

CALLED TO LEAD

*THE AUTHORITATIVE ROLE OF
PASTORS AND TEACHERS
IN THE PARISH ACCORDING TO CALL*

WRITTEN BY
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AS ADAPTED FROM ESSAYS PRESENTED TO THE
SOUTHWESTERN MICHIGAN
AND
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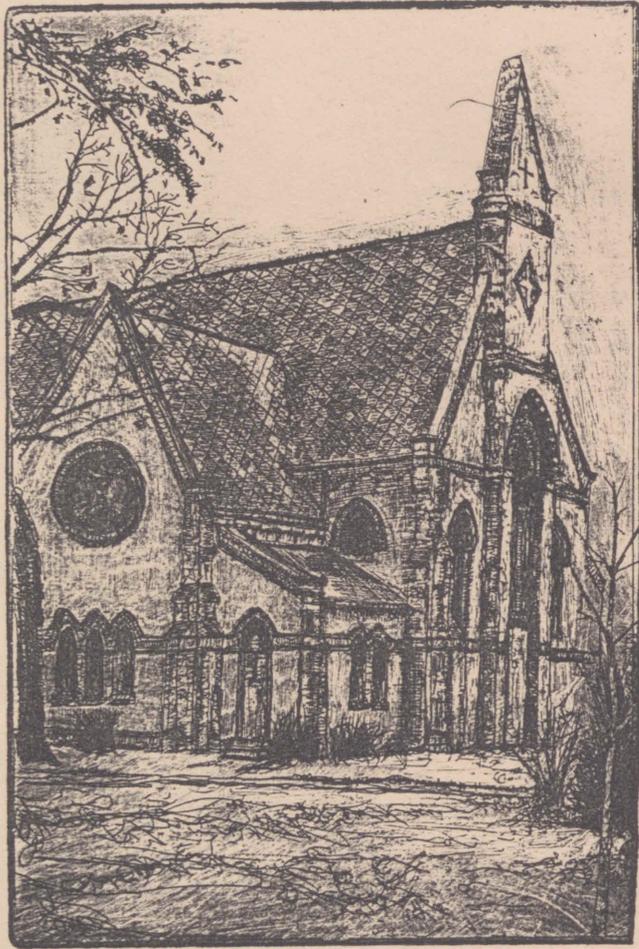
AND PRESENTED TO THE
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Christ Among the Teachers in the Temple



Called to Lead

The Authoritative Roles of Pastors and Teachers in the Parish According to Call

Nathan R. Pope

In Nomine Jesu

Last October marked a first for me when I received an invitation to attend a teachers' conference - yours - and present a doctrinal paper. This request conjured up the unmistakable spectre of adventure, for in 18 years in the public ministry I have attended many a pastors' conference, some interesting, some so-so, well, tedious if must know, but never a teachers' conference. I told myself that if I attended your forum I would find myself outnumbered and out of my element, like a lion in a den of Daniels, a whale in a sea of Jonahs, a barber in a bedroom of Samsons; but, I also love mystery, so I could not resist but accept.

Then when I sat down with your conference chairman to decipher the cryptic manuscript meant to outline my writing assignment, which was headed opaquely "Called to Lead," I learned what you were after, and that moment of discovery shot me through with the momentary sensation that I would rather skip it and do something safer like team with St. Paul to fight the wild beasts of Ephesus. You want to hear what I have to say about the leadership role of teachers in the parish, which in turn directly involves the role and interaction of pastors, their joint working rapport under parish polity, parish politics, and the limitations which the call puts upon men and women in the various offices of public ministry. You would also

like it practical, which means I am forbidden to fill my essay with raw chunks of doctrine but must prepare and present our ethics in an appetizing arrangement fit for Lutheran consumption. In a word, then, you wish to stab, slice, chew, and digest what? Authority.

Providence hath wonderfully prepared me for this day. For no sooner had I accepted this writing assignment than I received, in quick succession, not another but two more requests to address pastor/teacher conferences on similar themes. To the paranoid these coincidences prove, do they not, that the world is masterminded by conspiracy rings, but to the religious like you and me this is evidence that God has a hand in things, for having been through this subject twice already he has prepared me a bit, and I find myself not as daunted as I might otherwise have been if today marked my maiden voyage into these deep waters. Then again, as people who give others homework and expect original results, you will appreciate what a spot you might otherwise have put me in but which failed to materialize, in so far as having completed the same lessons for others, I now grant myself permission to plagiarize my earlier works to fulfill your assignment and thus make my life less complicated before Lent strikes. Some would call this a stroke of luck.

