

# Pastor and Teacher: Working Together to Glorify God

[This essay was originally presented for the Southwestern Michigan Conference and reread with extra annotation for the Northern Michigan Conference, February 20, 1995.]

by Nathan R. Pope

## Seven Statements on the *Predigtamt* in the Wisconsin Synod

- Statement One** Pastor and teacher relations in the Wisconsin Synod are probably no better and no worse than what existed 100 years ago; but, this arrangement of pastors and teachers within parish life has worked well and will continue to serve the purpose of Christ's church on earth "that repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47).
- Statement Two** God instituted the office of preaching (*Predigtamt*) so that sinners might obtain faith in the gospel by its official administration of the means of grace.
- Statement Three** "The ordinary office of preaching (*Predigtamt*) is the divinely willed continuation of the special office of the apostles, and *in and with* the office of the apostles is of divine institution."
- Statement Four** Parish pastors and teachers occupy the *Predigtamt* with certain distinctions and limitations.
- Statement Five** The position of LES teacher combines the *Ministry* of the word of Acts 6:4 with the *ministry* of praiseworthy deeds of Acts 6:2.
- Statement Six** To serve Christ and church in the *Predigtamt* does not preclude the actual governing or use of authority by its Ministers within the parish according to call.
- Statement Seven** Pastors and teachers are creatures of their environments.

## **Pastor and Teacher: Working Together to Glorify God**

*Seven Statements on the Predigtamt in the Wisconsin Synod*

Nathan R. Pope

*In Nomine Jesu*

The Lutheran who is invited these days to write on the workings of the *Predigtamt* (the office of public preaching) might well wonder if someone wants to do him an honor or do him in. The topic sizzles as hot today as what snapped and hissed on conference griddles one hundred years ago, and who dishes up his own thoughts for others knows that some will pronounce them a feast while others will taste death in the pot; he will please some and dismay others. You have asked me to write about pastor and teacher relationships, which means you have lobbed a hot potato across the lake through my study window. I promise then to arrange for you my honest and prayerful thoughts, not to settle this issue once and for all but hopefully to spice up an old rehash with a dash of newly cut arguments and stir up frank, friendly discussion.

Now your assignment committee narrowed the focus of what they expected from me. They set before me a series of targets. I see it as a courtesy to detail this for you so that you understand that I am not shooting from the hip from atop my favorite hobbyhorse, but that my opinions, assertions, and beliefs qualify as attempts to hit specified concerns. I was asked:

Is the answer to improved Pastor/Teacher relationships found in equalizing of the two ministries (same pay, same housing, more “pulpit announcements” concerning the value of the teaching ministry, same amount of schooling required, etc.)? Or is it found in the realization of individual ministers (pastoral or teaching) that both forms exist to glorify God? And does the realization translate into the teacher having to put up with the inequities of regard given by congregation in forms of salary, benefits, honor, etc? ...or the pastor expecting “double honor” in comparison to the teacher?

In addition I also cite some “crumbs in the food of thought category” which asked me some tantalizing specifics:

“In general, is the pastoral ministry more demanding than the teaching ministry?”

“In general, is the pastoral ministry more critical to the kingdom of God than the teaching ministry?”

“In general, is the pastoral ministry more valuable than the teaching ministry?”

“Should the pastoral and teaching ministries be regarded as equal?”

“Is the pastor rightly considered to be over the teacher in terms of authority within the congregation?”

So. There it is. To resume my metaphor of hot potatoes, I congratulate you for growing them in wintertime, and here is how I slice this one.

**Statement One** Pastor and teacher relations in the Wisconsin Synod are probably no better and no worse than what existed 100 years ago; but, this arrangement of pastors and teachers within parish life has worked well and will continue to serve the purpose of Christ's church on earth "that repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47).

Solomon said it: "What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9). This means pastors and teachers discover nothing new when periodically they feel a tension between themselves in the hurly-burly of parish life. I offer little to prove this assertion other than citing a short but eloquent passage that appears in the daybook of my great-great grandfather, Christian Popp, an émigré pastor from the Franconian territorial church, who while serving a Missouri Synod parish in Illinois summarized the day's events of October 2, 1863 as: "Rumpus with the teacher."

I cite the above tiff to advance the theory that when the new world, free parish created colleagues of pastors and elementary school teachers by mixing them together under her administration of Word and sacrament, she fertilized the soil to grow difficulties between the two professions.<sup>1</sup> She planted a set of perennial circumstances that her pastors and teachers can never avoid, will always find problematic, and often blow out of proportion to their importance in the proclamation of the gospel. Perhaps one way in improving Pastor/Teacher relationships is accepting the fact that we have inherited a bed of conditions from the dead over which we have little control.

I would rather believe that some of our difficulties result not from certain disagreeable individuals, who if only they were to disappear all would turn rosy, but radiate more than we think from conditions which naturally pit the properties of pastoring and teaching against each other. Consequently however hot we feel these circumstances shining on us, striking us as new and novel because we have fallen under their orbit now, we can feel strangely comforted in knowing that they were rising and falling on generations now gone and sure to cast shadows on those who will succeed us – there is nothing new under the sun.

Does this mean that today's pastors and teachers may see their relations bloom better than how they previously perceived them, if they can believe that relations can get no worse? Or

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<sup>1</sup> The Lutheran elementary school, as an arm of the local parish, is for the most part a new world phenomenon. "Pastor and Teacher: Working Together to Glorify God" would have been an unlikely essay in the lands of Lutheranism from which our forefathers emigrated. The *Landeskirche*, the *Grundschule*, and the *Gymnasium* all taught religion, but the circumstances of such state-supported institutions kept pastors and teachers fundamentally apart by reason of separated jurisdictions. The separation of church and state in the new world, however, created a set of circumstances not experienced by Lutherans before, namely, combining the operation of Word and sacrament with secular education within the jurisdiction of a free parish. The closest parallel to our situation of which I am aware is that which existed up until the First World War in imperial Russia where the Czar allowed ethnic Germans to administer their own churches and schools in their enclaves in the southwestern Russian provinces. The history of this brand of Lutheranism is detailed by Edgar C. Duin (*Lutheranism Under the Tsars and the Soviets*. Vol. I and II. Xerox University Microfilms: Ann Arbor, Michigan. 1976) and presents the idea that the ethnic Germans were allowed to set up a *de facto* form of local state-supported religion.

better? No, I am not advocating complacency; I am arguing for the acceptance of a certain normalcy.

But let it be said that whatever conditions challenge pastors and teachers, we have a system second to none. It has produced many of us from kindergarten onward, and we can vouch for its effectiveness in our lives; what we learned from our mothers' lips was reinforced by our teachers, namely, the gospel, the forgiveness of our sins.

The proclamation of gospel and supporting Lutheran doctrine was and remains the central purpose of our schools, as E. Clifford Nelson traces in his history of the educational enterprises of the Synodical Conference bodies: "The Missouri Synod promoted parochial schools *as essential to the preservation and inculcation of sound doctrine.*"<sup>2</sup> So also the Wisconsin Synod, and if anything, religious indoctrination grew as the purpose of the "Christian Day School." Like fine wine, the passage of time settled the dregs of impure but understandable motives which clouded the establishment of some of our schools. John Isch writes many an early parish established its school in part or mainly to teach German language and culture.<sup>3</sup> Yet by the early 1900s Isch shows that our schools had progressed beyond this reaction to Yankeeism: "The focus of Lutheran schools was to be the integration of Scripture and the Christian philosophy of life into all instruction."<sup>4</sup> Our schools are not about *Kultur* but Christ.

