

Issues in Ministry
With a Special View toward our Sister Synod, the ELS

Part One: The Pastoral Office

**Part Two: Women Lectors and
Women Administering Communion to Women**

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Part One: The Pastoral Office

Ministry = One of the most controversial doctrines among Lutherans recently

Prof. John Brug in the Winter 2001 issue of *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* wrote: "The doctrine of church and ministry is without doubt the hottest topic in Lutheranism today. It is the issue which is hotly discussed 'across the board'" (p. 13-14).

My years on the CICR (starting in 1991) have seen a continuous discussion of the doctrine of the ministry.

- 1991-1994 – Discussions with the ELFK in Germany.
- 1996 – The Lutheran Confessional Synod (Rev. Randy DeJaynes in Decatur IL) breaks fellowship with WELS and ELS over the doctrine of the ministry.
- 1996 to present – The ELS is wrestling with this doctrine.

We should recognize it as a distinct blessing from God that we in WELS have for the most part enjoyed a unity of doctrine in this area!

The nub of it = What should one say about pastors?

- Is the pastoral office the only form of public ministry?
- Are pastors divinely instituted and commanded in a unique way?
- How are pastors different from other church offices?
- Are there duties that only pastors can perform?

WELS position – as seen in a 2001 LOGIA article

The public ministry can have various forms. The pastoral office is not the only form of public ministry. See "The Revised *This We Believe* of the WELS on the Ministry," pages A:2 and A:4-5.

Pastors are very important. The way we have organized our church life, we train and call pastors to be the comprehensive spiritual overseers of congregations. See pages A:6-7.

Recent events in the ELS

- 1980 – The ELS adopts a doctrinal statement on the church. There is the intention that a corresponding statement on the ministry be produced.
- 1980-1995 – Other issues take the front burner for the ELS, especially the roles of men and women and the doctrine of the Lord's Supper.
- 1994 – The ELS Doctrine Committee starts working on a doctrinal statement on the ministry.

- 1999 – The ELS begins discussion of “The Office of the Public Ministry,” a doctrinal statement produced by the ELS Doctrine Committee.
- 2002 – The ELS convention fails to approve “The Office of the Public Ministry” by a vote of 104-140.
- October 2002 – Pres. Moldstad appoints a six man committee to start over with a new doctrinal statement on the ministry – the “Presidium’s Committee on Ministry.”
- May 2004 – the PCM presents a new doctrinal statement entitled, “The Public Ministry of the Word” (PMW).
- June 2005 – “The Public Ministry of the Word” is adopted at the ELS convention by a vote of 131-79 (62-38%). 12 pastors and 5 laypeople register their “no” votes. The PMW is attached on pages A:13-16 along with the review published by the CICR on pages A:17-18.
- October 2005 – “A Statement of Opposition to the PCM Document” is signed by 22 ELS pastors.
- December 2005 – Rev. Rolf Preus publicly announces: “I cannot accept the PCM document. I will not permit it to be a standard for my teaching and I do not acknowledge it as having any authority over me whatsoever.” (“Clarifying the Issues in the ELS Ministry Debate.” This paper and other papers by Rev. Preus are available on his website: www.christforum.org).
- January 2006 – Pres. Moldstad meets with Rev. Preus, and afterward he suspends Rev. Preus from the ELS clergy roster. Rev. Preus subsequently appeals the suspension.
- September 2006 – The ELS Appeals Commission upholds the suspension of Rev. Preus.
- March 2006 through February 2007 – 8 congregations and 5 pastors who publicly sided with Rev. Preus are declared to be no longer members of the ELS.
- June 2007 – These 8 congregations and 6 pastors meet in a new association called the Association of Confessional Lutheran Churches (ACLCL).
- March 2008 – The ACLCL finalizes a Doctrinal Statement in which one can notice (attached on pages A:19-22):
 - Antithesis 1 directly condemns the WELS teaching (page A:3).
 - Antithesis 3 denies that women may be called to teach in the church. This rejects the long-standing practice of both WELS and ELS of calling women into the teaching ministry (page A-3).
 - Note also Thesis 2 – Makes it a point of doctrine that churches of the ACLCL follow “the historic liturgies of the church” (page A:2)

What does the PMW say?

