when the state of the office itself is being considered, as Art. V of the Augsburg Confession treats it; second, in a concrete way, when the persons are considered who minister in this holy office, as Art. XIV of the Augsburg Confession treat it' (*Pastorale evangelicum* [Nuremberg, 1697], 4:25)." C. F. W. Walther, *Church and Ministry: Witnesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church on the Questions of the Church and the Ministry*, tr. J. T. Mueller (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987), 178.

²³ Studies on this correspondence, which consists of five documents, are relatively few, at least in English. To review recent studies on this topic, see William M. Cwirla, "Grabau and the Saxon Pastors: The Doctrine of the Holy Ministry, 1840–1845," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 68 (Summer 1995): 84–99. William Schumacher translated the first two documents, i.e., *Hirtenbrief* and *Kritik*, with an introductory short essay in "Grabau's *Hirtenbrief* and the Saxon Reply," *Soli Deo Gloria: Essays on C. F. W. Walther in Memory of August R. Suelflow* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2000), 133–176. Benjamin T. G. Mayes has translated the fourth document and included an introduction in "A Letter by Johannes Grabau on Christian Ordination," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 73 (Fall 2000): 171–189. Most recently, Mayes did a thorough treatment of the entire correspondence in "Reconsidering Grabau on Ministry and

Our primary source is Gotthold Heinrich Löber's collection of the correspondence.²⁴ As the longer title of this book indicates—" . . . a *Protestation* against a hierarchical view asserted within the Lutheran Church"—this monograph was edited by Missourians with a possible bias. Unfortunately, this is the only available source on the correspondence. It contains Grabau's *Hirtenbrief* itself (1 December 1840),²⁵ and the Saxon pastors' reply two and a half years later (3 July 1843).²⁶ Grabau, then, responded to the Saxons' reply (12 July 1844),²⁷ to which Löber attaches Grabau's letter to a Saxon pastor in New York, T. J. Brohm (26 June 1844).²⁸ The Saxon pastors have the last word in their reply to Grabau's 1844 rebuttal (15 January 1845).²⁹

Löber's forward already indicates the concerns that prompted the Saxon pastors to publish the correspondence: the position of the *Predigtamt* in the church. It must not be placed too high or too low, but remain in the "salutary middle."³⁰ If the *Predigtamt* is regarded too highly, then the right and duty of the spiritual priesthood of the congregation may easily be diminished and Christian freedom obscured. If, on the other hand, it is regarded too low, the congregation may show contempt for preaching and

Sacraments," *Lutheran Quarterly* 20 (Summer 2006): 190-212. See note 1 of the above work by Mayes for a rather exhaustive list of works on Grabau. Readers are to consult these and other writings regarding historical questions of the debate.

²⁴ G. H. Löber, *Der Hirtenbrief des Herrn Pastors Grabau zu Buffalo vom Jahre 1840. Nebst den zwischen ihm und mehreren lutherischen Pastoren von Missouri gewechselten Schriften. Der Oeffentlichkeit übergeben als eine Protestation gegen Geltendmachung hierarchischer Grundsätze innerhalb der lutherischen Kirche* (New York: H. Ludwig & Co., 1849). The translation is: *The Pastoral Letter of Mr. Pastor Grabau at Buffalo of the year 1840, together with the writings exchanged between him and a few Lutheran Pastors of Missouri, to the general public presented as a Protestation against hierarchical view asserted within the Lutheran Church.*

²⁵ Löber, "The Pastoral Letter of Mr. Pastor Grabau," 11-20; hereafter "*Hirtenbrief*."

²⁶ Löber, "Judgment of the aforementioned Pastoral Letter to which the Author had Requested," 20-36; hereafter "*Kritik*." This document was written by G. H. Löber and co-signed by T. C. F. Gruber and C. F. W. Walther.

²⁷ Löber, "Mr. Pastor Grabau's Supposed Rebuttal to our aforementioned Judgment," 37-57; hereafter "*Antikritik*."

²⁸ Löber, "A Letter of Mr. Pastor Grabau to Mr. Pastor Brohm in New York Forming Part of the Preceding Rebuttal," 57-64; hereafter "Letter to Brohm."

²⁹ Löber, "Our Judgment of the aforementioned Pastoral Rebuttal of Mr. Pastor Grabau," 64-88; hereafter "Judgment of *Antikritik*." This document is signed by G. H. Löber, K. F. Gruber, E. G. W. Keyl, and C. F. W. Walther.

³⁰ "*diese heilsame Mitte*." Löber also uses the phrase: "*die rechte Mitte*." Löber, *The Pastoral Letter*, 6. Interestingly, it was the Saxon pastors who were concerned about a high or low view of the *Predigtamt*; whereas, Grabau used no such words or thoughts in his correspondence against the Saxon pastors.

could lead to separatism and an excess of Christian freedom, resulting in enthusiasm and sectarian disorder. "We Lutheran preachers and congregations from Saxony under our leader, former pastor Stephan, indeed just experienced manifold of the worst pain in both of these erroneous ways here mentioned," states Löber. To guard against this, "we have sought with diligence and great care to let our souls be navigated to the right middle [*die rechte Mitte*], according to which the holy *Predigtamt* is positioned in its right divine *Ordnung* neither too high nor too low."³¹ For the Saxons, Grabau's understanding of the *Predigtamt* was too high, which frustrates the salutary middle (*heilsame Mitte*) of the Saxon conviction and did not regard the spiritual priesthood of all Christians enough.³² Thus, Grabau's position was characterized as papistic, Old Testamentalish, too liturgical, and hierarchical.³³

Indeed, there are expressions in Grabau that may give this impression. He writes: "Even if the person in the office be evil, the words of institution are nevertheless powerful *because of the office, to which the Lord still binds Himself. . .*"³⁴ The Saxons interpreted this to mean the sacraments depend on the person of the pastor, denying the efficacy of the word of God.³⁵ The Saxons' uneasiness must have increased when they read Grabau's reply: "It maintains thereby that the word and sacrament of the altar is [*sic.*] powerful only in this *Ordnung* of the office in which the Lord wants to have them used."³⁶

Then, Grabau refers to the *Predigtamt* as "a particular *Stand* on earth ordained by God."³⁷ The Saxons appear to have understood this to mean the office of the holy ministry is a special rank or class of Christian. In response to this, the Saxons incorporated the distinction of the ministry *in abstracto* and *in concreto*:

Merely incidentally we remark with respect to linguistics that the office, when it is designated not *in concreto* but *in abstracto*, cannot be called a *Stand*, but rather an *Ordnung* which Christ has instituted in His church,

³¹ Löber, *The Pastoral Letter*, 6; emphasis original.

³² Löber, "Kritik," 22.

³³ Löber, "Kritik," 22; Löber, "Kritik," 35; see also Löber, "Judgment of *Antikritik*," 67. Again, the title of this collection by Löber includes a phrase: "a Protestation against hierarchical view."

³⁴ Löber, "Hirtenbrief," 15; emphasis original.

³⁵ Löber, "Kritik," 28. Such a characterization of Grabau is widely held.

³⁶ Löber, "Antikritik," 45.

³⁷ Löber, "Antikritik," 38.

an *ordo ecclesiasticus*, or ministry [*Dienst*], *ministerium*, and authority [*Macht*], ἐξουσία. a call [*Beruf*], etc.³⁸

Finally, Grabau's understanding of ordination was not acceptable. While ordination for Grabau is essential and has a divine mandate; for the Saxons, it was non-essential, an *adiaphoron*, because only the call from a congregation is essential. Ordination was still retained, however, but "simply for the sake of unity and good order."³⁹

Do Grabau's statements necessarily mean that he held a hierarchical, even papistic, view of the ministry? Other correspondence may clarify. Grabau does not actually say that the sacrament depends on the *Predigtamt*:

Not that Christ needs the office in order to bestow power to His words of institution, but rather that Christ, in order to make things more certain for us, wants to *use* the office instituted by Him in grace in order to deal with men on earth by the power of His Word.⁴⁰

Grabau was concerned about distributing the Lord's body and blood, not just their presence. The Lord gave the means of grace (*Gnadenmittel*) not "to be enclosed in a vessel" but to be served and given out. For the sake of its distribution, he instituted the means of the ministry (*Dienstmittel*).⁴¹ For Grabau, to isolate the *Gnadenmittel* from the *Dienstmittel* not only diminishes the Lord's mandate and arrangement but also robs Christians of the gospel's certainty. When Grabau writes: "God wants to deal with us *ordentlicher Weise* in His church only through the holy *Predigtamt*,"⁴² he neither denied the efficacy of God's word, nor suggested that the efficacy of the word depends on the office of the holy ministry or the person in the office.⁴³ He simply sought to extol the Lord's arrangement for distributing

³⁸ Löber, "Judgment of *Antikritik*," 66.

³⁹ Löber, "*Kritik*," 23; see also Löber, "*Antikritik*," 40–41. The Saxons also accuse Grabau that he speaks more of the inner call in connection with CA XIV. Löber, "*Kritik*," 26. The reference to the "alleged inner word and every kind of enthusiasm" that Walther opposes in Thesis 2 of *Die Stimme* in the second edition forward may have Grabau in mind; see e.g., Walther, *Die Stimme* (1865), 195.

⁴⁰ Löber, "*Hirtenbrief*," 15; emphasis original. See also Maves, "Reconsidering Grabau," 194.

⁴¹ Löber, "*Antikritik*," 44.

⁴² Löber, "*Antikritik*," 44; cf., Löber, "*Hirtenbrief*," 15.