Perhaps.

Now, what I did for others amounted to this. I attempted to answer questions that inquired of the way pastors and teachers relate to one another within their respective leadership roles, that asked me, *"Is the answer to improved pastor teacher relationships found in equalizing of the two ministries? 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?"* I found that many of the items which I was asked to unravel for others have common threads with your interests and which I have attempted to weave into this essay.

For example, the relevant conditions of pastors and teachers and their areas of responsibility have a direct bearing on the subject of leadership, of authority, of policy making, and of striving for unified goals. In other words, what is the purpose of the church, and how do called workers work together towards this goal? This comes first.

Then, secondly, what is the nature of the public ministry? Leadership roles are determined on its definition. In this regard I am going to retrieve the original Lutheran nomenclature for *"public ministry"* which bears the German handle, *Predigtamt*.

Predigt = preaching. *Amt* = office.

When the German language was in vogue in Lutheran circles, people spoke of *"public ministry"* as *Predigtamt*. You'll hear this word often in my essay, because it is confessionally correct in apposition to *"public ministry"* which is vague. My aim hopes to help those who brood over their place or role in parish ministries because they have forgotten, or maybe never understood, what leadership role the call into the *Predigtamt* gives. I realize that it is I who is being perfectly vague at this time, but now, you see, it is your turn to be mystified.

Thirdly and fourthly I will write about the authority of our calls and of church policies and politics (the fine art of getting your way), which involves pastors and teachers with each other and with boards, where the powers are often broad and where precious few are the rules. I am guessing you may find these parts most practical, because here I am going to try and show how the wheels of theory grab the winding road of reality, and why pastors do what they do, and what teachers do, and

what teachers can do when they see pastors not doing what they think they should do.

And fifthly, I will end my essay with a section on the inherent, on-the-job conditions which I believe exist, and have always and will live, in the two worlds of pastors and teachers. *"Pastors are pastors, and teachers are teachers,"* a principal said. And I am praying that the recognition of these differences will foster greater understanding about the nature of ministerial leadership according to call, and will lead both pastor and teacher to greater mutual respect and admiration, and team spirit.

So you have it. Now, let us proceed, from the easy chair of generalities to the bed of nails specifics.

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"* (Eccles 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.¹ She

¹ 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

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 how ever 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 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.*"² 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.³ Yet by the early 1900's 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.*"⁴ 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).⁵ Con-

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 Tzars 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.

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

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

⁴ *Ibid*, 163.

fessing 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 leadership role and 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 R's.

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."⁶

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.

How highly then those in the *Predigtamt* should believe themselves privileged and honored! 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. Here see the greatest measure of leadership to which you have been called, namely, to stand in for Christ, dispensing his pardon with his permission and pleasure, how ever small or wide the field of your official jurisdiction within the parish

⁵ Augsburg Confession. *Der IV. Artikel*. "*Von der Rechtfertigung.*" My translation: "*Weiter gelehrt, dass wir Vergebung der Sünden und Gerechtigkeit vor Gott nicht erlangern mögen durch unser Verdienst, Werke und Genugtum, sondern dass wir Vergebung der Sünden bekommen und 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 und 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).

⁶ 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 und 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.

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.

Statement Three. Pastors and teachers occupy the *Predigtamt* with certain authorities, distinctions, and limitations according to call..

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.)⁷

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 Function Two, to administer the sacraments (most often to assist in communion), but this function cannot be given to female teachers as Luther says,⁸ 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* (the Keys). To use the keys means to stand in for Christ (*in loco Christi*) and make pronouncements for him.

First of all recognize 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 authoritatively, "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 is the loosing key, turned right privately or publicly, and happily.

Secondly it is the pastor who is also called 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

⁷ "I. To feed the church of God with the true, pure, and salutary doctrine of the divine Word. Acts 20.28; Eph 4.11; 1 Pet 5.2.