There are statements in PMW that we would have been worded differently if we in WELS had written it. There is some terminology different from WELS. But PMW clearly confesses the vital truth that there are offices other than the pastoral office in the divinely instituted public ministry. Teachers of children in Christian schools, for example, are in the public ministry and are called. See pages A:14-15.

Some have felt that PMW is a compromise document. Some fear that it allows two different interpretations. Time will tell if that is true. The way ELS leaders have explained PMW to the CICR has been acceptable, however. Therefore we see nothing in PMW to disrupt our fellowship with the ELS. See page A:17-18.

What have Rev. Rolf Preus and others been saying?

- The public ministry and the pastoral office are one and the same thing. This is the only office that Jesus has instituted for his church on earth.
 - Rolf Preus: "I have argued today that the office of the public ministry and the pastoral office are the same thing. . . . We in the ELS should not adopt the new Wisconsin Synod position on the ministry. . . . We should tell them in love where we must respectfully disagree with them as we invite them to return with us to the confessional Lutheran foundation from which our synods were born." ("The Teaching of the Synodical Conference on the Office of the Public Ministry").
- There is no limited public use of the keys. Either a person is called to carry out the entire ministry of word and sacrament, or he does not have a public ministry.
 - Rolf Preus. "Neither the Bible nor the Lutheran Confessions teach us anything about a limited public use of the keys." ("Does the Bible Teach a Limited Public Use of the Keys?").
 - The "teachers" of 1 Cor. 12:28 / Ephesians 4:11 were pastors
 - The "deacons" of the NT didn't use the keys
 - Rolf Preus: "The very concept of a limited public use of the keys as this is set forth in the PCM document is foreign to the Scriptures." ("The Old Ministry Debate in the Synods of the Synodical Conference").
- The apostolic office is continued by pastors. When Christ instituted the Lord's Supper, he entrusted it to pastors. When Christ gave the Great Commission, he gave it to pastors.
 - Joseph Abrahamson: "The first gift Christ institutes for His Apostles to make use of after His ascension is the Lord's Supper. His first commission to the first Pastors as Ministers of the New Testament Church is 'do this.'" ("The Endings of the Gospels and the Institution of the Office of the Ministry").
 - Joseph Abrahamson: [Commenting on the Great Commission] "Christ selects out the eleven disciples and gives them the duty to Baptize in the name of the Holy Trinity and to teach. . . . From this we know that baptizing and teaching the Word of God are given to the Divinely Instituted Ministerial Office of the New Covenant." ("The Endings of the Gospels and the Institution of the Office of the Ministry").

- The work of the Christian day school teacher is not the work of the public ministry.
 - Rolf Preus: "The essence of the pastor's job is evangelical, while the essence of the schoolteacher's job is legal. . . . When we call the actual work of the Christian Day School teacher the work of the public ministry, we confuse law and gospel. We redefine Christ's evangelical ministry and turn it into a law ministry. . . . We have done a great disservice to many faithful Lutheran schoolteachers by telling them that they are in the ministry. They have fretted over their inability to run a classroom by the gospel." ("The Teaching of the Synodical Conference on the Office of the Public Ministry").

- Christian day school teachers don't need to be called.
 - Rolf Preus: "There is nothing in the written word of God that required us to extend 'divine calls' to parochial school teachers. To insist that this be done is legalistic. It is perfectly appropriate for church schools to hire teachers without providing tenure. There is nothing contrary to God's word in treating a parochial schoolteacher as an at will employee of the congregation." ("Clarifying the Issues in the ELS Ministry Debate").

- Women cannot be in the public ministry.
 - From "A Statement of Opposition to the PCM Document": "We believe, teach, and confess that only scripturally qualified men may be called to the Office of the Public Ministry of the Word."