⁴³ Löber, "*Kritik*," 28; see also Löber, "*Antikritik*," 46. In order to support the Saxons' view that the sacrament depends on the words of institution and not on the person who administers it, which Grabau also shares, the Saxons gave a lengthy quotation from Luther's "The Private Mass and the Consecration of Priests, 1533." LW 38:200–204; WA 38:241, 6–243, 23. Here Luther indeed makes a distinction between the person and the

his gifts. Grabau sees no contradiction between his position and the Saxons' that God wants to deal with us through the word.⁴⁴ Ultimately, the Saxons did not have a problem with Grabau either, as their response to his "*Antikritik*" indicates:

If the question is: 'How does God let us partake these means of grace and deal with us *ordentlicher Weise*? The answer is: through the *Predigtamt* ordained by Him.⁴⁵

What about Grabau's claim that the *Predigtamt* is a special *Stand* in the church? As Mayes observes, Grabau does not entertain any thoughts that the pastor possesses an indelible character.⁴⁶ Grabau distinguishes between the *Predigtamt* and the spiritual priesthood.⁴⁷ While he calls the former a special *Stand*, he speaks of the latter as the occupants of "all other *Ständen*."⁴⁸ This is how Luther also used the word *Stand* and *Ständen* in the "Table of Duties" attached to the Small Catechism⁴⁹ and in the third part of the Large Confession.⁵⁰ With *ordo* and *Stand* used interchangeably in Luther, the use of the term *Stand* is not an issue. Despite the Saxons' questions to the contrary, Grabau does in fact highly extol the spiritual

office in the *Predigtamt* and emphasizes that the Lord's Supper does not depend on the worthiness of the person who fills the office. But, again, this is what Grabau also believes; see Löber, "*Antikritik*," 46. Luther asserts that the doer and giver of the sacrament is not the person in the office but Christ. Christ administers the sacrament through the *Predigtamt*; see WA 38:240, 8–11; 24–34; LW 38:200. The *Predigtamt* does not belong to the person who fills it, but to Christ. In fact, it is Christ's office; see WA 38:243, 21–23; LW 38:204. The *Predigtamt* and the sacraments always remain in the church; persons, however, are daily subject to change; see WA 38:241, 19–20; LW 38:201. The sacrament, therefore, does not depend on the person, whether he is godly or evil, but "on Christ, on His Word, on His office, on His mandate and *Ordnung*;" see WA 38:241, 6–10; LW 38:200–201. In the portion of Luther quoted here, it is indeed the Lord's words that consecrate the bread and wine as the Saxons maintain, but Grabau's point is also supported as the *Predigtamt* is included in the *Ordnung* of Christ.

⁴⁴ Löber, "*Kritik*," 28; Löber, "Judgment of *Antikritik*," 82–83.

⁴⁵ Löber, "Judgment of *Antikritik*," 83.

⁴⁶ Mayes, "Reconsidering Grabau," 203.

⁴⁷ The Saxons respond to Grabau that they do not need his instruction on such a distinction because they already knew it "from the little book of Spener about the spiritual priesthood." Löber, "Judgment of *Antikritik*," 67.

⁴⁸ Löber, "*Antikritik*," 38.

⁴⁹ "*Die Haustafel etlicher Spruche für allerlei heilige Orden und Stände . . .*" *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*, 11th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 523. Luther here follows the three orders: *ordo ecclesiasticus*, *politicus*, and *oeconomicus*.

⁵⁰ WA 26:504, 30–505, 18; LW 37:364–365.

priesthood.⁵¹ He even explains their right to choose and ordain pastors as emerging from the nature of the church's spiritual sacrifice in presenting a person to God to whom he gives the office.⁵² The spiritual priesthood concerns the position of Christians before God. The *Predigtamt* is a *Stand*, which entails the congregation because it stands before her to serve the means of grace.⁵³ Grabau's first statement on the *Predigtamt* as a *Stand* in the correspondence should be read carefully again:

The Holy Scripture teaches concerning the Holy *Predigtamt* that it is a particular *Stand* on earth ordained by God in which He ordains certain apt persons from among men so that they may with divine authority as messenger/ambassador in His stead carry forward the Lord's words to others, administer the sacraments, as also lead (them) to Christ and build them up for the eternal life.⁵⁴

There is no reference to an indelible character here. Instead, Grabau confesses that the man in the *Predigtamt* preaches and distributes the sacrament with divine authority as an ordained man. When the Saxons replied to Grabau's "*Antikritik*" by saying that the ministry *in abstracto* is to be called an *Ordnung* rather than a *Stand*, they explained the *Ordnung* as *Macht* (authority) and ἐξουσία.⁵⁵ When the Saxons' suspicion that Grabau resembles Stephan is removed, both positions appear to be similar.

Even though the Saxons objected to the use of the word *Stand* in Grabau's description of the *Predigtamt*, their primary objection was to Grabau's disapproval of the Saxon view that "the office is set up when the congregation transfers/confers (*überträgt*) it according to the right it receives from God to call a preacher."⁵⁶ For Grabau, ordination was not an *adiaphoron*; it has a divine mandate.⁵⁷ For the Saxons, ordination was an *adiaphoron*. A call from a congregation was essential, while ordination remains simply for the sake of good order. Grabau's view of ordination comes from the New Testament terms for *sending*: from the Father to the Son and to the apostles.⁵⁸ He notes, in the mandate to and practice of the

⁵¹ Löber, "*Antikritik*," 38.

⁵² Löber, "*Antikritik*," 38.

⁵³ Löber, "*Antikritik*," 38.

⁵⁴ Löber, "*Antikritik*," 38; emphasis original.

⁵⁵ Löber, "*Antikritik*," 66.

⁵⁶ Löber, "*Kritik*," 31. Grabau replied: "The congregation does not give or transfer (*überträgt*) the holy *Predigtamt*, as you, my beloved friends, say, but the Son of God, with the Father and the Holy Spirit." Löber, "*Antikritik*," 39. "Your view that the congregation transfers/confers (*übertrage*) the office is false." Löber, "*Antikritik*," 47.

⁵⁷ Löber, "*Antikritik*," 39-40, 41; see also Löber, "Letter to Brohm," 58.

⁵⁸ Löber, "*Antikritik*," 40; Löber, "Letter to Brohm," 58-59.

apostles, the person to be placed into the office was not only called and elected but also sent and placed.⁵⁹ Placement refers, in Grabau's view, to ordination. He does say, however, that the *how* of ordination is an *adiaphoron*, but the ordination itself—namely, a man's placement into the office for service—is not.⁶⁰ While the Saxons argued that CA XIV does not define ordination as divinely mandated, they maintained that the word *öffentlich* excludes "self-promoting crooked preachers" and, at the same time, reserves "oral witness of all Christians because outside the *öffentlichen* Divine Service every Christian may and should give testimony to the Gospel to others."⁶¹ Grabau did not object to the Saxons' claim concerning a Christian's personal testimony in the world.⁶²

What, then, is the difference between Grabau and the Saxons on ordination? Both refer to the consecration and distribution of the Lord's Supper by laymen. Each oppose a lay administration of the body and blood of Christ. As Mayes demonstrated, the Saxons were more rigorous about this practice than Grabau.⁶³ But the reasons for this were quite different. For the Saxons, lay administration of the Lord's Supper was not acceptable because the Lord's Supper is by nature *öffentlich*. God wants order (*Ordnung*) in his church and an office-less (*Amtlose*) person should not distribute the sacrament, since it would cause disorder.⁶⁴ On the other hand, Grabau's reason is that a lay person is not within the Lord's *Ordnung* of the *Predigtamt*. He is not put there to serve the body and blood of the Lord. Lay distribution, therefore, is contrary to the Lord's design and arrangement for distributing the Lord's Supper through the *Predigtamt*. Grabau goes even further, arguing that anyone who stands outside the office ends up distributing only bread and wine.⁶⁵ While the Saxons do not touch on this last statement, they came to a similar conclusion: "the office-less (*Amtlose*) person should not distribute the sacrament because they do not have a mandate for it."⁶⁶

Contrary to their usual characterization, Grabau and the Saxons hold more in common regarding the *Predigtamt* than not. Both confessed that the words of institution consecrate the bread and wine. Both confessed that the Lord's Supper is administered by the *Predigtamt* in *ordentlicher Weise*.

⁵⁹ Löber, "Antikritik," 40; Löber, "Letter to Brohm," 59–60.

⁶⁰ Löber, "Antikritik," 41.

⁶¹ Löber, "Judgment of Antikritik," 66.

⁶² Löber, "Letter to Brohm," 59.

⁶³ Mayes, "Reconsidering Grabau," 205–206.

⁶⁴ Löber, "Judgment of Antikritik," 83.

⁶⁵ Löber, "Antikritik," 44–45.

⁶⁶ Löber, "Judgment of Antikritik," 83.

Both appreciated the spiritual priesthood. Both confessed the distinctiveness and the divine institution of the *Predigtamt*. Both confessed that a man is a pastor because he is called and placed in a congregation. The Saxons took Grabau's *Stand* as the ministry *in abstracto*. There was no such abstract ministry, however, among the Saxons or with Grabau. The use of the ministry *in abstracto* and *in concreto* originated from the Saxons' impression that Grabau elevated the person of the pastor too high, as in Rome; yet there was no trace of this in his letters. The Saxons saw a shadow of Stephanism in Grabau, and indeed there are places where Grabau may cast such a shadow, but the core of Grabau's thinking centered around the dynamic flow of the gospel in the Lord's institution of the means of grace and the *Predigtamt*, and their coherent relationship for man's certainty as the Lord's arrangement to deliver his gifts.

Grabau and the Saxons came out of different circumstances, but each attempted to be faithful to the Lord of the church in these issues. The distinction between the ministry *in abstracto* and *in concreto* did appear in the words of the Saxons. The purpose, however, was not to separate the office from its functions, but simply to oppose a hierarchical understanding that they saw in Grabau.

Walther's *Die Stimme, the Second Edition (1865)*

Walther's second edition of *Die Stimme* (1865) introduces the distinction between the ministry *in abstracto* and *in concreto* in continuity with the Saxons' response to Grabau. The longer title of this book specifically mentions Grabau by name: ". . . in defense against the attack of Mister P. Grabau in Buffalo."⁶⁷ As the "*Hirtenbrief*" correspondence demonstrated, Walther too addressed what the Saxons thought Grabau's position was rather than what he actually confessed.

The phrases in question appear under Thesis II on the *Predigtamt* in Walther: "The *Predigtamt* or *Pfarramt* is not a human *Ordnung* but an *Amt* instituted by God Himself."⁶⁸ Grabau would agree with this statement, except he would prefer to use the word *Stand* rather than *Amt*. Since Luther used these words interchangeably, Grabau would not oppose this thesis. Under the second subsection of Thesis II "The testimonies of the church in its official confession," the second edition of *Die Stimme* adds the words *in abstracto* and *in concreto* immediately after the quotation from CA V: "To obtain such faith God instituted the office of preaching [*Predigtamt*]" (CA V, 1):

⁶⁷ ". . . zur Abwehr der Angriffe des Herrn P. Grabau in Buffalo."

⁶⁸ Walther, *Die Stimme* (1865), 193.