II. To administer and dispense the sacraments of Christ according to his institution. Matt 28.19; 1 Cor 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 (Matt 16.19; Jn 20.23), and to fulfill all these things and the whole ministry (as Paul says, 2 Tim 4.5) on the basis of the prescribed command, which the chief Shepherd himself has given his ministers in his Word for instruction. Matt 28.20." Chemnitz, Martin. Ministry, Word, and Sacraments - An Enchiridion. Translated by Luther Poellot, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981), 26.

⁸ 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 Sämmtliche Schriften, "Von der Conciliis u. Kirchen." XVI, 2279-80.

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*).⁹ It is to her pastor, remember, 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. Yet the diploma of vocation does most certainly charge the teacher to "maintain Christian discipline in the school". As the pastor, so the teacher will turn the law, but within the circumscribed boundaries of the school; the teacher is called to discipline a portion of the parish.

But what of the reverse? The loosing of sins? Recognize this call to action. What is the joy and leadership role of the *Predigtamt* but that through its official channels people receive forgiveness through the gospel? This means not only public instruction but personal absolution. I encourage you then to grow in the conviction that you own the supreme command not only to discipline your students but to restore them, when

they disobey you or sin against their fellows, weekly--daily-- hourly. And then in the doing, 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.

To sum up what you have read, when your parish called you to teach, she authorized you, first and foremost, to practice some of the functions of the *Predigtamt* with some of her parishioners - not all of its functions with all of her parishioners - where the standard diploma of vocation charged you: "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*."

Now, if that is all that your call charged you to do, your leadership role would be clear-cut. You would be Sunday School teachers and Bible Class teachers. But you are not. Something else has made your position full-time and salaried, and in the process complicated your leadership identity.

Your parish has authorized you: "To teach the children thoroughly also the elementary branches of learning in the spirit of the gospel."

The LES teacher, as a consequence, plays two roles: ministering to the soul as well as to the mind. And what does that practically mean? It means that sometimes things do not appear as they are, and sometimes people are as they do not appear, and sometimes both happen at once.

⁹ "Ratione graduum duplex statuitur excommunicatio, minor scilicet et major. Illa est exclusio sive suspensio ab usu coenae dominicae, haec e communicatione ecclesiae ejectio, illa vocatur καθαίρεισις, haec vero ἀφορισμός" (By reason of steps excommunication is considered twofold, in other words the one minor and the other major. The former is exclusion or suspension from the use of the Lord's Supper, the latter an ejection from the communion of the church; the former is called a tearing down, the latter truly an excommunication) - Gerhard, *Loci*, tom. XIII, loc. XXIV, cap. V, sect. I, §CXCV, p. 16., as quoted by Hoenecke (Band IV, 197-198) who in fairness, I am also relaying, seems to disagree with brother Gerhard's recycling of these terms from canon law for Lutheran use. *Excommunicatio minor* (the little ban) in Roman circles referred to expulsion from the church, while *excommunicatio major* (the great ban) referred to the outlawing of the individual, to the extent of the loss of civil rights, even life itself; the reader will recall that Martin Luther suffered both.

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 oneness. 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/her, 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, authorizes you to practice functions of the *Predigtamt* towards souls. As you instruct children in doctrine, punish disobedience, or absolve sin, you Minister in the true sense of the office and play in unison with your pastor in his monophonic "*ministry of the word*" (Acts 6.4).

At the same time the call charges you 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 you 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. And I write minister with a lower case "m" to distinguish it from a means of grace Ministry, as the apostles themselves distinguished between their work and that of the 7 deacons.

Works of "*responsibility*" characterized the service of the 7 deacons to the apostolic church. 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 deacon's ministry then consisted then of the praiseworthy works of sanctification of which the church can make no end until the end, but which the apostles kept separate from the Ministry of the word and sacrament, their *Predigtamt*.

So, where does this put you, the LES teacher? In a dual role. Teaching elementary subjects in the "*spirit of the gospel*" is a diaconal work, strictly speaking; but, your parish has also combined this work with your primary calling into the *Predigtamt*, to teach and proclaim the gospel and supporting doctrine. And it is in this dual role, then, where you are continually challenged to integrated the Word, at your discretion, into the bulk of your activities.

In other words teach English, speak the Word where you will, and there you, a minister, turn into a Minister. For such activity 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. Therefore, practically speaking, you will feel more of a togetherness with your pastor, who is called only to Minister, when you do what? The more you speak the Word in all your called work, so the more you Minister and will see yourself as such. And others too. In this situation, as in absolving your pupils, it falls finally upon you to determine how much of a Minister you would become. The choice is clearly an individual one.

