

Lutheran Mission Matters



Volume XXIV, No. 2 (Issue 48) May 2016

Celebrating the Ministry of Licensed Lay Deacons: A Theological Review of the Task Force Report on 2013 LCMS Convention Resolution 4-06a

Michael T. Von Behren

Abstract: This article provides a theological review of the Task Force Report on 2013 LCMS Convention Resolution 4-06a from the perspective of those who seek to support the ongoing ministry of Licensed Lay Deacons in the LCMS and to encourage fuller appreciation of the complementary nature of the role of both pastors and laity in service of the Gospel. It affirms aspects of The Report, while responding to The Report's critiques of Licensed Lay Deacons used in Word and Sacrament ministry by relying on the same fundamental theological sources as the Task Force Report, namely scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, and C. F. W. Walther's *Church and Ministry*.

Introduction, Purpose, and Rationale

The thrust of the Task Force Report, which convened in response to 2013 Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Convention Resolution 4-06a to study the use of Licensed Lay Deacons in the LCMS, was not affirming but rather raised critical contention with the practice of using Licensed Lay Deacons in Word and Sacrament ministry. In support of Licensed Lay Deacon ministry, it identified the twenty-six years of history that our Synod has had since the 1989 Synod Resolution 3-05b and listed briefly the following insights from its recent interviews with the districts who most utilize Licensed Lay Deacons.

Visitations of six districts with the largest number of active deacons and/or graduates of district training programs provided helpful insights. The rationale for the programs emphasized during the visits generally included three points:



Rev. Michael T. Von Behren is a 2005 graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri. He, his wife Jennifer, and their two children live in Spokane, Washington, where he serves as Pastor of Holy Cross Lutheran Church, LCMS.

mvonbehren@holycrosslcms.net

- First, most frequently mentioned was the number of *small congregations*—particularly those in rural and urban areas—that are *unable to support a pastor* financially and have difficulty finding supply or vacancy pastors to serve them.
- Second in importance was the shortage of ordained pastors available to serve LCMS congregations in certain *isolated geographic locales*, both in terms of their availability for calls and also their ability to serve with minimal remuneration.
- Third, few LCMS pastors are equipped for ministry, church planting, and mission *outreach in urban settings and elsewhere among racial and ethnic minorities*. Moreover, such missions tend to have minimal financial resources and frequently cannot support the costs of a full-time minister.

Proponents of the districts' programs frequently mentioned the need for and value of specially trained laymen who work under pastoral supervision to supply these needs. They often suggested that such programs have developed a neglected aspect of pastoral responsibility because the pastors who serve as mentors to deacons exercise *episcopate*—pastoral supervision—of the deacons and also, thereby, expand their pastoral scope beyond what they can do by themselves.¹

The Report also explained that the theological position used to assess Licensed Lay Deacon ministry was discussed with the Council of Presidents of the LCMS and there were “no reservations” regarding it. The report states:

While various district presidents have expressed reservations about how to address various practical aspects of the proposals offered below, no one on the Council has expressed any theological objections to the understanding of *rite vocatus* provided in the preceding sections. It is our prayer, then, that the Synod can move forward in its practice on the basis of a common theological understanding of the need to rightly train, examine, call, and affirm the ministerial validity of those who will preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments in our congregations and missions.²

The critiques of using Licensed Lay Deacons for Word and Sacrament ministry raised in The Report all stem from this theological position, which The Report indicates is rooted in the Scriptures, the Confessions, and the historical witness of the Church. The Report assumes then that the use of Licensed Lay Deacons in Word and Sacrament ministry finds no support in our common theology. Instead it states:

Walther's 'Church and Ministry' lays forth quite clearly a scriptural and confessional case for distinguishing the Office of the Ministry from the priesthood of all believers, emphasizing that the ministry is a particular office established by God which the church is bound to uphold by divine

command and not on an arbitrary or optional basis. Church and Ministry anchors this teaching in a multitude of scriptural witnesses, and AC (Augsburg Confession) V, AC XIV, AC XXVIII, AAC (Apology of the Augsburg Confession) XIII, the Treatise (on the Power and Primacy of the Pope) and FC (Formula of Concord) SD (Solid Declaration) XII among other confessional sources. In addition, Walther cites Luther and many Lutheran fathers to make his case. Such an array of biblical, confessional, and historical witnesses to the necessity of a rightly called Office of the Ministry has led many in the LCMS to voice significant discomfort and objections to the practice of lay preaching and administration of the sacraments which is present in some LCMS congregations.³

Therefore an adequate response to this Task Force Report must first state the theological basis upon which the utilization of Licensed Lay Deacons for Word and Sacrament ministry is founded and demonstrate that this theology is in line with the Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, and our common theology of ministry found in the theses and various sources cited in Walther's landmark compendium *Church and Ministry*.⁴

Theological Statement on Laymen in Word and Sacrament Ministry

Celebrating the use of laymen in Word and Sacrament ministry supports and affirms the Office of the Ministry across our synodical fellowship as we rejoice in the partnership in the Gospel that God has bestowed on His Church between the priesthood of all believers and those called into the Office of the Ministry.⁵

The urgency of Christ's call for workers into the harvest fields where "the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few" (Lk 10:2, Mt 9:37) necessitates our willingness to place people into Christ's service in a variety of ways. The first Lutheran reformers shared an excitement over the freedom of the Gospel, not only in that it is "the power of salvation to all who believe" (Rom 1:16) but that, in this glorious freedom, "the Word of God is not bound" (2 Tim 2:9). It is not bound by chains, as Paul reminded the young pastor Timothy, nor is it bound by human institution or the traditions of men as the Lutheran reformers sought to express even in the very words with which they chose to frame the Confessions of our church in order to free the Gospel message from the tyranny of Roman ecclesiology.

So together with the Early Church evidenced in the pages of the New Testament, the witness of the Church Fathers, and the support of the Lutheran reformers, it behooves us to strive for multiplication of leaders in the church, both lay and ordained, who will respond to God's grace as Isaiah did in saying, "Here am I. Send me" (Is 6:8) and provide response to Paul's cry of faith from Romans 10, "And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they

are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring the good news!’” (10:14–15).

It is a beautiful thing when the ministry of the Gospel is carried out as God intends. The gift of the Office of the Ministry is one facet of this beauty. The Office of the Ministry is a divine gift to the church as scripture witnesses that it was Christ who “gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers” (Eph 4:11). Yet this divine office was not given to procure ministry unto itself, but as follows in Ephesians 4, it exists to “equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ, until we all reach unity in the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God” (Eph 4:12–13). Johann Gerhard is quoted by our father in faith C. F. W. Walther in *Church and Ministry*, speaking of Jesus, saying “After His session at the right hand of God, He still grants to His church pastors and teachers in order that His saints may be perfected for the work of the ministry, by which His mystical body [the church] is edified (Ephesians 4:11–12).”⁶

It is a beautiful thing
when the ministry
of the Gospel is carried
out as God intends.
The gift of the Office
of the Ministry is
one facet of this beauty.
The Office of the Ministry
is a divine gift
to the church as scripture
witnesses that it was
Christ who “gave the
apostles, the prophets, the
evangelists, the pastors
and teachers” (Eph 4:11).
Yet this divine office was
not given to procure
ministry unto itself.

The Office of the Ministry is that divinely established office that God has given His Church to equip and lead through Word and Sacrament the great and glorious mission Christ has given to us until the day He returns, namely, the proclamation of the Gospel, so that the Spirit may turn hearts to faith “where and when” it pleases Him.⁷

Within the doctrine of vocation, namely, that God calls His people into vocational service for Him, the Office of the Ministry is a particular vocation and divine calling not common to every believer. In every vocation, the responsibility and duty of each believer is to proclaim the Gospel as a function of the priesthood of all believers in an individualized (as opposed to public) sense. Thus the Apostle Peter who affirms our priesthood reminds us that we “proclaim the excellencies of him who called [us] out of darkness” (1 Pt 2:9) and that we ought to be “prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks [us] for a reason for the hope that is in [us]” (1 Pt 3:15).

