

# THEOLOGICAL AXIOMS

## PART IV

### Assembled by C. F. W. Walther

*Translated from the German  
by Christopher S. Doerr*

#### Preface

**A**s part of our Walther Bicentennial observation we are publishing what we believe to be the first English translation of Walther's *Theological Axioms*. The first installment appeared in the Winter 2011 issue.

These axioms were not written by Walther but were collected by him as part of his preparation for teaching his dogmatics class, which he taught in Latin on the basis of a Latin text. These axioms therefore provide insight into Walther's teaching methodology and into the points which he emphasized in his class

This collection of axioms reminds the reader of the book of Proverbs. The axioms are best taken in small doses. Readers might want to read and ponder only one section of axioms at a sitting. Each saying is thought-provoking. The student must chew on them and digest them. Each statement presents only one side of a complex question. Statements are often supplemented by their neighbors.

The axioms are intended to lead readers into Scripture. They do not have independent validity. They flow from a study of Scripture. A correct understanding of the axioms depends on a knowledge of Scripture, not vice versa.

The axioms may form a basis for theological reflection and for discussion by pastors' study groups. As Walther concludes, "We leave it up to the readers themselves to weigh their rich and important meanings in their minds." (And, we would add, also their limitations.)

#### **XXI. About the Church and Doctrines Related to It**

1. Outside of the church there is no salvation. (Gerhard)
2. Whoever does not have the church on earth for a mother does not have God in heaven for a Father. (Kromayer)
3. The Christian church is properly speaking nothing other than the assembly of all believers and saints. (Augsburg Confession)

4. God be praised, even a child seven years old knows what the church is: namely, the holy believers, the lambs who hear their Shepherd's voice. For so the children say in their prayers, "I believe in the holy Christian church." (Smalcald Articles)
5. Christ clearly says that the good seed is the children of the kingdom, the weeds are the children of the devil, and the field is the world, not the church. (Apology)
6. Therefore we make a correct confession in the Creed, when we say, "We believe in the holy Christian church," for it is invisible and lives in a place no one can come to. (Luther)
7. So the holy church of Christ says, "I believe in the holy Christian church," and then the mad church of the Pope says, "I see the holy Christian church." (Luther)
8. When we say that the church is invisible, it is not because we want to prove that the church was preserved under the papacy, for we say that the true, holy, and worldwide<sup>1</sup> church is always invisible, even now at this time, when the rekindled light of the gospel shines its brightest in many realms and provinces. (Gerhard)
9. When Christ says that the kingdom of heaven is like a net or like the ten virgins, he does not intend to say that the evil are members of the church, but to teach how the church is seen in this world. Therefore he says it is "like" (*simile*, similar to) these things. In other words, just as in a pile of fish the good and the bad lie there all mixed together, so the church is here hidden among the great mass and multitude of the godless. (Apology)
10. Wherever the name "church" is taken literally and used specifically for the worldwide church, it indicates the invisible assembly of the saints and the genuine believers, since the true members of the worldwide church are nothing other than the genuine believers and saints. (Quenstedt)
11. As a person consists of two natures, body and soul, so he is not considered a limb in the body of Christianity according to his body, but according to his soul, yes, according to his faith. For if Christianity were a bodily assembly, then you could look at someone's body to see if they were Christian, Turk, or Jew, same as I can look at your body to see if you are man, woman, or child; black or white; etc. Again, as far as secular society I can see whether you are assembled with others in Wittenberg or Leipzig, here or there, but I cannot see at all whether you believe or not. Therefore you have a firm grasp on this and will not err if you say

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<sup>1</sup>The translation "worldwide" is used for "catholic" throughout.

that Christianity is a spiritual assembly of souls that have one faith and if you do not count anyone a Christian on account of his body. (Luther)

12. It is manifest that Christianity (*Christenheit*) is a spiritual community, which you may not number among secular communities any more than you number spirits among bodies or faith among the temporal gifts. (Luther)
13. We see the assembly of people that is the church, but we do not see whether a particular person is part of the church. (Quenstedt)
14. You must not look for any who have been elected apart from the crowd of those who have been called. (Quenstedt)
15. That the congregations of genuine believers and saints which actually make up the church militant on earth have mixed together with them in all places those who are not saved, that is sinners, secret and manifest, is too well-known to require any proof. (J. Musaeus)
16. A thing gets its name according to its main ingredient.
17. Scripture speaks of the church in different ways: first, in a common and customary way, synecdochically,<sup>2</sup> so that it understands this name to refer to the whole crowd of those who have been called; second, in its narrow, literal, and original sense, counting out of that whole crowd only those who have been chosen, the saints. (Gerhard)
18. You must not look for an invisible church apart from the visible church; rather, the former is included within the latter. (Quenstedt)
19. There is no visible local church in which the invisible church does not lie hidden. (Dannhauer)
20. We do not make a double church, one holy and the other commingled; rather, we are only saying that we make a distinction between the homonymous<sup>3</sup> uses of the name “church,” sometimes for the assembly of believers, and other times for the assembly in which believers are found to have hypocrites mixed in with them. (Calov)
21. That crowd in which the church is can for sure be seen and discerned and pointed out with your finger, namely where the word is taught and the sacraments distributed according to Christ’s command. But that crowd which actually is the church, that is,

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<sup>2</sup>That is, Scripture gives the name “church” to the whole crowd, although it properly belongs only to a portion, namely, those who believe Scripture.