Thus you have the two fundamental and unique conditions of the WELS parochial teacher. The parish calls you to tend the souls of children with clear-cut but limited functions of the *Predigtamt*, as she also charges you to educate their minds, placing at your 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.¹⁰ These circumstances certainly explain some inherent

¹⁰ 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

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 orchestra pit 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 Ministers, but they are sawing the same line... all are "*rightly dividing the word of truth*" (2 Tim 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 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 is the LES 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 and sisters, I wager you can hear who, in this respect, faces the greater professional challenge. I want only to fiddle.

Recognize then a set of conditions to which I alluded under Statement One. Given the polyphonies of the teaching duettist, distortions are always possible. The male teacher, in particular, 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 her trumpet, because she is mainly teaching secular subjects, but they minimize her station and importance in the string section and show it in ways, and morale is hurt. Pastors experience little tension of this identity crisis in their *Amt*, and therefore must appreciate that 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 teacher complements pastor by striking spiritual notes even in the school's mental and physical worlds.

Statement Four. 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.

There exists an inherent tension regarding authority within the spiritual jurisdiction of the church. On the one hand the apostle Peter told the pastors¹¹ of his day to serve as overseers (bishops)

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 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 choses to be so busy ministering with other things.

¹¹ The so-called "*elders*" (πρεσβυτεροι) 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. πρεσβυτεριος (elder) and επισκοπος (bishop, overseer) are

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 (Matt 20.24-28). On the other hand the writer of Hebrews directed Christians to obey their spiritual leaders and submit to their authority (Heb 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 Tim 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 behaviour of the apostles who commanded and expected compliance-- yes, of our Lord himself.¹²

In addition the confessions defend the use of "the power of the order, i.e., the ministry of the

*Word and Sacraments*¹³ 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].¹⁴ 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."¹⁵ 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*")¹⁶

In the above context then of spiritual equality, of authority, and of degrees of official functions within the *Amt* I was asked by a pastor/teacher conference in Michigan: "Is the pastor

used interchangeably, together with ποιμην (shepherd) in 1 Pet 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 Pet 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 (Gal 2.9) describing himself to anonymous men as their fellow elder! *σὺν + πρεσβυτερος* (1 Pet 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 Rom 10.15, "And how can they preach unless they are sent (*αποσταλωσιν*)?" "Apostle" too looks pregnant with linkage.

¹² 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 Thess 3.4); or to Timothy: "Command and teach these things" (1 Tim 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).

¹³ Apology of the Augsburg Confession. Article 28. "Of Ecclesiastical Power" (Triglotta, 447).

¹⁴ Apology of the Augsburg Confession. Article 24. "Of Ecclesiastical Order" (Triglotta, 315).

[Emphasis added]

¹⁵ See Predigt am Tage Bartholomäi, des Apostels, SL XIIIa, 1239-1241.

¹⁶ See Predigt am zehnten Sonntage nach Trinitatis, SL XII, 828-830.

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. Why?

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 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.

But back to the point, on whether or not the pastor is over the teacher in terms of authority, 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 *επισκοπος* (overseer, bishop), and his is the *επισκοπη* (oversight). [See Illustration B in the end-notes]. 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 makes for good reading on wet afternoons. 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 (Heb 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 think indifferently of the prospect of girls standing in a pulpit during a divine service, but I am sure that the sight 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; esp.: a critical watching and directing as of activities or a course of action*").¹⁷ 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 ever nook and cranny of the elementary branches of instruction and to presume to critiquing teaching itself. 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 does a pastor do, for example, when he hears 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 he learns he's been hard at it for an hour, after all the other children have left, you figure will take the boy 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.

Pastors will want to defer to teachers to teach, to trust them, to affirm them, and to keep their 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 they are invited, so to speak, to twitch, sniff, or otherwise flare their 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.¹⁸ 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 all 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; the pastor is only carrying out the directive of his call. Here again I urge balance, saying that togetherness grows tighter when called workers understand that submission finally is an incidental factor in the overriding concern of the pastor's call to devote himself to the "*general advancement of the 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.*"

All of the above address the often felt but seldom expressed (to the pastor's face, that is) perception that "*the pastor runs the parish*" or "*the pastor always has to have his way.*"

Now the above beliefs exist. You know it; I know it. I say this not to be provocative but to

¹⁷ Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (Springfield, Massachusetts: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1977).