While not every believer is called to the Office of the Ministry, the public exercise of the Means of Grace is a right God has bestowed upon the priesthood of all believers. This is the foundational truth expressed by the Lutheran Confessions in *The Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope*, which states, “the keys do not belong to any one particular person but to the church For having spoken of the keys in Matthew 18, Christ goes on to say, ‘where two or three agree on earth . . .’ [Matt. 18:19–20]. Thus he grants the power of the keys principally and without mediation to the church.”⁸ *The Treatise* is objecting to the claim that the power of the keys was given to Peter alone and subsequently to those who have succeeded him as Pope. The term “power of the keys” is used here by *The Treatise* in the broad sense to refer to the power to “proclaim the gospel, forgive sins, and administer the sacraments.”⁹

That these keys are not only given to the Church as a whole to use, but that the right and ability to use them is given to each individual believer is seen in writings of Luther quoted by Walther in *Church and Ministry*. Thus Luther, speaking of the Pope, says, “A [baptized] child in the cradle has a greater claim to the keys than he, together with all those who have the Holy Spirit,”¹⁰ and again, “Christ gives to every Christian the power and use of the keys,”¹¹ and again, “He not only grants [to every Christian] the right and power of the keys, but he orders and commands their use and administration,”¹² and again, “The keys belong to the whole communion of Christians and to everyone who is a member of that communion, and this pertains not only to their possession but also their use and whatever else there may be.”¹³

It is this right and ability within the priesthood of all believers to use the Word and Sacraments that allows an individual believer publicly to proclaim the Word of God in an assembly of unbelievers. Some are fond of Luther’s phrase, “Necessity knows no laws.” This is true, not because it allows one to step outside of our God-given theology that defines the distinction between the priesthood of all believers and the Office of the Ministry, but because God has fundamentally given the ministry of Word and Sacraments to the priesthood of all believers. This is our common theology. Thus, in the presence of unbelievers a believer needs no call other than that of necessity as Walther quotes Luther on this saying,

“If he has not been called to do so, as you yourself have often taught, he dare not preach.” To this I reply: Here you must place a Christian in two places. First, if he is where there are no Christians, he needs no other call than that he is a Christian, inwardly called by God and anointed. There he owes it to the erring heathen or non-Christian to preach and teach them the gospel, moved by Christian love, even though no Christian has called him to do so. . . . In such cases . . . necessity ignores all laws In the second place, if he [the Christian] is where there are other Christians who have the same power and right as he, he should not put himself forward but let others

call and put him forth so that he might preach and teach in the place at the command of others.¹⁴

Indeed there is a God-given distinction between the Office of the Ministry and the priesthood of all believers. While every Christian has the right and ability to publicly use the Word and Sacraments, to do so among others who likewise have that same right amounts to one Christian esteeming himself above others instead of using the gifts to edify the church. So Luther says regarding this, “it does not behoove anyone of his own accord to appropriate to himself that which belongs to all.”¹⁵ Thus among believers propriety and humility prevail. So when a Christian is in the presence of other believers, even when as few as “two or three” are gathered, he should not arrogate such a calling to himself, but in Christian love, he should wait until he has been called by others to do so.

While in apostolic times this call occasionally came immediately, that is, directly from God to the person, the New Testament also clearly witnesses that God calls people to this public exercise of the Word and Sacraments mediately, that is, through other believers, as well. Such mediate calls came in a variety of ways in the pages of the New Testament, as has also been acknowledged by the 2003 LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) document, *The Theology and Practice of the Divine Call*. In summary of the biblical data it states, “the biblical writers give us several pictures of how the church actually went about selecting pastors in ‘normal,’ settled situations. . . . In any case, however, they do not provide any explicit directives regarding the practice of the call. Any guidance drawn from these examples, therefore, will have to be inferential.”¹⁶

Even in the absence of “explicit directives,” we find in the New Testament that the call sets apart some from the priesthood of all believers to exercise publicly Word and Sacrament ministry on behalf of others. Also discernible in the New Testament witness, the writings of the ancient Church Fathers, and the writings of the Lutheran church fathers are different types of calls into the public use of Word and Sacrament.

Even in the absence of “explicit directives,” we find in the New Testament that the call sets apart some from the priesthood of all believers to exercise publicly Word and Sacrament ministry on behalf of others. Also discernible in the New Testament witness, the writings of the ancient Church Fathers, and the writings of the Lutheran church fathers are different types of calls into the public use of Word and Sacrament.

First and foremost, among these types of calls publicly to exercise Word and Sacrament ministry is the formal call into the Office of the Ministry. Not all are qualified to hold this office, and those qualifications are outlined by the scriptures in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. The priesthood of all believers confers the authority of the keys upon a man when it chooses (examines or certifies), calls, and places him into this highest office, which is referred to in various ways in the scriptures, such as, the office of pastor/shepherd, overseer/bishop, or presbyter/elder.

Ordination is a means of placing one into this office, and yet it is not a necessary means, as is clearly noted in *Church and Ministry*, where Walther's Thesis IV on the Ministry states that it "is not a divine institution but merely an ecclesiastical rite established by the apostles; it is no more than a solemn public confirmation of the call."¹⁷ Likewise, Gerhard is quoted in *Church and Ministry* to affirm the conclusion that ordination is an "adiaphoron."¹⁸

Ordination is a means of placing one into this office, and yet it is not a necessary means.

Even so Walther, the historic church, and the fellowship of the LCMS through the years have each affirmed the value of ordination as apostolic custom. As a Synod, the LCMS has agreed that it should be retained, utilized, and reserved for the placement of pastors into the Office of the Ministry.¹⁹ This rite, seen in practice already in the New Testament, is useful for publicly confirming the call which confers the office.

This practice of examination (or certification), call, and ordination was the primary means for placing men into Word and Sacrament ministry among the confessors, as is enumerated by the CTCR's 2003 report *Theology and Practice of "the Divine Call."* It recounts carefully the precedents found in the sixteenth century.²⁰

There is however another type of mediate call from God, which places some from the priesthood of all believers into what Walther in *Church and Ministry* called "subordinate" or "auxiliary" offices that take part in the functions of the Office of the Ministry. Walther writes, "Every other public office in the church is part of the ministry of the Word or an auxiliary office that supports the ministry For they take over a part of the ministry of the Word and support the pastoral office."²¹ Again, Walther writes, "Therefore, in scripture the incumbents of the ministerial office are called elders, bishops, rulers [*Vorsteher*], stewards, and the like, and the incumbents of subordinate offices are called deacons, that is, servants, not only of God but of the congregation and the bishop."²²

In support of such offices Walther quotes Chemnitz: "Paul himself sometimes attended to the ministry of the Word in such a way that he entrusted the

administering of the sacraments to others: ‘For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the Gospel’ (1 Corinthians 1:17).”²³

Such offices carry out their ministry under the “oversight” of one in the Office of the Ministry. This is acknowledged in Walther’s *Church and Ministry* by citing Luther, who said of bishops (pastors), “They are the ones who are placed over every office. . . . That should be the business of the bishops; for this reason they are called overseers or *antistites* (as St. Paul here designates them), that is, presiders and rulers.”²⁴

The use of subordinate or auxiliary offices is evidenced in the Scriptures as well. Phillip, Stephen, and five others were the first to be chosen by the church and then placed into such offices in Acts (Acts 6:1–6). In other scriptures, such as 1 Timothy 3:1–12 and Philippians 1:1, the subordinate office of deacon is clearly differentiated from that of overseer, which we now call pastor. While the scriptures do not enumerate lists of such offices, our Lutheran church fathers have understood from the Scriptures and the witness of the church through the centuries that the church is free to establish them according to need and context for the sake of the Gospel. Again Chemnitz is quoted in *Church and Ministry* saying of the New Testament witness,

Because many offices pertain to the ministry in the church that in a large assembly of believers cannot be well attended to in whole and in part by one person or a few, the church, as it began to increase, began to distribute these ministerial offices among certain grades of servants in order that all things might be done orderly, decently, and in an edifying way . . . when the number of disciples increased, they entrusted the part of their ministry dealing with alms to others, whom they called deacons or servants. . . . This origin of ministerial grades and orders in the apostolic church shows the cause, reason, purpose and use of these grades and orders. According to the size of the congregation, the various ministerial functions thereby were to be performed more readily, more rightly, more diligently, and with greater order and becoming dignity to the edification of the church.²⁵

Again from Chemnitz, *Church and Ministry* cites, “Those grades and orders of which we have spoken above were not above and outside of the ministry of Word and sacraments; the very functions of the ministry itself were divided into these grades.”²⁶

These offices are not inherently bound in what particular functions of the Office of the Ministry that they authorize men to take part in and utilize; nor are they mandated to a length of time.²⁷ The particular functions of the Office of the Ministry in which they participate and the tenure of such a call is established instead by the call of the congregation and the delegation of the one who has “oversight” of such offices through his calling to the Office of the Ministry in that place.

As an example of such in the witness of the New Testament, Stephen and Phillip began with appointment to service at the table distributing food to widows, yet after being found faithful in their calling, they were entrusted with ministry of Word and Sacrament. This practice also is included in *Church and Ministry* under the thesis that deals with subordinate and auxiliary offices by quoting Chemnitz who writes, “Since the apostles themselves appointed some of the deacons who had proved themselves, such as Stephen and Phillip, to the ministry of the Word we conclude that these grades or orders were also to serve the purpose of preparing and testing some in the minor offices in order that they might be entrusted with more important functions of the ministry with greater security and profit.”²⁸ There is no indication in the Scriptures that Stephen and Phillip were made pastors, elders, or overseers but rather that they were entrusted with the public use of “more important functions of the ministry,” here, namely, the Word of God. In addition, Phillip’s ministry was clearly more than that of Word alone but also of Baptism as is evidenced in Acts 8:12, 38.

The ministry of Licensed Lay Deacons is not identical to that scriptural office of deacon but may likewise be understood as such a subordinate or auxiliary office in the church, which exercises both Word and Sacrament.

