

# **What do the Lutheran Confessions teach about the public ministry?**

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In the questions regarding the public ministry there is a point in which we are all united and as such in which a few deviate on account of different convictions.<sup>1</sup>

1. Agreement in the evaluation of what the confessions say.
- 1.1 There is beside the universal priesthood the public ministry.

AC XIV. Concerning Church Government<sup>2</sup>

Concerning church government it is taught that no one should publicly teach, preach, or administer the sacraments without a proper [public] call<sup>\*</sup>.

Treatise on the power and primacy of the Pope 60<sup>3</sup>

In the Augsburg Confession and Apology we have set forth in general what needs to be said about ecclesiastical power. The gospel bestows upon those who preside over the churches the commission to proclaim the gospel, forgive sins, and administer the sacraments. In addition, it bestows legal authority, that is, the charge to excommunicate those whose crimes are public knowledge and to absolve those who repent.

- 1.2 The public ministry is established by God.

Apology VII,11<sup>4</sup>

For the ministry of the Word has the command of God and has magnificent promises like Romans 1: the gospel “is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith.” Likewise, Isaiah 55, “. . . so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose. . . .” If ordination is understood in this way, we will not object to calling the laying on of hands a sacrament. For the church has the mandate to appoint ministers,

Treatise 26<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, the ministry of the New Testament is not bound to places or persons like the Levitical ministry, but is scattered throughout the whole world and exists wherever God gives God’s gifts: apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers. That ministry is not valid because of the authority of any person but because of the Word handed down by Christ.

- 1.3 The public ministry comes out of the apostolic ministry.

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<sup>1</sup> All quotations from the confessions are taken from: Kolb, Robert, Timothy J. Wengert, and Charles P. Arand. *The Book of Concord : The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000. [Concord]

<sup>2</sup> Concord Page 46 [German: öffentlich lehren oder predigen oder Sakramente reichen (lat.: publice docere aut sacramenta administrare) soll ohne ordentlichen Beruf.]

<sup>\*</sup> Translator’s note: Where the author has underlined portions of the text, the translator has followed in the same manner. Where the author has placed a comparison of the German and the Latin texts from the Book of Concord, the Translator has placed the comparison into a footnote.

<sup>3</sup> Concord Page 340

<sup>4</sup> Concord Page 220 [German: hat Gott eingesetzt und geboten (lat.: habet mandatum Dei)]

<sup>5</sup> Concord Page 334. [Und tut die Person (lat.: personae autoritas)]

### Treatise 10<sup>6</sup>

Therefore, since Paul makes it clear that he had no desire to ask for Peter's confirmation, even when he had come to him, he teaches that the authority of the ministry depends upon the Word of God, that Peter was not superior to other apostles, and that ordination or confirmation was not to be sought from Peter alone. *[that the office of the ministry proceeds from the general call of the apostles, and that it is not necessary for all to have the call of confirmation of this one person, Peter alone. <sup>7</sup>]*

- Similarly it is also previously found in the same connection.

### Treatise 9<sup>8</sup>

According to John 20, Christ commissions the apostles as equals, without distinction

1.4 In the confessions it mentions the name, that is to say, the form of the office of the public ministry described mainly as the comprehensive pastorate.

- the majority of the office descriptions in the confessions mean well such forms, the extensive service done with all the means of grace in every group in the congregation. The confessions mention: shepherd, priest, bishop, preacher, teacher, sexton, deacon, and principal.
- an evident exception from this observation is composed of the supervising, church leading office of the bishop.

1.4 Summary:

Among us there is therein complete agreement: Next to the universal priesthood there is a public ministry established by Christ, which comes from the office of the apostles. The job of this service is to administer the Gospel in Word and Sacrament and to lead the congregation with God's Word.

2. Differences in the assessment of what the confessions state.

Among us the assessment of what the confessions say separates us from each other in the following points.

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<sup>6</sup>Concord Page 331 [German: [so] haben wir eine gewisse Lehre, daß das Predigtamt vom gemeinen Beruf der Apostel herkommt, und ist nicht not, daß alle dieser einigen Person Petri Beruf oder Bestätigung haben]

<sup>7</sup>This point is not found in the original Latin, but only in the German translation of the Book of Concord. [The italicized portion comes from the Triglotta since it is not included in Kolb.]