¹⁸ For a good look into the mind of the current form of anticlericalism, see Carl F. George, Prepare Your Church for the Future (Grand Rapids: Revell, 1991). You will be amazed how bad it is.

address honestly a common issue and condition in parish life.

Politics.

Good word or bad? It means "1) *a: the art or science of government, b: the art or science concerned with guiding or influencing governmental policy, c: the art or science concerned with winning and holding control over a government.*"¹⁹

Note two things about this definition.

First of all, politics need not be a bad name; it becomes such when people play unfairly and make it a dirty game. Fact is, teachers do their share of it - governing, "to control and direct the making and administration of policy in"²⁰ the classroom. You have your policies, rules, handbooks; you make policy. So does the principal and board of education. There are levels of politics.

The same situation exists parish wide. The parish is grouped around the gospel and supporting doctrine, and then follow her customs, special interests, and programs. Connected to this struggle of forces is her pastor, who is concerned, yes, called to influence, guide and unify policies as the one establishing and maintaining sound Lutheran practice at all times.

Secondly, note that politics is also called an art or science. Politics is like dishing up eggs for breakfast; there is more than one way to do it; there are no precise recipes. The mix of factors and circumstances varies from parish to parish. Leadership styles, a congregation's history, traditions and customs, and the spirit of a parish all combine uniquely to scramble local politics. Yet, you can separate the whole business nicely into two parts, the yoke of doctrine and the white of adiaphora. Therein you have found the x factor; there is little room for argument when the pastor expedites doctrine, but when he takes a hard- or soft-boiled approach to an item of indifference, an adiaphoron, which touches, supports, or relates to doctrine and practice, the politics of it will challenge unity and peace if others disagree with him.

For example, the church bazaar.

Egg yoke? Or egg white?

Remembering our mutual calls into the *Predigtamt*, we start with the operative theme that the parish has called, not you, but her pastor to "establish and maintain sound Lutheran practice

at all time;" but at the same time, let it be said, that whatever ideas your pastor has about bazaars (aka fall fairs, harvest fairs, etc.), so do you, the teacher.

Now, here is where you fit in.

You are a new graduate, assigned to a mission school. The parish itself is 25 years old, and her pastor has been out of the seminary 5 years. The parishioners can count themselves mainly new Lutherans, with a nucleus of former LC-MS people.

One day 3 mothers approach the pastor. They would like to know if they can organize a bazaar, on church grounds!, to help benefit the school, whose teacher - you - has let it be known that the classroom needs new desks. You are even so helpful as to inform the trio that the Methodists down the street are running a fair.

The young pastor feels his pulse quicken. He would rather be shot out of a cannon than allow any such fund raising. It has never been done before, might set a bad precedent, could work against stewardship, and would upset the LC-MS people who had already told him, "That's the kind of stuff they used to do in our old church." Besides his professors took a dim view of such things.

The pastor rejects the suggestion.

Now, does he have the right to do so? Yes. Shouldn't he bring the matter to the council, and let them decide? Not necessarily. It depends.

What does the church constitution and its by-laws say? What congregational resolutions have been passed, pertinent to situations like this?

Any pastor's political authority, as well as the range and staying power of his decisions, are only as broad or narrow as his parish permits. I served a small parish once where the elders wanted personally to inspect every piece of church mail. They would open and even read the junk mail in the meeting, much to my disgust. But in my present call, I use my judgment and the wastepaper basket.

In the case of the bazaar, the young pastor does not label it a sin, but given his circumstances judges that such a practice might have the potential for trouble. He is unwilling to establish a practice that might lead to unLutheran ways and squashes the idea. He does not even want the idea coming up in a meeting, lest it gain a toehold. Now, yes, one could put the worst spin on that pastor's actions and say he is running the parish, but he is also

¹⁹ Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 890.

²⁰ Ibid, 497.

operating within the spirit and intent of the establishment and maintenance clause of his called authority. And that's the end of it.