<sup>3</sup>Homonymous is when two different ideas or things have the same name.

the congregation of believers and saints, is not visible and cannot be pointed out. (Calov)

22. The church is a greatly and deeply hidden thing, so that no one can recognize or see it. All you can do is lay hold of baptism, the sacrament, and the word and believe it is there. (Luther)
23. Just as you would know from the protruding ends of the poles, as marks of its certain presence, that the ark was in the holy of holies, although it was hidden from view, so also no one sees the church: they have to believe because the word is there as a mark of its presence. (Luther)
24. Through God's word the church is born, sustained, nurtured, and strengthened. (Augustine)
25. A group of people that consists of both hypocrites and genuine, upright believers is one thing. A group of people that has gotten hypocrites mixed in with it is another thing. The church, when referred to literally, is not a group that consists of hypocrites and unsaved people, but a group that has gotten hypocrites and unsaved people mixed in with it. (Carpzov)
26. Hypocrites are for sure not members of the invisible church, not even members of the true visible church, but are members of the visible church insofar as it is combined with other components and makes up a whole: like the weed is no part of the wheat field *per se*, but it is part of the field as a whole, consisting of wheat and weeds. (Dannhauer)
27. Although hypocrites are in the crowd that *contains* the church, they are not actually in the crowd that *is* the church. (Calov)
28. The godless and hypocrites can for sure be called *parts* of the true church, but by no means *members* of it. (Quenstedt)
29. They would argue about the church: "church" includes godless people who are in the ministry. They argue about this, so that the promises meant for the church would apply to them. (Luther)
30. The godless are *in* the church, not *of* it: they are in it according to number, not merit. (Augustine)
31. Catechumens who have the true faith are true members of the church. (Quenstedt)
32. The unjustly excommunicated do not cease to be members of the worldwide church, even when they are thrown out of a visible, local church. (Quenstedt)
33. It is for sure correct to say that an excommunicated person who has repented and dies before receiving public absolution is truly a member of the church. (Quenstedt)

34. When you call the *pure* preaching of the word and the *correct* distribution of the sacraments “marks of the church,” then you are considering the church in pure, corruption-free conditions, in comparison not only to secular communities, but also to a corrupt and impure church. That this is a proper comparison to make becomes apparent from the fact that definitions, rules, and laws have to be taken from what is *ideal*, as well as from the fact that corrupt churches have to be reformed, renewed, and purified according to the norm and form of purer and clearer doctrine. (Gerhard)<sup>4</sup>
35. As the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments are the marks of the church, if you want to speak in an unconditional and unqualified way; so the pure preaching of the word and the correct administration of the sacraments are the marks of the pure, corruption-free church. As the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments distinguish the church from secular communities that are outside of the church, so through the pure preaching of the word and the correct administration of the sacraments it distinguishes itself from heretical communities that are inside the church. (Gerhard)
36. The true church is contrasted with false churches either in a way that excludes them, that is, they are non-churches or such that overturn the very essence of baptism and the whole religion; or in a way that withdraws from them, that is, they are churches that don’t believe correctly. In the latter sense, a church that is guilty of only partial apostasy is no true church, on account of the adulteration of the religion; rather it is a false church, that is, a corrupted and impure one. With regard to the first way of contrasting them, we concede that such a church is a true church. (Gerhard)
37. The more purely and clearly the word of God is preached in a church, the nearer the preaching and doctrine come to the norm of Holy Scripture, the more pure and clear the church will be. But the further they depart from the standard of the word, the condition of the church will be all the more impure and corrupt. Through such corruption they for sure do not cease to be a church, since we have shown that God begets and preserves for himself a holy seed and spiritual sons, even when the public office of the visible church is corrupt. (Gerhard)
38. Generally, wherever baptism is administered in a true and unmitigated way, it is the washing of rebirth and renewal, since that is how baptism is defined by the apostle in Tit. 3:5, and salvation is

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<sup>4</sup>Gerhard here acknowledges that even orthodox churches may not be entirely pure in doctrine in all their members all the time, as he explains in the following points.

also offered to those baptized, since it is said by God in 1 Pet. 3:21<sup>5</sup> that he saves us through baptism. But now no rebirth happens outside the church and outside the church there is no salvation. So everywhere that baptism is administered is a church of Christ. (Gerhard)

39. Some do not distinguish between erring and remaining in error. Erring does not harm the church, but it is impossible for the Church to remain in error, as Christ says in Mt. 24:23 that men would lead even the elect into error—"if that were possible." (Luther)
40. How else should you distinguish between the actual church of Christ and the devil's church, besides by their obedience or disobedience toward Christ, especially when the disobedience is publicly recognized and understood, excusing itself frivolously and freely and expecting to be considered proper. For the holy church does a fine job of sinning and struggling with error, as we learn from the Lord's Prayer, but does not defend or excuse itself, rather humbly prays for forgiveness, and improves itself however it can. And it is forgiven, so that its sin is no longer reckoned as sin. Now if this obedience and hardened disobedience isn't enough to show and distinguish for me which is the actual church and which the false, I don't know what to say about any church at all. (Luther)
41. Those words, "schism" and "faction,"<sup>6</sup> if you bear in mind the biblical usage, are related to one another as the broader and the narrower term. For in Scripture a "schism" means every separation, whether it happens because of an article of faith or a ceremony. But according to how Scripture says it, a "faction" means a sect that has erred in one of the chief articles of the Christian faith. (Calov)
42. The Holy Spirit did not prophesy in 1 Co. 3:12 secretly or weakly, but publicly and powerfully, that now and then in the holy church there would be builders, that is, teachers, who use wood, straw, and hay and nevertheless remain on the groundwork or foundation, receive harm indeed in the fire, but must be saved for all that. You must not understand this as talking about the heretics. They lay a different groundwork. But those in the passage remain on the groundwork, that is, keep their faith in Christ, are saved, and are called God's saints; even though they have hay, straw, wood that has to be burned up by the fire of Holy Scripture, but without harm to their salvation, as St. Augustine says of himself,

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<sup>5</sup>Walther has 3:2.

<sup>6</sup>The German words are "Spaltung" and "Rotte," the Latin "schism" and "haeresis."