<sup>8</sup>Concord Page 331 [German: Joh. 20 sendet Christus seine Junger zugleich zum Predigtamt, ohne allen Unterschied, daß einer weder mehr noch weniger Gewalt soll haben denn der andere.]

2.1 The confessions name different jobs of the public ministry.

Does this mean all servants in this office must receive by transfer all the jobs?

One finds more or less the following saying concerning the function of this office (we have already heard of the place.)

AC XIV. Concerning Church Government<sup>9</sup>

Concerning church government it is taught that no one should publicly teach, preach, or administer the sacraments without a proper [public] call.

Smalcald Articles 60<sup>10</sup>

In the Augsburg Confession and Apology we have set forth in general what needs to be said about ecclesiastical power. The gospel bestows upon those who preside over the churches the commission to proclaim the gospel, forgive sins, and administer the sacraments. In addition, it bestows legal authority, that is, the charge to excommunicate those whose crimes are public knowledge and to absolve those who repent.

In the understanding of this statement the view differs:

To the question whether the job and authority of every church office-holder in the public ministry must be transferred, we must answer differently:

- A separate conclusion which reasons the different functions of the ministry are summarized in the formula: Every office holder must always be transferred in all these functions, if he shall be called to work in the public ministry.
- We think, it is nothing at all to avoid this special question. We must be on guard against short conclusive conclusions.

What stands to be debated is something else:

- Who shall oversee the congregation in the Lutheran church if the catholic bishop no longer consecrates priests?
- According to divine right, what actually happens to the power of the supervising, church leading bishop (a. from worldly might, as [it is] then widely spread? b. the right for the congregation to appoint a pastor?)

And regarding that the confessions say:

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<sup>9</sup> Concord Page 46 [German: öffentlich lehren oder predigen oder Sakramente reichen (lat.: publice docere aut sacramenta administrare) soll ohne ordentlichen Beruf.]

<sup>10</sup> Concord Page 340

- AC 14: Only one orderly called shall manage word and sacrament.
- Apol 14: This does not exclude [rule out] that we will accept also the catholic order of the ordination of priests, if one only would be willing to regard the biblical teaching and accept the Lutheran priests.
- Treatise: The church power of the bishop according to divine right (i.e. of God's decree in these things) is equal as the congregational pastor. Worldly might is not included. Proper ordinations are, according to man's understanding, arrived at in the course of time. In need it was always different. If the bishop today would not look after the pastor, then the congregation can do so itself.

What explicitly emerges from this understanding is this:

- preacher, pastor(shepherd) and priest are such people who preside over the congregation, that they administer for them Word and Sacrament
- Whether these functions must be transferred to all at the same time did not stand for debate.

The question is not discussed in the confessions, whether the summary of the formula speaks about the function of the public ministry, that is, at least fundamentally all the functions must always be conferred, or if they only declare what the area of responsibility is which will be perceived from the public ministry. The proper understanding can not be explained through assumptions or assertions but only through examination of the question in hand with Holy Scripture.

2.2 The confessions say the offices have a comprehensive character.

Therefore does it follow that only the 'comprehensive' office are called to the public ministry?

For this question the same is meant as in the reason which we have just seen. That the most mentioned office in the confessions is the office holder, but better described is the congregational pastor. It is not verified from the beginning that only the congregational pastorate is the divinely established ministry.

In the situation at that time there existed a burning interest whether and on what basis the congregational pastor can be obtained. The questions about whether other servants belong to the public ministry were not relevant in comparison.

It is undoubtedly true, what the confessions say: pastor, priest, bishop, preacher, teacher, sexton, deacon and headmaster stand in the public ministry.

At the same time it should certainly be observed that today we do not entirely always know from the start all the details what one has designated the name with and individual term.

- Under deacon there is one apparent understanding in the ancient church, something else in the middle ages and also in the reformation era. Today this word is filled with an entirely different meaning.
- In the same way the 'headmaster' in the confessions is something different as the 'headmaster' in our church.
- Moreover we want to make certain the declaration, whether also today's deacon (active in the instruction of children or active in the care of the sick) or schoolteacher stand in the public ministry. Then we can not give a glance in the confessions the last word. From there we must go into the scriptures themselves.