Or is that the end of the story? What if the three mothers have their husbands take their idea to the voter's meeting, or enlist the support of the principal, to ask the voters to overrule the pastor. That would not be a sin, since the parish fairly allows for such a democratic right of review, but would it be smart? The pastor could find himself outnumbered and outvoted, and at that point all he could do is sound his advice, judgment, and warnings. But if the politics of the situation were to reach this point, can you imagine what happens?

Before I proceed, notice the essence of much policy making on the part of the pastor: his advice. Where the pastor's judgment is sound and respected, pastor and people usually get along; where a record of bungling exists, people grow distrustful. Trust is the cement that bonds a pastor's advice to the willingness of people to go along with his guidance, but, contrary to what some think, trust does not automatically come with the diploma of vocation; trust is earned. To complicate matters further, where a called worker like you may exhibit better judgment than the pastor, you may find yourself in *capitis dolor*, a big pain, if parishioners trust you with their complaints, disagreements, or intrigues over against their pastor. In such cases the best political advice I can give you amounts to this, that first you pray for your pastor, and second you do all you can to harmonize your policies or differences in private parley.

Let's proceed on the assumption that the young pastor has had his way. The women are instructed that bazaars are fine for Methodists but not for Lutherans, and the trio are enlightened and drop the proposal, and oh, by the way, who suggested this idea to you? Ah, the new teacher.

The 30 year old pastor is bugged by the innocent involvement of the 21 year old teacher. You do not know any better. You saw a need. You said something in passing to some mothers, and before you know it, you are in trouble with a pastor you hardly know, who as gently as he thinks himself, instructs you that there are proper channels for teachers to advance their controversial ideas

without stirring up a hornet's nest with *his*²¹ parishioners. You are rattled and become upset, but you also recognize that you have learned a lesson from a course never taught in college.

Years go by. Your initial experiences in the world of parish policy-making have taught you that proper channels do exist, and should all else fail you know that the safest bet always is to get the pastor's reaction for your ideas, where you think it would involve him or his parishioners in any way, and clear it with him and get him in your corner. And you are left with a permanent bad taste in your mouth when it comes to church bazaars.

Then you receive and take a call to Wisconsin, to a parish that is older than the synod. And no sooner are you installed, than you read in the same Sunday's bulletin the announcement of a fall fair, run by the Ladies Aid, which is planning to use the profits to benefit the school and buy new tables and desks. They are even selling tickets. In the foyer!

You are thunderstruck.

Now it is you who would rather be cannon fodder than see children sit on chairs purchased by near Tetzal-tactics. Or so it appears. You are hot.

You meet with the pastor, who is 20 years older than you, and therefore apprehensive. Now what, he thinks. One month on the job and the teacher from out west has brought him some trouble; he can only fear the worst. His chair groans as he hunkers down ready to catch it.

You explain yourself.

Oh, is that all, the pastor exclaims. He looks relieved and sits up with a bounce, while you grow disappointed. Hasn't he heard me, you wonder. How can he be so nonchalant about such poor practice as bazaars? So hardened? So wrong?

The pastor waves off your concerns and explains with a smile that his parish has been having fairs before there was a synod. It's a tradition, nothing for you to worry about. And besides, he comforts, the Ladies Aid won't ask you to help.

You protest. No, you tell the pastor, that's not the point. Isn't it wrong? The pastor of your former church wouldn't allow it.

The smile withers on the man's face. Sighing he launches into a long, exhaustive defense of his parish's right to maintain a custom, which

²¹ The parish's teacher is called to teach her children, as her principal is called to run her school, as her fellow parishes jointly call administrators to superintend churchwide policies, but none save her pastor can call her parishioners "his."

yes, he admits other pastors might take a dim view of and could cause them trouble, but which has never been, as far as he is concerned, a problem within his parish. He knows his people and how long a leash to grant them to keep them happy.

Later as you get to know that parish and how it works, you come to see that her fair does seem to fit her character; most everyone considers it normal and a few wonder why you are the one acting strange about it. In time you learn to live with it, even plan wish-list items for your classroom from its projected sales, but down deep you believe it best to be rid of it.

My example of the church bazaar, I hope, addresses some of the forces which swirl in the making of policy in the gray zone of adiaphora. In this area I am referring to anything from the Men's Club brat 'n beer supper to the color of the chancel carpet to the adoption and implementation of change or custom of any sort. A pastor will play a much greater role than a teacher in this, and all the larger as he perceives things approaching or touching upon or affecting the practice of doctrine or the messages, subtle or crass, that such things may convey - even as he will also initiate a policy of consensus building to win support in larger issues of adiaphora that have the potential for splitting parishioners - you must expect this and accept this.