As Walther states clearly in Part II Thesis VI of *Church and Ministry*, “since the congregation or church of Christ, that is the communion of believers, has the power of the keys and priesthood immediately (Matthew 28:15–20; 1 Peter 2:5–10; cf. also what has been said under Part I, Thesis IV), it also and it alone can entrust the office of the ministry, which publicly administers the Office of the Keys and all ministerial [priesterliche] functions in the congregation by electing, calling, and commissioning.”²⁹ Thus, even the smallest gathering of believers has this right which cannot be taken from them, as the Lutheran Confessions also state saying,

For wherever the church exists, there is also the right to administer the gospel. Therefore, it is necessary for the church to retain the right to call, choose, and ordain ministers. This right is a gift bestowed exclusively on the church, and no human authority can take it away from the church. . . . Pertinent here are the words of Christ which assert that the keys were given to the church, not just to particular persons: “For where two or three are gathered in my name . . .” [Matt. 18:20].³⁰

The local congregation, even in a synodical fellowship, retains this right and privilege of the Gospel. As the congregations of the LCMS have agreed to together train and certify men for the Office of the Ministry, we can celebrate all the various routes that our seminaries have established to prepare and certify men for that office: M.Div, Alternate Route, SMP, CHS, EIIT, the Cross-Cultural Institute at Concordia, Irvine, etc. We can also celebrate the joint work our Synod has established for the training of commissioned ministers to function in auxiliary offices.

At the same time, congregations and districts can be encouraged to partner together in local areas to create avenues for laity to engage in additional subordinate or auxiliary offices, which may not be synod-wide and may be utilized only in particular contexts and regions. District leadership and regional Concordia Universities are a tremendous blessing in equipping the church in these ways with leaders for ministry.

Yet we should also recognize that, in addition to these formal calls (the call into the Office of the Ministry and the call into subordinate or auxiliary offices), there is a legitimate, right, and proper call that is made informally in which a believer may be asked to publicly exercise Word and Sacrament ministry. This is a call that does not place one into an office of the church but is a call that comes from a fellow Christian in a time of need for temporary public exercise of the functions of the Office of the Keys. Here temporary means not “one time,” but “as long as the need persists.”

Such a call need only be the simple request of a fellow believer. This is the case that is often referred to as an emergency situation. Thus our Confessions quote Augustine’s story of the two men in the boat, where one baptizes the other and then the latter absolves the former. The Confessions say that by this simple request and act “one becomes the minister or pastor of another.”³¹ This does not mean that such an act placed these two men into the Office of the Ministry with tenured calls that needed to be confirmed by the church at large with ordination should they be rescued. No, the point *The Treatise* is driving at is laid out before the story, “wherever the church exists, there also is the right to administer the gospel.”³²

At times, Luther speaks of such emergency situations by saying that a Christian might use his right to publicly exercise the Means of Grace, even without a mediate call. As Walther quotes him in *Church and Ministry*, “There is a difference between administering a common right by the command of the congregation and using that right in an emergency. In a congregation, in which everyone has the right, none should use that right without the will and appointment of the congregation. But in an emergency anyone may use it who so desires.”³³ At other times, Luther still speaks of the propriety of an informal call in such circumstances; thus, Walther also quotes Luther: “he should not put himself forward but let others call and put him forth so that he might preach and teach in the place at the command of others.”³⁴

So also Walther quotes Johann Gallus, professor of the Augsburg Confession and pastor at Erfurt during the days of the Reformation, who said, “Therefore, not only ministers but, in most urgent and extreme emergency (that is, when no pastor can be obtained and a Christian is asked by a fellow believer), laymen are also permitted to administer Holy Communion, to baptize, and to pronounce absolution.”³⁵ Likewise Tilemann Hershuisius, Professor of Theology at Rostock and Heidelberg in the time of the Reformation, is quoted by Walther saying, “In such emergencies a Christian should not be troubled about being a busybody in another’s

business, but he should know that he is performing a true and due call of God and that his ministry is as efficacious as if it were ratified by the laying on of hands for the office of the ministry in the whole church.”³⁶ Thus there is a “true and due” call that is informal and is simply the request of a fellow Christian, yet it too is at the same time divine in nature.

It was not only because the Roman bishops would not carry out their responsibility to ordain that the reformers arrived at this theology concerning the priesthood of all believers and the Office of the Ministry. Nor was it simply response to enthusiasts who saw no need for a mediate call or the Office of the Ministry. Rather, these influences precipitated the reformers’ study, discovery, and articulation of the doctrine of the call and of the office. This doctrine, in a freeing fashion, affirms this God-given right of the local church.

In other words, just because our Synod is not in the same context of having an oppressive ecclesiology that refuses to ordain men as pastors does not mean that this theology, which centers this right to choose and call men into a service of Word and Sacrament in the local congregation, is inapplicable. The theology itself is scriptural, true, and timeless.

Of these different types of calls listed above, the formal call to the Office of the Ministry was the most common practice among the Lutheran confessors. Yet all of the understandings of the word “call” that validate a person’s public use of Word and Sacraments—whether in the Office of the Ministry, in a subordinate or auxiliary office, or in situations of necessity—are in view in the confessor’s choice of words in Augsburg XIV, “*rite vocatus*.”³⁷

Even if never placed into regular practice, the call to subordinate or auxiliary offices and the call of necessity were in the experience of the confessors. That is to say, the reformers saw situations that they needed to respond to outside of the norm of ordaining men to be pastors; and, in their theological reflections on this matter, they recognized other valid understandings of a proper call, namely, the informal call in necessity and the use of subordinate offices. Some of these same reformers had input in framing, and others were among the first confessors of *The Augsburg Confession*. While the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* following The Confutation’s rebuttal concerning canonical ordination narrows the discussion at that point specifically to call and ordination to the Office of the Ministry, as also does the *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope* when it addresses the Roman bishops who withhold ordination of pastors, the *Augsburg Confession* is written more broadly. In a beautiful stroke of Gospel-inspired wording, it does not limit itself to discussion of the Office of the Ministry but picks up the whole of the preceding theology when it says, “concerning church order . . . no one should publicly preach, teach, or administer the sacraments unless properly called (*rite vocatus*).”³⁸

This is the theology captured in the sources cited in Walther's *Church and Ministry* and upon which Walther builds his theses. This theology was hotly debated in the early days of the LCMS, and since then Walther's compendium, *Church and Ministry*, has become the statement of our Synod on these matters. Yet this ongoing struggle over the free course of Gospel proclamation has continued. It was found in the discussions over the *Reiseprediger*,³⁹ the traveling lay preachers utilized in the Western District of our Synod in its early years, and this struggle continues in our discussions today. These timeless truths become clouded in the life of the church by our polity and practical arrangements and need again and again to find expression in our ecclesiology so that the Gospel may have its free course among us.

These timeless truths become clouded in the life of the church by our polity and practical arrangements and need again and again to find expression in our ecclesiology so that the Gospel may have its free course among us.

This is of course not all that is to be said regarding the theology of church and ministry. Even Walther acknowledges that concerning his monumental work. Instead, he stated, "it was, of course, not our intention to present the doctrines of church and ministry in their completeness. . . . It was our purpose to stress only those points concerning which there prevails a difference and to embody only so much uncontested material as is demanded by the context."⁴⁰ This also was the task in the preceding theological statement. The remainder of this report will address specifically the words of the Task Force Report, both affirming aspects and addressing criticisms.

Review of Task Force Report on 2013 LCMS Convention Resolution 4-06a

In keeping with this theology of church and ministry as enumerated above, the first step in responding to the Task Force Report on 2013 LCMS Convention Resolution 4-06a is to affirm and celebrate these shared beliefs and common theology as they are expressed in the report.

Shared Theology that is Affirmed:

The mission of Christ given by Jesus to the apostles extends to the whole church, both lay and clergy.

The Lord's promised presence and His command to preach the saving Gospel to the nations establish both the daily witness of the entire church [laity] and the office of preaching in the church. . . . The office of preaching

in the church and the proclamation of ordinary believers in daily life do not compete, but correlate with and complement one another.⁴¹

The first president of the LCMS, Rev. Dr. C. F. W. Walther preached a sermon in 1842, in which he proclaimed,

Thus, my dear ones, you see: the office of Preacher or Caretaker of souls has not been instituted so that no one else is responsible for teaching or the care of souls. No, the whole congregation is to be a holy people, a royal priesthood. . . . Oh, how differently things would look; how much greater and more wonderful would be the blessing of the Word of God, if each Christian recognized his holy calling and administered his royal priesthood. With that in mind the Apostle cries to the Corinthians, “*Strive to love. Be zealous for the spiritual gifts, but primarily for the gift of prophesying Christ’s message of salvation.*” [The German imperative is plural, denoting all of the people.]⁴²

The Office of the Ministry is not optional for the Church, nor is it a humanly created institution of the church.

Originally published in 1852 as *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt*, Walther’s *Church and Ministry* lays forth quite clearly a scriptural and confessional case for distinguishing the office of the ministry from the priesthood of all believers, emphasizing that the ministry is a particular office established by God which the church is bound to uphold by divine command and not on an arbitrary or optional basis. *Church and Ministry* anchors this teaching in a multitude of scriptural witnesses, and AC V, AC XIV, AC XXVIII, AAC XIII, the Treatise, and FC SD XII among other confessional sources. In addition, Walther cites Luther and many Lutheran fathers to make his case.⁴³

Indeed, here the conclusion of the report even asks if those who support Licensed Lay Deacon ministry can agree to this. As the theological statement above affirms, the answer is “yes.”

Can we not agree that our Confessions remind us that the Office of the Ministry and the Royal Priesthood stand together in a complementary relationship, but also not one without distinction? The Lord of the church has given ministers to His church so that the church may be served faithfully and competently.⁴⁴

Those who serve in Word and Sacrament ministry should not be imposed upon congregations nor should they carry out this ministry without a proper call.