To be sure, the *Predigtamt* is spoken of not *in concreto* or of the *Pfarramt*, but of the office *in abstracto*, as Ludwig Hartmann quite rightly reminds us, among other things. He writes in his *Pastorale*: Concerning the *ministerium* it may be treated in two ways: 1. *in the abstract*, if the *Stand* itself and the *Amt* itself is under Christian consideration in which the *Amt* is treated in the fifth article of the Augsburg Confession; 2. *in the concrete* or with respect to the persons who are there in the holy office, as this topic is treated in the fourteenth article of Augsburg Confession.⁶⁹

Walther identifies the source of the expressions *in abstracto* and *in concreto* as from Ludwig Hartmann's *Pastorale Evangelicum*.⁷⁰

The definition of the Holy Ministry is given and particularly in abstract view: IV. But now, for the thing itself (the Holy Ministry), according to the account instituted for us, we put forward several things concerning the pastoral office. Concerning the ministry it may be treated in two ways: 1. *in the abstract*, if the position/standing itself, and the office itself is under Christian consideration, in whose respect is treated in the fifth article of the Augsburg Confession, concerning the ministry; 2. *in the concrete* or *the consideration of the persons*, who is engaged in this holy office, as considered in the fourteenth article of the Augsburg Confession, which reads, "*nemo debeat publice in Ecclesia docere aut sacramenta administrare, nisi legitime vocatus.*"⁷¹

⁶⁹ Walther, *Die Stimme* (1865), 194. "*Vom Ministerium kann auf zweierlei Weise gehandelt werden: 1. abstraktiv, sofern der Stand selbst und das Amt selbst der christlichen Betrachtung unterliegt, in welchem Betracht vom Amte im 5. Artikel der Augsburgischen Konfession gehandelt wird; 2. konkretiv oder in Ansehung der Personen, die sich in diesem heiligen Amte befinden; so wird von diesem Gegenstand im 14. Artikel der Augsburgischen Konfession gehandelt.*" The Latin original of Hartmann is quoted in a footnote in *Die Stimme* (1865): "*De ministerio tractari potest dupliciter: 1. abstractivae, prout ipse status, ipsumque officium christianae considerationi subjacet, quo respectu agitur de ministerio articulo 5 August. Conf.; 2. concretivae seu ratione personarum, quae in hoc sacro officio versantur; sic artic. 14 August. Conf. de hoc themate agitur.*"

⁷⁰ Hartmann was born in 1640 in Rothenburg and was active throughout his life as pastor and superintendent until his death in 1680, except for his time of theological study in Wittenberg. He was a friend and brother-in-law of Spener and corresponded with him since 1669. See Erhardt Peschke, "Das Collegium Pastorale August Hermann Frankes 1713," in *Reformation und Neuzeit 300 Jahre Theologie in Halle*, ed. Udo Schnelle (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1994), 158-159; and Werner Elert, *The Structure of Lutheranism*, tr. Walter A. Hansen (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), 352.

⁷¹ Hartmann, *Pastorale Evangelicum* (1722), 27. Note that Hartmann uses the word *legitime* instead of *rite* when quoting from CA XIV. He writes: "*nisi legitime vocatus*" and not "*nisi rite vocatus.*"

Hartmann continues: "the *ministerium* or pastoral office is instituted by God to preach the Word in the public assembly of the church and administer the sacraments legitimately," and "the suitable person is legitimately called to impart all Christ's benefits to the faithful." Then, he expounds through New Testament passages on the distinctive "*ministerium* or definite order of the ministry in the church in the New Testament which lasts to the end of the world." Matthew 28:18–20 comes first, explaining that this is the divine institution of the *ministerium*. "Just as Christ is sent by the Father, He sent Apostles immediately and the Apostles who are instituted by Christ instituted further pastors and bishops as witnessed in the Book of Acts . . . (and in) Tit 1:5." Mark 16:15 comes next, which Hartmann uses to explain that the office is instituted to baptize, teach, preach the word, and administer the sacraments. "Where the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments according to the institution of Christ are made, there is the church."⁷²

While Spener's influence may be associated with Hartmann and his work, at least in this part of his book, Hartmann faithfully discusses the office of the ministry according to CA V as the divinely instituted office for the distribution of the gospel in preaching and the sacraments. He considers this the ministry *in abstracto*. While the distinction between the ministry *in abstracto* and *in concreto* may be regrettable, for Hartmann the ministry *in abstracto* was neither about mere functions of the means of grace nor generic activities of sharing the gospel by the spiritual priesthood.

This leads one to ask: Did Walther correctly understand Hartmann?

It is important for this sake to understand this because of those who desire to make the pastoral office (*Pfarramt*) a means of grace and coordinate it with the Word and sacraments and assert that it is unconditionally necessary for anyone for salvation, so that no one without the service of an ordained pastor can either come to faith or obtain absolution of his sins, whereas our church teaches this only of the oral or bodily Word (*mündlichen oder leiblichen Wort*) in opposition to the alleged inner word and every manner of enthusiasm. Nevertheless, our foundational Confession in the fifth article no doubt intends to bear witness also to the divine institution of the pastoral office, even if only

⁷² Hartmann, *Pastorale Evangelicum* (1722), 27–28. Other Biblical passages here quoted are 1 Cor 12:27–29, Eph 4:11–12, Acts 20:28, etc.

indirectly, as all commentaries of our orthodox theologians on this article clearly show.⁷³

Whether Walther intended to allude to Grabau's position or not is irrelevant. Regardless, Walther's intent in Thesis II, as the Hartmann reference indicates, was to confess that the *Predigtamt* or *Pfarramt* is divinely instituted.

Problematic is the location of Hartman's quotation in Walther's presentation of Thesis II. Hartman's words are located under "2. Witnesses of the Church in Its Official Confessions" rather than "3. Witnesses of the Church in the Private Writings of Its Teachers."⁷⁴ Here also in this thesis Walther refers to only the first half of the first sentence of CA V: "*Das Predigtamt oder Pfarramt ist keine menschliche Ordnung, sondern ein von Gott selbst gestiftetes Amt.*"⁷⁵ Missing is its reference to the means of grace and the *externum verbum*. CA V states that the gospel is located concretely in the *externum verbum* of word and sacraments. There is nothing abstract (no ministry *in abstracto*) about CA V. It confesses that God gives out his gifts through the *externum verbum*, by his use of the *Predigtamt*, which he instituted for the *ministerium docendi evangelii et porrigendi sacramenta*.

Ultimately, Walther's use of Hartmann does not separate the office and its functions to the end that CA V refers to the office of the spiritual priesthood; however, his distinction between the ministry *in concreto* and *in abstracto* does not fully appreciate the whole of CA V.

Baier's Compendium (1879)

The third source to examine the distinction between the ministry *in abstracto* and *in concreto* is Baier's *Compendium Theologiae Positivae*⁷⁶ that

⁷³ Walther, *Die Stimme* (1865), 195.

⁷⁴ Norman E. Nagel, "The Doctrine of the Office of the Holy Ministry in the Confessions and in Walther's *Kirche und Amt*," *Concordia Journal* 15 (October 1989): 426.

⁷⁵ Walther, *Die Stimme* (1865), 193. "The Preaching Office or Pastoral Office is not a human order but an office instituted by God Himself."

⁷⁶ J. W. Baier (1647–1695) studied at Jena, where he came under the influence of John Musaeus. He was called as professor at the University of Jena and later to Halle. According to Robert Preus, Baier was, like many of the later orthodox Lutherans, somewhat affected by Pietism. His *Compendium Theologiae Positivae* was first published in 1685 and appeared in thirteen editions by 1750. Robert Preus evaluates: "While demonstrating that the Jena theology was not syncretistic but orthodox, this work, which on every page leans on Musaeus, is not wholly free from the latter's synergism. Baier's presentation and formulations are very scholastic and indicate a decline in the forcefulness of orthodox Lutheran dogmatics;" *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism: A Study of Theological Prolegomena* (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House,

Walther enlarged and published in 1879.⁷⁷ Baier's original work was published in 1685, eight years after the appearance of Hartmann's *Pastorale Evangelicum*. Whether Baier used this or drew from a common source cannot be verified, although Hartmann's influence on Baier seems unlikely.

Section one of Baier's chapter on the ministry in the church (Part III, Chapter 14, "*De ministerio ecclesiastico*" [i.e., the Latin title of CA V]) begins:

For the gathering and preserving the church it is necessary for certain men to perform the office of preaching the word and administering the sacraments, in order that through these means faith may be granted to men, those gathered be strengthened and enriched. And this is that office which is called *ministerium ecclesiasticum*.⁷⁸

This statement echoes CA V. One subsection (a) discusses how God, although he could have done and can do such works described above *immediate*, ordained both *ordinem* and *media* to do so through them. Walther now adds to Baier's text a few quotations from Luther, the Lutheran Confessions, and the teachers of the church. Walther quotes Hartmann's *Pastorale Evangelicum* followed by CA V.⁷⁹ In *Die Stimme*, Walther quoted only the first part of CA V. Here he presents the full text. He, then, cites Mentzer, SD II, SD XII, and Gerhard. So far, it appears that Walther, not Baier, has incorporated Hartmann's view.

When we come to section two, which discusses how the triune God and the God-man Christ is the *causa efficiens* of not only the constitution of the ministry in the church, but also its functions,⁸⁰ the view of the ministry *in abstracto* and *in concreto* appears in Baier's text itself, not in Walther's additions.⁸¹

1970), 1:64–65. For the scholastic use of *in abstracto* and *in concreto* in Christology, see Martin Chemnitz, *The Two Natures in Christ*, tr. J. A. O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971), 31–33.

⁷⁷ At the time of Walther, the St. Louis seminary was using Baier's *Compendium* as a textbook for dogmatics. Interestingly, *Compendium Theologiae Historicae* (1699), one of Baier's many other works, places the chapters on church and the office of the holy ministry before the chapters on baptism and the Lord's Supper, not after, as in his *Compendium Theologiae Positivae*, Baier-Walther (1879), and Pieper's *Christliche Dogmatik* (1917–1924).

⁷⁸ J. W. Baier, *Compendium Theologiae Positivae*, ed. C. F. W. Walther (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1879), III:683.

⁷⁹ Baier, *Compendium Theologiae Positivae*, III:685.

⁸⁰ Baier, *Compendium Theologiae Positivae*, III:687.

⁸¹ Baier, *Compendium Theologiae Positivae*, III:688.

The *principle efficient* cause of the ecclesiastical ministry which not only *in itself* but also the arrangement [place, doctrine, purpose, etc.] of the ministers is the Triune God and Christ, the God-man θεάϊθρωπος.⁸²

Baier explains that the power of the ministry comes from Christ through his institution of the ministry. The ministers' standing (*status*, *Stand*) belongs to the Lord's institution, which may be viewed *abstractly*. The ministry may be viewed *concretely* when the man who does the work of the office is concerned. God, the author of grace, instituted both the means of grace and the office of the ministry in order to teach doctrine (Gal 1:8, 9, 12; 2 Tim 3:14-15) and to administer the sacraments (1 Cor 11:23-26). God placed certain individuals into this office by sending them and going with them (Ps 68:12, Matt 9:38, Luke 10:2, Rom 1:1, Heb 5:4). The office with its functions belong together. God made Paul an apostle (Gal 1:1), while the Holy Spirit has made others overseers to care for the church (Acts 20:28; cf., 1 Cor 12:4-11). Both God and man are involved because God entrusts the office to certain men (Matt 28:19-20; Mark 16, Eph 4:11-12).⁸³ Walther supports Baier here by adding quotations in German from Ap XIII, 11-13, Tr 10, and Luther.