2.3 The confessions call gradations between offices human titles.

Therefore does it follow that only the pastoral (shepherd) office is divinely ordained and all other offices are not? (N.B. the church leading office of the bishop)

A question where the confessions meet everything already more in trend with today's formulation of a questioning statement is the problem of the supervising, church leading bishop,

2.3.1 Of the power of the bishop.<sup>11</sup>

AC 28,20f<sup>12</sup>

Consequently, according to divine right it is the office of the bishop to preach the gospel, to forgive sin, to judge doctrine and reject doctrine that is contrary to the gospel, and to exclude from the Christian community the ungodly whose ungodly life is manifest—not with human power but with God's Word alone.

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<sup>11</sup> Concord Page 90-104

<sup>12</sup> Concord Page 94

How is this statement to be understood?

- A few say:

Only if such a bishop has his own regional congregation (= part-time bishop) and if he administers this congregation as pastor, he exercises the divinely ordained preaching office (that is only as congregational pastor is he in the divinely ordained preaching office), but not then if he in his supervising church leading office of bishop proclaims the gospel, passes judgment on doctrine, forgives sins and lead the spiritual clerics against public sin in the church.

*In other words: A full time bishop does not stand in the public ministry.*

- We mean:

A supervising church leading bishop exercises the divinely ordained preaching office as such when he in the church leading function carries on in the described manner. The same is true then if he does not care for his own regional church. (= full time bishop).

*In other words: Likewise a fulltime bishop stand in the public ministry. The full time bishop is another form of the public ministry next to the congregational pastor.*

### **The historical background:**

In the Lutheran lands the question came to light how one should handle the existing bishop's office. The bishop had (for the most part) not only churchly<sup>13</sup> but also worldly power. They were also princes. In addition, in this instance it happened that according to the current order the preacher would be ordained by the Bishop. What then should one do? How does one handle the existing bishop's office? That was the burning problem at that time!

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<sup>13</sup> The *potestas ecclesiastica* –the church power (understanding the bishop also as priest; c.f. Treatise 60; Apol 18,13; c.f. Holsten Fagerberg, Die Theologie der lutherischen Bekenntnisschriften von 1529-1537, 250ff) will combine in roman theology the priestly and kingly office of Christ in analogy and set themselves according to this understanding:

- *potestas ordinis* (Treatise 60; Apol 18,13):
  - Catholic feel: all belongs to the worship of sacrifice;
  - Lutheran feel: the proclamation of word and the administration of the sacraments
- *potestas jurisdictionis* (Treatise 60; Apol 18,13; especially AC 28,21 lat.):
  - All the parts that belong to the spiritual power of the church: by practicing the power of the keys (binding and loosing until excommunication) and in the part concerning doctrine (c.f. especially AC 28,21 lat.).

## **The train of thought:**

We will examine the connection in AC 28 (the internal structure of the article of the confessions.)

1. The worldly and spiritual rule are to be distinguished [ §§1-18]
  - 1.1 The worldly and spiritual rule are to be distinguished in God's grace [ §§ 1-4]
  - 1.2 The way of the spiritual rule [ §§5-9]
  - 1.3 The way of the worldly rule [ §§10-11]
  - 1.4 Clear distinction is necessary (no mixing, no messing with other offices.) [ §§ 12-18]

### The wording of §1-18

#### The worldly and spiritual rule are to be distinguished in God's grace

Many and various things have been written in former times concerning the power of bishops. Some have improperly mixed the power of bishops with the secular sword, and such careless mixture has caused many extensive wars, uprisings, and rebellions. For the bishops, under the guise of power given to them by Christ, have not only introduced new forms of worship and burdened consciences with reserved cases and with forcible use of the ban, but they also took it upon themselves to set up and depose emperors and kings according to their pleasure. Such outrage has long since been condemned by learned and devout people in Christendom. That is why our people have been compelled, for the sake of comforting consciences, to indicate the difference between spiritual and secular power, sword, and authority. They have taught that, for the sake of God's command, everyone should honor and esteem with all reverence both authorities and powers as the two highest gifts of God on earth.