From a confessional angle then our parishes and their schools do not exist to improve the lot of parishioners but basically, essentially, unmistakably – to forgive the sins of sinners. What people need, what is properly called nurturing, is when pastors and teachers proclaim that "we cannot obtain forgiveness of sins and righteousness before God through our merits, works and satisfaction, but that we receive the forgiveness of sins and are justified before God by grace, for the sake of Christ, through faith, if we believe that Christ has suffered for us, and that for his sake sins are forgiven and righteousness and eternal life are granted us" (Augsburg Confession IV).<sup>5</sup> Confessing this theme, we work our Lord's will and fulfill the purpose of the church and know we are working results when we preach repentance and forgiveness of sin (Luke 24:47). And if we would gauge the success of our ministrations, let us tally how often we preach the gospel.

**Statement two** God instituted the office of preaching (*Predigtamt*) so that sinners might obtain faith in the gospel by its official administration of the means of grace.

What status do teachers enjoy whom the local parish entrusts with the education of her youth? The extremes on this issue begin with those on the right who believe that teachers are no more than instructors hired by the church and end with those on the left who believe that teachers are nothing less than *de facto* pastors who are called incidentally to teach the three Rs.

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<sup>2</sup> Nelson, E. Clifford. *The Lutherans of North America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 295 [Emphasis mine].

<sup>3</sup> Isch, John. *Train Up a Child* (New Ulm, Minnesota: Dr. Martin Luther College, 1992). 161-64.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>5</sup> Augsburg Confession. Der IV Artikel "Von der Rechtfertigung." My translation. "Weiter gelehrt, daß wir Vergebung der Sünden and Gerechtigkeit vor Gott nicht erlangen mögen durch unser Verdienst, Werke and Genugtu, sondern daß wir Vergebung der Sünden bekommen and vor Gott gerecht werden aus Gnaden, um Christus' willen, durch den Glauben, so wir glauben, daß Christus für uns gelitten hat, und daß uns um seinetwillen die Sünden vergeben, Gerechtigkeit and ewiges Leben geschenkt wird." I am citing the German text because it says more than the Latin. F. Bente says that the German text has equal authority along with the Latin, but that the German text has the added distinction and prestige of having been the version read to the Diet (*Triglotta*, 19).

Pastors and teachers who wrestle with the two extremes in the above opposing corners should match wits with the Augustana's definition of and purpose for the *Predigtamt* and then return and pin the confessors' simple words to the apostles' attitude toward public ministry, in particular their words and actions in Acts 6.

The Augsburg Confession states that in order to obtain faith in the gospel of forgiveness "God instituted the office of preaching (*Predigtamt*), has given gospel and sacraments through which he, as through means, gives the Holy Spirit, who works faith when and where he wills in those who hear the gospel, which teaches that we have a gracious God through Christ's merits and not through our merits, if we believe it."<sup>6</sup>

Now *Amt* means "office." Webster's says that someone who occupies an office enjoys a "position of authority to exercise a public function." Hence to act officially.

And *Predigt* means "preaching."

The Symbol is saying that the holder of the *Predigtamt* preaches/teaches not only by definition of function but he does so officially. When it says that "God instituted the office," it means just that; it is not merely a case of function but institution.

We therefore think of the office of preaching as occurring in the abstract. This means it is a position which exists, like that of the presidency, and can sit empty or vacant until it is filled. In this respect consider the case of Judas. Paul Alliet writes that when Judas committed suicide he ended his discipleship, but his actions did not end his apostleship. His apostleship was an office, which when vacated, could be and was filled.<sup>7</sup>

Alliet then shows how the abstract office of the apostles shaped their work in the concrete, that is, what they would and would not do. They respected the boundaries of their office, refusing to be involved in other church work (Acts 6:2-5), no matter how praiseworthy; they would not confuse the service of "waiting on tables" with their office of "prayer and the ministry of the Word."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Augsburg Confession. Der V Artikel "Vom *Predigtamt*" My translation. "Solchen Glauben zu erlangen, hat Gott das *Predigtamt* eingesetzt, Evangelium und Sakramente gegeben, dadurch er, als durch Mittel, den Heiligen Geist gibt, welcher den Glauben, wo and wann er will, in denen, so das Evangelium hören, wirkt, welches da lehrt, daß wir durch Christus' Verdienst, nicht durch unser Verdienst, einen gnädigen Gott haben, so wir solches glauben." I am citing the German text because it makes a stronger statement regarding the *Predigtamt* as an office and as a divine institution. The Latin says: "*institutum est ministerium docendi evangelii et porrigendi sacramenta*" – "the ministry of teaching the gospel and administering the sacraments was instituted." See footnote 5 on the authority of the German text.

<sup>7</sup> "The presence of Judas' name in the lists of the Twelve underscores the point that the Ministry of the New Testament is not an exercise or an outgrowth of the faith of the individual or of the priesthood of believers...Judas ceased to be a disciple; he remained an apostle, so that even after his betrayal, despair, and suicide, St. Peter could still speak of Judas as one 'who obtained a part in this ministry' (τὸν κλῆρον τῆς διακονίας ταύτης) and whose office (τὴν ἐπισκοπὴν αὐτοῦ) remained after his defection so that it could be filled by another. Judas' actions destroyed his faith and his salvation; they did not destroy the office which he held. After Judas abandoned his apostolate, it remained and could be occupied by another." Alliet, Paul W. *Ordination and Installation* (Unpublished manuscript, April 19, 1994), 3-4. [Emphasis mine]

<sup>8</sup> "Later on when other responsibilities, no matter how praiseworthy, threatened to divert them from that service (Acts 6:1-4) they arranged to have others take their place in carrying out the tasks which fell outside their divine commission so that they might concentrate entirely on that which had been given to them by the One who called them. Their ministry was the specific work of preaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments. Accordingly they distinguished between τῇ διακονίᾳ τοῦ λογοῦ [the ministry of the word] (Acts 6:2,4), which was

From the Augustana and Acts 6 we begin to assemble fundamentals on the *Predigtamt* as respecting the relations of pastors and teachers:

- 1) God established an office by which sinners might obtain faith in the gospel through its ministrations of Word and sacraments.
- 2) God established an office which could be filled, vacated, and transferred.
- 3) To render a praiseworthy public service for the church does not qualify anyone for inclusion in the *Predigtamt*, unless the individual has been called to its ministry of Word and sacraments.

But the objection is raised that it is not plausible to link the apostles' office with the post-apostolic *Predigtamt*. Regarding this latter-day dissent, I defer to, arguably, synod's greatest divine.

**Statement Three** "The ordinary office of preaching (*Predigtamt*) is the divinely willed continuation of the special office of the apostles, and in and with the office of the apostles is of divine institution."

Dr. Adolf Hoenecke, director and professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, authored the above Statement Three in his *Dogmatik*.<sup>9</sup> He writes that the *Predigtamt* is essentially (*wesentlich*) the same as the apostolic office according to:

- a) Position,
- b) Task,
- c) Authority, and
- d) Purpose.

Hoenecke offers scriptural proofs to explain his statement (reproduced in the footnote) and then repeats that the *Predigtamt* is a "continuation of the special office of the apostles, and essentially one with it."<sup>10</sup> [See also footnote 16]

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their unique responsibility, and *διακονεῖν τραπέζεις* [to wait on tables] (Acts 6:2), which might and should be assigned to others." *Ibid.*, 4-5. [Emphasis mine]

<sup>9</sup> Hoenecke, Adolf. *Ev.-Luth. Dogmatik* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1909), Band IV, 180. My translation of the German. "Das ordentliche *Predigtamt* ist die von Gott selbst gewollte Fortsetzung des außerordentlichen Apostelamts, und ist in und mit dem Apostelamt göttlicher Stiftung." [Emphasis mine]

<sup>10</sup> "The normal preaching office is the continuation of the special apostolic office, which God himself wants. It is of divine institution in and with the apostolic office. The divine institution of the divine apostolic office is proven in Thesis One.

- A. It is certain from Scripture that the ordinary preaching office is essentially the same as the apostolic office:
  - a. According to their position.
    - aa. Apostles are servants and stewards (1 Corinthians 4:1).
    - bb. Likewise the preachers. In 1 Corinthians 4:6 Paul refers verse 1 to Apollos.
    - cc. Scripture expressly places the preachers, as servants of Christ, workers, etc., on the same level as the apostles (1 Timothy 4:6. Colossians 4:7, Philippians 2:25, 1 Peter 5:1, 2 Thessalonians 1:1, 1 Corinthians 1:1, James 1:1).