*Errare potero, haereticus non ero*—I may err, but I will not become a heretic. The reason being, a heretic not only errs, but also refuses to be corrected, excuses his error as correct, and strives against what he has already perceived to be true and against his own conscience. St. Paul says of such people in Tit. 3:10-11 that you should separate from a heretic once he has been warned once or twice and you should know that he is warped and sins *autocatacritos*, that is, he is headstrong and knowingly intends to remain condemned in error. But St. Augustine gladly confessed his errors and let others tell him what they were. Therefore he was no heretic even though he erred. That is what all other saints do too, gladly giving away their hay and straw to be burned up, and so they remain on the groundwork of salvation. Thus we also have done and still do. (Luther *On Councils and Churches*)

43. More often than not, the ears of the hearers are purer than the lips of their teacher. (Jerome)
44. This is why the church is holy everywhere, even in places where those in charge put their faith in their feelings or are factious spirits, so long as they of course do not deny and throw away the word and sacrament. For those who totally deny these things are no longer the church. But where the word and sacrament are in essence still present, a holy church is also still present, and it doesn't matter even if the antichrist himself is in charge—he does not sit in a devil's sty or in a pigpen or in a crowd of unbelievers, but namely “in God's temple,” 2 Th. 2:4. From this, then, it is certain and evident that God's temple must exist and remain even under the spiritual tyrants who rule and rave within it. Yes, for everywhere under these same tyrants you find those who believe correctly and so on. Therefore you can give a short and simple answer to this question: the church is everywhere in the whole world that the gospel and sacraments are. But Jews, Muslims, those who put their faith in their feelings, and factious spirits or heretics are not the church, for they deny and destroy such things. (Luther on Gal. 1:1)
45. If indeed we must confess that those who put their faith in their feelings have the Scripture and God's Word in the other articles of faith, although they are unholy heretics and they blaspheme Christ, those who hear the word from them and believe it will be saved. (Luther *On the Anabaptists*)
46. It is true, I confess, that the church in which they (the papists) sit comes from the ancient church just as much as we do and has just the same baptism, also the sacraments, keys, and Bible- and gospel-text. You will boast still more and confess that we have



received everything from the church that is among you (not from you). What more do you want? Aren't we pious enough? We know that we should not consider you Muslims or Jews (as we said above) who are outside the church, but we say that you have not stayed a part of the church. You have become the gone-astray, renegade, prostituted church (as the prophets used to call it), which was born and begotten of the church but does not remain in it. (Luther *Against Hans Worst*)

47. The pious people that stay in a false and heretical church can also be called part of that church because they live in outward fellowship with it. (Quenstedt)
48. The more wolves there are within, the more sheep without! (Augustine)<sup>7</sup>
49. We concede that our (Lutheran) church is a local church (*Particularkirche*), but we do not say it is the only true church. (Carpzov)
50. While, as far as visible assemblies are concerned, there may never be another one as pure and free from doctrinal blemishes as the Lutheran, we for sure do not deny that there are other local churches in which the true church in reality is present, as far as upright members who are only known to God are concerned and who lie hidden among other visible groups that are indeed also impure. (ibid)
51. Nor through the Reformation have we separated ourselves from the Roman church, rather we have only done away with the evil that clung to that church, namely the papacy. (ibid)
52. You should distinguish between what is still left over in the Roman religion from the worldwide church and what is papist and is due to the papacy. (Calov)
53. We are not opposed to it when the church of the Romanists is given the name "catholic" insofar as it teaches some of the chief parts of the faith and uses the sacraments in part, with the remaining genuine believers who are everywhere present, but not because it is catholic with regard to an undamaged faith that accords with Holy Scripture. (ibid)
54. God preserves his saints even in the midst of error. (Luther)
55. While an error may persist for a hundred years, that doesn't give it validity for a moment.
56. Antiquity without truth is nothing other than ancient error. (Cyprian)

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<sup>7</sup>The greater the number of false teachers in a church, the more people that will be lost through false belief.



57. It is just as vain to boast that the church fathers are on your side and then use them to pass judgment on the truth as it is to use Belial as an authority for passing judgment on the rights of heaven.<sup>8</sup> (Dannhauer)
58. Whoever does not have the faith of Peter does not have the inheritance of Peter. (Ambrose)
59. After one group or another of the called has defiled itself with heresy or broken away from the rest through schism, that doesn't mean that you can now point to that remnant which they left behind as the one worldwide church,<sup>9</sup> outside of which there are no genuine believers or saints and no salvation. Even apart from that remnant the word of God and baptism can and do exist, whereby faith and salvation are distributed to human beings. (Baier)<sup>10</sup>
60. A group full of bishops' and cardinals' hats is not called the Christian church. It may well be called a council or a council may come out of it, but not a Christian church. For the church cannot be gathered all into one group, but is scattered through all the world. (Luther)
61. You must distinguish between two entrances into the church. The first is the spatial and apparent entrance into a local church through the outward confession of faith. The other is the spiritual entrance, hidden to the general church, through the inner assent of the heart. Even when instead of the former there is a time of persecution and prevailing falsification, the latter is for sure always in the church. (Quenstedt)
62. O blessed schism, through which one is united with Christ and the true universal church! (Gerhard)<sup>11</sup>
63. We do not deny that the title "the catholic church" in a broader sense reaches out to include the whole crowd of all people who have been correctly baptized. (Aeg. Hunnius)
64. The correct doctrine and church are often so totally suppressed and lost, as happened under the papacy, that it seems there is no church and it has gone to ruin. (Apology of the Augsburg Confession)

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<sup>8</sup>Word for Word: It is vain to boast of oneself with the ancients so that the truth is judged by them, like the right of heaven [being judged] by Belial.

<sup>9</sup>WFW: then the rest do not constitute that one catholic church . . .

<sup>10</sup>Members of the true invisible church may be found even in the heretical faction that left the orthodox church.

<sup>11</sup>The Lutherans had to leave the Roman Catholic church to remain faithful to the true Church.