- Synod presidents are not in the public ministry and should not be called.
 - Rolf Preus: "To teach that a synodical president, solely on account of his supervisory doctrinal authority over others, holds an office of divine institution is a papistic argument." ("Does the Bible Teach a Limited Public Use of the Keys").
 - Rolf Preus: "A synod president has only a human appointment, not a divine call. The false notion that a synod president has a divine call to be a synod president cheapens the doctrine of the divine call." ("Clarifying the Issues in the ELS Ministry Debate").

- It is wrong for a vicar to administer Lord's Supper, either publicly in the congregational worship service or privately to shut-in's.
 - Rolf Preus: "I think it is vital to require that only called and ordained pastors may administer the Lord's Supper under any circumstances." (Recent discussion on the Luther Quest internet discussion site)
 - Rolf Preus: "The creative word 'do this' has been given to the apostolic office. This is why vicars should not administer the Lord's Supper." (Luther Quest)

How is it that the ELS has come to have these difficulties?

The ultimate origin of these ministry ideas is the Missouri Synod where these ideas have long had a home. Over the years the ELS has colloquized a number of pastors into the ELS from the Missouri Synod. Some of them brought "Missouri" ideas of the ministry with them. Three of the pastors of the new ACLC originally came from the Missouri Synod.

Also, from 1918 until 1946 the ELS very significantly did not have its own seminary. During these years, almost all ELS pastors were trained in the Missouri Synod. Only one ELS

pastor in these years is known to have attended Mequon. The pastors trained during these years taught in the ELS until the 1980's, some with a degree of Missouri influence. Three of the pastors of the ACLC are younger men trained at Bethany Seminary.

Here is a paragraph from *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Fall 2006, commenting on the situation:

The ELS unfortunately is heir to the unresolved baggage of the Synodical Conference on the doctrine of the ministry. The ELS has officially stood side by side with WELS on the doctrine of the ministry for the past 45 years while the WELS has had a clearly articulated doctrinal statement on the ministry. But the ELS has also had significant Missouri Synod influence throughout the years. From the inception of the ELS in 1918 until the establishment of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary in 1946, nearly all ELS pastors attended Missouri Synod seminaries; almost none came to Mequon. In recent decades the ELS has also welcomed numerous ex-Missouri pastors through colloquy (p. 291).

The prognosis

Only God knows the future. Maybe the ELS will have greater unity and peace on this topic now that the separation has taken place. With the publication of the ACLC Doctrinal Statement, one can clearly see that there is a doctrinal difference and the lines are drawn.

Certainly we can continue to pray for the ELS and work to preserve our fellowship in the truth of God's Word. It always is an easy thing for the church to fall apart in dissension and splintering. It is hard work to keep things together.

May God bestow on us his grace and favor
To please him with our behavior
And live together here in love and union,
Cherishing our blest communion.
O Lord, have mercy!
Let not your good Spirit forsake us;
Grant that heav'nly minded he make us.
Give your Church, Lord to see
Days of peace and unity.
O Lord, have mercy! (CW 317:3)

Part Two: Women Lectors and Women Administering Communion to Women

The latest issues in our relationship with the ELS

The ELS became concerned when they heard of a WELS church or two making use of women lectors and women administering communion to women. This topic, therefore, has become the subject of discussions involving the CICR.

There is a very great sensitivity in the ELS about women pastors. They have seen the establishment of women pastors in ELCA. They are aware of some in the Missouri Synod who are advocating women pastors. They are rightfully nervous about what they sense is movement in this direction, fearing that it could be a slippery slope.

WELS position on women in the public ministry of the church

We affirm that women may serve in the public ministry as they are called to minister to women and children. It is contrary to the Scripture headship principle, however, for women to teach or have authority over men. See pages A:9-10.

Women lectors – A timeline of the discussion

- 1998 – The topic of women lectors is discussed at the joint meeting of the CICR and the ELS Doctrine Committee.
- 2001 – The ELS hears of a WELS church or two that allows women to read the Scripture lessons in regular worship services. The CICR is unaware of it, and relays the concern to the COP.
- 2003 – In a joint meeting of the CICR with the ELS Doctrine Committee, Wayne Mueller reports that a WELS pastor had used a woman as a lector. But, “the appropriate district president spoke to the pastor about the situation.” (CICR minutes). The COP did not produce a resolution or statement. It was considered a matter for district presidents to handle.
- 2005 – The ELS complains that some postings on the Q+A section of the WELS website seem to allow for women lectors.
- September 16, 2005 – Hopefully the issue is satisfactorily resolved at the joint meeting of the CICR and the ELS Doctrine Committee.