We may observe four things here. First, Baier uses the word *status* (*Stand*) to describe the Lord's institution of the office of the holy ministry. *Status* was controversial for the Saxons during the Grabau controversy. Second, Baier bases the doctrine of the ministry on the Lord's institution. In fact, he teaches that both the means of grace and the office that serves them are instituted by the Lord. It is the Lord who puts certain men into the office. He sends them. Third, while Baier in section two uses the terms *abstract* and *concrete*, he does not apply the language of *abstract* to CA V nor the term *concrete* to CA XIV. Fourth, the office and the activities of the ministers run together for Baier.

Baier does not separate the ministry *in abstracto* (CA V) from the ministry *in concreto* (CA XIV). By inserting the Hartmann quotation into Baier's *Compendium*, Walther did. Yet, as Walther's placement of the Hartmann quotation indicates, his intention was to say the Lord instituted the *Predigtamt* with CA V and not to advocate the separation of the office from the functions of the *Predigtamt*. It appears that Walther cited Hartmann in section one in anticipation of Baier's own statement in the following

⁸² Baier, *Compendium Theologiae Positivae*, III:687. "*Causa efficiens principalis ministerii ecclesiastici cum in se, tum ratione ministrorum, qui illo funguntur, Deus trinus est, et Christus θεάϊθρωπος*" (emphasis original).

⁸³ Baier, *Compendium Theologiae Positivae*, III:688-690.

section. When the Saxons spoke of the ministry *in abstracto* and *in concreto*, they were likely reflecting on Baier's *Compendium* or had in mind Hartmann's *Pastorale Evangelicum*. Neither Hartmann, Baier, Walther, nor even Grabau, separated the functions of the ministry from the office of the ministry.⁸⁴

A few additional observations on Walther's *Die Stimme* may help us to understand his position.⁸⁵ First, Walther does not start with CA V but with CA XIV: "*Das heilige Predigtamt oder Pfarramt ist ein von dem Priesteramt, welches alle Gläubigen haben, verschiedenes Amt.*" In his situation, he wanted to refute the error that the *Predigtamt* and the *Priesteramt aller Gläubigen* are not distinct. Walther does not use the term *rite vocatus* but *verschiedenes Amt*. The terms are not identical, but *rite vocatus* gives a basis for *verschiedenes Amt*. Thesis II: "*Das Predigtamt oder Pfarramt ist keine menschliche Ordnung, sondern ein von Gott selbst gestiftetes Amt*" contains only half of CA V.⁸⁶ For Walther the office of the holy ministry was not derived from the priesthood of all believers or historically evolved but was instituted by God. What is missing in Walther is that the office of the holy ministry is instituted by God for the delivery of what has been confessed in CA IV. This comes in Thesis V.

Second, the essential core of placing a man into the *Predigtamt* for Walther is the call from the congregation: "*Das Predigtamt wird von Gott durch die Gemeinde, als Inhaberin aller Kirchengewalt oder der Schlüssel, und durch deren von Gott vorgeschriebenen Beruf übertragen*" (Thesis 6-A).⁸⁷ God is the subject of the verb. Neither bishops nor the church but the Lord's mandate and institution places a man into the *Predigtamt*. The church is God's instrument, but by emphasizing the congregation as the possessor of all church power, this thesis gives the impression that the congregation and not God places a man into the *Predigtamt*. Later generations may have gotten a different impression, especially from Thesis VII: "The holy *Predigtamt* is the authority, conferred by God through the

⁸⁴ Kurt Marquart similarly observed: "Walther himself, however, may have over-interpreted L. Hartmann (*Church and Ministry*, 178), whose citation says not that there is an abstract office and then also a concrete office, but rather that *one and the same office* may be *considered* abstractly, in respect of the office and estate [*Stand, status*] itself (as in AC XIV). There is only one divinely instituted office, which is ordinarily—and this is part of the divine institution—exercised by the divinely called incumbents of that office, but which may in emergencies be exercised to the extent necessary by anyone." *The Church and her Fellowship, Ministry, and Governance*, Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics, ed. Robert Preus, vol. 9 (Ft. Wayne, IN: The International Foundation for Lutheran Confessional Research, 1990), 126; emphases original. Our consideration here may support William Cwirla's assertion: "the pastoral office *in abstracto* has been misused in terminology of 'every Christian a minister' via the abstraction of AC V." Cwirla, "Grabau and the Saxon Pastors," 99.

⁸⁵ See the excellent study of Walther's theses on the office of the holy ministry in Nagel. "The Doctrine of the Office of the Holy Ministry in the Confessions and in Walther's *Kirche und Amt*," 423–446.

⁸⁶ Walther, *Die Stimme* (1865), 193.

⁸⁷ Walther, *Die Stimme* (1865), 245.

congregation as the possessor of the priesthood and all churchly authority, to carry out the rights of the spiritual priesthood in public office on behalf of the community."⁸⁸

Third, Walther speaks of ordination as an ecclesiastical rite not instituted by God: "*Die Ordination der Berufenen mit Handauflegung ist nicht göttlichen Einsetzung, sondern eine apostolische kirchliche Ordnung, und nur eine öffentliche feierliche Bestätigung jenes Berufs*" (Thesis VI-B).⁸⁹ Here, Walther does not refer to CA XIV. When quoting Chemnitz's *Loci Theologici* that the rite of ordination is a public confirmation of the call, Walther leaves out this sentence: "By this public rite we testify that though this act is mediate, yet it is truly divine, for the person is presented to God and it is pointed out that the person has been sent through lawful means by God Himself. For it is not our work but God's which we do: through us He calls and ordains this person."⁹⁰ Similarly, when Walther quotes Chemnitz's *Examination of the Council of Trent*, he leaves the five reasons why the laying on of hands were particularly suited for the public confirmation.⁹¹ He also did not use Luther's words from *The Lectures on Genesis, 1535-1545*: "The laying on of hands is not a human tradition; it is God who makes and ordains ministers. Nor is it the pastor who absolves you, but the mouth and hand of the minister is the mouth and hand of God."⁹² Although not his intention, this seems to indicate that Walther opens the door to fraction or quantify the office.

Thesis VIII from Walther's *Die Stimme* is often cited to suggest the delegation of certain functions of the office of the holy ministry to laymen: "The *Predigtamt* is the highest office in the church, from which all other offices in the church flow."⁹³ On the basis of this thesis, we customarily speak of *ad hoc* auxiliary offices (*Hilfsamt*: "office that helps" or "helping office"). While it is widely held that the holders of auxiliary offices can perform one or more of the functions of the office of the holy ministry, Walther in Thesis VIII did not envision this. The *Hilfsamt*, according to Walther, supports the *Predigtamt* so that the holder of the *Predigtamt* may devote himself fully to the ministry of word and sacrament. Walther's examples of *Hilfsamt* are "[lay] elders who do not work in the word and in the teaching [doctrine] (1 Tim 5:17)," "the rulers (Rom 12:8)," "deacons in

⁸⁸ Walther, *Die Stimme* (1865), 315.

⁸⁹ Walther, *Die Stimme* (1865), 289.

⁹⁰ Walther, *Die Stimme* (1865), 303; cf., Martin Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici*, tr. J. A. O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989), II:705.

⁹¹ Walther, *Die Stimme* (1865), 303-342; Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, tr. Fred Kramer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978), II:693-695.

⁹² WA 43:600, 25-27; LW 5:249.

⁹³ Walther, *Die Stimme* (1865), 342.

the narrow sense," "the school teachers," "the almoners," "the sexton/sacristan," and "the leader of a choir in the public Divine Service." Quite to the contrary, for Walther the *Predigtamt* is the only office that Jesus instituted, and the bearers of the *Predigtamt* are to care for the congregation of God and watch over their souls as those who give account for them (1 Tim 3:1, 5, 7; 5:17; 1 Cor 4:1; Titus 1:7; Heb 13:17). Walther does not hold the bearers of the *Hilfsamt* accountable to God, neither partially nor fully.⁹⁴ As in Thesis II, so in Thesis VIII, Walther does not divide the *Predigtamt* into office and functions.

The move towards separating functions and office is not a uniquely Lutheran phenomenon. In the mainline Protestant seminaries, the interdependence of piety and intellect were challenged by the early twentieth century. They adopted the early-nineteenth-century European model of a fourfold curriculum. Following the fundamentalist-evangelical seminaries, which emphasized skills-oriented training in social service and marketing, many seminaries saw pastoral work as the application of certain techniques or theories.⁹⁵

A study by The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching's Preparation for the Professions Program warns against separating skills of the minister from his person. It opposes a mere application of pastoral skills and emphasizes the formation of a minister by advocating an integration of thinking, being, and doing. A good theological education develops not only ministerial functions, but forms pastors who embody the doctrine handed down by Jesus through the apostles.⁹⁶ This "is a process by which the student becomes a certain kind of thinking, feeling, and acting being."⁹⁷

For Lutherans, an integration of skills and personal formation are crucial but still do not make a pastor. A man is a pastor not because of his knowledge of sound doctrine, his skilled performance of preaching and administration of the sacraments, his leadership quality, his personal faith and piety, or even a combination of all of the above. He is a pastor when Jesus places him into the office of the holy ministry. Yet, the Carnegie study leaves us something to think about. It challenges separating the

⁹⁴ Walther, *Die Stimme* (1865), 342–343; Walther, *Church and Ministry*, 289–290. For a study of Acts 6, see Norman E. Nagel, "The Twelve and the Seven in Acts 6 and the Needy," *Concordia Journal* 31 (April 2005): 113–126. Cf., Samuel H. Nafzger, "The CTCR Report on 'The Ministry,'" *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 47 (April 1983): 97–129.

⁹⁵ Foster, et al., *Educating Clergy*, 190–271.

⁹⁶ Foster, et al., *Educating Clergy*, 22, 100–126, 178–182, 330–354.

⁹⁷ Foster, et al., *Educating Clergy*, 10.

functions of the ministry from the office and disputes shortening pastoral education.⁹⁸

II. What Do We Confess in CA XIV?

Does CA XIV suggest or even allow delegating preaching and the administration of the sacraments to lay people? Some take CA XIV merely as a rule for good order within the church because there are no biblical citations given either in CA XIV or Ap XIV. We need to keep in mind that CA XIV belongs to the doctrinal portion of the Augsburg Confession (“Our churches teach . . .”),⁹⁹ and thus is fully biblical. Here is the text of CA XIV.