65. It can happen and God has foretold that it will happen that for a time no part of the church is visible, that is, that the visible church completely ceases to be. (Baier)
66. The worldwide church does not cease to be. (Kromayer)
67. The worldwide, invisible church, which has lasted from the beginning of the world and will last to the end of the world, has neither erred all at once in the fundamentals of the faith nor does it err nor can it cease to be or get exterminated. (Quenstedt)
68. Even though at times corruption seizes the whole visible church and its public ministerium in every local church in every place, so that no unadulterated and pure preaching ministry is left, nevertheless the whole church is never in error, so that there would not be any people who simply follow where the word leads them, being sanctified by the reigning and powerful working of the Holy Spirit and by faith. They retain the groundwork of salvation, remain undefiled by destructive errors, and through God's power are preserved by faith unto salvation, although at times they are few and are so hidden by public frenzies of persecution and falsification that they become unheard of by the public and the world.<sup>12</sup> (Gerhard)
69. Insofar as the church follows the word, it is reigned over by the Holy Spirit and it does not err. (Gerhard)
70. It is not God's word because the church says it, rather because God's word is spoken there it becomes the church. The church does not make the word, rather from the word it arises. (Luther)
71. The true church gives orders regarding adiaphora, not that they would be done or omitted on account of its commands, but only on account of the preservation of order and decency: so long as the latter are not harmed, the church leaves the conscience free and neither has scruples over its orders nor imposes them as necessary. (Gerhard)
72. This is enough for the true unity of the Christian church: that it enjoys the harmony of preaching according to the pure understanding of the gospel and of distributing the sacraments in line with God's word. It is not necessary for true unity in the Christian church that uniform ceremonies instituted by men are everywhere retained. (Augsburg Confession)
73. Dissimilarity in fasting should not undo the unity of the faith. (Formula of Concord)

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<sup>12</sup>WFW: publicly unheard of by the world.

74. Now some clever little fellows are happy to start patching everything up. They want give advice here and settle the quarrel. They say the men on both sides should compromise and give in. Indeed we will let them try and do what they can. They are well worthy of the trouble. But if they can make the devil pious and one with Christ, they will be the first. I, however, consider such patching-up work to be the same as patching together potsherds (as Jesus Sirach 22:7 says). Indeed there have been many such shoemakers, who have undertaken to do the same, but their work has been for nothing and they have lost both the thread and the stitching. (Luther)
75. But someone goodhearted (as they call it) would like to say, "What harm will it do then, if you hold onto God's word and yet allow these other (erroneous) pieces all to remain alongside it, or as many as would unfortunately remain?" I answer: They may be called goodhearted people, but they are erring-hearted and led astray people. Sure, your life can be sin and unrighteousness—yes, it is sadly far too unrighteous—but your doctrine must be straight as a string and certain, without any sin. Therefore there must be nothing preached in the church besides the certain, pure, and united word of God alone. Where that is missing, it is no longer the church, but the devil's school. (Luther)
76. You do well and are correct when you say that the church cannot err, for God's word which the church teaches cannot err. Whatever else is taught, or whatever is in doubt as to whether it is God's word, cannot be the teaching of the church, but must be the devil's teaching, lies, and idolatry. (Luther)
77. The use of the sacraments is a mark of confession and doctrine. Therefore whoever does not acknowledge as true the doctrine of that church where he wants to take the sacrament also cannot take the sacrament in that church with an unharmed conscience. (Balduin)
78. He who would be divided from the Christians cannot be united with Christ. (Augustine)
79. The discord that originates on account of godliness is better than a sinful accord. (Gregory Nazianzus)
80. All heresies arise from overweening ambition. (Luther)
81. Whoever does not believe Christ, has faith in Christ much less. (Selnecker)
82. There is one truth, but many lies. (Gregory Nazianzus)
83. If you are in Rome, live according to Roman custom: if you are somewhere else, then live how the custom is there. (Melanchthon)

84. Ceremonies are subject to us, not we to them. (Luther)
85. When an order ends up being misused, it is no longer an order, but a disorder. (Luther)
86. The state is not in the church, rather the church is in the state. (Brenz)
87. The church's weapons are prayer and tears.
88. The church does not thirst for blood.
89. The church was founded in blood, began with bloodshed, grew through blood, and with bloodshed will come to an end.
90. The truth is to be expressed, not suppressed.
91. As often as you mow us down, more of us will grow, and the blood of the Christians will be the seed. (Tertullian)
92. If a church is a true church, then it is the church that suffers persecution, not the church that causes it. (Augustine)
93. The church does not pass judgment on that which is still not public.

### **XXII. About the Holy Preaching Office and Doctrines Related to It**

1. God has marshaled three ranks (*Stand, ordo*) in this world against the devil and his supporters: namely, the household rank, the governmental, and the teaching rank. (Luther)
2. The household ranks serve for the increase of the human race, the civic ranks for the defense of it, and the ecclesiastical ranks for the promotion of eternal salvation. (Gerhard)
3. God has set up the household ranks to stand in the way of unbridled lust, the civic ranks in the way of tyranny and robbery, and the ecclesiastical ranks in the way of heresies and the perversion of doctrine. (Gerhard)
4. You have the office of humble prayer, you of protection, and you of labor.<sup>13</sup>
5. To have an office is to have both the right and the duty to do this or that. (Kromayer)
6. You can deal with the preaching office in two ways: 1. in the abstract, insofar as the rank and office itself is subject to Christian consideration (and in this respect it is dealt with in the fifth article of the Augsburg Confession, about the preaching office);

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<sup>13</sup>Namely, the church, the state, and the family.