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- b. According to their task.
    - aa. The apostles' task is pastoring and administering the sacraments (John 21:15-17, Matthew 28:18ff).
    - bb. The preachers' task is the same (Acts 20:28, 2 Timothy 1:14, 2 Timothy 4:5, compare with verse 6).
  - c. According to their authority.
    - aa. Apostles should rule in the church (2 Tim 1:6), exercise, supervise, discipline, etc.
    - bb. Likewise the preachers have the authority to supervise (Acts 20:28, 1 Timothy 1:3), to teach (1 Timothy 4:14, 2 Timothy 2:2), to command (1 Timothy 4:11), to ordain (1 Timothy 4:14, 2 Timothy 2:2, 1 Timothy 3:1-7), to teach (1 Timothy 3:2), to rule (1 Timothy 3:5, compare 5:17), Titus 1:5, 1:7-9), and to demand obedience (Hebrews 13:17).
  - d. According to purpose. The preaching office has the same purpose as the apostolic office: to save (1 Corinthians 3:5).

B. The normal preaching office is a continuation of the special apostolic office, willed and ordained by God.

Proof:

- a. Christ always wants to have servants, i.e. preachers, teachers, and bishops, and does not present his church in any other way than with the preaching office and preachers whom he appoints (Matthew 22:3,4, 24:45) until Judgment Day (Matthew 19:28). In the Matthew passages, where the Lord speaks to his disciples as stewards and servants, he is speaking of servants whom he appoints (Luke 12:42-48, compare verse 41). In 12:43, it is important that it is the Lord's will that there are servants (that is what the apostles are called in Romans 1:1, Galatians 1:10, Philippians 1:1, and also the regular preachers in Philippians 1:1, Revelation 1:1, and James 1:1) until he comes.
- b. As a continuation of the special apostolic office, Christ wants to have regular preachers who become preachers by an indirect call for all time until the Last Day, according to the apostles. Having the rights and obligations firmly set by the apostles for these preachers shows this.
  - aa. Obligations. Paul delineates the main objections for the elders in Ephesus for the time after his departure (Acts 20:25-31, 1 Timothy 3:2-7). They are expressly designated as men obligated to give account to the Lord, but also as those whom he has employed and empowered (Hebrews 13:17).
  - bb. Rights. In Hebrews 13:17 the most outstanding right of preachers, to demand obedience, is stated, with attention to the time after the apostles (verse 7).  
According to this, it is clear that Christ wanted and appointed the office itself.
- c. Scripture clearly teaches that just as the apostles were appointed by the Lord, so the apostles appoint others in the name of the Lord and transfer the right to them also to appoint others as servants and preachers.
  - aa. Paul explains himself as a preacher appointed by God into the office (2 Timothy 1:11).
  - bb. Paul himself commands the office to others (2 Timothy 2:2, compare verses 4:15,24, 4:5, where the work and office of the preachers is spoken of; see 2 Timothy 1:11 on this, where Paul speaks of himself this way).
  - cc. Paul commands those to whom he has commanded the office to commend it again to others (2 Timothy 2:2, 1 Timothy 5:22, Titus 1:5, which is followed by the description of the bishops in verses 6-8, like 1 Timothy 3:1-7, according to which they are completely the present day preachers).
- d. According to all of the preceding, the present-day normal preaching office is the continuation of the special apostolic office which God wills, and essentially one with it. Scripture expressly confirms this in many ways:
  - aa. By the explanation that the congregations are commended to the preachers (1 Peter 5:2), and evidently by Christ, not by church authority. This is expressed in verse 4, where preachers are responsible to Christ as Chief Shepherd, and thus also to under-shepherds.
  - bb. By the explanation that preachers are appointed by the Holy Spirit in the congregation (Acts 20:28).
  - cc. By the equating of preachers and apostles (Colossians 4:7, Philippians 2:25, 1 Corinthians 1:1, 4:1, 1 Peter 5:1).
- e. And this continuation is to last, according to God's arrangement, until the Last Day. Matthew 28:19ff is proof (cf. B,b), "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." There is a promise of comfort here, and the only conclusion possible: "I am with you so that you can accomplish what I want to have accomplished until I return." If the Lord promises help for carrying it out until the end. then he also extends the command to carry out the office until the end.

While it is to be expected that one reads and hears little of Adolf Hoenecke's teachings on the *Predigtamt* in a day when the parish building and grounds committee seems to qualify for inclusion into the church's public ministry because of its supportive role, Hoenecke's views are Luther(an). Like Luther, Hoenecke has a high view of the *Predigtamt*, but there is no high church, no apostolic succession, in his words. He speaks of the office, which the apostles once occupied, as still existing in the abstract, and which Christians, by reason of their royal priesthood, also supply members to and call from to serve them by the means of grace. By this public office Christ authorizes those called to it to stand officially in his name and place and incidentally in the name of and on behalf of a group of Christians to forgive or bind their sins (See Illustration A in the end notes).

And it was a mature, sober Luther, not a recent monk hung over from cloistered spirits, who said in a sermon preached at a baptism in 1540: "Herewith are *the apostles and their descendants* appointed to be masters to the end of the world and such great power and might is given to them, *according to the office*, as Christ, God's Son, himself had."<sup>11</sup> By the term descendants (*Nachkommen*) Luther referred to all who were put in office to act in Christ's stead. At the end of this sermon Luther spoke about the treasure of the gospel's absolution which people heard from their pastors and preachers:

But he (Christ) has given command and full power to his apostles and to all their descendants, and *in emergency* [the exception proving the rule] to every Christian, until the end of the world that they should comfort and strengthen the weak and the despairing, and in his name should remit sins.<sup>12</sup>

How highly those in the *Predigtamt* should believe themselves privileged and honored! For the origins of the *Predigtamt* are not from below but from above, regardless of the manner and ways in which the *Predigtamt* is supplied, staffed, and applied. To hold this office completely or partly is to stand in a long procession dating back to Peter and Paul – but it is not to stand in their place but in the place of Christ!

There you have the thought to gladden hearts and grant a divine sense of responsibility to those who occupy this office. This is not about egos; this is about the gospel, and it means jealously keeping its forgiveness central and knowing that you have been charged with the authority to use it within your charge to the sinner's good and to God's glory. I know of no better way to keep relationships in working order than to see yourself in the place of Christ, dispensing his pardon with his permission and pleasure, however small or wide the field of your official jurisdiction within the parish or whatever other praiseworthy tasks are combined with it. That poor, miserable sinners can stand in his stead and officially declare the wonders of God – this dispensation of grace brings all God's public ministers to the same level of humility.

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<sup>11</sup> *Dr. Martin Luthers Sämmtliche Schriften* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1901), Vol. XI, 757. My translation of the German. "Hiermit sind die Apostel und ihre Nachkommen bis ans Ende der Welt auch zu Herren gesetzt und ist ihnen so große Gewalt and Macht gegeben, dem Amte nach, als Christus, Gottes Sohn, selbst gehabt" (Emphasis mine).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 769. My translation of the German: "Sondern er hat Befehl and volle Macht gegeben seinen Aposteln and allen ihren Nachkommen, und in der Noth einem jeglichen Christen, bis ans Ende der Welt, daß sie die Schwachen and Verzagten trösten and stärken, and in seinem Namen die Sünde erlassen sollen." [Emphasis mine] On the matter of the emergency proving the rule, see also Augustine's story of the two men in a rowboat, "The Smalcald Articles," *Triglott* 523.