<i>Vom Kirchenregiment wird gelehrt,</i>	<i>De ordine ecclesiastico docent</i>
<i>daß niemand</i>	<i>quod nemo debeat</i>
<i>in der Kirchen</i>	<i>in ecclesia</i>
<i>offentlich</i>	<i>publice</i>
<i>lehren</i>	<i>docere</i>
<i>oder predigen</i>	
<i>oder Sakrament reichen soll</i>	<i>aut sacramenta administrare</i>
<i>ohn ordentlichen Beruf.</i>	<i>nisi rite vocatus.</i>

“Concerning church order they teach that no one should teach publicly in the church or administer the sacraments unless properly called” (CA XIV).¹⁰⁰

The Place of Article XIV in the Augsburg Confession

CA V was the first article on the ministry and CA XIV the second, but CA XXVIII, the third article on the pastoral office, was drafted before the other two, and played the central role within the “disputed articles” of the second part of the Augsburg Confession. CA XXVIII distinguishes between spiritual and temporal authorities, and clearly confesses the office of the holy ministry as the office that delivers the means of grace. CA XXVIII draws this confession from John 20:21–23 and Mark 16:15 (5–21).

⁹⁸ In many ways, the new curriculum of Concordia Theological Seminary, which was formed before the appearance of this Carnegie study and which began to be implemented starting the academic year 2005–2006, represents the integral way of forming pastors; see John T. Pless, “A Curriculum from and for the Church,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 70 (January 2006): 85–93.

⁹⁹ David Scaer understands CA XIV as well as CA XXVIII as a commentary of CA V; see David P. Scaer, “Augustana V and the Doctrine of the Ministry,” *Lutheran Quarterly* 6 (Winter 1992): 407.

¹⁰⁰ The Latin text from Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, tr. Charles Arand, et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 47.

CA V must be read within the context of preceding articles. The Augsburg Confession moves from God and his creation (CA I) to man's fall and original sin (CA II), then on to the incarnation of Christ and his accomplishment of salvation through his death and resurrection (CA III), and finally to the justification of sinners before God (CA IV). CA V confesses the preaching office as instituted by God (by Jesus in CA XXVIII, 5-7) along with the means of grace. CA V emphasizes not the person placed into the *Predigtamt* but the Holy Spirit as the one who bestows faith and who, according to CA III, is sent by Jesus (CA III, 5). Thus, the Augsburg Confession confesses the intimate connection between the Lord's ascension and the sending of the Holy Spirit.¹⁰¹ The ministry of Jesus continues after Easter. Jesus, by sending the Holy Spirit, bestows the fruits of the cross to sinners until the end of the age. The Holy Spirit in turn binds himself to the *externum verbum*, the means of grace (CA V), in order to deliver the forgiveness won on the cross. The *externum verbum* speaks against any notion of a ministry *in abstracto*. Rather, the ministry is concrete: the gospel is located *extra nos* as a gift. Preaching happens when there is a preacher preaching, a teacher teaching, and a minister administering the sacraments.

CA V reflects a rich biblical theology of the mandate and institution of the office of the holy ministry: John 20:21-23 (CA XXVIII, 6-7; Tr 9, 23, 31); Matthew 28:19-20 (Tr 31); Luke 10:16 (CA XXVIII, 22; Ap VII/VIII, 28, 47); Matthew 16:18-19 (Tr 22, 25); John 21:17 (Tr 30).¹⁰² Through the apostle, Christ himself speaks (Lk 10:16), absolves (John 20:21-23; Matt 16:19-20), teaches and baptizes (Matt 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-16).¹⁰³ The doer and giver

¹⁰¹ The Lord's ascension was the presupposition of the Pentecost. Or to put it another way, the ascension and the sending of the Holy Spirit can never be separated. It is the ascended Lord Jesus (Acts 1:6-11) who continued his own ministry on earth (Acts 1:1) by sending the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-13; cf. John 20:22). The Holy Spirit bound himself to the means of grace (preaching, baptism, the Lord's Supper) to do what he is given to do (John 14:26, 15:26, 16:7, 13-14). Preaching (Acts 2:14-36), baptism (Acts 2:37-41), and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:42) were not floating about. Christ did not leave them up to a spontaneous or incidental service. He gave the apostles to deliver them; precisely that was the reason for his *sending* them (Acts 1:12-26, John 20:21-23, Matt 28:16-20 Mark 16:15, Luke 24:44-49, Eph 4:11-12, 2 Cor 5:17-21).

¹⁰² In the ordination liturgy of the first LCMS Agenda of 1856, John 20:19-23 appears first and as dominical mandate of the Holy Ministry, and so also in 1866, 1876, 1880, 1890, 1896, and 1922. It disappears from the 1917 Agenda where Matthew 28 comes first as dominical mandate, and so through 1921, 1936, and 1943. In 1984 *Lutheran Worship Agenda*, John 20:19-23 returns as second mandate passage after Matthew 28:19-20. The most recent *Lutheran Service Book Agenda* of 2006 follows the way of 1984.

¹⁰³ Thomas M. Winger, "The Office of the Holy Ministry according to the New Testament Mandate of Christ," *Logia* 7 (Eastertide 1998): 40.

of the ministry is Jesus (Matt 20:28; Luke 22:27). The man put into the *Predigtamt* is an instrument sent by Jesus (2 Cor 5:17-21;¹⁰⁴ cf., Ap VII/VIII, 28: *Christi vice et loco*; Ap XXIV, 79-81).¹⁰⁵ Just as the Holy Spirit is most pleased when he brings Christ while hiding himself; likewise, the Spirit active in the *Predigtamt* (John 20:21-23; cf., John 14:25; 15:26; 16:13-14; Luke 3:16, 22; 4:18; 24:49) is all about Jesus and the means of grace, not about the pastor.¹⁰⁶ A pastor is only an instrument to deliver the forgiveness of sins. Attention is not directed on him but on what he is there for: an instrumental servant of the gospel and the sacraments through whom Jesus speaks and gives.¹⁰⁷

CA V was thought as sufficient for the Wittenbergers to confess the doctrine of the ministry. In Augsburg, they had to answer John Eck's false allegations:

267. The church of Christ does not know the Sacrament of Ordination. Luther. But it is a figment invented by human beings. Zwingli. Rhegius. Amsterdo.

¹⁰⁴ The proclamation, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself; θεὸς ἦν ἐν Χριστῷ κόσμον καταλλάσσων ἑαυτῷ" (v 19), is changed into the address, "Be reconciled to God; καταλλάγητε τῷ θεῷ" (v 20). Here the words of reconciliation are both the word of the apostles and the word of God (cf., 1 Thess 2:13). Since Christ gave the apostles (here, Paul and Timothy; 2 Cor 1:1) the ministry of reconciliation (τὴν διακονίαν τῆς καταλλαγῆς; 2 Cor 5:18), entrusting to them "the message [word] of reconciliation; τὸν λόγον τῆς καταλλαγῆς" (2 Cor 5:19), so the apostles speak "on behalf of [in the place of] Christ; ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ" (2 Cor 5:20) as the authorized sent-ones, as the "ambassadors for [in the place of] Christ; ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ οὖν πρεσβεύομεν" (2 Cor 5:20). We also note that the Greek word for "making appeal; παρακαλοῦντος" in 2 Cor 5:20 is the verb form of the *Paraclete* (John 14:16, 26, 15:26, 16:7), whose work is to bring Jesus to the hearers. The reconciliation of God in Christ takes place in the very proclamation of the messengers of God. See also Chemnitz, *Examination*, II:229.

¹⁰⁵ Cf., John 5:30, 8:28-29, 12:44-50, 15:26-27, Matt 11:27, Luke 10:16, Rom 10:14-15, 17, Heb 3:1, Exod 3:10-15, Is 6:8, Jer 1:7, Ezek 2:3-4.

¹⁰⁶ Luther says: "Offices and sacraments always remain in the church; persons are daily subject to change. As long as we call and put into the offices persons who can administer them, then the offices will surely continue to be exercised." WA 38:241, 19-21; LW 38:201.

¹⁰⁷ Luther writes about this in: WA 38:239, 27-32; LW 38:199. Cf., WA 38:240, 8-17; LW 38:199; WA 26:295, 34-35; LW 37:193; WA 26:156, 34-36; LW 40:242; LC IV, 10; WATR 4:695, 1-9; LW 54:394; WA 19:506, 30-507, 15; LW 36:350; WA 23: 271, 8-11; LW 37:142.

268. All Christians, as many as are baptized, are equally priests. And any layperson can consecrate churches, confirm children, and so forth. Luther.¹⁰⁸

Eck had twisted Luther's biblical teaching of the royal priesthood (βασιλειον ιεράτευμα, 1 Pet 2:9).¹⁰⁹ He accused Lutherans of setting aside the office of the ministry by including every Christian. He charged that laymen were acting as if they were ordained. Melancthon added CA XIV to refute these charges and to exclude the suspicion that CA V talks about the priesthood of all believers.

The Priesthood of the Baptized

The phrase "the priesthood of all believers" originated not with Luther, but about 150 years later with Philipp Jakob Spener.¹¹⁰ In his early polemics against Roman theology, Luther used the biblical teaching of the priesthood of all the baptized for two purposes. First, the Roman church claimed that the sacrament of ordination indelibly gave a spiritual character to the ordinand. The priesthood was a spiritual *Stand*, a special rank or class of people in contrast to the laity, who were presumably lower. This taught that the ordained priest worked together with God to work the miracles of transubstantiation and baptismal renewal because of his indelible character. For Luther this was a denial of the gospel. The baptized are all equally spiritual and there is only one *Stand* before God. Within the body of Christ one serves the other according to his or her vocation.¹¹¹ Holding an office is not a claim to power but to service.

¹⁰⁸ BSLK 69, n. 1. Robert Kolb and James A. Nestingen, *Sources and Contexts of the Book of Concord*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 65. Cf., Henry E. Jacobs, ed., *The Book of Concord: Historical Introduction, Appendixes and Indexes* (Philadelphia: General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America, 1908), II:89.

¹⁰⁹ Eck quotes Luther's *Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, 1520. The whole section of *De Ordine* is a polemic against Roman bishops and priests who did not do the ministry of the word, that is, preaching and giving out the sacraments. WA 6:560, 20–30; 564, 6–566, 9; LW 36:106–107, 112–117.

¹¹⁰ For the study of Luther's doctrine of the priesthood of the baptized, see Norman E. Nagel, "Luther and the Priesthood of All Believers," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 61 (October 1997): 277–298; Thomas Winger, "The Priesthood of All the Baptized." I am particularly indebted to Timothy J. Wengert, "The Priesthood of All Believers and Other Pious Myths," unpublished manuscript, 2005.