2. in the concrete, or in view of the person found in this holy office (and so it is dealt with in the fourteenth article of the Augsburg Confession, on this topic). (Ludwig Hartmann)<sup>14</sup>
7. The word through which we are called is an office of the Spirit: the Spirit gives it or through it the Spirit is given. (Formula of Concord)<sup>15</sup>
8. The keys are nothing other than the office through which the promise of the gospel is distributed to everyone who desires it. (Smalcald Articles)
9. You must forever confess that the keys belong and have been given to the whole church, not to one man alone. (Smalcald Articles)
10. Speaking of the keys, Christ adds, “if two of you on earth agree,” etc.: hence he originally grants the keys to the church and they don’t need to get them through a middleman.<sup>16</sup> (Smalcald Articles)
11. Just as the promise of the gospel certainly belongs to the whole church without them needing a middleman,<sup>17</sup> so the keys belong to the whole church without a middleman. (Smalcald Articles)
12. The church is a holy community through the ecclesiastical rights and offices that she possesses without needing a middleman to get them and without anyone being able to separate them from her. (Dannhauer)
13. The power of the keys is rooted in the church and it can be propagated without interruption if the pastors die or turn into wolves and the sons of Levi have defiled themselves. (Dannhauer)
14. Now the preaching office is not ever bound to a specific place or person the way the office was bound to the Levites in the law; rather it is strewn throughout the world and is in whatever place God gives his gifts. (Smalcald Articles)
15. The saying of Christ belongs here, which bears witness that the keys have been given to the whole church, not just to a few people, as the passage says, “where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.” (Smalcald Articles)

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<sup>14</sup>There is a Heinrich Ludwig Hartmann listed in McClintock and Strong’s *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical literature, Volume 12*, as having lived 1770-1831, serving as professor at the Grimma Gymnasium, and writing a commentary on the parable of the shrewd manager in Lu. 16. He is also called Louis.

<sup>15</sup>Accordingly then the *Ministerium ecclesiasticum* is plainly defined as the “*verbum praedicatum et auditum*,” as the preached and heard word. See the Epitome, Art. 12, Erroneous Articles of the Schwenkfelders.

<sup>16</sup>WFW: he originally and directly grants the keys to the whole church.

<sup>17</sup>WFW: without means.

16. All that belongs to the office belongs to the church.<sup>18</sup> (Menzer)
17. If the preachers do not carry out their office as they are obliged to or if they are not on hand, the office comes back again to the churches that had the right to confer it, just as when a fief-holder dies or forfeits the fief it all falls under the feudal lord's control again. (Heshusius)
18. So whoever is now a correctly-believing Christian and a living member of Christ has a part of and a just claim to the holy preaching office and to everything that belongs to the church's ministry. (Heshusius)
19. All of us together, as many of us as are Christians, share the power of the keys. (Luther)
20. (The papists say:) No doubt the church has a right to the keys and their power, but only the bishops can use them. That is careless talk and it falls to the ground all on its own. Christ gives the power and use of the keys to each and every Christian when he says, "treat him as you would a pagan." (Luther)
21. Christ, the leader of his house, that is the church, has given the keys to her, his bride, who then transfers them to her ministers. (Balduin)
22. Since all things should be shared by all Christians, . . . it is not one person's right to put himself forward and lay claim to what belongs to all of us. Go ahead, presume that you have this right and make use of it, so long as nobody else has received the same right. But when it is the congregation's right, the congregation has to choose and accept someone, or as many people as it pleases, to exercise these offices publicly in the stead and in the name of all who have that right, lest there be horrible disorder amid God's people and the church, where all things should happen decently and in order as the apostle taught, be turned into a Babylon. It is two different things when you exercise a shared right at the congregation's command or when you make use of it out of necessity. In a congregation, where the right belongs freely to everyone, no one should assume it for himself unless the whole congregation has willed and chosen him, but in necessity anyone who wants can make use of it. (Luther)
23. The right to teach and to administer the sacraments has its roots in the whole church, but the public exercise of that right belongs to the church's duly called ministers. Just as with the authority to teach, every member of the church, as well as the congregation as

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<sup>18</sup>WFW: The whole office is the church's.

a whole, possesses the keys, but only for applying them in private, not for use in public ceremony: that way no confusion arises to cause the church deplorable disruption. When you are assembled publicly, then the keys are only to be applied by those to whom the whole church has transferred their exercise and use through a public call. (Deyling)<sup>19</sup>

24. *Quemadmodum claves sub nomine Petri omnes accepere discipuli, ita sub nomine discipulorum tota ecclesia, quae per ordinarios verbi ministros hodie eas exercet; alias nulla esset peccata ligandi vel solvendi potestas in nostro ministerio.* (Balduin)<sup>20</sup>

25. All the citizens of a free imperial city, however many live in that city, have shared rights and the same freedoms, as far as the republic is concerned. Sure, for order's sake they choose a senate and set a mayor over it, entrusting to him the keys and laws of the city, which he wields in the name of all of them, and it is in their name that he rules the republic. That is also what the citizens of the city of God do. Indeed they have a fellowship with all the saints and everything is theirs. They possess everything under one head, Christ, who by the merit of his blood has gained for his church everything that is needed for salvation—gained it for each and every individual member of his church, even the least. Sure, for order's sake they choose specific people and commission them to administer the keys of heaven's kingdom: so we have deacons, pastors, doctors, bishops or superintendents, and the like, so that everything is done decently and in order among us in accord with the teaching of Paul. (Polycarp Leyser)

26. We stand fast on this, that there is no other word of God besides what all Christians have been commanded to proclaim; that there is no baptism other than that which all Christians can administer; that there is no remembrance of the Lord's Supper other than that which every Christian may celebrate, that which Christ instituted to be celebrated; also, no sin other than that which every Christian may bind and loose; again, we maintain that there is no sacrifice God wants other than the body of every Christian person; also no one can or may pray besides a Christian; and to that end, no one can judge doctrine besides a Christian. But these are all there is to the office of God's royal

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<sup>19</sup>This seems to be Salomo Deyling, 1677-1755, a Lutheran professor at the University of Leipzig, whose most important work was *Observations Sacrae*, according to Kitto's *Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature*, accessed online. The 1954 *Lutheran Cyclopedia*, however, says he was known for his *Institutiones Prudentiae Pastoralis*.