#### The way of the spiritual rule

Our people teach as follows. According to the gospel the power of the keys or of the bishops is a power and command of God to preach the gospel, to forgive or retain sin, and to administer and distribute the sacraments. For Christ sent out the apostles with this command (John 20[:21–23]) “As the Father has sent me, so I send you. . . . Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

The same power of the keys or of the bishops is used and exercised only by teaching and preaching God's Word and by administering the sacraments to many persons or to individuals, depending on one's calling. Not bodily but eternal things and benefits are given in this way, such as eternal righteousness, the Holy Spirit, and eternal life. These benefits cannot be obtained except through the office of preaching and through the administration of the holy sacraments. For St. Paul says [Rom. 1:16]: “The gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith.”

#### The way of the worldly rule

Now inasmuch as the power of the church or of the bishops bestows eternal benefits and is used and exercised only through the office of preaching, it does not interfere at all with public order and secular authority. For secular authority deals with matters altogether different from the



gospel. Secular power does not protect the soul but, using the sword and physical penalties, it protects the body and goods against external violence.

Clear distinction is necessary

That is why one should not mix or confuse the two authorities, the spiritual and the secular. For spiritual power has its command to preach the gospel and to administer the sacraments. It should not invade an alien office. It should not set up and depose kings. It should not annul or disrupt secular law and obedience to political authority. It should not make or prescribe laws for the secular power concerning secular affairs. For Christ himself said [John 18:36]: “My kingdom is not from this world.” And again [Luke 12:14]: “Who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?” And St. Paul in Philippians 3[:20]: “Our citizenship is in heaven.” And in 2 Corinthians 10[:4–5]: “For the weapons of our warfare are not merely human, but they have divine power to destroy strongholds . . . arguments and every proud obstacle raised up against the knowledge of God.” In this way our people distinguish the offices of the two authorities and powers and direct that both be honored as the highest gifts of God on earth.

2. The problem with the personal union §§19-29
  - 2.1 The church leading bishops are worldly princes *jure humano* [§ 19]
  - 2.2 The church leading bishops are servants of the church according to divine right through their figurative office of the keys<sup>14</sup> [ §§20-21 ]
  - 2.3 The following concerning the authority of the church leading bishop [ §§ 22-29 ]
    - 2.3.1 If they as church leading bishop exercise spiritual rule in accordance to God’s establishment then shepherds (pastors) and the church owe their obedience in that respect. [ § 22 ]
    - 2.3.2 If they as church leading bishop exercise spiritual rule in contradiction to God’s establishment then shepherds and the congregation do not owe their obedience in these things. [ §§ 23-28 ]
    - 2.3.3 If they as church leading bishops according to human right have worldly power, they shall do this carefully, otherwise worldly princes shall take these powers. [ § 29 ]

The wording of § 19-29

The church leading bishops are worldly princes *jure humano*

However, where bishops possess secular authority and the sword, they possess them not as bishops by divine right but by human, imperial right, given by Roman emperors and kings for the secular administration of their lands. That has nothing at all to do with the office of the gospel.

The church leading bishops are servants of the church according to divine right through their figurative office of the keys

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<sup>14</sup> Therefore they have through the power of divine words, without worldly power, the Gospel to preach, doctrine to pass judgment or on the other hand to reject and evident wickedness from the church to expel.

Consequently, according to divine right it is the office of the bishop to preach the gospel, to forgive sin, to judge doctrine and reject doctrine that is contrary to the gospel, and to exclude from the Christian community the ungodly whose ungodly life is manifest—not with human power but with God’s Word alone.

The following for the authority of the church leading bishop

*If they as church leading bishop exercise spiritual rule in contradiction to God’s establishment then shepherds (pastors) and the church owe their obedience in that.*

That is why parishioners and churches owe obedience to bishops, according to this saying of Christ (Luke 10[:16]): “Whoever listens to you listens to me.”