**Statement four** Parish pastors and teachers occupy the *Predigtamt* with certain distinctions and limitations.

Episcopalians debate how high or low to make the bishop's miter. Baptists bludgeon themselves according to their pre- or post-millennial dispositions. Catholics have sex on the brain and are torn on issues of birth control, abortion, divorce, and celibacy for priests. And the Wisconsin Synod is still mystified and arguing about the place and position of parochial teachers in the *Predigtamt*. One thing is for sure: how ministers of the *Predigtamt* relate to each other has always been our favorite pastime. We enjoy mystery plays.

But what is so problematic about the teaching ministry that has played such a long run? that asks: "Should the pastoral and teaching ministries be regarded as equal?" or "Is the answer to improved Pastor/Teacher relationships found in equalizing of the two ministries?"

I believe the story line goes like this: when the church created a partial *Predigtamt*, made it a full-time, salaried position, combined it with praiseworthy works which are not a part of the *Predigtamt*, and then assigned it to a partial flock within the whole flock, you have plenty of room for confusion if you are so inclined to put this parish position on a par with the position of parish pastor. And if my answer has succeeded in confusing you, I congratulate myself for having made my point.

How is the teacher a member of the *Predigtamt*?

Answer: The call diploma charges the teacher "to instruct and train the children entrusted to you diligently and faithfully in the chief truths of the Word of God as they are revealed in the Scriptures and set forth particularly in the Small Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther." This charge installs the teacher into the *Predigtamt*, so far as it concerns Augustana V (covered under my Statement Two); from the teacher children hear the gospel which either obtains or maintains the faith that saves. There it is; this is not difficult.

But what sort of minister is the LES teacher?

Answer. Dr. Martin Chemnitz's definition of the *Predigtamt* shows that the LES teacher enjoys a partial ministerial office, when his *Enchiridion* divides the *Amt* into 3 functions.

Chemnitz asks, "What then is the office of ministers of the church?" He answers: "This office, or ministry, has been committed and entrusted to them by God himself through a legitimate call, that preachers are to (and I paraphrase):

- I. Teach the word.
- II. Administer the sacraments.
- III. Loose and bind sins.<sup>13</sup>

In the pastor's call Functions One to Three are broad; in the teacher's call they are circumscribed – generally so. It happens, yes, that a call may install the male teacher into

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<sup>13</sup> "I. To feed the church of God with the true, pure, and salutary doctrine of the divine Word (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 5:2).

II. To administer and dispense the sacraments of Christ according to his institution (Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23).

III. To administer rightly the use of the keys of the church, or of the kingdom of heaven, by either remitting or retaining sins (Matthew 16:19; John 20:23), and to fulfill all these things and the whole ministry (as Paul says, 2 Timothy 4:5) of the basis of the prescribed command, which the chief Shepherd himself has given his ministers in his Word for instruction" (Matthew 28:20). Chemnitz, Martin. *Ministry, Word, and Sacraments – An Enchiridion*. Translated by Luther Poellot (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981), 26.

Function Two, to administer the sacraments (most often to assist in communion), but this function cannot be given to female teachers as Luther says,<sup>14</sup> then again few male teachers will ever practice it. Here recognize *de jure* distinctions, wherein pastors or teachers practice “by right,” according to the call, any or all of the *Predigtamt*’s functions.

Oh! But do not forget Function Three, the *Kirchenschlüssel*. To use the keys means to stand in for Christ (*in loco Christi*) and make pronouncements for him. The church charges the minister: “Forgive their sins. Do not forgive their sins” (*Catechism*, Questions 304-311).

First of all approach this by observing that to talk about or teach the gospel is not necessarily the same as saying, “I forgive you your sins.” Do you follow? To use the gospel key means to tell someone, “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.” Clearly one recognizes this most often as a pastoral function, this being reinforced through the well-known words from *The Lutheran Hymnal* (p. 16), and if one squints hard enough, from *Christian Worship*’s formula (p. 16). This is the loosing key, turned right privately or publicly, and happily.

Secondly the parish calls her pastor also to latchkey the law parishwide and twist it left by condemning or marking sin, disobedience, and impenitence. The parish delegates to him the authority “to establish and maintain sound Lutheran practice at all times.” Where he detects unbelief, rebellion, impenitence and the accompanying evil works, he will take action. As the individual case merits, he will twist the binding key by degrees.

He may, for example, routinely admonish those who despise Word and sacrament or who afflict the church with their wretched giving habits. Or, he may refuse to conduct the wedding of a cohabiting couple. He may refuse to bury a suicide. He may refuse to recommend a transfer because the parishioner is in poor standing. He may remove a woman from teaching Sunday School who has initiated an unscriptural divorce. He may expel a man from the choir who is obsessively sending its director sweet nothings and frightening her, or ban the Lothario from communion if he refuses to knock it off (*minor excommunicatio*), or even ask the council to confirm his judgment that the man is impenitent and to excommunicate him (*major excommunicatio*). It is to her pastor that the parish delegates the authority “to establish and maintain sound Lutheran practice at all times.”

The parish, on the other hand, restricts this broad range of Function Three in its calling of teachers. Parishes call their pastors and teachers to minister with different degrees of authority and do not empower them all equally to practice the three functions of the *Predigtamt*. A wrong-headed egalitarian spirit rebels against this distinction. Yet the diploma of vocation does most certainly charge the teacher to “maintain Christian discipline in the school.” I see this as a tacitly delegated power of Function Three of the *Predigtamt* – a limited use of the keys within the circumscribed jurisdiction of the parish school.

You will think here of sanctified behavior among the children entrusted to the teacher. As the pastor, so the teacher will turn the law. Naturally so. When you think of the classroom you think of rules, God’s and man’s. Who can run a classroom without the law? This is not a criticism, but a defense of the teacher to apply the key, to punish, to rebuke, to suspend, yes, to expel.

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<sup>14</sup> Luther says that even if children, women, and incompetents are competent to hear the Word of God, or to receive baptism, communion, and absolution, and are good Christians, nonetheless they are not competent to administer these signs of the church as *ein Bischof*. Dr. Martin Luthers *Sämmliche Shriften*, “*Von der Conciliis u. Kirchen*.” XVI, 2279-80.

Within the circumscribed boundaries of the school the LES teacher will bind the sins of the pupils, to a point. But what about the reverse? The loosing of sins? Here let experience quiz my brother teachers as to the nature of their *de facto* practice? What status do you “in fact” give to the absolution of your pupils in the course of everyday classroom sin? Recognize this as an individual challenge which asks: “Is it possible that I may be bringing *de facto* limitations upon my *Amt* by simply not bothering much to tell disobedient but repentant children, ‘I forgive you?’” Meaning, if I see that I am underemploying one of the powers of the *Amt*, when and where I will or to the extent that I should, then I have made an exciting breakthrough, and I know what I must do to align my practice to this nurturing function of the office. In the process I will also attune myself more towards the pastor’s monophonic ministry.

What is the joy and purpose of the *Predigtamt* but that through its official channels people receive forgiveness? This, yes, is our great joy, that God would have his officers stand in for him, speak the word of forgiveness, and have people depart in peace (*Ita missa est*). This means not only gospel instruction but personal absolution. Therefore if a teacher would feel himself safely ensconced within the *Predigtamt*, and convince others of the same, then grow in awareness, if you are not already, that you too own the supreme command to dismiss your charges, forgiven and restored, when they disobey you or sin against their fellows, weekly–daily–hourly. And then in the doing, ever enjoy the identity this gives, namely to stand in for Christ and to say to his glory and to the sinner’s highest good, “Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.” Blessed are the misbehaving children who repent and hear the teacher say, not “I don’t want to hear you’re sorry”... nor “Don’t say you’re sorry – just don’t do it again”...but “I (Christ) forgive you.” They will love you for it, as you will catch the spirit of being in office every time you do it.

<p><b>Statement five</b> The position of LES teacher combines the <i>Ministry</i> of the word of Acts 6:4 with the <i>ministry</i> of praiseworthy deeds of Acts 6:2.</p>
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Sometimes things do not appear as they are, and sometimes people are as they do not appear, and sometimes both happen at once.