<sup>20</sup>Walther didn't give a German translation for this one. Is it because it is so similar to the next one?



priesthood.<sup>21</sup> Therefore let the papists either show us other offices of a priest or surrender the priesthood and cry bitterly for pardon. (Luther)

27. Although in our time good ministers of the church are Christ's vicars in his church militant, the appointment of ministers is part of his kingly office. (Valentin Alberti)<sup>22</sup>
28. Concerning church governance, it is taught that no one in the church should publicly teach or preach or distribute the sacrament without having been called in an orderly way to do so. (Augsburg Confession)
29. We have the sure teaching that the preaching office is derived from the apostles' common call. (Smalcald Articles)
30. The church has God's command that it should commission preachers and deacons. (Apology of the Augsburg Confession)
31. The new birth we received in baptism did not make one of us into an apostle, a preacher, a teacher, or a pastor (*Pfarrherr*), but made all of us only into priests and parsons (*Pfaff*): accordingly, from those who were parsons by birth they call and choose for such offices those who should carry them out on behalf of all of us. (Apology of the Augsburg Confession)
32. When the apostles first went and preached in unfamiliar houses, they had been commanded, called, and sent to preach in all places. But since then no one has that kind of general apostolic command anymore; rather, every pastor or bishop has a designated parish or benefice, which St. Peter then calls a "kleros," that is a portion, so that each one has received a command in regard to a portion of the people, as St. Paul also wrote to Titus. Within it, apart from his knowledge and permission, no other person or stranger should presume to teach those who are his children as pastor, whether he does it secretly or openly. If someone does, nobody should listen to him with either body or soul, but notify and report it to the pastor or authorities. You should hold fast to this, that no preacher, however pious or upright he may be, should presume to preach or secretly teach even among the people of a papistic or heretical pastor without that pastor's knowledge and permission, for the preacher has no command to do that. But if you have no command for something, you should let it rest: we have enough to do just carrying out what has been

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<sup>21</sup>WFW: the priestly and kingly offices

<sup>22</sup>A professor at the University of Leipzig, lived 1635-1697, he was "noteworthy chiefly for his part in the Pietistic controversy," according to *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*.

commanded. Nor does it help their case to say, all Christians are priests. It is true, all Christians are priests, but they are not all pastors. For besides being a Christian and a priest, the pastor must have his office and have received a command in regard to his parish. It is the call and command that make pastors and preachers. (Luther)

33. In necessity even a simple layperson can absolve others and be a pastor, as St. Augustine writes how two Christians were in a boat together and the one baptized the other and then was absolved by the other. (Smalcald Articles)
34. Only some will stand out in the crowd, who should exercise and occupy the office in the congregation's stead: it is not as though one has more power than the others, because it is an office that belongs to all. (Luther)
35. The laypeople are priests, but only owing to an inner capability that makes them adept for all church work and then also for distributing the holy supper, whereby we do not consider the sacrament to be any less genuine when given by a layperson, perhaps out of necessity or because of following an erroneous idea. (Grapius)<sup>23</sup>
36. No one can hold an office apart from or without a command and a call. (Luther)
37. The call to the preaching office is in part something mediated by men like other offices and in part un-mediated by men and unlike any other office.<sup>24</sup> (Gerhard)
38. Those to whom he would transfer the public teaching office in the church, God calls in two ways: without men's mediation on his own, while at the same time through the mediation of the church. (Gerhard)
39. If above and beyond his arrangement for calling people into offices God wants to do something special and awaken someone in addition to the prophets, he will prove it with signs and achievements. (Luther)
40. Wherever the church is, there is the command to preach the gospel. Therefore the church must retain the power to ask for, choose, and ordain the ministers of the church. Such power is a gift which

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<sup>23</sup>Also known as Grappius, as in a citation *The Complete Timotheus Verinus*, Part Two, p.89: Zacharias Grapius is mentioned as an opponent of Pietism. He lived 1671-1713, according to Joseph Thomas' *Universal Dictionary of Biography and Mythology*, accessed online.

<sup>24</sup>WFW: in part mediate or ordinary and in part immediate or extraordinary

properly speaking has been given by God to the church and which no human power can take from the church. (Smalcald Articles)

41. Finally this is confirmed also by the verse from Peter, "You are a royal priesthood." Strictly speaking these words concern the true church, which, since it alone has the priesthood, must also have the authority to choose and ordain the ministers of the church. (Smalcald Articles)
42. What concerns all must happen with the agreement of all. (Leo)
43. It is fitting that whoever is to serve all be chosen by all. (Concil. Aurelianus, III. a. 538)
44. There are three distinct ranks within the church, the churchly, the governmental, and household, or the presbytery, the ruling body, and the people; therefore, none of the ranks is entirely excluded from extending calls in the church. (Gerhard)
45. Of course the people who have authority to choose worthy priests have authority to send back unworthy ones. (Cyprian)
46. No one should be forced upon a congregation against the congregation's will. (Leo)
47. None of the ranks can relinquish its right to extend a call. (Kromayer)
48. You should distinguish between the person who disposes of his very right to extend a call and the person who disposes only of the exercise of that right: the former is denied, the latter is tolerated if it happens cautiously. (Kromayer)
49. What you entrust to someone else, you do not thereby lose. (P. Tarnow)<sup>25</sup>
50. If you came upon a group where there were no Christians, then you would like to do as the apostles did and not wait for a call. Then you do not have the preaching office. Then you might say, "There are no Christians here anywhere. I will preach and instruct them about Christianity and when a group gathers and chooses me and calls me as its bishop, then I would have a call." (Luther)
51. It is one thing to have something: it is another thing to have it without right or to use it in an unlawful way. (Augustine)

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<sup>25</sup>The 1954 *Lutheran Cyclopedia* entry on Paul Tarnow says he lived 1562-1633: "Professor at Rostock. Wrote *On the Holy Ministry*, against Rome; *On the Holy Trinity*, against Socinus; a commentary on the Gospel of St. John. His contention that the absolution must not be spoken categorically, but hypothetically ('If you believe'), was generally repudiated as conflicting with the doctrine of justification, making faith the cause of forgiveness."