By now, you have undoubtedly forgotten that there remains the other half of church government to take up. I had said the business of church policy-making can be cracked in half: doctrine and adiaphora. I gave you a case of casuistry involving the latter, to give you a taste of the variables which you might experience as your calls take you from parish to parish, relative to the way different churches and pastors handle similar things. Now there remains the matter of doctrine.

Shall the church sponsor a Scout troop? Can the groom's sister, a member of St. Rita's parish, sing that wonderful ballad from Disney's *"Beauty and the Beast"* in the wedding at church? If the wine has run out unexpectedly, can the Altar guild substitute blackberry wine for communion because one of its members just happens to have a bottle at home? May the mother of the chairwoman of the Altar guild take communion; she belongs to a LC-MS church? Can women hold membership in the voter's assembly? Shall the church join with the

local ecumenical council of parishes which is sponsoring a prayer vigil? May the pastor bury someone of a different faith or conduct the wedding of someone he knows is cohabiting? Can a Lutheran teach religion in a Baptist grade school?

No.

The pastor is supposed to say, no, where practice invalidates doctrine. Here, in the true sense of the word, the pastor forbids the practice. But what if people refuse to obey? Then of course there will be trouble.

For example, I know a pastor who took a stand against the Masonic order and said parishioners could not belong to it and the church, that such double membership represented a conflict of interest. He received death threats. He stood his ground, however, and the Masons had to go.

How far does a pastor pursue political measures against members who deviate from doctrine? In 1864 my ancestor, Christian, was forced to sue some of his parishioners to gain possession of the church's property; being called to establish and maintain sound Lutheran doctrine, he pleaded his case to an Illinois judge that the Reformed he discovered in his parish had no business there and successfully had them ejected.

But what happens when the pastor, for some reason, fails to enforce practice? Or uphold true doctrine? This, realistically, is where I think teachers will find themselves more often than not as interested parties, as well as wishing to play a supporting role, wondering what to do.

From the standpoint of your call, this is dangerous ground; because the parish has limited your call to a select group, any attempt on your part to challenge in the public forums of the parish the pastor's authority, integrity, or orthodoxy in his practice can be perceived as presumption, insubordination, or revolution... even if you happen to be correct in your judgment. Yet from the perspective of your Christianity, this is ethical ground. If you know or believe that the pastor to be guilty of false practice or doctrine, then love and fear of God, and obedience to the Second Commandment, constrain a man or woman to do something, whether your concerns be grounded in private or public news.

Technically, public offense need not be corrected privately; Jesus did not (The Sermon on the Mount), nor Luther (The 95 Theses). Thus if the pastor is guilty of public offense you are free to

right the wrong publicly. Just make sure you are correct. A safer course of action, in the event you may have misinterpreted the pastor's actions, is to follow Matthew 18's steps (also the correct protocol in following up a concern involving private news); then no one can fault you for improper procedures, which the guilty love to do to deflect the attention from off themselves, and you will keep the spotlight on the issue. Talk with the pastor first, who will recognize this as a test, but you have God on your side since it is he who commands not trust but testing of leaders. *"Test everything"* (1 Thess 5.21). *"Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world"* (1 John 4.1).

If you get nowhere, go next to the elected lay leadership, the chairman, president, or the head of the elders. What you do not want to do, before you've exhausted your appeals in the parish, is talk with pastors or teachers in neighboring churches. This is the easiest way I know of to suffer Humpty Dumpty's fate. Like rotten eggs, the whiff of one misplaced word can follow you home, cling to you, and put you under a cloud of suspicion.

If all else fails, seek the counsel or action of the district president or circuit pastor, whose offices supervise doctrine and practice.

<p>Statement Five. Pastors and teachers are creatures of their environments.</p>

"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; I see them created by the characteristic environments in which both groups work, which also in a sense make of 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 her, as well they should, because the call limits the teacher to her children and classroom -- that is her 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 you teachers are called, when you are asked to specialize and give your all, and then also 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 principals through the years why I was absent. 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 that my presence would be welcome. So I went. I listened, I contributed really nothing, but the teachers seemed 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 work place, 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..

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