¹¹¹ See John T. Pless, "Reflections on the Life of the Royal Priesthood: Vocation and Evangelism," in *Shepherd the Church: Essays in Honor of the Rev. Dr. Roger D. Pittelko*, eds. Frederic W. Baue, et al. (Ft. Wayne, IN: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 2002), 271–285. On pages 283–284, Pless cites and comments on "The Office of the Church: An Orientation" by the Theological Commission of the Independent Evangelical Lutheran

Luther's doctrine on the priesthood of the baptized does not suggest the uniformity of actions or the slogan that everyone was a minister so that all Christians preach and administer the sacraments. He emphasized neither the authority of the laity nor indelible character of the ordained, but the unity of the body of Christ and service to one another according to each one's calling.¹¹²

Second, the doctrine of the priesthood of the baptized is the church's defense against unfaithful and legalistic pastors. It taught pastors to be

Church (SELK) in 1997, to argue the same point as Luther's here. The full text of the SELK statement in English translation is found in *Logia* 10 (Holy Trinity, 2001): 17-30.

¹¹² A prolonged exchange of blows between Emser and Luther took place during 1521. Emser, a humanist who became an adviser to Duke George of Saxony, a Roman Catholic ruler, criticized Luther's exposition of 1 Peter 2:9, claiming that it destroyed the distinction between the clergy and the laity. Luther responded: "I have never said that St. Peter's words refer to his (Emser's) invented priesthood, which he calls *ecclesiasticum* and which I shall call 'churchly' from now on. Furthermore, I did not say that all Christians are churchly priests." *Answer to the Hyperchristian, Hyperspiritual, and Hyperlearned Book by Goat Emser in Leipzig, 1521*. WA 7:629, 14-17; LW 39:153. Luther then pointed out that "the churchly priesthood" has been called "ministry (*ministerium*)," "preaching office (*Predigtamt*)," and "shepherd (*Hyrten*)," etc., but never "priesthood (*sacerdocium*)" or "spiritual (*spiritualis*)." WA 7:630, 10-16; LW 39:154. Luther's *To the Christian Nobility of 1520* was a target of Emser's accusation. Luther's interest was not to talk about the relation between the Office of the Holy Ministry and the priesthood of the baptized, but to deny the pope's claim that there are two classes of people (*Stände*), one spiritual and the other secular. WA 6:407, 13-19; LW 44:127. His primary emphasis was oneness among Christians. Another important point is that among the Christians, each *serves* the other. Within the body of Christ, holding an office can never be a claim to power but a claim to service. All the baptized are members of the one body of Christ and individually servants to each other in their respective offices. Disunity of individualistic spirituality is not upheld. WA 6:408, 31-409, 10; LW 44:130.

The oneness of Christ's body does not mean uniformity of action. Each is called to serve with his and her distinctive vocation. One does not invade, so to speak, another's office and its duties and responsibilities. Congregational leaders do not belong in the pulpit; the pastor is not above the law. All in all, the doctrine of the priesthood of the baptized confesses Jesus as the Lord and head of the church, for cut off from the only Priest, Christ, the priests (the baptized) will lose their being as royal priesthood. Thus, Luther confessed the priesthood of the baptized as a defense against the pope and his displacement of Christ. Melancthon in 1530, then, seems to have reflected on Luther's earlier words in his *Retraction 1521*: "In all my writings I never wished to say more, indeed only so much, that all Christians are priests, although not all of them are ordained (*geweyhet*) by bishops, and so not all preach, celebrate Mass or exercise the priestly Office unless they were ordained to it (*vorordenet*) and called (*beruffen*). That is all I intended to say, and so let that be that." WA 8:250, 31-35; LW 39:233.

faithful to their call and ordination,¹¹³ even as it also taught all the baptized to be faithful to their callings. More specifically, it supported the argument that Christians may not be deprived of pastors because of the pope's unwillingness to allow anyone except those ordained by the bishops loyal to him to offer the sacrifice of the Mass.¹¹⁴

Jobst Schöne observed that the understanding of the doctrine of the royal priesthood changed after Luther's death.¹¹⁵ During the age of pietism, the royal priesthood was internalized and individualized into true believers, who confess their faith and give proof of their faith by living a holy life. Then in the nineteenth century, the pietistic view of the royal priesthood morphed into a democratic expression where the priesthood of all believers was viewed as a check and balance to the power of the office of the ministry. He writes: "What a strange development!"¹¹⁶ It reappeared in the ecumenical movement of the World Council of Churches with the "the apostolate of the laity."

Ecclesial Order

What does the *ordo* in the church denote in CA XIV (*De ordine ecclesiastico*)? Does CA XIV simply espouse a good order to prevent chaos and disunity?

In the Large Confession (1528), a key source of the Augsburg Confession, Luther delineates three estates: *ordo ecclesiasticus*, *politicus*, and *oeconomicus* (church, government, and household) as is also found in the Table of Duties in the Small Catechism. All three orders are holy in God's sight, above which is the common order of Christian love.¹¹⁷ Luther explains the

¹¹³ Ernst Kinder reports that at the time of the writing of the Augsburg Confession the terms "call" and "ordination" were used interchangeably. *Der evangelische Glaube und die Kirche* (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1958), 158.

¹¹⁴ WA 6:564, 6-14; LW 36:112-113. Melancthon picks this up in the Treatise. Citing 1 Peter 2:9 in Tr 69 (the only appearance of this passage in the entire Book of Concord), Melancthon argued that the baptized should never be deprived of the service of a faithful pastor of the gospel, not that all the baptized should publicly preach, teach, and administer the sacraments.

¹¹⁵ Jobst Schöne, *The Christological Character of the Office of the Ministry and the Royal Priesthood* (Plymouth, MN: Logia Books, 1996), 15.

¹¹⁶ Schöne, *The Christological Character of the Office of the Ministry and the Royal Priesthood*, 15.

¹¹⁷ WA 26:504, 30-505, 28; LW 37:364-365.

ordo in the church as “*pfarampt odder dienst des worts* (pastoral office or the ministry of the word)” that preaches, administers the sacraments, etc.¹¹⁸

The *Variata* of 1540, although a private writing of Melanchthon, is nevertheless informative because it adds the following words to CA XIV: “. . . *sicut et Paulus praecipit Tito [1, 5], ut in civitatibus presbyteros constituat* [. . . just as Paul instructs Titus [Tit 1:5], to ordain elders [appoint men to the office of elder] in every city].”¹¹⁹ Thus, Melanchthon indicates that the *ordo* in the church refers to the ordination of pastors. Putting (καταστήσῃς; καθίστημι) a man into the office of elder, that is, the ministry, was Paul’s *ordo* (διατεξάμην; διατάσσω; τάξις). The *ordo* encapsulates τάξις, ἐτάξατο, and ἐξουσία (*potestas*; Mt 28:16, 18), and ἀποστέλλειν (*missio*; ἔστ; John 20:21).¹²⁰

For Rome the *Predigtamt* is not the *Gnadenmittelamt*, the office that preaches and serves the sacraments, but it is the *ordo* that has acquired the power (*Gnadenkraft*) to consecrate the body of the Lord and sacrifice the Mass for the living and the dead. For Rome the *ordo* is complete in itself, which imparts a magical power *ex opere operato*. For the Reformed, the sermon became a sacrifice of the gospel and the Lord’s Supper a eucharist: things the church does. The *Predigtamt* became an organ of the congregation for its functions. In this way, Luther’s and Chemnitz’s distinction between preachers/teachers and hearers/learners was annulled. Both Rome and the Reformed have changed the office of

¹¹⁸ WA 26:504, 30–35; LW 37:364. In a similar way, the Lutheran Confessions use the term *ordo* regarding the office of the holy ministry (Ap XIII, 11–12; XXII, 13; XXVIII, 13, SA III, 11, 1; SC, Table of Duties, 1). For example, Ap XXVIII, an article closely related to CA XIV as to CA V as we saw above, confesses: “Therefore, bishops have the power of the order, namely, the ministry of Word and sacraments” (Ap XXVIII, 13).

¹¹⁹ Th. Kolde, *Die Augsburgische Konfession lateinisch und deutsch* (Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes, 1896), 177. Cf., Jacobs, *The Book of Concord*, II:140. The complete *Variata* XIV reads: “*De ordine ecclesiastico docent, quod nemo debeat in ecclesia publice docere aut sacramenta administrare, nisi rite vocatus, sicut et Paulus praecipit Tito [1, 5], ut in civitatibus presbyteros constituat.*” Melanchthon uses *constituat* from the Vulgate’s *constituas* for καταστήσῃς in Titus 1:5. Titus 1:5–6 is cited again in Tr 62.

¹²⁰ While Melanchthon in his *Variata* gives Titus 1:5 for CA XIV, later Lutheran dogmaticians connected other biblical passages to it. For example, according to Robert Preus, Gerhard cites Jer 23:2, John 17:9, John 3:27, Rom 10:15, and Heb 5:4 with CA XIV; for Balthasar Mentzer (1565–1627) CA XIV is based on Rom 10:15 as well as on 1 Tim 4:14, 2 Tim 1:6, Acts 20:28, and Eph 4:21. Robert Preus, “The Doctrine of the Call in the Confessions and Lutheran Orthodoxy,” in *Church and Ministry Today: Three Confessional Lutheran Essays*, ed. John A. Maxfield (St. Louis: The Luther Academy, 2001), 6–7, 10.

distributing the means of grace into the office of sacrificing.¹²¹ When the congregation is understood as the actual bearer of the *Gnadenmittelamt* and the pastor as mandated by the congregation, the direction from him to us will be muddled. This view entered the Lutheran Church through Spener's pietism.

The *ordo* in CA XIV does not refer to a rank, but the office of preaching, teaching, and distributing the sacraments (*Gnadenmittelamt*). The *ordo* in the church is not a spontaneous or incidental service but a regular and orderly service that incorporates the office bearer. This all comes together with the Lord's institution of baptism, preaching, absolution, and the Lord's Supper. That the salvation accomplished on the cross may be distributed to people not only privately and incidentally but regularly and orderly, the Lord also instituted the office of the holy ministry for distributing the forgiveness of sins. Those put into the *Predigtamt* do the regular and orderly service of this office. The *Predigtamt* engages the minister's entire person, his vocation.¹²² One is never half in.¹²³

In the Church

This *ordo* is found "in the church" (CA XIV), but how does the Augsburg Confession understand the church? Many people today feel that organized religion does not empower them to be fully-committed Christians. Church rituals and organizations seem to them empty shells. If one congregation does not deliver what they want, then they may seek another option or switch denominational affiliations. Many people float around, attempting to find a place they can call home.