A new Lutheran pastor, for instance, had come to town and his clerical collar made him look not unlike that of the neighboring priest. He chanced to pass several Catholic boys on the street, who responded accordingly.

“Hi’ya, Father,” some of them chorused.

But no sooner had he passed than one of the boys turned on his friends in disgust, “Father! He ain’t no real father...he’s got three kids!”

I would also say, in a sense, that the LES teacher, ever since his arrival, has battled an image problem, namely the suspicion, “Minister! He ain’t no real minister...he teaches the three Rs.”

As with many perceptions you will sink your teeth into the sweet center of truth only after you have penetrated a thick coating of one-sidedness. And this is no different in the matter of what I will refer to as the *Case of the Vanishing Teaching Minister*... now you see him, now you don’t. By this I am referring you back to the extremes on the teaching ministry which I introduced in Statement Two, that which sees the teacher as either all minister or no minister. Both views wrap a bitter *overstatement* around a nougat of fact which makes for bittersweet chewing.

The teacher by call, however, is neither of the two but some of both at once, an *M & m*...that is, both *Minister* and *minister*.

The call, recall, gives the teacher limited rights to practice functions of the *Predigtamt* towards the souls of students. As he instructs the children in doctrine, punishes disobedience, and absolves sin, he *Ministers* in the true sense of the office and plays in unison with the pastor in his monophonic “ministry of the Word” (Acts 6:4).

At the same time the call charges the teacher to “teach the children thoroughly *also* the elementary branches of learning in the spirit of the gospel” [emphasis mine]. This charge, as it clearly reads, is not a call per se to teach doctrine, administer the sacraments, or use the keys. It charges the LES instructor to *minister* to the minds of children by teaching them English, Social Studies, Mathematics, etc., the so-called secular subjects, in the spirit of the gospel. However, it is potentially injurious to faith, to the gospel, and to the nature of the *Predigtamt* to perceive that such instruction, *as a whole*, becomes a part of the *Predigtamt* when it is done in the spirit of the gospel or from a scriptural viewpoint. No. Such instruction becomes Function One, a part of the *Ministry*, only when and where the Scriptures of God are materially (*forma externa*) integrated into the instruction by speaking the Word. Teach English, speak the Word where you will, and there a *minister* turns into a *Minister*. Practically speaking, the LES teacher will feel more of a togetherness with the pastor, who is called only to *Minister*, when he does what? The more he speaks the Word in his classes, so the more he *Ministers* and will see himself as such. And others too. In this situation, as in absolving his pupils, it falls finally upon the teacher to determine how much of a *Minister* he would become. The choice is clearly an individual one.

Now we need to keep the above distinction between *Ministry* and *ministry* clear, if we believe as Hoenecke writes that the Holy Spirit has bound himself for all time to the Word.<sup>15</sup> For what is the nature of the Holy Office?, but that people would obtain the faith that saves by the *Ministrations* of those in this Office, working the Spirit’s once for all (*ein für allemal*) tools of Word and sacraments... Stay with me, now, because I’m leading to the crux of the concerns of many of us these days... But if service and works (*ministry*) that are done in the spirit of the gospel or from a scriptural viewpoint are perceived as being identical with preaching “Christ crucified” (1 Corinthians 1:23) or “rightly dividing the Word,” then law and gospel are being confused and the purpose of the church is changed. How?

This becomes clear when viewed from the angle of the works of “responsibility” (Acts 6:3) that characterized the work of the seven deacons. They served the church by doing what the apostles refused to undertake lest the Twelve “neglect the ministry of the Word of God” (Acts 6:2). The deacons’ ministry consisted then of the praiseworthy acts of sanctification of which the parish can make no end until the End, but which the apostles kept separate from the *Ministry* of Word and sacrament (*Predigtamt*). The fact that the apostles characterized their work as “the ministry of the Word of God” in apposition to the called (Acts 6:6) waiting on tables proves this line of demarcation between *Ministry* and *ministry*. Meaning, the church can “call and lay hands” on anyone it chooses to render any type of public works for the church in the spirit of the gospel, but that calls no one per se to the *Ministry* of Word and sacrament (*Predigtamt*).<sup>16</sup>

In this regard it is said that the public ministry is a divine institution without prescribed forms. This is true, so far as it goes. However, it is an overreach of revisionism to stretch the term “public ministry” to cover non-means of grace public works. Luther knew of many forms of public ministry too, but how curious that his church restricted these offices only to means of

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<sup>15</sup> Hoenecke, Adolf. *Ev.-Luth. Dogmatik. (Lehrsatz VI)*, Band IV, 21.

<sup>16</sup> See *Predigt am andern Sonntage nach Epiphaniä*, SL XII, 336 (*Hat jemand ein Amt, so*).

grace ministries. Thus the ministers (*Kirchendiener*) were *Prediger, Pfarrer/Pfarrherr, Capellane/Priester, Bischof, Seelsorger, Beichtvater, Lehrer, Ausleger, Probst*. Bruce Bitter's "What Is Ministry" (*LOGIA*, Holy Trinity/July 1993) addresses this distinction in a lovely way. I think his Theses 5-7 cut through the latter-day claim that public ministry includes any and all who publicly aid and support the *Predigtamt* to expose its *ad fontes*, "back to the spring," reworking of ministry as a mirage. Hoax would also not be too strong a word to characterize this non-*Predigtamt* view of public ministry, if in the future it can be proven that this inflated view of public ministry leads to the extremes, disrespect for the institutionalized pastorate, or demotion of the gospel in our circles which well-intentioned fads like Feucht's "Everyone a Minister" brand of Lutheranism, the American discipling movement, and now the Meta-church movement (a variant of Church Growth) have created elsewhere by this Reformed/Pietistic approach to churchmanship. [See also footnote 25]

To repeat Chemnitz, those in office will teach the Word, administer the sacrament, and bind or loose sins. And that translates finally to this: to do something in the spirit of the gospel (Acts 6:2) is the pathway of sanctification; it is quite another thing to proclaim the gospel (Acts 6:4), which is the pathway of justification. That is why this difference between *Ministry* and *ministry* cannot be yielded. As in all branches and concerns of the church, it is finally the objective pronouncement of forgiveness which stands in the balance. Always.

Thus you have some unique conditions of the WELS parochial teacher. The parish calls the teacher to tend the souls of children with clear-cut but limited functions of the *Predigtamt*, as she also charges the teacher to educate their minds, placing at the teacher's discretion the freedom to integrate the Word of God in the sanctified service of teaching all the elementary branches of learning. This calls for a tremendously difficult balancing act on the part of parochial teachers, the likes of which pastors simply do not or should not face.<sup>17</sup> These circumstances certainly explain some inherent tensions within teachers, as they also trace the source of some misunderstandings between pastors and teachers.

To what can I compare the above? I see a typical parish, and I see an orchestra in it.

In the parish orchestra sits the pastor, playing first violin, and mind you, playing a monophonic tune. Around him are arranged other string players: the Sunday School teacher, the Vacation Bible School teacher, the Teen Bible Class teacher. They are part-time players, but they are sawing the same line...all are "rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). Seated opposite the strings is the brass section. Some players are full-time, others part-time: the church secretary, the school secretary, the janitor, the hot-lunch cook, the Ladies Aid president. They

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<sup>17</sup> I can already hear the claim that the pastor too must spend time and energy on ministries not directly connected to the Functions of his Office. I do not deny this, as at the same time I will say that ever since I entered the pastoral *Ministry* I have been doing my level best to free myself from the type of sanctified responsibilities which the apostles found were taking their time and attention away from their called duties. In former days I spent considerable amount of my waking hours snowblowing the walks, getting the church and school garbage curbside, chasing down incompetent vendors who mishandled church business, fixing things, etc. – you name it, I've probably done it, as have many, many other parish pastors. Those of us who live on the job site especially know how easy it becomes to collect chores by default, and a parish pastor can find himself saddled with so many "secular" sanctified works, that he finds that he lacks the time or energy to do what he was essentially called to do: preach the Word, administer the sacraments, and turn the keys. The pastor who must also double as his own secretary feels this keenly. The temptation in all of this, naturally, is for the pastor to fool himself into believing that he is truly *Ministering* when he chosen to be so busy *ministering* with other things.

too are playing a monophonic tune, but unlike the strings they are sounding a separate line of ministry; they trumpet a supporting “responsibility” (Acts 6:3).