52. Rightful use and valid use are to be distinguished from one another. (Dannhauer)
53. Although ordination does not give you your call, indeed, when anyone has been legitimately called, the practice of ordination serves as an announcement and public confirmation that the call—which you had already before you were ordained<sup>26</sup>—was a legitimate one. (Chemnitz)
54. We willingly concede that ordination is not entirely and absolutely necessary, nor is it founded upon a divine command or some God-given authority; rather it is an authority created by the church—yes, it is an indifferent practice. (Calov)
55. It depends on whether the church is in unity with the bishop, and on whether the church listens to the bishop and the bishop wants to teach the church. Then it is done. The laying on of hands is a blessing, a confirmation, and a testimony. It is like when a notary testifies to a secular matter with his seal, and it is like when a pastor, as he blesses the bride and bridegroom, confirms or testifies to the marriage vows they have already made and publicly professed: whether the pastor is now an angel or a devil, because of the office he holds, the bride is blessed. (Luther)
56. That on account of specific words or on account of appointed gestures a special grace is given to those who are ordained, has neither been believed by the orthodox nor been proved by anyone from the practice of the apostles. (Hulsemann)
57. Therefore the consecration given by a bishop is nothing other than if he, in the stead and person of the whole assembly, took one person out of the group, all the members of which have the same power, and commanded him to exercise that power for the others. It is the same as if ten brothers, sons of a king, having the same inheritance, chose one to rule over that inheritance for them. They would all be kings and have the same power, but one has the command to rule. (Luther)
58. Although it happens on account of a good and legitimate arrangement that the bishop together with the elders lays his hands on the person to be ordained, he for sure does not do this by his own decision or on his own authority, but rather in the name of, by the rights of, upon the vote of, under the authority of, with the consensus of, with the confirmation of, and thus also with the prayers of the whole church. And so although its realization occurs through the bishop, it is itself an action taken by the church. (Luther)

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<sup>26</sup>WFW: the preceding call

59. In a case of necessity, not only one pastor but even the lay-elders of any local congregation can ordain someone, since the power to ordain does not belong to just one member of the church, for example to the bishop by way of a capability or quality that inheres in him. Rather the bishop has it by way of a transference and as a power that will pass away like that which an authorized agent or representative has from his employer. (Huelsemann)
60. Wherever God has gathered and still preserved a church, the ordination that is given through the laying on of the elders' hands and with public prayer is to be considered a legitimate ordination and hence should not be done over, even if the elders or ministers of that church are themselves not pure in all doctrinal points and free from all errors. (Gerhard)
61. We confess that under the papacy they had the proper Holy Scripture, the proper baptism, the proper Sacrament of the Altar, the proper keys for the forgiveness of sins, and the proper preaching office. (Luther)
62. Those who have departed from our unity don't have it legitimately, but they for sure have it, and hence it is not given to them again when they come back. In the same way, those who have departed from our unity don't give it legitimately, but they for sure give it, and hence when we welcome a man who comes from them to our unity, no repetition [of ordination] is held for him. (Augustine)<sup>27</sup>
63. When we say that the ordination of papistic priests is indeed defiled but not made invalid by the appended command to offer sacrifices for the living and the dead, that is always with this condition understood: if what is given to the person ordained is only and especially the power to teach God's word and administer the sacraments, then when this condition is not met, the ordination is not only defiled but is also invalid. (Huelsemann)
64. If the call is missing, then the ordination can have no place. (Balduin)
65. It is not the chancel that makes the priest, but the priest the chancel. (Chrysostom)
66. Ordinarily a church office is meant to last for your whole life, since, except for a case of necessity, it is neither free nor right either for the person called to resign or for the persons who extended the call to transfer it to someone else, in the manner of a contract that expires after a set number of years or that reserves for those calling the power of dismissal. (Kromayer)

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<sup>27</sup>This principle would apply both to ordination and baptism.

67. Neither those calling nor the one called can consider the call to be divine if it is for a predetermined number of years. (Kromayer)<sup>28</sup>
68. Therefore as far as God-given authority, this is the office of a bishop: preaching the gospel, forgiving sins, judging doctrine, repudiating doctrine that is opposed to the gospel, and excluding from the Christian congregation those godless people whose godless ways have become public, excluding them not by human force but only with God's word. (Augsburg Confession)
69. Therefore you should not mix together and confuse the two governments, the spiritual and the secular. (Augsburg Confession)
70. In 1 Cor. 3 Paul makes all the church's ministers the same and teaches that the church is greater than the ministers. (Smalcald Articles)
71. When he says, "All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas," he means that neither Peter nor another minister of the word may apportion to themselves their own power or authority over the churches: no one should weigh down the churches with his own statutes. (Smalcald Articles)
72. Neither the pope nor a bishop nor any man has the power to speak even one syllable that is binding upon a Christian unless that Christian is willing to be bound by it: if it happens any other way it is from a spirit of tyranny. (Luther)
73. A bishop, as a bishop, has no power to impose statutes or ceremonies upon his church without the church's consent, whether in clear words or given tacitly. Since the church is free and sovereign and the bishops do not rule over the faith of the church, they may not burden and weigh her down against her will. For they are only ministers and stewards, not masters of the church. (Luther)
74. We can concede to the bishops neither through churchly nor secular power the authority to give commandments to the church, even if those commandments were ever so proper and godly, for we must not do evil in order that good may result. If they want to use force to drive and compel, then we must not obey or consent to it, but die first, in order to preserve the distinction between these two governments. (Luther)
75. With one word St. Peter has overturned and condemned the entire government now superintended by the Pope and clearly concludes that they do not have power to command with even one word, but that they should only be servants and say, "Your Lord Christ says it, for that reason you should do it." (Luther)

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<sup>28</sup>We do not object to a temporary call when the need is temporary.