Those who preach and administer Christ’s gifts must be examined in their personal life and in their ability to teach rightly. They are not to be imposed

on congregations, but freely chosen by the flock that will be served by them.⁴⁵

The Pastoral Epistles summarize the qualities the church must look for in her pastoral servants. Above all, they must be “above reproach” so as not to put obstacles in the way of the Gospel and must be “able to teach” so that they proclaim Law and Gospel clearly. Self chosen good works quickly become idolatry. Therefore, no one is able to certify himself or declare himself qualified for ministry, but the Church as the Bride of Christ is to put in place the structures necessary to assure herself that her ministers are qualified. No one should set himself up as pastor, so churches develop procedures by which pastors are called.⁴⁶

It is the Word which restricts those who should preach, even though the Word also affirms that every Christian is a priest (1 Pet 2:5, 9; Rev 1:6; 5:10).⁴⁷

The rite of ordination is by apostolic custom the manner in which the church publicly confirms the call of a congregation and places pastors into the Office of the Ministry.

The rite of ordination does not confer a special character or power on the person. It is also, as Walther emphasized, an apostolic custom and not a divine mandate. . . . Ordination, as a rite, is not mandated by the Lord.⁴⁸

Luther was just as emphatic. Referring to the public ministers by the term “priest” as was still current at his time, Luther writes: “. . . whoever does not preach the Word, though he was called by the church to do this very thing, is no priest at all, and that the sacrament of ordination can be nothing else than a certain rite by which the church chooses its preachers.” Walther is therefore following this understanding of ordination when he says of it: “The ordination of those who are called with the laying on of hands is not a divine institution but an apostolic, churchly order and only a solemn public confirmation of the call.”⁴⁹

When no believers are present, a Christian needs no formal call but sheer duty to the Gospel is such a call in itself.

The Word also affirms that every Christian is a priest (1 Pet 2:5, 9; Rev 1:6; 5:10), that all Christians are “taught by God” (John 5:45), and that, as Luther explained, when any Christian is with those who do not know Christ “it is his duty to preach and to teach the gospel.” “In such a case a Christian looks with brotherly love at the need of the poor and perishing souls and does not wait until he is given a command or letter from a prince or bishop. For need breaks all laws and has none.” There is no biblical restriction on sharing the faith in one’s daily vocation in the world.⁵⁰

All these statements are common in our theology, and our whole Synod can rejoice together in them.

Now this paper will turn its attention to and respond to the critiques of Licensed Lay Deacons in the ministry of Word and Sacrament as enumerated in the report.

Concluding Remarks

The recommendations of the Task Force Report to end Licensed Lay Deacon ministry and instead utilize only ordained pastors for Word and Sacrament ministry results from an unfortunate narrowing of the definition of call. Indeed this is true not only in terms of the way Augsburg XIV is interpreted but it's also seen in our synodical documents like *The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature*, published by the CTCR in September 1981, which states, "In order to clarify what is meant by call we define it as follows: A person is 'called' when he or she is summoned by the church to the office of Word and Sacrament or to an office auxiliary to it on a full-time permanent basis and by education, by certification, and by solemn and public act (e.g., ordination or commissioning)." ⁵¹

Increasingly congregations are in need of servants in Word and Sacrament who are not "full-time" and for whom ministry is not their primary livelihood. This is true in small congregations that cannot afford a full-time pastor, in congregations where the pastor serving simply needs assistance in carrying out the functions of the office, in places where ethnic ministry is growing and expanding, and in new starts where the Holy Spirit is moving powerfully and effectively.

It is not reasonable to expect that every congregation can afford all the full-time pastors it might need, nor that there are enough retired pastors in a local region who have the ability and desire to serve those ministries. Licensed Lay Deacon ministry meets these needs in a responsible way within our theology of church and ministry. Rather than further restricting the guidelines for who may participate in Word and Sacrament ministry, it would be a blessing to our Synod if we were to explore more avenues for equipping and engaging laity for ministry of all kinds responsibly under the oversight of those called to the Office of the Ministry.

(Follow this link or go to lsfm.global to read the author's analysis of the specific issues raised in Task Force Report on 2013 LCMS Convention Resolution 4-06a.)

Endnotes

¹ 2013 Resolution 4-06a Task Force Report to the Synod, July 2015, 6.

² Ibid., 13.

³ Ibid., 3.

⁴ Ken Schurb warns against creating caricatures of Walther in “Was Walther Waltherian?” *Concordia Journal*, 37:3 (Summer, 2011): 189–200. The first of such caricatures that he points out comes from those who claim, based on Walther’s high esteem for the priesthood of all believers, that he would have supported occasional lay preachers. Schurb demonstrates this to be a false caricature of Walther’s view. The theological statement above, as well as the rest of this document, will heed that due caution and will not posit of what Walther would have or would not have approved. Rather, it will simply quote the sources cited by Walther in *Church and Ministry* and quote Walther himself at times as he draws theological understandings from these sources. The purpose is not to be “Waltherian” but rather to let the Lutheran Fathers, the Scriptures, and the Early Church speak through these sources collected in a work, *Church and Ministry*, that the LCMS has since its early days affirmed.

⁵ The term Office of the Ministry is used in this document to refer to that same highest office in the church otherwise known as the “Predigtamt,” “The Pastoral Office,” “Office of the Public Ministry,” or “Office of the Holy Ministry.”

⁶ C. F. W. Walther, *Church and Ministry*, trans. J. T. Mueller (St. Louis: CPH, 1987), 185.

⁷ The full expression of that quote is familiar from our Confessions, *Augsburg Confession* Article V: “So that we may obtain this faith, the ministry of teaching the gospel and administering the sacraments was instituted. For through the word and sacraments as through instruments the Holy Spirit is given, who effects faith where and when it pleases God in those who hear the gospel.” Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, ed., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 41.

⁸ Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 334.

⁹ *The Treatise* in this section on “The Power and Jurisdiction of Bishops” explicitly references the *Augsburg Confession* and *Apology* to define what it means by this power. See Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 340. Often in the *Augsburg Confession*, the term “power of the keys” narrowly refers to absolution or retention of sin in the context of confession and absolution. *Augsburg Confession* Article XXVIII, however, which corresponds to this particular topic, defines the term more broadly as the public use of the means of grace (God’s Word and Sacraments): “Our people teach as follows. According to the gospel the power of the keys or of the bishops is a power and command of God to preach the gospel, to forgive or retain sin, and to administer and distribute the sacraments.” Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 92.

¹⁰ Walther, *Church and Ministry*, 56.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, 57.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 163–164.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 161.

¹⁶ CTCR, *Theology and Practice of “The Divine Call”* (St. Louis: LCMS, 2003), 10.

¹⁷ Walther, *Church and Ministry*, 219.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 262.

¹⁹ CTCR, *The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature* (St. Louis: LCMS, 1981), 22 states “As a matter of uniform nomenclature and in accordance with common understanding, the term ‘ordination’ should be reserved for a man’s entry into the office of the public ministry. The initial acceptance by the church of the gift also of those who are to serve in the vital auxiliary offices should be carried out with solemnity befitting the office. Tradition,

common expectations, and the uniqueness of the pastoral office speak against using the term 'ordination' for other than the office of the public ministry."

²⁰ CTCR, *Theology and Practice of the Divine Call*, 13–17.

²¹ Walther, *Church and Ministry*, 289–290.

²² *Ibid.*, 289.

²³ *Ibid.*, 298.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 293.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 296–297.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 299.

²⁷ The tenure of "subordinate" or "auxiliary" calls is not addressed specifically in C. F. W. Walther's *Church and Ministry*, nor is the extent of the functions of the ministry which these offices may exercise. The CTCR document *The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature* (p. 35) states without further supporting citation: "Functions that are essential exercises of the ministry of word and sacrament should be performed by those who hold the office of the public ministry," not by those in auxiliary offices. However, the sources cited by C. F. W. Walther in *Church and Ministry* and quoted in this document will show that statement to be inadequate. The CTCR document, *Theology and Practice of the Divine Call* (pp. 19–20), cites additional writings of Walther, outside of *Church and Ministry*, to explain Walther's view that rejects the idea of a temporary call, which was prevalent in American Lutheranism in the mid-nineteenth century. He writes, "Unfortunately it has become customary in our country to hire ministers for one year, even as we hire our servants and cattle herders. . . . Even in emergencies these calls with a time limit cannot be justified." The basis for this explained in the CTCR document is "The very idea that a divine call could be issued for a set number of years was a contradiction in terms. Since God is the one who issues the call." While the issue of the tenure of divine calls is beyond the scope of this document, let it simply be said that the divine nature of a call need not contradict the possibility of its being short term. If God calls a person to the ministry mediately, through the church, then what scriptural reason would prevent God, through the church, from mediately determining the tenure of that call based upon its need for ministry? The CTCR document also cites Franz Pieper who reasoned for the possibility of "calls of temporary assistance," while still maintaining Walther's rejection of "temporary calls." These discussions themselves reveal an underdeveloped area of our theology and the want for some understanding of the "temporary" needs for assistance in the public use of Word and administration of the Sacraments in the church.

²⁸ Walther, *Church and Ministry*, 297.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 219.

³⁰ Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 340–341.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 341.

³² *Ibid.*, 340–341.

³³ Walther, *Church and Ministry*, 162.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 164.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 280–281.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 281.