But teamed with the pastor and seated directly between both groups sits the teacher. With his right hand he plucks the Strad tucked beneath his chin, while somehow he sounds the horn pressed against his lips, and he manages to bow and blow two lines at once! Unlike either group, the teacher’s music is polyphonic. And if playing two tunes simultaneously and keeping the notes in order ranks as a challenge, brothers, I wager you can hear who, in this respect, faces the greater professional challenge. I want only to fiddle.

Recognize then a condition to which I alluded under Statement One. Given the polyphonies of the teaching duettist, distortions are always possible. The teacher, for example, may want to hear himself only a string player and harp on that and grow embittered when parishioners fail to grant him the same measure of deference as the first violinist. Or a pastor or layman see, or only want to hear, the teacher working his trumpet, because he is mainly teaching secular subjects, but they fail to acknowledge his station and importance in the string section and show it in ways, and morale is hurt. Pastors experience little of this identity crisis in their *Amt*, and therefore must appreciate that the teachers do, be sensitive to it, and lend support. This fosters the bond of fraternity.

Oh, but on the other hand, just the opposite condition exists when the teacher blows his instrument overly so...that is, getting caught up in the blare of the trumpet section, the teacher unintentionally allows the mundane and germane to dominate in the countless combinations of classroom and school interaction, the pastor gets wind that the children are hearing too many jam sessions and the teacher not scoring enough chamber music, and you have the makings for a classical music clash.

I urge balance, as I point to the satisfaction which comes when pastor and teacher produce a beautiful counterpoint of Ministry, where the teacher complements the pastor by striking spiritual notes even in the school’s mental and physical worlds.

<b>Statement six</b>	To serve Christ and church in the <i>Predigtamt</i> does not preclude the actual governing or use of authority by its Ministers within the parish according to call.
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There exists an inherent tension regarding authority within the spiritual jurisdiction of the church. On the one hand the apostle Peter told the pastors<sup>18</sup> of his day to serve as overseers

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<sup>18</sup> The so-called “elders” (πρεσβύτεροι) of 1 Peter 5 were the pastors of the New Testament congregations and not the officers with whom we associate that name today in parish organization, namely the men who comprise the board of elders. πρεσβύτερος (elder) and ἐπίσκοπος (bishop, overseer) are used interchangeably, together with ποιμήν (shepherd) in 1 Peter 5:1-2. “Elder” is a name befitting dignity, perhaps on the scale of “Reverend” and consistent with the position of being in charge of a flock, while “bishop,” meaning “overseer,” is more of a descriptive title of the task at hand, that of oversight, like “pastor.” Peter, an apostle, likewise identifies himself as a fellow elder, as does John ( 2 John 1, 3 John 1), but in his case his oversight was over many flocks. Oh, the fact too that St. Peter addresses the local bishops as a “fellow elder” (1 Peter 5:1) proves that Peter believed he and these unidentified men, who had received legitimate calls from their parishes, occupied the same divinely instituted office, a continuation and expansion of the office first created with the calling of the Twelve (Matthew 10:2-4). It is hardly plausible to argue that the Holy Spirit in this account is teaching two different types of ministerial offices, one given specifically and exclusively to the Twelve by Christ and the other evolving from the need of the priesthood of all believers to keep matters orderly through an ingenious invention of a representative ministry and also incidentally by divine institution, when you have one of the pillars of the church (Galatians 2:9) describing himself to

(bishops) and not to lord it over the people (1 Peter 5:1-3), and Jesus said the same, directing his men away from autocratic notions of power and stressing that their greatness would be determined in serving others (Matthew 20:24-28). On the other hand the writer of Hebrews directed Christians to obey their spiritual leaders and submit to their authority (Hebrews 13:17). And St. Paul said that the would-be pastor must know how to manage his household and have the respectful obedience of his children if he would be entrusted with overseeing God's church (1 Timothy 3:4-5). And the book of Acts shows the apostles wrestling and deciding on issues and then forwarding the decrees to the churches for the people to obey (Acts 16:4).

If servanthood, therefore, precludes the use of authority by called servants among Christians and the expectation of their obedience, one feels at a loss to explain the apparent contradictory behavior of the apostles who commanded and expected compliance, yes, of our Lord himself.<sup>19</sup>

In addition the confessions defend the use of "the power of the order, i.e., the ministry of the Word and Sacraments"<sup>20</sup> within the jurisdiction of clergy arrangement, surprising us with their wish "to maintain *church polity and the grades in the Church* [old church-regulations and the government of bishops], even though they have been made by human authority provided the bishops allow our doctrine and receive our priests."<sup>21</sup> Therein is the rub. The confessors had little argument with ecclesiastical authority, even in an episcopal format, provided it not be legalistic but evangelical.

And finally, Luther said repeatedly that all of the clergy (*Kirchendiener*) who served in the evangelical church's divisions of the *Predigtamt* (*Kirchenämter*, *Kirchenregiment*) were "all the same."<sup>22</sup> Yet he also had to qualify this at times by saying that many types of offices in the *Predigtamt* existed, and some greater, some smaller than others ("*eines grösser, das andere geringer*").<sup>23</sup>

In the above context then of spiritual equality, of authority, and of degrees of official functions within the *Amt* I am asked: "Is the pastor rightly considered to be over the teacher in terms of authority within the congregation?" How I wish I would have been asked, "Is the principal considered to be over the teacher within the school?" Ah, that does not seem as controversial. No? Yes. But, I'll let you to sort that one out since I was not asked to answer it.

It's a funny thing. We Lutherans studiously avoid terms like subordination or rank to describe the relationships between called workers in carrying out their prescribed duties to the congregation. We prefer to speak of a call into the *Amt* as being more comprehensive or broader in scope than another call, because we wish to de-emphasize the disparity of authority by equals and accent instead their service to God's redeemed – even though some would maintain that it

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anonymous men as their fellow elder! *συμ + πρεσβύτερος* (1 Peter 5:1) is more than tacit evidence but a simple and direct admission by the apostle Peter of the abstract and material linkage between his office and that of the New Testament *Predigtamt*. Confer also Romans 10:15, "And how can they preach unless they are sent (*ἀποστάλωσιν*)?" "Apostle," too, looks pregnant with linkage.

<sup>19</sup> For example, St. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians: "We have confidence in the Lord that you are doing and will continue to do the things we command" (2 Thessalonians 3:4); or to Timothy: "Command and teach these things" (1 Timothy 4:11). And when Peter saw Gentiles converted: "He ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 10:48). And our Lord said: "Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me" (John 14:21).

<sup>20</sup> Apology of the Augsburg Confession. Article 28. "Of Ecclesiastical Power" (*Triglotta*, 447).

<sup>21</sup> Apology of the Augsburg Confession. Article 28. "Of Ecclesiastical Power" (*Triglotta*, 315).

<sup>22</sup> See "*Predigt am Tage Bartholomäi, des Apostels*," SL XIIIa 1239-1241.

<sup>23</sup> See "*Predigt am zehnten Sonntage nach Trinitatis*," SL XII, 828-830.

pretty much works out the same in the end. Nonetheless we hold our semantics dear, for none of us are in this for personal glory but to cure souls and to advance God's gracious reputation by faithful use of Word and sacraments; that's the equalizer.

More to the point, I think the question put to me is too pinched, and I will answer by asking, "Does not the minister who is called to oversee the entire parish have the authority to overrule anyone who digresses from sound doctrine and practice?" The pastor's call says he can and must; he is the *ἐπίσκοπος* (overseer, bishop), and his is the *ἐπισκοπή* (oversight). [See Illustration B in the endnotes] This is not a surveillance assignment to minute the affairs of the parish from a rocking chair but a call to action. The parish authorizes him to "establish and maintain sound Lutheran practice at all times." This means exactly what it says.