¹²¹ Theodor Kliefoth, *Liturgische Abhandlungen* (Schwerin/Rostock: Stiller, 1854), I:348-351. See my, "The Confessional Liturgical Revival of Theodor Kliefoth and the Works of Liturgical Revision of the Preface in Nineteenth-century Sweden: The Vitality of the Lord's Supper as Confessed in 'He Alone Is Worthy!'" (Ph.D dissertation, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 2005). Kliefoth writes: "If the *Gnadenmittelamt* were comprehended as a product and as an organization of the common priesthood of all Christians, then the Lord would have instituted only a function of the means of grace administration but not a certain ministry entrusted to a certain person for this." *Liturgische Abhandlungen*, I:341. The term *Gnadenmittelamt*, as far as I can tell, is unique to Kliefoth; see Theodor Kliefoth, *Acht Bücher von der Kirsche* (Schwerin and Rostock Stiller, 1854), 18-19, 187-212. The only other theologian who employs this term that I have found is Ernst Kinder; see *Der evangelische Glaube und die Kirche*, 146-151. Kliefoth also employs another unique term for the office of the holy ministry: *Heilsmittelamt* in *Acht Bücher von der Kirche* (Schwerin and Rostock: Stiller, 1854), 217 *passim*.

¹²² Werner Elert, *Der Christliche Glaube: Grundlinien der Lutherischen Dogmatik*, 3rd ed. (Hamburg: Furcht, 1956), 419-420.

¹²³ Nagel, "The Doctrine of the Office of the Holy Ministry in the Confessions and in Walther's *Kirche und Amt*," 443.

When CA XIV speaks of the church, it confesses the church as defined not by whatever we would seek or bring, be it the most brilliant of human organization, the most splendid liturgy, the wisest men, the most beautiful church building, the well-put set of doctrinal formulations, or the warmest love found among members. The church is the assembly of all believers “among whom the Gospel is purely preached and the holy sacraments are administered according to the Gospel” (CA VII, 1). For the Augsburg Confession, the church is the place where our crucified and risen Lord lives and gives his abundant gifts set forth in its first five articles.

In church, the living Jesus (CA III) is actively bestowing his gifts to us personally and collectively. Jesus is not just an object of our faith or worship, but the giver of all good gifts. The life of the church and of Christians does not depend on our works, feelings, reasoning, tastes, spirituality, or even faith, but on the gifts that Jesus brings to us continuously and abundantly (CA IV; CA V). When we are cut off from the source—Jesus and his gifts—we will be left wondering how best we may seek a relationship with him, either by shopping for another church or by attempting to find God within us.

Thus, Luther spoke of the church in his *Lectures on Genesis* (1535–1545):

Wherever the Word is heard, where Baptism, the Sacrament of the Altar, and absolution are administered, there you must determine and conclude with certainty: ‘This is surely God’s house; here heaven has been opened.’ . . . This is nothing else than calling it the kingdom of heaven and heaven itself, for the place where God dwells is the house of God. But where does God dwell? Does He not dwell in heaven? Therefore He joins the earth with heaven and heaven with the earth.¹²⁴

To define the church by the means of grace is to confess the church as the place where Jesus continues his service to us: *ubi Christus, ibi ecclesia*.

No One May

The words *debeat* and *soll* allow no options (*nemo debeat/Niemand . . . soll*). These same verbs describe the indispensable relation of good works to faith in CA VI, 1. They have the force of *must* rather than *should* in English.¹²⁵ What the Lord has joined may not be separated.

¹²⁴ WA 43:597, 4–6, 16–19; LW 5:244.

¹²⁵ Arthur Carl Piepkorn, “The Sacred Ministry and Holy Ordination in the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church,” in *Eucharist & Ministry: Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue IV*, ed. Paul C. Empie and T. Austin Murphy (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1979), 113.

The office bearer does not have a primacy given by some special endowed quality. Rather, it means that only those who are called and ordained into the *Predigtamt* are to gather and feed a congregation.¹²⁶ CA XIV holds that the means of grace and the office (*Gnadenmittelamt*) are instituted together. The office and its functions (i.e., the means of grace) are not detached from each other.

Kinder maintains that the preservation of the church's apostolicity (apostolic doctrine, Scripture, and ministry) is the *conditio sine qua non* of its existence as Christ's church. For this reason, it cannot be relegated to spiritual abstraction. He also emphasizes the ministry's face-to-face character before the congregation in preaching and the administration of the sacraments. The Lord did not leave his people to cling simply to abstract principles but addresses them through men in the office.¹²⁷ Thus, the pastoral ministry does not exist for itself, but as a secondary means through which the Lord speaks and gives of his gifts concretely.

Public Service

The words *öffentliche* and *publice* refer to preaching and the distribution of the sacraments by those in the office (CA XIV; *öffentliche lehren oder predigen oder Sakrament reichen; publice docere aut sacramenta administrare*). Within the Augsburg Confession and its Apology, the word *publice* is defined not as a sacrifice (*sacrificium*) but public service (*publicum ministerium; Ap XXIV, 78*). The ministry is a public service: liturgical, sacramental, and pastoral.¹²⁸ Through the ministry the Lord speaks and feeds us. The congregation lives from what is given. Since the bearer of the office is Christ's instrument, he is answerable for faithfully handing on of the doctrine of Jesus.¹²⁹

"Teaching," "preaching," and "administering the sacraments" link CA XIV with CA V and XXVIII, and also with CA IX, X, XI, XII, and XIII. Our Lord's mandates to teach (Matt 28; cf., Eph 4), preach (Mark 16; Luke 24), absolve (John 20; Luke 24), baptize (Matt 28; Mark 16), and distribute his body and blood (Matt 26; Mark 14; Luke 22; 1 Cor 11) are the foundation. What becomes apparent from the Augsburg Confession and other confessions is that Christ's institution of the ministry is adjacent to his

¹²⁶ Cf., Kinder, *Der evangelische Glaube und die Kirche*, 157.

¹²⁷ Kinder, *Der evangelische Glaube und die Kirche*, 154–156.

¹²⁸ Kinder explains *publice/öffentlich* in CA XIV as not only God's proclamation to the congregation but the church's preaching to the world. *Der evangelische Glaube und die Kirche*, 156–157.

¹²⁹ Kinder, *Der evangelische Glaube und die Kirche*, 155–156.

institution of the means of grace.¹³⁰ Office and functions do not exist independently. The apostles do not exist apart from what the Lord gives them to do. Baptism, teaching, the Lord's Supper, and absolution do not exist as abstract functions seeking someone to carry them out.¹³¹

Ritely Called

The practice of early Lutherans clearly shows that they did not understand the word *call* in an arbitrary or temporary sense. They did not, for example, envision that a congregation could appoint one layman to preach and administer the sacrament one week, and a different one the next. That was precisely Eck's accusation, and it was against such a notion that CA XIV was added. Nagel points out that Mueller's translation of Walther's Thesis III in *Kirche und Amt* is misleading.¹³² By rendering "ordinarily" for "*ordentlich*er Weise," the intended connection of Thesis III with CA XIV by the word "*ordentlichen*" is lost. Walther states that the preaching office is not an arbitrary office (*Das Predigtamt ist kein willkürliches Amt*). The opposite of arbitrary for Walther is "*ordentlich*er Weise." The word *ordinarily* allows other options, which Walther did not intend as the citation of Matthew 28:19–20 demonstrates. The *Predigtamt* has Christ's mandate and institution; therefore, the church is "*ordentlich*er Weise" bound till the end of days (*bis an das Ende der Tage*). CA VII confesses that the one holy church remains forever (*una sancta ecclesia perpetuo mansura sit*) because Jesus, the Lord of the church, will not die. Thus his way of distributing the gifts will be bound to the *Predigtamt* "until the end of days."¹³³ Within this *ordo*, the church maintains the means of grace.

¹³⁰ Cf., Elert, *Der Christliche Glaube*, 419; Edmund Schlink, *Theology of the Lutheran Confessions*, tr. Paul F. Koehneke and Herbert J. A. Bouman (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1961), 241; Winger, "The Office of the Holy Ministry according to the New Testament Mandate of Christ," 40.

¹³¹ Kinder notes that in CA XIV the ministry is spoken of with "administering the sacraments." He explains that the sacrament should not be given out by each member of the congregation but only by the called office bearers. Kinder, *Der evangelische Glaube und die Kirche*, 157–158.

¹³² Nagel, "The Doctrine of the Office of the Holy Ministry in the Confessions and in Walther's *Kirche und Amt*," 428–429.

¹³³ Walther's Thesis III reads as follows: "*Das Predigtamt ist kein willkürliches Amt, sondern ein solches Amt, dessen Aufrichtung der Kirche geboten und an das die Kirche bis an das Ende der Tage ordentlich*er Weise gebunden ist." Mueller translates it as: "The ministry is not an arbitrary office but one whose establishment has been commanded to the church and to which the church is *ordinarily* bound till the end of time;" *Church and Ministry*, 191, emphasis added. Drickamer is similar to Mueller: "The ministry of the Word is not an optional office, but one whose establishment has been commanded to

An *ordentlichen Beruf* does not simply mean *orderly*, as opposed to chaotically, or *ordinarily* to indicate a normal principle open to other options. It refers to the Latin title of CA XIV (*De ordine ecclesiastico*) denoting the *Kirchenordnung*, which specified the legitimate and liturgical procedures of the church including how a man is examined, called, and placed into office through a liturgy of ordination. Ordination brings this whole process to completion (Tr 67).¹³⁴

Discussion of the specific liturgy for ordination is not included in CA XIV. It was likely avoided due to its negative connotation in connection with the Roman theology of the sacrifice of the mass and the office to do so.¹³⁵ However, *rite vocatus* means not just *rightly* called, but *ritely* called, that is, called in accordance with the rite of the church.¹³⁶ The rite or liturgy is included in the adverb *rite*, not a ritual of empty formalism, but the public liturgy of the church whereby the candidate is publicly ordained, namely, in the presence of the congregation. *Ordentlich* goes with the *ordo publice*, which denotes the ordinand's placement into an office for the sake of doing something specified for the community.¹³⁷

The Roman opponents understood the words *rite vocatus* as "canonical ordination," a sense foreign to the Lutherans.¹³⁸ The Confutation essentially accepts CA XIV but insists on the Roman rite, which stipulates that only a bishop is authorized to ordain. The issue was not about ordination but whose hands did it—Rome's understanding of *potestas ordinis*. Apology XIV does not accept this restriction. It emphasizes, on the one hand, the teaching of the word and administration of the sacraments;

the church and to which the church is *ordinarily* bound till the end of time;" *Walther on the Church*, 78, emphasis added. *Ordinarily* does not adequately convey the meaning of *ordentlichen* and *rite*.