*If they as church leading bishop exercise spiritual rule in contradiction to God’s establishment then shepherds and the congregation in these things do not owe their obedience.*

But whenever they teach, institute, or introduce something contrary to the gospel, we have God’s command in such a case not to be obedient (Matt. 7[:15]): “Beware of false prophets.” And St. Paul in Galatians 1[:8]: “But even if we or an angel from heaven should proclaim to you a gospel contrary to what we proclaimed to you, let that one be accursed!” And in 2 Corinthians 13[:8]: “For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth.” And again [2 Cor. 13:10]: “. . . using the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down.”

Canon law also commands the same in Part II, Question 7, in the chapters entitled “Priests” and “Sheep.” And St. Augustine writes in the letter against Petilian that one should not obey bishops, even if they have been regularly elected, when they err or teach and command something contrary to the holy, divine Scripture.

*If they as church leading bishops according to human right have worldly power, they shall do this carefully, otherwise worldly princes shall take these powers.*

Whatever other power and jurisdiction bishops have in various matters, such as marriage or tithes, they have them by virtue of human right. However, when bishops neglect such duties, the princes are obligated—whether they like it or not—to administer justice to their subjects for the sake of peace, in order to prevent discord and great unrest in their lands.

### 3 Church legislation [§§ 30-68]

#### 3.1 To the assertion that the church leading bishop has power, the rules for the church are put forward [§§ 30-33]

3.1.1 They have no power in the place of the constitution, which allows obedience as commendable [§§ 34-38]

3.1.2 They have no power in place of constitution, which allows violations as sin [§§ 39-52]

#### 3.2 The character is good ecclesiastical order [§§ 53-68]

3.2.1 They are for the sake of love and good order necessary [§§ 53-56]

3.2.2 Example 1 The Sunday celebration in the church [§§ 57-64]

3.2.3 Example 2 Blood and strangling according to Acts 15:20,29 [§§ 65-68]

#### 4. Exhortation to the church leading bishop [ §§ 69-78 ]

##### **Result:**

Accordingly, the character of spiritual and worldly might would be defined and the necessity to distinguish would be emphasized. Now the historically formed bishop will be applied in order to draw the differing conclusion:

- Thus in §19 it will be brought out what the historically found bishop becomes according to human power.
- In §20 the thought will continue in which is now explained what comes to him according to divine right.
- In §22 the consequence is drawn out: therefore the pastor and congregation owe the bishop obedience, if they need spiritual power according to divine right. Here the bishop only in the supervising sense be understood.
- Therefore it is clear:
- Every supervising bishop who does his church leading service in a proper, spiritual way stands also in this area of responsibility in the public ministry. It is the same if he did not have his own regional congregation to look after.

Whether the confessions completely treat this in the breadth of its statement is not today's question. But it is still clear in the matter of the supervising, church leading bishop's office that the doctrine of the WELS lies entirely in the direction which the confessions lay out here. With that however, the confessions concur with the distinction of the WELS.

- The ministry is ordained by God.
- However, the form is found according to God's Word and instruction of the Holy Spirit, according to man's judgment.

Then it is also clear how the statement at the beginning of the articles is to be understood:

AC 28,5<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Concord Page 92 [German: Gewalt der schussel oder der Bischofen (Schwab. Art.: der Bischof oder Priester Amt)]

Our people teach as follows. According to the gospel the power of the keys or of the bishops is a power and command of God to preach the gospel, to forgive or retain sin, and to administer and distribute the sacraments.

The form of the office or the description of the office of bishop will be needed here in the sense of Christ's institution of the ministry, not in regard to its special supervising, church leading form, which the ministry in the supervising bishop's office assumes.

However the spiritual nature of the bishop's office is nothing other than that of the common way the keys of the heavenly kingdom are publicly administered (the power of the keys or the bishop).

The confessions could say exactly the same: the power of the keys or pastors. Here it expressly calls it the bishops office, because this article must be explained specially with this office.

- With it also stands in unison what Apology 28 says!

### 2.3.2 Apology 28 –Ecclesiastical Power

#### Apology 28,12f<sup>16</sup>

In the Confession we have said what power the gospel grants to bishops. Those who are now bishops do not perform the duties of bishops according to the gospel, even though they may well be bishops according to canonical order, about which we are not disputing. But we are talking about a bishop according to the gospel. We like the old division of power into the “power of the order” and the “power of jurisdiction.” Therefore, bishops have the power of the order, namely, the ministry of Word and sacraments. They also have the power of jurisdiction, namely, the authority to excommunicate those who are guilty of public offenses or to absolve them if they are repentant and ask for absolution.