The establishment and maintenance clause of the pastoral call, however, is the source of many a disagreement between pastor and principal, pastor and teacher, pastor and vicar, pastor and laymen, and pastor and board. How can it be otherwise? Our doctrine in print makes good reading. But when life invites us to paste a page not on paper tigers but to real people, we find the practice of religion sticky. The difficulties of applying doctrine to practice only compound themselves the more people are teamed together in a collective effort to teach and lead others in the ways of gospel and God, namely, the church staff. Two minds and two consciences do not always behave alike, yet one is called to make the final determination of practice. The pastor, consequently, will invoke the Word where it is applicable, for that is the fount of authority, which in turn will challenge those covered by his oversight to respect his decisions, yes, to obey and to yield (Hebrews 13:17).

For example, one December the school was practicing their Christmas program in church, and I chanced to walk by on my way to see my secretary. I eavesdropped and enjoyed the sweet sounds. Then I saw a sight which froze my blood.

The door of my sacristy opened, and I saw an eighth grade girl enter and mount my pulpit and deliver her lines from it. You could have driven a truck through my open mouth.

Maybe you do not mind the prospect of girls standing in your pulpit during a divine service, but I am sure that it would still give me a prickly sensation. My pulpit is an impressive piece of furniture, not a few sticks thrown together and topped over with a plastic lid; mine is a manly platform. People are used to seeing men in it, and I thought to myself looking at that girl standing so sweet, gee, that looks awful. What are people going to think? Has the synod gone modern? You know what I mean.

When a lull in the action permitted it, I explained to the teacher that people, however strange the logic, might be given to wonder a bit about our position on suffrage, if suddenly during the service a girl would pop out of the pulpit, like a Jane in the box. The state of my stomach told me that it was just plain, bad practice, and I explained as best I could, alluding to our doctrine, and pointing out this practice might look contradictory. And, I asked the teacher to use the lectern, which had always been the customary place for recitations (which did not seem to look so bad).

Now, I knew that the teacher was not in full agreement with my concerns. I could tell that by the way she rolled her eyes and gushed a huge sigh. But – she cooperated. That was the nice thing. She respected my call of oversight and my right to make such decisions, even as it touched what for her mind was just a matter of staging, but which for me was a case of theology. She let me do my job.

In extending the call to a man or woman the parish charges the LES teacher to "submit to the supervision of the pastor and others who are responsible for the conduct of the school..."



This too means exactly what it says. Certainly, as this speaks indirectly of the pastor's oversight and responsibilities to the entire flock, so it directly instructs the teacher to submit ("to yield to governance or authority") to another's supervision ("the action, process, or occupation of supervising especially: a critical watching and directing as of activities or a course of action").<sup>24</sup> The teacher submits to the oversight of the principal as both submit to the oversight of the pastor.

In this case of the pastor's supervisory authority, I must stress that I am still referring to doctrine and the practice thereof. I am very hesitant to apply this pastoral authority to every nook and cranny of the elementary branches of instruction and to presume to critiquing teaching itself. We pastors need to practice extreme caution in this area, and I fear that this is one area where teachers' complaints of pastoral meddling are justified. Teachers take it hard when their pastors criticize them. Therefore pastors need to be selective when they fault a teacher for doing something wrong.

What do you do, for example, when you hear that a boy on the last day of school smashed a cookie to smithereens in the classroom? ...whereupon the teacher exploded and assigned him a sentence to write 500 times which, after you learn he has been hard at it for an hour, after all the other children have left you figure will take him 4 more hours. You might want to let the parents and the teacher handle most such situations. I did. I went over to school sheepishly and as a father appealed to the teacher for my boy to ask if she would make the sentence fit the crime; she relented.

We pastors will want to defer to teachers to teach, to trust them, to affirm them, and to keep our noses out of their business, leaving the critiquing mainly to those whose specific charge is to run the school (the principal and the board) unless we are invited, so to speak, to twitch, sniff, or otherwise flare our nostrils...

...except in matters of doctrine or the practice thereof. Teachers, in this case, must expect pastors to have a nose for the game when it is up, no matter where the scent leads them. If you want the quarry flushed, then you cannot keep the bird-dog tethered.

It is to the interest of all who occupy a part in the *Predigtamt* that the parish authorize her shepherd to have the final say, where it matters most: true doctrine. The practice of doctrine is not a matter of democracy, but rather, "Thus saith the LORD." Yes, I know there are gray areas, but you also know what I mean. Someone must hold the flock to true religion, and if not its pastor, who? Why have a shepherd? A pastorate that has been reduced and stripped of any real authority to tell this one, "Go, and he goeth," or this one, "Come; and he cometh," in the practice of doctrine will suit some who feel less threatened by a church filled with people who do their own thing (a.k.a. "lay pastors") and are answerable finally only to themselves or to their special interest groups and with a pastor who makes spot appearances as the resident visionary, a sugar daddy in clerical disguise.<sup>25</sup> But that's about as satisfying as reaching for a bag of *M&Ms* with peanuts and discovering, one after the other, that they are chocolate covered marshmallows.

Submission, therefore, among equals for the greater good of the flock is nothing to resent, nor should teachers think themselves ill-used when a pastor presses a practical point of doctrine over their objections or disagreement. Here again I urge balance, saying that togetherness grows tighter when called workers understand that submission finally is only an incidental factor in the overriding concern of the pastor's call to devote himself to the "general advancement of the

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<sup>24</sup> *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, Massachusetts: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1977).

<sup>25</sup> For a good look into the mind of the current form of anti-clergism, see Carl F. George, *Prepare Your Church for the Future* (Grand Rapids: Revell, 1991). You will be amazed how bad it is.

kingdom of Christ” among all the various groups which comprise his flock – a charge that the parish, which is not so coincidental, gives likewise to its teacher, “to do everything within the limits of your call for the general advancement of the Kingdom of Christ.”

**Statement seven** Pastors and teachers are creatures of their environments.

“Better relations between pastors and teachers, and better stewardship of our money.”

A high ranking synodical official answered me so, when I asked him crudely about the amalgamation: “After we have destroyed traditions, upset people, and moved hundreds of bodies, what will we have hoped to accomplish?”

I hope both happen. I can see the latter happening, better stewardship, if the arithmetic adds up. But, on the first count, I am a betting man, and I will give you 2 to 1 odds that the only relations which will improve measurably over the course of time will be the rise of marriages between pastors and teachers.

This is my way of illustrating that the great many things which challenge the togetherness of pastors and teachers, I believe, are produced by on-the-job factors, and not the lack of fraternization during school days; these factors will always remain site related, as I have been illustrating all along, and as I will now make an end of with observations on the work environments.

“Pastors are pastors, and teachers are teachers,” said the former principal of our school in Racine. He was commenting to members of the board on the different approach he and I had taken on a problem in the school. I do not remember what the problem was, but I will never forget his observation. He spoke in jest, and he was poking fun at the two of us in a good-natured way, and I did not disagree with him. We both knew that it was true, to a point. Pastors are pastors, and teachers are teachers. There are differences between the two that will never go away, because they are created by the characteristic environments in which both groups work, which also in a sense make the two victims of circumstances.

In the first case, pastors are called to oversee all the interests of the parish. Teachers are called to one specific interest of the parish. Immediately you have endless possibilities for tension and misunderstandings in this formula between the generalist and the specialist.