³⁷ This is contrary to the opinion of the CTCR, *Theology and Practice of the Divine Call* (St. Louis: LCMS, 2003), which recognizes only the formal call to the Office of the Ministry as fitting within the meaning of "rite vocatus." For a more detailed defense of the understanding

of “*rite vocatus*” presented above, see Michael T. Von Behren, “Rehabilitating the Doctrine of the Call: Building Strength and Agility for Mission,” *Lutheran Mission Matters*, 24:1 (January 2016): 96–117.

³⁸ Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 47.

³⁹ C. F. W. Walther participated in producing twenty-eight additional theses to address the *Reiseprediger*, traveling lay preachers, who were subsequently adopted by the Western District. They can be found in LCMS, 1863 Proceedings, pp. 56–58. Karl Wyneken, “Missouri Molds a Ministry for Mission,” *CHI45* (May 1972): 69–88, among which include these:

“9. Love is the queen of all laws, more so than all regulations, i.e., in cases of necessity it knows no commandment.

10. There are cases of necessity in which also the regulation of the public Office of the Ministry cannot and should not be observed. Exodus 4:24–26.

11. A case of necessity occurs when, by legalistic observance of the regulation, souls would be lost instead of saved and love would thereby be violated.”

Yet even with this concession for emergency use of Word and Sacrament by lay preachers, it was determined that these laymen should not administer the Lord’s Supper. However, this was not because of lack of right or ability, but rather because “the traveling preacher does not possess the required knowledge of those who come to the Lord’s Supper, and since on account of the press of time he cannot prepare them for the Holy Supper.” This is cited by William C. Weinrich in “Should a Laymen Discharge the Duties of the Holy Ministry?” *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, Volume 68:3/4 (July/October 2004): 207–229. Weinrich cites this to support the conclusion that “The exegetical, dogmatic, and pastoral tradition of the Lutheran heritage admits no circumstance that justifies the use of unordained laymen for the purposes of preaching, baptizing, and administration of the holy supper.” While these theses do indicate that the debate was ongoing in the early LCMS and even now, and that Walther himself wrestled with these issues, it does not seem to indicate that the issue is as clear or resolved as Weinrich suggests. Do the *Reiseprediger Theses* provide circumstances where laymen may carry out these functions or not? So then, as also today, it is beneficial for us to listen to Walther’s fundamental thesis contained in *Church and Ministry* and beyond Walther, to listen carefully to the sources he collects and cites for us in that work, which do offer broader understandings of the call to publicly use Word and Sacrament, beyond simply the call to the Office of the Ministry.

⁴⁰ Walther, *Church and Ministry*, 9.

⁴¹ *2013 Resolution 4-06a Task Force Report to the Synod*, 1–2.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 27.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁵¹ CTCR, *The Ministry Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature*, 29.

Celebrating the Ministry of Licensed Lay Deacons: A Theological Review of the Task Force Report on 2013 LCMS Convention Resolution 4-06a

Michael T. Von Behren

Editor’s Note: This is the author’s analysis of the specific issues raised in Task Force Report on 2013 LCMS Convention Resolution 4-06a. To see the author’s article in *Lutheran Mission Matters*, go to lsfm.global.

Response to Critiques of Licensed Lay Deacon Ministry of Word and Sacrament:

1. The Task Force Report on 4-06a notes that many in the LCMS are uncomfortable with non-ordained men participating in the distinctive functions of the Office of the Ministry and suggests that the practice itself is therefore “confusing,” “schismatic,” and “divisive.”

The following quotes state the position of The Report:

The matter of licensing lay deacons for preaching and sacramental administration has been a divisive, polarizing aspect of Synod’s life for over a quarter century.⁵² . . . None of this denies that the church is free to have or not have an office of deacon, but the definition of that office would be a matter of human authority, not divine authority, and it should not create confusion about the necessity of the one office of preaching.⁵³ . . . Therefore, because our congregations are part of a wider fellowship, we call only such men as are properly certified, and we seek the recognition of the wider Church by ordaining (and publicly installing) them to office. We believe omitting any of these elements would be schismatic and contrary to the “catholicity” of the Church and the unity of our Synodical fellowship.⁵⁴ . . . The result has been confusion and division, rather than order and harmony.⁵⁵

Just because there is confusion or divided opinions in the church over a topic or practice does not make that practice itself divisive, schismatic, or inappropriate. There was considerable division and confusion over the practice of bringing uncircumcised gentiles into the church in the early days of the church’s life and mission as evidenced in the book of Acts and the letters of Paul. Yet that did not mean that the practice itself was unfounded, divisive, or schismatic. Rather, through those, at times vigorous, exchanges the Lord affirmed the truth of His Gospel message in the church, namely, that “The

Copyright 2016 Lutheran Society for Missiology. Used by permission.

View *Lutheran Mission Matters* 24, no. 2 (2016) at <http://lsfm.global/>.

Membership in LSFM is available at <http://lsfm.global/joinlsfm.htm>.

E-mail lsfmissiology@gmail.com to purchase a print copy of a single issue.

gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise of Christ Jesus through the gospel” (Eph 3:6) apart from circumcision.

Likewise, the Reformers earned the moniker “protestants,” as if they were the schismatic ones creating division in the church. Yet we all acknowledge them to have been holding onto the truth of the Gospel amidst a cloud of human tradition and false theology that was prevailing in the Roman Church.

So also this very topic of church and ministry was hotly debated in the early years of the LCMS. Some considered the upstarts from Perry County, Missouri, to be divisive and schismatic among Lutherans by separating themselves from the succession of church and ministry passed down from the apostles through bishops, declaring themselves to be church, and affirming their rights to have Word and Sacrament ministry in their midst. Yet it was out of this debate that our theology of church and ministry came to be so clearly researched and expressed as we have come to have it in Walther’s *Church and Ministry*.

So also, we should pray that through these years of debate, unsettledness, and at times heated discussion over the use of Licensed Lay Deacons in Word and Sacrament ministry the Lord would again affirm in His Church the blessed ways that laymen may participate in Word and Sacrament ministry for the sake of the Gospel.

Recognizing that some are uncomfortable with this practice, that some may even be confused whether it is valid and efficacious to receive Word and Sacrament ministry from a layman, and that others may be concerned that it depreciates the Office of the Ministry, these additional voices from Walther’s *Church and Ministry* supplement the statement of theology above:

Zacharias Grapius (Professor of Theology at Rostock in the seventeenth century): “The laymen are priests and apt to perform all ecclesiastical functions of the ministry by virtue of an inward ability. So also they can administer the Lord’s Supper. We must not think that a sacrament is a less valid sacrament when a layman administers it, moved perhaps by an emergency or an error.”⁵⁶

Tilemann Hershuisius: “Ministers and pastors have been appointed and separated from ordinary Christians in order that there might be certain persons who preach the gospel, serve the congregation, and administer the sacraments. . . . Otherwise, there is no difference between ministers and ordinary Christians. In the kingdom of Christ the one has no more authority than the other. From this it also follows that ordinary Christians, in such cases when no upright minister of the Word is to be had, may preach the Gospel, remit sins, baptize, and administer the Lord’s Supper.”⁵⁷

Polycarp Leyser (Professor of Theology at Wittenberg in the sixteenth century): “Although the public ministry ordinarily belongs only to those

who have been duly called by the church and who in the name of God and the power of the church exercise the power to loose and bind, nevertheless, in an emergency this power reverts to the next best Christian.”⁵⁸ Or again, “Nevertheless every single Christian, even the most humble, retains this right inviolate, which he has because of Christ’s bestowal of the keys. . . . They indeed share in all things and all things are theirs, whether it be Paul or Peter, life or death, things present or things to come (1 Cor. 3:21). . . . But for the sake of order, they elect certain persons to whom they entrust the administration of the keys of the kingdom of heaven. So there are among us deacons, pastors, doctors, bishops, and superintendents so that all things, according to Paul’s direction, are done decently and in order (1 Cor. 14:40).”⁵⁹

Tertullian: “The right to baptize is certainly that of the chief priest, who is the bishop; but after him also the presbyters or deacons possess it, but not without the consent of the bishop. This is for the honor of the whole church; if that remains inviolate, then also peace remains inviolate. In addition, laymen also possess this right. . . . Therefore, Baptism, which everywhere is God’s same gift, can be administered by all.”⁶⁰ And again, “Are not also we laymen priests? It is written: ‘He has made us kings and priests before God.’ . . . Hence, whenever there is no assembly of members of the ecclesiastical rank, you administer the Lord’s Supper and baptize, and are to yourself alone a priest. Whenever there are three, there is the church, though they are only laymen; for everyone lives to himself, and God is not a respecter of persons.”⁶¹

2. The Task Force Report on 4-06a acknowledges only a limited sense in which in cases of emergency a laymen might perform functions of the Office of the Ministry.