Also the church leading bishop has the public ministry with his spiritual job (potestas ordinis and potestas iurisdictionis). The problem with the Catholic bishop is only that they do not practice it as Christ instructed.

- With it also stands in unison what the Treatise says!

### 2.3.3 Treatise 60ff Of the Bishop's Power and jurisdiction

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<sup>16</sup>Concord Page 290

Since Treatise 60 makes reference to AC 28 and Apology 28, the concessions stand firm. The authority of the public ministry will be attributed to all its servants, entirely the same how one calls it: pastor, elder, bishop (Treatise 61) The following refers the confessions of Jerome, who from the historical development reports distinctions of degrees of office (Treatise 62)<sup>17</sup>. Then it says:

#### Treatise 63-65<sup>18</sup>

Jerome, then, teaches that the distinctions of degree between bishop and presbyter or pastor are established by human authority. That is clear from the way it works, for, as I stated above, the power is the same. One thing subsequently created a distinction between bishops and pastors, and that was ordination, for it was arranged that one bishop would ordain the ministers in a number of churches. However, since the distinction of rank between bishop and pastor is not by divine right, it is clear that an ordination performed by a pastor in his own church is valid by divine right.

- Therefore it follows that according to the Treatise both the pastor and also the supervising, church leading bishop has the same God ordained office.<sup>19</sup>

#### 2.3.4 Summary

With this we have seen what the confessions say about the relation of congregational pastor and supervising, church leading bishop's office.

- According to divine right there stands no distinction between a church leading supervising bishop and a congregational pastor.
- The special office divisions are human powers.

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<sup>17</sup> Note also the wording of Treatise 62: Darum spricht auch Hieronymus mit hellen Worten, daß *episcopi* und *presbyteri* nicht unterschieden, sind; sondern daß alle Pfarrherren zugleich Bischöfe und Priester sind, und allegiert den Text Pauli ad Tit. 1, da er zu Tito schreibt: "Ich ließ dich derhalben zu Kreta, daß du besteltest die Städte hin und her mit Priestern", und nennt solche hernach Bischöfe: "Es soll ein Bischof *eines* Weibes Mann sein." So nennen sich selbst Petrus und Johannes *presbyteros* oder Priester. Danach sagt Hieronymus weiter: "Daß aber einer allein erwählt wird, der andere unter ihm habe, ist geschehen, daß man damit die [der] Zertrennung wehrte, daß nicht einer hier, der andere dort eine Kirche an sich zöge, und die Gemeinde also zerrissen würde. Denn zu Alexandria", sagt er, "von Marko dem Evangelisten an bis auf Esdras [Heraclam] und Dionysium, haben allezeit die Presbyteri einen aus ihnen [sich] erwählt und höher gehalten und *episcopum* (einen Bischof) genannt, gleichwie ein Kriegsvolk einen zum Hauptmann erwählt; wie auch die Diaconi einen aus ihnen [sich], der geschickt dazu ist, wählen und Archidiakon nennen. Denn, sage mir, was tut ein Bischof mehr denn ein jeglicher Presbyter, ohne daß er andere zum Kirchenamt ordnet" usw. ? --This point does not speak against the WELS doctrine. For all forms of the office are the same: in their origin from the apostolic office and in their spiritual substance – as servants with the Gospel to build up the kingdom of God.

<sup>18</sup>Concord Page 340

<sup>19</sup> Note also the parallel phrase 'church office' and 'ministry': The supervising, church leading bishop regulates to the 'church office' (Treatise 62) or, sometime later in the Treatise, to the 'ministry' (Treatise 64).

3. Result: The confessions do not handle today's question in the great part. Only the question of the overseeing church leading bishop's office plays a special case in our day's way of looking at the problem. But the solution of the confessions stands entirely in unison with the doctrinal statement of the WELS in regard to the public ministry.

A postscript on the translation of AC 28,20

There is a claim being made that AC 28,20 defines not only the nature and core of the church leading bishop's office as *jure divino*, but likewise places this with the congregational pastor.