The tendency for the teacher is to see all the other activities, societies, and agencies of the parish orbiting around the school, or his classroom. This perception can only grow as the budget to run the school grows. The Sunday School, the elders, the Bible classes, the Ladies Aid, the youth group, the Pioneers, the Altar guild, etc., are secondary to him, as well they should, because the call limits the teacher to his children and classroom – that is his great love. So the call, of necessity, narrows the field of the teacher’s duties, and in the process also narrows the focus of his attentions. This is not a negative except where the teacher expects the same spirit of the pastor. As a generalist the pastor has many loves. Recognize then the tough spot to which we call our teachers, when we asked them to specialize and give their all, and then also ask them to “do everything within the limits of your call for the general advancement of the kingdom of Christ.” It is hard to keep one’s perspective always. I know. I am getting farsighted and need glasses. I can still read without help when I want to, but when I do, and after I have been squinting hard for a while, it takes a while for my eyes to refocus when I look up at the big picture. Things are blurry, then they clear up. In the same way pastors can be understanding of the teachers’ condition when it appears from time to time that from they do not see things his way.

The flip side to this condition happens when the pastor sees things so farsighted, that the school wonders if he has any time or energy to focus on them. I am guilty of this. In 14 years at Racine I attended one faculty meeting. I did not sit in because I did not want to meddle or give the impression, and frankly I have enough meetings to attend. The thing is, I never bothered to tell any of the teachers or the principal why I failed to attend their meetings. I thought I was giving them space, not imagining how my benign neglect could be construed. But then last fall I was surprised to discover in the course of a conversation that my presence would be welcome. So I went. I listened, I contributed nothing, but the teachers seem a bit happier with me. I will probably attend more.

And finally, this condition, admittedly rare and weird, can happen wherever you have specialists and generalists. That is where pastor and teacher, because of dissatisfaction with each other's performance, try to do each other's job.

What else makes pastors pastors, and teachers teachers?

If there exists one huge difference between pastors and teachers which will never go away, and is to no one's fault, I firmly believe you will find it in this condition which I have saved for the end. Pastors and teachers work in two different worlds, and their worlds create and shape spirits, methods, attitudes, and approaches to the way they characteristically handle problems and people.

Pastors are accustomed to working in an adult's world; teachers are accustomed to working in a child's world. There it is. This can affect many areas, but I will give one illustration.

It may come as a great shock to the pastor to read a teacher's mind and discover that, not only does the teacher view him coming down the hallway as the sometime heavy (as in authoritarian figure), but in the same thought, as the Rev. Wishy Washy... with whose policies he does not always find himself in agreement. How can this be? Permit me to generalize.

Teachers must control a classroom six hours a day, five days a week. Teachers must control children with rules, rules, and more rules. Teachers are disciplinarians, but pastors are not.

In the process, can you see how solving problems and coming to resolutions in the child's world can also shape that person's approach to the way others who work in a different world should solve and resolve their problems? and how one might tend to view unsympathetically the way others are doing their job? 3 demerits equals 1 detention. 2 detentions equals 1 suspension. 2 suspensions equals expulsion. School yard procedures. Very black. Very white.

Pastors on the other hand live in a shadowy world of grays. Adults make it so. You cannot treat adults in the same manner as their children. Dealing with adults and coming to resolutions take much more time, and there are few rules. Consequently pastors generally are in less of a rush, yes, to deal with parishioners. Can you see how working in the adult's world shapes his approach? Can you see how working in this world can also affect the way he may unsympathetically size up the way others, working under a different set of circumstances, go about their problem solving and the way they handle individuals?

The teacher sees the pastor handling church matters not with the same speed or reaction with which he is accustomed to do things in his classroom. What the pastor thinks is patience, the teacher perceives as laxness or indecisiveness. And maybe it is so, but working with adults slows him down and makes him hesitant at times, yes, even turns him gun shy from past bad experiences.

The pastor sees the teacher handling children in a way he is not used to with adults. What the teacher thinks is just and fair, the pastor perceives as too reactionary or strict. And maybe so, but working with a classroom of children saps energy and patience, and quick solutions often become the only solutions.

Pastor and teacher each own unique and unchanging circumstances. May we understand and respect one another's workplace, as we support and pray for each other in carrying out the gospel ministry through Word, through sacraments, through the keys, for the good of sinners, to the glory of God. This ministry, this *Predigtamt*, is most valuable, the most critical of all human endeavors.

*Soli Deo Gloria*

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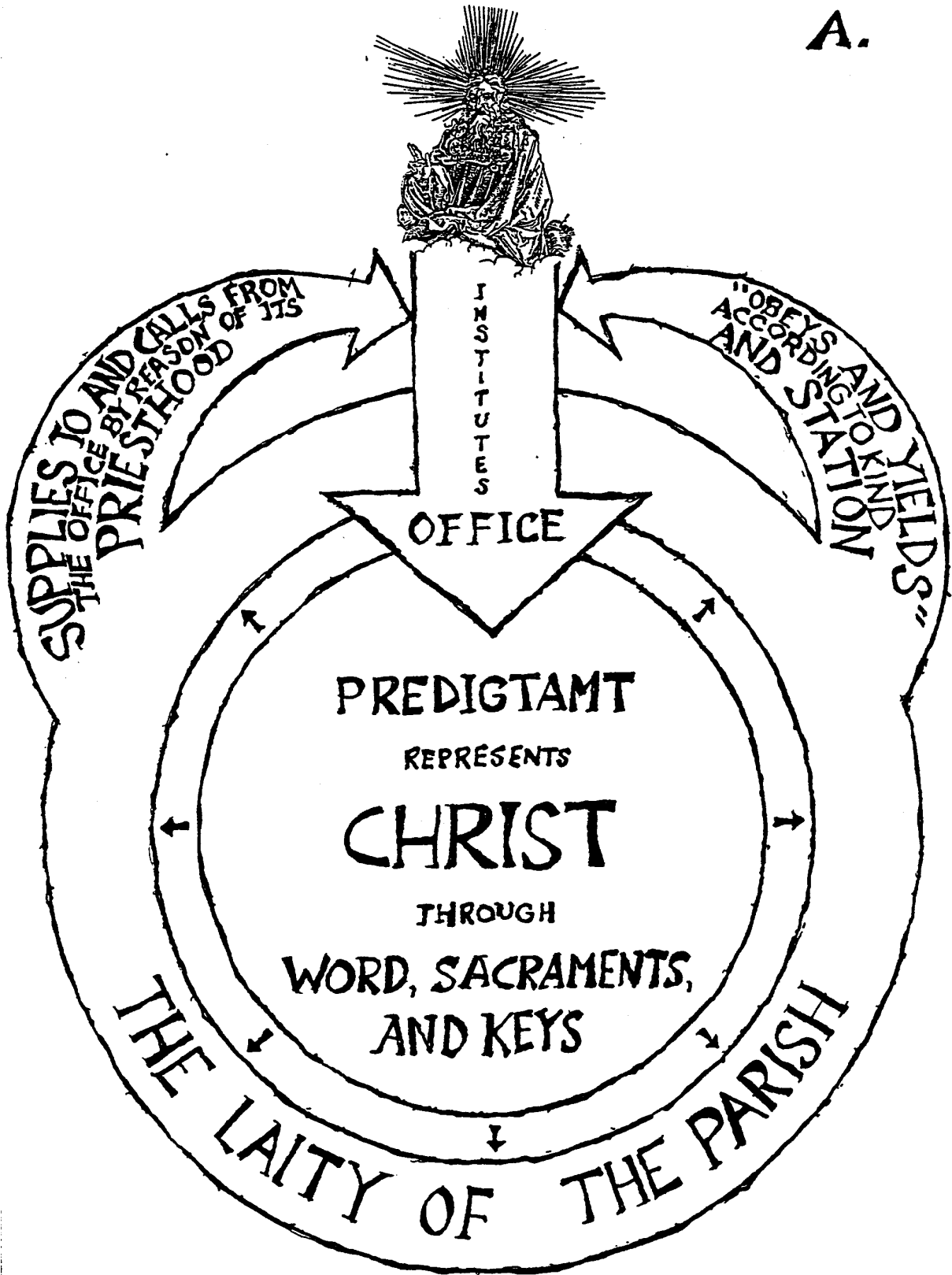
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