The following quote states the position of The Report:

Emergencies and other unforeseen circumstances will occur that will make it impossible for a pastor to serve his congregation on a given Sunday. The time-honored approach to such occasions has been to designate a man (typically an elder or perhaps another called auxiliary minister) to conduct Matins or another service from the hymnal. . . . A sermon can be prepared by the pastor to be read in the service. Of course, another way to address pastoral absence is for congregations to re-schedule their service times. . . . In all such cases where it is simply impossible for a pastor to preach or conduct worship, care should be taken so that an exceptional circumstance does not create confusion or become a precedent for errant practices. . . . A pastor’s illness and unavoidable absence on a given Sunday presents an emergency need. But, when there will be no pastor for the foreseeable

future, a thoughtfully considered, theologically orthodox answer, rather than “emergency” remedies, is needed.⁶²

As has been shown in the theological statement and in the sources cited in response to the first critique above, the emergency use of Word and Sacrament ministry by laity is not theologically unorthodox, nor is it an errant practice even should the laymen lead a service including the Lord’s Supper and undertake to prepare the sermon and preach it himself. This emergency use of Word and Sacrament shows in clearest and simplest form the truest aspect of our theology regarding the church and ministry, that the proclamation of the Gospel and administration of it in the Sacraments are given freely by God to His Church, and He does not want His Church deprived of them. Therefore, He has given them and their use to all believers.

In regard to what constitutes an emergency situation, the Task Force suggests a one-Sunday absence of a pastor. Others at times speak of life or death situations. Yet hear how such emergency situations are defined in the sources cited by Walther in *Church and Ministry*.

Tilemann Hershuisius: “There can be no doubt that in an emergency, when no duly called pastor can be obtained, every Christian has the power and is permitted, according to God’s Word and out of Christian love, to attend to the ministry of the Word by preaching the divine word and administering the sacraments. . . . But here we speak of what a Christian may do in an emergency when no godly and sincere minister of the church may be obtained, for example, when some Christians are in a place where no appointed pastor is to be had . . . or when some Christians are among Calvinists, Schwenckfelders, Adiaphorists, or Majorists, whom they must avoid as false teachers.”⁶³

The very circumstance used here in this example is a matter of geography, not of life and death. It is a common occurrence in many LCMS districts. Needless to say, this emergency exercise of the Word and Sacraments by laymen goes way beyond the pastor being sick for a single Sunday. The emergency situation exists wherever and as long as the need exists and a pastor is not available to serve that need, for whatever reason.

3. The Task Force Report on 4-06a acknowledges that Licensed Lay Deacons have a “call of sorts” but does not consider that “call” to fit the meaning of the expression “*rite vocatus*” in Augsburg Confession XIV.

The following quotes state the position of The Report:

The proper calling—*rite vocatus*—involves several aspects. The Task Force commends to the Synod the understanding of this phrase that was emphasized in the CTCR’s 2003 report, *Theology and Practice of “the*

Divine Call” Noting Melanchthon’s references to the rights of calling, choosing (or electing), and ordaining, *Divine Call* argues that, “Taken together, the terms used by the Treatise constitute and explain the ‘rightly called’ (*rite vocatus*) of AC XIV.” Further, *Divine Call* suggests how the three aspects of “rightly called” may be distinguished. . . . Therefore, the confessional understanding of *rite vocatus* involves three elements: examination (or certification), call, and ordination.⁶⁴ . . . While there is a call of sorts by the congregation, when the church inducts a licensed lay deacon, it specifically does *not* place the man into the pastoral office.⁶⁵

Again, as stated clearly in the above theological statement, we must recognize that there are different types of “proper” or “right” calls that may validate a person’s public exercise of Word and Sacraments. The primary one of these is the call to the Office of the Ministry as described in the Task Force’s Report. Yet there are others. One is a call to a subordinate or auxiliary office, and yet another is in the situation of necessity where the call may be simple, informal, and from a fellow Christian. As the sources in Walther’s *Church and Ministry* cited above state, even this call of necessity is a “true and due” call. That the call to preach may be right and proper, even without placing one into the Office of the Ministry, hear from Luther himself about the author of our beloved Augsburg Confession, the laymen Philip Melanchthon. This comes from a letter in September of 1521 written to George Spalatin:

I really wish Philip would also preach to the people somewhere in the city on festival days after dinner to provide a substitute for the drinking and gambling. This could become a custom which would introduce freedom and restore the form and manners of the early church. For if we have broken all laws of men and cast off their yokes, what difference would it make to us that Philip is not anointed or tonsured but married? Nevertheless he is truly a priest and actually does the work of a priest, unless it is not the office of a priest to teach the Word of God. In that case Christ himself would not be a priest, for he taught now in synagogues, then in ships, now at the shoreline, then in the mountains. In a word, [Christ] was always and everywhere all things to all people at all times. Since, therefore, Philip is called by God and performs the ministry of the Word, as no one can deny. . . . Therefore he has to be called and driven [to preaching] by the order and pressure of the whole congregation. For if the congregation demands and requests it, he ought not and cannot say no.⁶⁶

It is evident that Luther does not here intend that Melanchthon should be ordained into the Office of the Ministry, but simply that he be called to preach because, in another letter dated the same day to the nobleman Nicholas von Amsdorf, Luther says, “You have a fitting answer if someone wants to object that a layman should not

preach the gospel in a corner; answer that [Melanchthon] is doing it under the auspices of the University.”⁶⁷

4. The Task Force Report on 4-06a notes that Licensed Lay Deacons carry out the functions of the Office of the Ministry but are not placed into that office. The Task Force Report argues that all those carrying out the functions of preaching and administering the sacraments should be placed into the Office of the Ministry.

The perspective of The Report is shown in the following quotes:

When the church inducts a licensed lay deacon, it specifically does not place the man into the pastoral office. Yet the church is telling the man to go and to do pastoral work (albeit under supervision). The people see the man behaving as their pastor, yet they are not to call him pastor, but deacon.⁶⁸ . . . However, this principle should always apply: If we ask a man to go and do pastoral work, we should make him a pastor. . . . That is, he should in some public, mutually agreeable manner, be examined for fitness, called by a congregation, and ordained to the Office of the Ministry.⁶⁹

This one-size-fits-all approach is not reflective of the biblical witness where there are various deacons, assistants, and other ministers serving in Word and Sacrament ministry of whom there is no record that they were ever ordained as overseers, elders, or pastors. Consider for example Apollos in Acts 18. When Priscilla and Aquila “explained to him the way of God more accurately” (Acts 18:26), there is no record that they ordained him. Yet he continued to preach and carry out his ministry in Ephesus and later in Corinth with the Apostle Paul’s encouragement (1 Cor 16:12).

The theological statement supporting Licensed Lay Deacon ministry above presented the case for subordinate or auxiliary offices in ministry also participating in the public exercise of Word and Sacrament as a function of the Office of the Ministry. That such assisting roles are legitimate, note also the following sources cited in Walther’s *Church and Ministry* on such offices:

Chemnitz: “Paul and Barnabas took Mark with them as their assistant (Acts 13:5). But he was not merely to render them bodily service; he was to be entrusted with some functions of the ministry of the Word, as Paul states (Acts 15:38). In the church at Corinth there were apostles, prophets, and teachers; some spoke with tongues, others expounded the scriptures, others spoke psalms, others prayers, praise, and thanksgiving not merely in private devotions [Privatgottesdiensten] but in the public assemblies of the congregation (1 Cor. 12:8ff; 14:2ff).”⁷⁰

Luther: “The office to preach the Gospel is the highest of all, for it is the apostolic office that lays the foundation for all others that belong to all. . . . Even Christ above all only preached the Gospel as he who was to

administer the highest office and not to baptize. So also Paul boasts that he was not sent to baptize, which is a minor and subsequent office.”⁷¹ And again, “John 4:2 tells us that Christ did not baptize but that he only preached and Paul boasts that he was not sent to baptize but to preach the Gospel (1 Cor. 1:17). Therefore, the one to whom the ministry is entrusted is entrusted with the highest office in Christendom. After that he may also baptize, administer the sacrament, and minister to souls. Or if he does not desire these duties, he may adhere to preaching, letting others baptize and administer the minor offices as did Christ and all his apostles.”⁷²

Polycarp Leyser: “Finally, since one minister does not suffice for a large congregation or an entire city, it is the duty of the church administrators to ordain and appoint others as deacons, pastors, or fellow ministers.”⁷³

Such use of assisting offices affirms that our theology does not mandate that all who participate in Word and Sacrament ministry must be placed into the highest office, The Office of the Ministry, or as we now commonly call it, the office of “Pastor.”

The Task Force Report says, “The practice of licensing lay deacons to preach and teach and preside for the Supper is, at its core, not clear.”⁷⁴ In truth it is only unclear if one attempts to limit the use of the Word and Sacraments to the highest office, that of the Pastor. This is the case even in the 1981 CTCR document *The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature*. It states:

However, the reference to auxiliary offices in the New Testament indicates that some of the actual functions of the office of the public ministry may be performed by others under his guidance and direction. . . . In any case, he must not disregard his responsibility as the overseer. If that principle is kept clearly in mind, various arrangements for the auxiliary offices to assist the pastoral ministry are possible and often desirable. . . . Functions that are essential exercises of the ministry of Word and sacrament should be performed by those who hold the office of the public ministry. Thus preaching in the worship service, leading the public prayer, celebration of the Sacrament of the Altar, baptisms, wedding and funeral services should be carried out by those who hold the office of public ministry.⁷⁵

When a synodical fellowship attempts to limit Word and Sacrament ministry only to the highest office and prohibit it in the subordinate or auxiliary offices, things do become unclear because it does not fit the biblical witness, the writings of the Lutheran fathers, nor the long and varied history of the church.

Indeed, there is an office of deacon in Scripture clearly differentiated by the Apostle Paul from the office of bishop, which we call pastor, in 1 Timothy 3:1–13 and Philippians 1:1. Paul speaks about some elders who labor in preaching and teaching distinguished from the elders who do not do so in 1 Timothy 5:17.