The gist of the discussion

At our September 2005 meeting, everyone agreed that it is not a good idea to have women read lessons in our regular worship services. There was a consensus that the practice will not be done in either of our church bodies.

There was a slightly different emphasis, however. The ELS representatives on their part seemed to make it an absolute principle that could never be violated anywhere. The ELS said they were not concerned about exceptional situations, like a Christmas Eve service or some other special service. But the ELS stressed that reading the lessons in a regular divine service is always authoritative teaching and therefore should never be done by a woman.

The WELS representatives on the other hand stressed that this is a fitting, contemporary application of the headship principle, given our times and our culture. But the WELS was worried that the ELS might be taking a contemporary application and turning it into part of the principle.

Here is a paragraph from the CICR minutes from May 1, 1998:

It is an accepted application of the headship principle among us that women not read lessons. The reading of the lessons is presented among us as part of the work of the pastor. However, it could be said that in different circumstances, if it would not be misunderstood, women perhaps could read lessons. In India some deaconesses have done readings. In the history of the church at some points women were allowed to read. It could be defended in the same way we allow women to sing solos. However, given the current climate of women pastors, it would cause offense among us now.

WELS pointed out that things aren't always so "black and white," but there is some grayness in these matters. For example:

- If it is OK for a woman or child to speak God's Word in the Christmas Eve service or some other special service, why is it wrong in other services?
- If it is OK for a woman to sing a solo which may have Scripture text included, why is it categorically wrong for her to read Scripture text?

In response to our concern about soloists, the ELS representatives said that it is OK for a woman to sing a Scriptural solo, if the solo is part of the sacrificial part of the service—that is, the message is the voice of people speaking to God. If the solo is part of the sacramental part of the service—that is, God's message to us—then a woman should not sing it.

Here is the report from *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* (Summer 2006) about how the discussions ended:

We had extensive discussions at our September 16 meeting on the topic of women lectors. Though the WELS was concerned about possible overstatement on the part of the ELS, it can be said that there was a consensus among all participants that women should not be reading the lessons in our regular Sunday services. President Gurgel and Vice President Mueller said they were aware of only one WELS church where this was an issue, and the situation was being dealt with. In WELS, the reading of the liturgical lessons in our Sunday services is recognized to be authoritative teaching. Therefore men should do it. In the desired practice, WELS and ELS representatives were agreed (p. 217).

Women administering communion to women – A timeline of the discussion

- 2001/2002 – Two WELS churches start the practice of having a woman “deaconess” commune women shut-ins. Some in the ELS are disturbed by this.
- 2004 -- Discussion with the ELS starts.
- 2004 -- The WELS COP immediately puts a “moratorium” on the practice for a number of reasons, without saying that the practice is prohibited by the NT.
- 2006 – Pres. Moldstad and Pres. Gurgel work on a statement on this issue, entitled “Concerning Women Administering Communion to Women.”
- March 2007 – The WELS COP indicates that they can live with this statement. It is published in *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Fall 2007 (104:4). This statement is attached on page A:23.
- June 2007 -- The ELS convention is happy with the progress made, but resolves that discussions should continue with the WELS.
- September 28, 2007 -- There are five hours of discussion on this topic at the meeting of the WELS CICR and ELS Doctrine Committee.
 - The WELS presentations are:
 - Paul Wendland: “Church and Ministry—Key Hermeneutical Considerations,”
 - Peter Prange: “1 Corinthians 4:1—An Exegetical Brief, and
 - Thomas Nass: “Different approaches with the women communing women issue?”
 - Due to a misunderstanding, the ELS brothers don’t have substantive written presentations.
- September 26, 2008 – Another meeting is scheduled with the WELS CICR and the ELS Doctrine Committee. The ELS brothers are preparing papers for this meeting.