76. They (the papists) pull out this verse to the Hebrews in chapter 13, “Obey your leaders,” etc. This verse requires you to be obedient to the gospel, for it does not give the bishops their own dominion or lordly power outside of the gospel. (Apology of the Augsburg Confession)
77. You do well to note that when the Augsburg Confession invests bishops with the power to set up ceremonies, this was according to the circumstances of that time, when that power was the bishops’ province because men had given them that authority. (Carpzov)
78. In the New Testament there is no churchly jurisdiction that has God-given authority, except that common authority which judges everything in the church in an orderly and honorable way. (Calov)
79. Among Christians there should and can be no superiority. (Luther)
80. Then what are the priests and bishops? Answer: Their government is not about superiority or power, but is a ministry and an office, for they are not higher and better than other Christians. Therefore they also should not impose laws or commandments upon others without their leave and consent; rather, their governing is nothing but urging God’s word upon others, using it to lead the Christians and overcome heresy. (Luther)
81. In 1 Cor. 3 Paul makes all the church’s ministers the same. (Smalcald Articles)<sup>29</sup>
82. The preaching office is the highest office in the church. (Apology of the Augsburg Confession)
83. When the office of the word is conferred upon someone, all offices carried out with God’s word in the church are also conferred to him. (Luther)
84. The office of preaching the gospel is the highest office of all, for it is the true apostolic office which lays the groundwork for all other offices: they all belong to it and are built upon it, whether the offices of teacher, prophet, or superintendent.<sup>30</sup> (Luther)
85. We should know, however, that nothing is higher than God’s word. It is the office above all offices. Therefore the office of superintendent is its servant, prompting and awakening it, like a servant wakes his master up from sleep or otherwise urges him to carry out his office. . . . Again the teacher or prophet should be obedient to the superintendent and follow him and even be submissive

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<sup>29</sup>This axiom begins the collection of axioms in a new month’s issue of *Lehre und Wehre*, so perhaps Walther forgot he already had included it in the previous month’s issue in axiom #70?

<sup>30</sup>Literally: ruler



- toward him, so that then every Christian work and office is a minister toward the others. (Luther)
86. There are indeed degrees in the holy offices in respect to order, but not in respect to jurisdiction. (Calov)
  87. Christ gives the highest and final jurisdiction to the churches when he says, “tell it to the church.” (Smalcald Articles)
  88. The bishops and teachers cannot represent the church by themselves, since the very idea of a church includes those who listen to them. (Gerhard)
  89. The elders can represent the church, not only those who work in the word, but also the oldest men, the leaders, who are commissioned to discharge churchly business in the name of the whole church. (Gerhard)
  90. Making yourself into God means you will not suffer to be judged either by the church or by anyone else. (Smalcald Articles)
  91. Whatever the Holy Scripture ascribes to the office of the word and sacraments is ascribed also to the church’s ministers, the proclaimers of the word and administrators of the sacraments, not in view of their person, but in view of their office, insofar as they actually preach God’s word and administer the sacraments. (Quenstedt)
  92. The churchly office has no effect apart from the Holy Spirit, but, by virtue of one undivided action in which God and man achieve<sup>31</sup> one and the same end, it is not an inert office, but it is such an office that the Spirit is efficacious—not without it or following it or with it (only as if it were an escort)—but through it, as through an instrument. (Quenstedt)
  93. The church’s ministers have the power to forgive sins, in such a way that they forgive sins not just historically, announcing and proclaiming forgiveness, but also effectively, as the instruments through which forgiveness is in fact given. (Quenstedt)
  94. The power of the sacraments does not depend on the instrumental cause, but on the effective, initial cause. (Kromayer)
  95. The forgiveness of sins does not depend on the sound of the church’s minister speaking the words, but on Christ’s power, which cannot lie. (Balduin)
  96. When Christ says, “If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven,” he establishes the power not of those who announce that forgiveness, but of those who believe in it. (Luther)

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<sup>31</sup>WFW: undivided, divine-human action for the achievement of

97. Our faith and our sacrament must not rest on the person, on whether he is pious or evil, ordained or not ordained, called or an interloper, the devil or his mother, but on Christ, on his word, on his office,<sup>32</sup> on his command and arrangement. Where these things are at work, it has to go right and it has to last, whoever the person is and whatever he may be like.
98. The purity of doctrine distinguishes a true prophet from a false one: the purity of life is his adornment. (Dannhauer)
99. The way the church's ministers live does not alter the power of the sacrament. (Proverb)
100. It is disgraceful for a teacher when his own guilt indicts him. (Proverb)
101. You have already fled and become a hireling, when you have held your tongue. (Augustine)
102. The living voice of those who teach has a wonderful power. (Proverb)
103. I would sooner listen to the master than be considered a master. (Augustine)
104. A benefice is given for bearing the burdens of the office. (Proverb, Smalcald Articles)
105. The ecclesiastical office is irreconcilable with the ranks of secular government. (Dannhauer)

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To be completed in the next issue. We had planned to complete the series with this issue, but because of the length of this installment, it was split into two parts.

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<sup>32</sup>So it is not ordination or the call that first causes the office to be administered, but it is doing what God has commanded and set up in his word. Ströbel is completely correct when he writes, "For the apostles and reformers, the 'office' is not distinct from but is the same as 'a role ordained by God.' For them the term does not have this meaning, 'Whoever has the office fulfills its role,' but quite the contrary, 'Whoever fulfills the office's role has that office.'" Cp. Rudelbach's *Zeitschrift* from 1854, p.778.