There are deacons placed into an office of food service among widows so that the apostles can focus on prayer and preaching the Word in Acts 6:2–4, yet in the next two chapters some of these same deacons are preaching and administering Sacraments. Walther identifies both offices above as subordinate or auxiliary offices in *Church and Ministry*. He says “the incumbents of the subordinate offices are called deacons.”⁷⁶ He then speaks about the “elders who do not labor in the Word and doctrine” (1 Tim 5:17) saying that they likewise fill an “auxiliary” office.⁷⁷

In support of this position, Walther cites Chemnitz, who speaks of these as “grades” and “orders” of the one Office of the Ministry rather than using the terminology “subordinate” or “auxiliary.” Chemnitz speaks of the distinctions in Ephesians 4:11, namely, apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher, and says, “The apostles included all these grades in the term ‘elder’ and ‘bishop.’ At times they also called them by the general term ‘deacon,’ to whom the ministry of the Word and Sacraments was entrusted (Col. 1:7, 1 Thess. 3:2, 1 Cor. 3:5; 11:23; Eph. 3:7).”⁷⁸ He then goes on to say, “Paul himself sometimes attended to the ministry of the Word in such a way that he entrusted the administering of the sacraments to others.”⁷⁹

Walther cites Luther saying that deacon ministry is about caring for the poor. So Luther writes, “A ‘bishop’ . . . must also have servants, and these are the deacons who serve the congregation in such a way that they have a list of all the poor people and care for them in all their needs with the money of the congregation.”⁸⁰ He also cites Luther saying that preaching is the “highest office” and the administration of the Sacraments is a “minor and subsequent” office.⁸¹

Cyprian, too, is cited by Walther, who says that deacons serve a ministry of the altar. Thus Cyprian writes, “The apostles observed this rule also when appointing deacons, not only bishops and pastors. The election of deacons was done carefully and cautiously by the whole assembled congregation in order that someone unworthy might not be consecrated to the ministry of the altar and the office of a pastor.”⁸² He also cites Ignatius who says of deacons, “they are not servants of food and drink but ministers of the church of God.”⁸³

In contrast to the way Luther described deacon ministry, Walther quotes Chemnitz saying that some deacons were “entrusted with more important functions of the ministry;” that is, with “the ministry of the Word”⁸⁴ and Gerhard, who said that it is “wrong to say that deacons were merely to serve tables . . . they also attended to the office of teaching.”⁸⁵

While it is true that the term deacon is fluid in Scripture, and in these quotations—sometimes designating an office, sometimes a function, and at other times carries a broader definition of servant—what is clear from all this is that the New Testament and the Church at various times throughout its rich history

has not been troubled by auxiliary or subordinate offices carrying out Word and Sacrament ministry. It is unfortunate that in our generation some are troubled by it. Yet, instead of resorting to artificial limitations and letting man's laws rule over the Gospel for the sake of order, can't we recognize that this variety and freedom of function within the subordinate or auxiliary offices is orderly and pleasing to God. We could benefit from a bit of Paul's approach, when he said, "What then? Only that in every way . . . Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice" (Phil 1:18).

5. The Task Force Report on 4-06a contends that the call of a man to serve in Word and Sacrament Ministry must be confirmed by ordination.

The following quote sums up The Report's view regarding this:

Therefore, because our congregations are part of a wider fellowship, we call only such men as are properly certified, and we seek the recognition of the wider Church by ordaining (and publicly installing) them to office. We believe omitting any of these elements would be schismatic and contrary to the "catholicity" of the Church and the unity of our Synodical fellowship.⁸⁶

Aside from the reasons above why these men are not placed into the Office of the Ministry but into subordinate or auxiliary offices, it is concerning that ordination has become such an issue that to have one serving in Word and Sacrament ministry without it causes those who called him to do so to be viewed as "schismatic." *Church and Ministry* affirms that ordination is a useful rite for placing men into the Office of the Ministry, yet as an adiaphoron, as the sources cited therein affirm it is not absolutely necessary and its omission should not be concerning. So Walther writes,

In place of dogmatic statements from the writings of the ancient church teachers we here repeat what Dannhauer reports of the ancient church: "Origen was not ordained, but when persecution set in, he went to Jerusalem, where he was permitted to preach and administer the sacraments. But Demetrius, the bishop of Alexandria disliked this, because thereby the canons of the church were not observed. However, Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem, answered him very aptly that nothing is done against custom if anyone teaches and administers the sacraments without ordination, as long as he has been called."⁸⁷

In this instance, the example is not even a situation of necessity, but simply the request of a bishop that a gifted layman preach and officiate in the Sacrament on occasion. Eusebius gives a more detailed account of this in his *Ecclesiastical History*, quoting from Bishop Alexander of Jerusalem, who appeals to this as a longstanding practice of the church.⁸⁸

Mandating an adiaphoron, even ordination, undermines the Confessions themselves. As *Formula of Concord* Article X in the *Solid Declaration* says concerning ecclesiastical practices that are called adiaphora: “We also reject and condemn as false the procedure whereby such commands are imposed by force upon the community of God as necessary.”⁸⁹

That said, there is nothing in Scripture to prevent us from ordaining deacons. After all, in Acts 6:6 the apostles did lay hands on and pray for the first deacons. However, it was to a subordinate and auxiliary office, not to the highest office, that of pastor.⁹⁰ So also, if we choose to ordain deacons to such a subordinate office, they should not be expected to meet the same educational and certification standards that our Synod has set up for pastors, even SMP pastors. However, in order to properly highlight the highest office, the Office of the Ministry, the view of the 1981 CTCR document, *The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature*, is helpful here when it reserves ordination for placing pastors into the Office of the Ministry, not men into auxiliary offices.⁹¹

6. The Task Force Report on 4-06a argues that overseeing others who serve in the functions of the Office of the Ministry is *not* a primary function of the Office of the Ministry.

The Report’s view is seen in the following quotes:

As noted above, a central assumption of LLD programs has been the idea that the practice of a pastor supervising deacons who carry out pastoral functions, such as preaching and sacramental administration under his (the pastor’s) authority, is a recovery of a New Testament emphasis on exercising “oversight.” Therefore the Task Force on Licensed Lay Deacons believes the matter of oversight must be addressed specifically. . . . Words that related to this επισκεπ- stem are not the main descriptors of the Office of the Holy Ministry, either of the officeholder or of his function. Holders of the office are described as επισκοποι only 4 times in the entire NT (Acts 20:28; Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:7), and the verb επισκέπτομαι is never used to describe the activity of the office holder. . . . The pressure of the linguistic usage of the NT is not in the direction of understanding men in the Office of the Holy Ministry as being and functioning principally as overseers.⁹²

In response, let it first be said that the argument that something is not the “main” descriptor of The Office of the Ministry does not make it any less a part of the office. Clearly from what has already been demonstrated in the exegesis of Luther above, the preaching of the Word of God is the main responsibility of the Office of the Ministry in the Scriptures, such that Luther even calls the administration of the Sacraments minor in comparison. In fact, there is hardly a specific reference to the administration of the Lord’s Supper as a function of the Office of the Ministry in the

Copyright 2016 Lutheran Society for Missiology. Used by permission.

View Lutheran Mission Matters 24, no. 2 (2016) at <http://lsfm.global/>.

Membership in LSFM is available at <http://lsfm.global/joinlsfm.htm>.

E-mail lsfmissiology@gmail.com to purchase a print copy of a single issue.

Scriptures (1 Cor 4:1, “*stewards of the mysteries of God,*” is often cited in respect to this), and yet none of us deny that it is clearly a function of the office.

Thus regarding oversight, Walther clearly states in his Thesis VIII on Ministry “The pastoral ministry [*Predigtamt*] is the highest office in the church, and from it stem all other offices in the church.”⁹³ So hear what Walther’s sources in *Church and Ministry* have to say about Pastors (Bishops) exercising oversight.

Ignatius: “Follow the bishop as Jesus Christ [follows] the Father and the elders as the apostles, and to the deacons show due respect as commanded by God. Let no one do any of those things that the good of the church demands without the bishop. Holy Communion that is celebrated under the direction of the bishop or of him whom he allows should be regarded as valid.”⁹⁴

Luther: “These are the ones placed over every office to see to it that the deacons rightly distribute the provisions [*Gut*] and are not to be lax in reproving sinners and excommunicating the impenitent, so that all offices are rightly performed. That should be the business of the bishops; for this reason they are also called overseers or *antistites* (as St. Paul here designates them), that is presiders and rulers.”⁹⁵

In a letter from Luther to a pastor whose parish involved more than one preaching location and in which a man had wormed his way in to preach by the consent of the council who had deposed the previous man without the pastor’s consent, Luther says, “This should have been done with your knowledge and on your advice as the pastor. But still worse, they appoint another in place of the one deposed without your permission. . . . For the congregation has been entrusted and commanded to you, so that it behooves no one without your knowledge to administer the office of teaching and ruling.”⁹⁶

These instances clearly show that the conclusion of the Task Force regarding the “oversight” function of the Office of the Ministry, namely, that it “oversees” ordinary Christians but not leaders participating in the functions of the Office of Ministry,⁹⁷ is not the view shared by Luther nor by the Church Fathers that Walther cites. It is also not the view of the 1981 CTCR document *The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature*, which says, “the reference to auxiliary offices in the New Testament indicates that some of the actual functions of the office of the public ministry may be performed by others under his guidance and direction. . . . In any case, he must not disregard his responsibility as the overseer.”⁹⁸

7. The Task Force Report on 4-06a finds that Licensed Lay Deacons are “called” by the congregation and are locally certified, but are not certified by the whole Synod as being “apt to teach.” This, it argues, is “schismatic” and contrary to the “unity of our Synodical fellowship.”