¹³⁴ Norman E. Nagel, "Ordination Is Not Other Than . . .," *Concordia Journal* 28 (October 2002): 431-446. Kinder, *Der evangelische Glaube und die Kirche*, 158-159; Jobst Schöne, "Church & Ministry Part 2: Systematic Formulation," *Logia* 2 (April 1993): 38-39.

¹³⁵ Cf., Kliefoth, "Mesopferamt," in *Liturgische Abhandlungen*, I:349.

¹³⁶ Maurer takes a view that *rite vocatus* simply means "regularly called." Any ritualistic sense of ordination is excluded. Maurer, *Historical Commentary on the Augsburg Confession*, 191-197. The same position is held by Leif Grane, *The Augsburg Confession: A Commentary* (Minneapolis, 1989), 153. John Kleinig, on the other hand, expounds on the ritual significance of the rite of ordination in CA XIV. "Ministry and Ordination," *Lutheran Theological Journal* 36 (May 2002): 33-35.

¹³⁷ Cf., the Large Catechism tells of the hangman who does his duty *by virtue of his office* (LCI, 274).

¹³⁸ Cf., Hellmut Lieberg, *Amt und Ordination bei Luther und Melanchthon* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), 335.

and on the other, it criticizes the Roman bishops, who compel the evangelical pastors to stop confessing the gospel. The Treatise addresses this: "when the regular bishops become enemies of the Gospel or are unwilling to ordain, the churches retain their right to do so" (Tr 66). This is the true divine right as opposed to Rome's three divine rights (Tr 1-5).¹³⁹ The royal priesthood may not be robbed of its right to elect and ordain ministers (1 Pet 2:9; Tr 66-72). Again, it does not follow that an unordained believer may publicly preach, teach, and administer the sacraments.

The word *vocatio* includes not only a call from a congregation but also the rite of ordination. At the time of the Augsburg Confession the terms *call* and *ordination* were used interchangeably.¹⁴⁰ CA XIV talks about the whole process of putting a man into the *ordo*, the *Predigtamt*, the *Gnadenmittelamt*.

To the ordination rite, Ernst Kinder adds the blessing, or consecration into the office (*die Einsegnung*), and a sending (*missio*, *die Weisung*, and *die Gemeinde*), as does Jobst Schöne (*benedictio* and *missio*).¹⁴¹ The blessing is given to the candidate through the Lord's mandating words and other words regarding the office of the holy ministry, through prayer, and through the laying on of hands. Through this blessing, the man is ordained and firmly put into "the ministry of the office." The *missio* puts the ordinand under the mandate of the ministry of Jesus.¹⁴²

Educating Clergy's view that the formation of a pastor calls for a long process was advocated by Reformation era Lutherans. For Lutherans, such formation is the work of God. Ordination (examination, blessing, and sending) does not depend on the candidate's self-service and self-glorification. He is presented and ordained for the *proprium* of the *Predigtamt*, the service of the means of grace, and bound to and by this office.¹⁴³

¹³⁹ These three are: that the bishop of Rome is superior to all bishops and pastors; he possesses the power of both swords; and it is, therefore, necessary for salvation to believe these things.

¹⁴⁰ Kinder, *Der evangelische Glaube und die Kirche*, 158.

¹⁴¹ Kinder, *Der evangelische Glaube und die Kirche*, 158-159; Schöne, "Church & Ministry, Part II: Systematic Formulation," 38. Kinder takes neither Rome's position that ordination bestows an indelible character nor the Reformed emphasis on an election by the congregation.

¹⁴² Kinder, *Der evangelische Glaube und die Kirche*, 158-159.

¹⁴³ Kinder explains that the word *Amt* should have come from a Celtic word *ambactus*, which means *umgriffen-sein*, indicating that a man is attached, fixed, to a service-oriented function. Ordination has this attaching and fixing element, which comes with

III. Why Should There Be Called and Ordained Clergy?

Questions about the ministry emerged from the context of what is actually happening in LCMS congregations: unordained men are acting as if they were ordained.¹⁴⁴

The problem of the medieval Roman church concerning the ministry was that the preaching office had become the office that sacrificed the mass on the basis of the priest's indelible character. Later the enthusiasts blurred the distinction between preachers and hearers. For Rome the ministry was the office that enforced the law. The enthusiasts had no office at all. A key problem for us is the separation of the preaching office from its functions, indicating that the person is inconsequential and anyone can do it. This was common in Protestantism. Doctrine was treated as theory. Pastoral ministry was viewed as the application of skilled techniques. In the background may lie an unconscious expectation of the laity who have adopted a professional and pragmatic mindset that the duties of the pastoral office do not require complex techniques or a skilled performance. The role of women, homosexuals, increasing globalization, and development of information technology have also affected the ministry of the church in various degrees.¹⁴⁵

Changing definitions of emergency situations, questions about supervision, licensure, and authority in the church are related to how we view the ministry. To respond properly, we begin with our Lord's words in the New Testament. Though we pledge ourselves to the Book of Concord as a correct exposition of the Scriptures, we may not be satisfied when we have arrived at an answer simply by citing the Confessions. Every generation must investigate doctrine in light of new questions and changing situations. Regarding CA XIV, we must articulate not only its importance for the Reformers, but also why we still confess it today.

I have discussed CA XIV. At the center of CA XIV is the Lord's mandate and institution. The doctrine of the ministry belongs to the gospel because the office of Jesus and the dynamic flow of the gospel through the means

duty, responsibility, and obligation. With ordination, then, the candidate is now bound to the particular mandate of the ministry, that is, the ministry of the means of grace.

¹⁴⁴ See the bullet-pointed questions on pages 125-126.

¹⁴⁵ The Report of the Church Growth Study Committee of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod gives us a concise and critical study on the gospel and American culture in its *For the Sake of Christ's Commission* (St. Louis, 2001).

of grace define it. The Lord gives; the church receives. Both occur through the office that delivers the means of grace (*Gnadenmittelamt*).¹⁴⁶

In our day, the office of the holy ministry is often referred to with language denoting power, ability, right and privilege, function, necessity, good order, piety, leadership, and election. Such language tends to separate the office from its functions. When, however, we begin with the Lord's words, that is, his mandate and institution of the office of the holy ministry for the sake of the dynamic flow of the Lord's giving and our receiving, we not only confess this doctrine most concretely and most cohesively, but we also find profound comfort. Let the pastoral office remain pastoral. It is Jesus who addresses us when we hear the words: "I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins," "I baptize you," and "Take, eat; this is the true body of Christ, given for you."¹⁴⁷

What is the difference between a pastor addressing the Lord's people like this, and a lay minister speaking these words? Lee S. Schulman, who wrote the foreword to *Educating Clergy*, observes that the technique of saying so is not that complex.¹⁴⁸ Anyone can say these words. Does who says it not matter because the efficacy of the word remains? Does a pastor speak these words simply for the sake of a good order? No, what is at stake is the office of Christ, and his words with which he established it.¹⁴⁹ Those who hear these words receive them as spoken by the Lord through the instrument he has put there to speak them, and thus with certainty and comfort. Doubt is taken away. They know that they have heard the voice of their Shepherd (SA III, 12, 2). They know that their pastor is the one Jesus called, blessed, and sent to and for them for the delivery of the gospel.

¹⁴⁶ Kliefoth, *Acht Bücher von der Kirche*, 18–19, 179.

¹⁴⁷ The Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, *Lutheran Service Book* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), 185, 270, 165.

¹⁴⁸ Foster, et al., *Educating Clergy*, x.

¹⁴⁹ Chemnitz confesses: "But it is worthwhile to ponder for what reasons it is so important that a minister of the church have a lawful call. Now, we must not think that this takes place out of some human arrangement or only for the sake of order, but the reasons are very weighty (and) consideration of them brings many things to mind. (1) Because the ministry of the Word is that of God Himself, which He Himself wants to carry out through ordained means and instruments in His church, Lk 1:70; Heb 1:1; 2 Cor 5:20. . . . (3) The real heart of the ministry is that God by His Spirit and His grace wants to be there with the ministry and through it work efficaciously." *Loci Theologici*, II:699.

Who consecrates the bread and wine matters. Who preaches matters. Who baptizes matters. CA XIV confesses the coherence of the office and the functions. It confesses the formation of a pastor. It confesses the office of our Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁵⁰ Laypersons who have not been put into the office of the holy ministry have not been blessed and sent by Jesus to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments.¹⁵¹

As always, the final question is what kind of Christ do we end up confessing if we fail to confess CA XIV clearly? Impoverishment of the doctrine of the office of the holy ministry impoverishes the church because through this office Christ shepherds his church. Luther reminds us that Satan's chief target is the Divine Service, where Christ visits his church through the preached word and the administration of his sacraments.¹⁵² When he takes aim, he seeks to sever the church's bond to the Lord's word,

¹⁵⁰ Luther writes: "For we must believe and be sure of this, that baptism is not ours but Christ's, that the Gospel is not ours but Christ's, that the office of preaching (*Predigampt*) is not ours but Christ's, that the sacrament [of the Lord's Supper] is not ours but Christ's, that the keys, or forgiveness and retention of sins, are not ours but Christ's. WA 38:240, 24-34; LW 38:200. See also WA 38:241, 6-10; LW 38:200-201.

¹⁵¹ *Concordia Theological Monthly* 39 (December 1968): 772-775 printed a brief study of the Systematic Department of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, under the names of Herbert J. A. Bouman, Erwin I. Lueker, and Arthur Carl Piepkorn, entitled "Lay Workers in the Church." The question that this study engages in is: "To what extent can functions of the sacred ministry properly be given to a layman, such as a lay worker or seminarian? Can he, for example, be given the right to celebrate the Sacrament of the Altar?" By citing AC V, AC XXVIII, Ap XIII, Treatise, AC XIV, AC XXIV, and SD VII, the study concludes: "These facts appear to lay down the principle that lay workers should *not* be given charge of congregations by District officials, if this implies that they are to exercise the pastoral ministry" (emphasis original).

¹⁵² WA 42:110, 15-111, 17; LW 1:146-147.

his mandate and institution, regarding worship and a faithful confession of the *Predigtamt*. This plants seeds of confusion and doubt that take root in the very means by which Christ serves the church. Ultimately, it is only the church that suffers for Christ and his gospel gifts are thereby obscured and oftentimes lost. Why, then, should there be called and ordained clergy? Because the Lord mandated and instituted it. We confess that our Lord Jesus Christ continues his ministry here on earth through the ministry of the means of grace according to his arrangement; and clinging to this, we cling to what is most certainly true.