In AC 28,20f<sup>20</sup> it says:

Consequently, according to divine right it is the office of the bishop to preach the gospel, to forgive sin, to judge doctrine and reject doctrine that is contrary to the gospel, and to exclude from the Christian community the ungodly whose ungodly life is manifest—not with human power but with God's Word alone.

To clarify:

- It is claimed that in “on account of which is the bishop's office after divine right . . .” portrays an identification.
- It is a false comparison to find it in the following statement: to the above mentioned church leading office according to divine right belongs only that which will be called in the following (which qualifies according to divine right.)

The following example makes the distinction clear.

- If I say, “The cat is an animal which meows,” so I identify it, I can also reverse it by saying “An animal which meows is a cat.”
- But if I say “A cat is an animal which has four paws,” I did not identify it but characterized it. The reverse is not valid in this case. “An animal which has four paws is a cat.”

We look at the following Latin text of AC 28,20

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<sup>20</sup>Concord Page 94

German	Latin	Translation of Latin	Translation of German
Derhalben ist das bischöfliche Amt nach göttlichen Rechten: Das Evangelium predigen, Sünden vergeben, Lehre urteilen und die Lehre, so dem Evangelio entgegen, verwerfen und die Gottlosen, deren gottlos Wesen offenbar ist, aus [der] christlichen Gemeinde ausschliessen, ohne menschliche Gewalt, sondern allein durch Gottes Wort.	<b>20]</b> Quum igitur de iurisdictione episcoporum quaeritur, discerni debet imperium ab <b>21]</b> ecclesiastica iurisdictione. Porro secundum evangelium seu, ut loquuntur, de iure divino nulla iurisdictione competit episcopis ut episcopis, hoc est, his, quibus est commissum ministerium Verbi et sacramentorum, nisi remittere peccata, item cognoscere doctrinam et doctrinam ab evangelio dissentientem reiicere et impios, quorum nota est impietas, excludere a communione ecclesiae sine vi humana, <b>22]</b> sed Verbo.	So when asking about the jurisdiction of bishops, one must distinguish political rule from the church's jurisdiction. Consequently, according to the gospel, or as they say, by divine right, this jurisdiction belongs to the bishops as bishops (that is, to those to whom the ministry of Word and sacraments has been committed): to forgive sins, to reject teaching that opposes the gospel, and to exclude from the communion of the church the ungodly whose ungodliness is known –doing all this not with human power but by the Word.	Consequently, according to divine right it is the office of the bishop to preach the gospel, to forgive sin, to judge doctrine and reject doctrine that is contrary to the gospel, to forgive sin, to judge doctrine and reject doctrine that is contrary to the gospel, and to exclude from the Christina community the ungodly whose ungodly life is manifest –not with human power but with God's Word alone.

- The Latin text as an equal original confessional text reads throughout not from and identifying view, but characteristics of the historical, previously mentioned bishop's office as it regards to the function according to divine right.
- The German text would be conceivable in a double sense, depending on the emphasis. Derhalben ist das bischöfliche Amt nach göttlichen Rechten: Das Evangelium predigen, Sünden vergeben, Lehre urteilen und die Lehre . . . ohne menschliche Gewalt, sondern allein durch Gottes Wort.  
= qualifying the true eight functions of the bishop through divinely established jobs.

Derhalben ist das bischöfliche Amt nach göttlichen Rechten: Das Evangelium predigen, Sünden vergeben, Lehre urteilen und die Lehre . . . ohne menschliche Gewalt, sondern allein durch Gottes Wort.

= identifies the bishop's office with directly established jobs, which is seen in the congregational pastor.<sup>21</sup>

But the summary points out

- that the emphasis of 'divine right' matters lies (that is, qualifies its actual nature);
- that the job and authority of the bishop according to divine right in no way divides from the ordinary congregational pastor (identity), then the pastors and congregation should obey the instruction of the proper church leading Bishop. Also the bishop is absolutely in the supervising, church leading responsibility, who fulfills the office according to divine right.

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<sup>21</sup> Certainly one would ask throughout, whether identifying with the described job must automatically mean shepherd-servant in the local congregation.