This view of The Report is found in the following statements:

The ordination provides the means by which the wider church—the Synod in our case—recognizes the examination and call of the individual and places him into the ministry of the church. Thus, the congregation’s call is the local affirmation of an individual’s ministry and ordination is the transparochial affirmation of the same.⁹⁹ . . . Therefore, because our congregations are part of a wider fellowship, we call only such men as are properly certified, and we seek the recognition of the wider Church by ordaining (and publicly installing) them to office. We believe omitting any of these elements would be schismatic and contrary to the “catholicity” of the Church and the unity of our Synodical fellowship.¹⁰⁰ . . . In essence, licensed lay deacons are locally certified as “able to teach” rather than certified by the whole Synodical fellowship. While there is a call of sorts by the congregation, when the church inducts a licensed lay deacon, it specifically does not place the man into the pastoral office.¹⁰¹

While this unified approach to training, certifying, and calling men into the Office of the Ministry across the Synod is a blessing and the similar process for commissioned church workers is also edifying to the church, it is not necessitated by our theology of church and ministry. Our common theology compiled in Walther’s *Church and Ministry* leaves the local congregation beautifully free to carry out ministry as it sees fit in the local congregation without approval of the entire church in far off geographical areas.

Walther uses examples of this pattern of local training, certifying, and calling as supporting documentation for Thesis VI on the ministry in *Church and Ministry*. In Walther’s day the Lutherans in Missouri were concerned with establishing a ministerium of their own without connection to a larger church body. In defense of this, Walther quotes from a situation in the seventeenth century where Lutheran congregations were popping up in Moscow and in Hungary, places far flung from Wittenberg. The question at that time was whether the men called to be pastors in those places needed transparochial affirmation from those in Wittenberg. Should these men be sent to Wittenberg to be certified and ordained? The answer was “no.” Thus *Church and Ministry* cites:

Veit Ludwig von Seckendorf¹⁰² (A Lutheran attorney, nobleman, and university chancellor in the seventeenth century): “‘Where two or three (not to speak of a larger congregation) are gathered together in my name, I am there in the midst of them’ (Matthew 18:20). From this it follows that such an assembly or congregation in itself has the power to do and execute all things that are demanded for the exercise of divine worship and for which Christ has promised his gracious presence. . . . Hence it must also have the proper and certain right to call persons for worship and ministry; for this belongs to the church or congregation, which has the authority to elect one

or several competent persons to serve as presbyters or elders and leaders in doctrine. . . . Thus, for example, the few disciples at Ephesus who were at first instructed by Apollos and then baptized by Paul, twelve in number (Acts 19:7), formed a church of Christ, and if its number had not increased, this little congregation would have had the same right that afterward the larger perishes had, of whose elders Paul says that the Holy Spirit had made them overseers to feed the church of God (Acts 20:28). He did not direct them to Jerusalem, Peter, or himself but only to the doctrine by which he declared to them all the counsel of God.”¹⁰³

Granted, Walther encourages congregations not to act alone, saying, “a vacant congregation should not act alone and according to its own opinion but seek the counsel of ministers in office whom it may consult . . . and concede to them especially the examination.”¹⁰⁴ However, where the sources in Walther’s *Church and Ministry* do speak of certification and confirmation of the wider church, it is in reference to geographically neighboring pastors. For example, he cites Cyprian:

Therefore, we must carefully maintain as a divine tradition and an apostolic practice what is also guarded by us and in almost all lands, that the appointment is rightly observed when the neighboring bishops of the province come to the congregation that know best the life of each individual and examine his way of living.¹⁰⁵

This historic pattern of local certification and placement into ministry is the pattern used in regard to Licensed Lay Deacon ministry, and this practice is healthy for the LCMS as a synodical body even if these men are not certified for use in every district of the Synod.

The sources cited in Walther’s *Church and Ministry* find in the New Testament witness the freedom to establish additional offices subordinate to the Office of the Ministry, even though these are only local and are used only in particular places and contexts. It is in this vein that Chemnitz encourages the church to remember,

It must be kept in mind (1) that God did not command which and how many grades or orders there should be; (2) that at the times of the apostles there were not always and in all congregations the same number of grades or orders, which we conclude from the letters that Paul addressed to the various congregations; and (3) that at the times of the apostles these grades were not so divided that one and the same person did not often take over and administer all of these ministerial functions.¹⁰⁶

In this freedom of the Gospel and ministry there is no reason theologically that we cannot agree to train and certify pastors and certain other subordinate or auxiliary offices at the synodical level that are used Synod-wide and still also approve districts and congregations to establish other offices such as Licensed Lay Deacons, where congregations work together with districts and neighboring pastors in their context to

certify men for such offices, call, and place them into service. Thus, the 1989 Synod Resolution 3-05b, in which the Synod together approved districts to utilize laymen in a limited sense in Word and Sacrament ministry in a responsible way under the Office of the Ministry, is, theologically speaking, wholly appropriate. We recognize that in some congregations, as also in the New Testament witness, a pastor might prefer to carry out all the Word and Sacrament functions of his office himself, while in other congregations some of these might be entrusted to those in a subordinate office. Our common theology of church and ministry as cited above from the New Testament and the plethora of Church Fathers, both Lutheran and ancient, welcomes such variety. It is not a mark of division. It is a mark of the freedom that we have and share in the Gospel.

Endnotes continued

⁵² CTCR, *The Ministry Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature*, 5.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, Footnote 21, 6.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁵⁶ Walther, *Church and Ministry*, 210.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 282.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 283.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 288.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁶² *2013 Resolution 4-06a Task Force Report to the Synod*, 23.

⁶³ Walther, *Church and Ministry*, 281.

⁶⁴ *2013 Resolution 4-06a Task Force Report to the Synod*, 9–10.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁶⁶ Martin Luther, “Letter to George Spalatin, September 9, 1521,” in vol. 48 of *Luther’s Works*, ed. J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald, and H. T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), 308.

⁶⁷ Luther, *Luther’s Works*, vol. 48, 310.

⁶⁸ *2013 Resolution 4-06a Task Force Report to the Synod*, 12.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁷⁰ Walther, *Church and Ministry*, 297.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 292.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁷⁴ *2013 Resolution 4-06a Task Force Report to the Synod*, 12.

⁷⁵ CTCR, *The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature*, 35.

⁷⁶ Walther, *Church and Ministry*, 289.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 289–290.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 298.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 293.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 292.

Copyright 2016 Lutheran Society for Missiology. Used by permission.

View Lutheran Mission Matters 24, no. 2 (2016) at <http://lsfm.global/>.

Membership in LSFM is available at <http://lsfm.global/joinlsfm.htm>.

E-mail lsfmissiology@gmail.com to purchase a print copy of a single issue.

-
- ⁸² Ibid., 245.
- ⁸³ Ibid., 196.
- ⁸⁴ Ibid., 297.
- ⁸⁵ Ibid., 238.
- ⁸⁶ *2013 Resolution 4-06a Task Force Report to the Synod*, 11.
- ⁸⁷ Walther, *Church and Ministry*, 267.
- ⁸⁸ Eusebius Pamphilius, *Church History*, in *Eusebius Pamphilius: Church History, Life of Constantine, Oration in Praise of Constantine*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wade, series 2, vol. 1 of *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library), 667–668. <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf201.pdf>.
- ⁸⁹ Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 640.
- ⁹⁰ Indeed, some of our partner churches around the world, who are in full fellowship with the LCMS and share our confession, regularly ordain men to an office of deacon, e.g., The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia.
- ⁹¹ CTCR, *The Ministry Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature*, 34.
- ⁹² *2013 Resolution 4-06a Task Force Report to the Synod*, 7.
- ⁹³ Walther, *Church and Ministry*, 289.
- ⁹⁴ Ibid., 196–197.
- ⁹⁵ Ibid., 293.
- ⁹⁶ Ibid., 226–227.
- ⁹⁷ In conclusion of the topic, The Report says, “Furthermore what are overseen by ‘overseers’ in the NT, when the noun is used, are not other leaders. It is the sheep themselves.” *2013 Resolution 4-06a Task Force Report to the Synod*, 7.
- ⁹⁸ CTCR, *The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature*, 35.
- ⁹⁹ *2013 Resolution 4-06a Task Force Report to the Synod*, 10.
- ¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 11.
- ¹⁰¹ Ibid., 12.
- ¹⁰² Viet Ludwig Von Seckendorf was an attorney and nobleman in Germany in the seventeenth century. He was influential in the start of the University at Halle and was its first chancellor. This university later combined with the University of Wittenberg to become Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg. He was an accomplished historian, as well, and wrote an influential defense of Lutheranism called *Commentarius Historicus et Apologeticus de Lutheranism sive de Reformatione*.
- ¹⁰³ Walther, *Church and Ministry*, 239–240.
- ¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 220.
- ¹⁰⁵ Walther, *Church and Ministry*, 245.
- ¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 298–299.