Reactions to “Concerning Women Administering Communion to Women”

I sense that many, perhaps most, in the ELS are comfortable with this statement. Some in the ELS, however, seem to want a stronger statement, insisting that the New Testament prohibits the possibility. Some are nervous that the WELS COP may adopt a good statement, but individual congregations and pastors may continue to do what they would like. Or, in the future the practice will easily change because the statement was not strong enough.

Some in the WELS, I sense, would prefer a statement that says less. Some would prefer a statement that says the practice is an adiaphoron. Some are concerned that we not exclude women from legitimate areas of service.

To be sure, WELS representatives have been unwilling to say that the New Testament absolutely prohibits it. And, to this point we have been a bit nervous that the ELS presentations have not started with Biblical exegesis. Some assertions have been made without clear Scriptural proof. The truth is, however, that we have not yet had a written presentation from the ELS Doctrine Committee presenting their Scriptural argumentation. All we have had is oral conversation and written documents from ELS individuals. Supposedly their Scriptural presentation is coming in September 2008.

It is fair to say that the WELS primarily approaches this topic from the doctrine of gender roles, where we feel we have a clear Scriptural principle. To a certain degree the ELS seems to come at the topic from the doctrine of the ministry—that there are certain ministry tasks (like administering Lord's Supper)—that can only be done by a pastor. We have misgivings about this approach.

Can only a pastor administer Lord's Supper? WLQ published an article in Fall 1994 (Vol. 91, No. 4) entitled: "The Pastoral Ministry as a Distinct Form of the Public Ministry." This article advocates that pastors should carry out four functions among us:

- Formal preaching in public worship services,
- General doctrinal and spiritual oversight,
- Administration of the sacraments, and
- Worship leading.

This is the way we usually operate. This model has served well historically and it still helps to preserve unity and doctrinal purity. But the 1994 article does not say that it is a divine requirement that only pastors do these four things. WELS is not about to say that the pastor is the only one according to the Bible who can do certain ministry tasks.

From as much as we have been able to uncover in our research, however, the practice of women administering Communion to women has not been done in church history. Occasionally in the early church, women would deliver the consecrated elements from the church worship service to shut-ins, but women would not consecrate the elements themselves. So if we go ahead with this practice, it would be an innovation in the practice of the church (apart from modern liberal churches with women pastors, of course). We have to ask ourselves: Do we want to appear like a sect that starts its own practices irrespective of church history?

Prognosis

I am hopeful that these discussions will turn out well. Pres. Moldstad and Seminary Pres. Schmeling of the ELS have assured me that they do not see a rift coming on this topic.

Certainly the main principles of Communion administration are agreed on. Communion administration requires spiritual oversight and authority. Therefore one needs to have a high level of spiritual understanding and maturity, and a woman should not commune a man. In addition, whoever administers Communion on behalf of the congregation should be properly called into the public ministry.

I personally would be happy if the statement "Concerning Women Administering Communion to Women," imperfect though it may be, could serve to reflect an adequate level of agreement between our synods on this topic.

So what do you think on this issue?

- What do you think of "Women Administering Communion to Women"?
- Are some in WELS too quick to push the envelope with changes, without thinking about the reactions of others?
- Are we in danger of legalistically limiting believers from the freedom that God gives us in the New Testament?
- Do we have the right to initiate a practice that has never been done before in the history of the church?

The Revised This We Believe of the WELS on the Ministry

THOMAS P. NASS

WHEN LOGIA ANNOUNCED THAT THIS ISSUE was to be a symposium on the ministry, I thought it ironic. One could argue that LOGIA throughout its history has been an ongoing symposium on the ministry! The doctrine of the ministry, of course, continues to be the most hotly discussed topic in contemporary Lutheranism. LOGIA has frequently published articles on this doctrine.

Readers of LOGIA may find it interesting to know that, when the Commission on Inter-Church Relations (CICR) of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) recently produced a revised edition of the WELS doctrinal booklet *This We Believe* for the WELS Conference of Presidents,¹ the doctrine of the ministry was also the most thoroughly discussed topic in our revision process. There are some seventeen editions of TWB saved on floppy discs in my files as secretary of the revising committee. Without a doubt the section that was the most difficult and time-consuming was the doctrine of the ministry. It is not that the WELS has changed its teaching on this or any other point. The revision of TWB was undertaken simply to clarify the original TWB first produced in 1967, and to add some important points not previously addressed. But it was not easy to come upon just the right wording for this topic.

In this article I would like to share the final wording of the revised *This We Believe* on the ministry, especially for those who may not have seen it in any other place. I will also add commentary that may prove helpful in understanding more fully the intention of TWB.

I will also comment on some of the past discussion that has appeared in LOGIA and in other places on the doctrine of the ministry. In the ongoing discussions on the ministry, WELS readers sometimes feel that the WELS position is misunderstood when articulated by others. WELS readers also sense that statements are sometimes made that go beyond the "pattern of sound teaching" (2 Tim 1:13). Examples of both will be shared in light of the revised TWB.

THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS

vii:7. We believe that every Christian is a priest before God (1 Pt 2:9). All believers have direct and equal access to the throne of grace through Christ, the mediator (Eph 2:17, 18).

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God has given the means of grace to all believers. All Christians are to declare the praises of him who called them out of darkness into his wonderful light (1 Pt 2:9). In this sense all Christians are ministers, or servants, of the gospel. God wants all Christians to share the message of salvation with other people (Mt 28:19, 20; 10:32).

The revised *This We Believe* devotes the first of its four paragraphs on the ministry to the priesthood of all believers. The point is clearly made that all believers in Jesus are priests. One aspect of their priesthood is the ability and responsibility to use the keys.

Here one is faced immediately with the issue of the word *minister*. It is fair to say that the use of this word has broadened in general WELS usage in recent years. At one time, the word *minister* was in most cases a synonym for "pastor." Now the word is freely used for forms of the public ministry other than the pastoral office. The church I attend has a full-time "minister of family and youth" and a full-time "minister of administration" in addition to two full-time pastors. Laypeople are sometimes also said to be "ministers" in that they are to serve other people by sharing the gospel with them.

This does not mean that laypeople are in the public ministry, however, or that the priesthood of believers and the public ministry are now blended into one. It does not mean that all forms of the public ministry are identical. Subsequent paragraphs in TWB make clear that the WELS teaches the divine institution and importance of both the royal priesthood and the public ministry. The WELS looks on the pastoral ministry as a distinct form of the public ministry with special responsibilities. There have also been cautions expressed in the WELS that we be sure to communicate clearly about our use of the word *minister* so there is no misunderstanding.²

It is true, however, that the word *ministry* has been used in WELS circles over the years to refer to the authority given to all Christians to forgive and retain sins, as expressed in the fifth chief part of Luther's Small Catechism. The Gausewitz Catechism of 1917, the first English catechism produced by the WELS, translated the German expression *Das Amt der Schlüssel* as "The Ministry of the Keys." *Amt*, like *ministerium*, is a word that can refer to a function or an office.³ In this context *das Amt* is referring to something given to all believers. It makes good sense to translate *Amt* with the English word *ministry*, a word that can connote a duty or work that all believers are to do. Then the English word *office* can be reserved for the discussion of the public ministry where people

are called into specific positions. The 1982 WELS Catechism by David P. Kuske translated *Das Amt der Schlüssel* as "The Use of the Keys."⁴ So WELS people have been accustomed to think that there is a general "ministry" given to all believers to open the doors of heaven by telling others about Christ. The 1969 WELS "Theses on the Church and Ministry" say, "This office or service, the ministry of the keys, has been given to the Church, i.e. to the believers individually and collectively."⁵

It is no secret that there have been voices in Lutheranism and LOGIA who have wanted to deny to laypeople the ministry of the keys.⁶ One LOGIA writer has asserted that not only the Great Commission in Matthew 28, but the entire book of Matthew is addressed to the apostles, and then to their successors in the office of the holy ministry.⁷ The WELS agrees with Luther when he states that the keys were given to the whole church. Luther wrote: "The keys belong to the whole church and to each of its members, both as regards their authority and their various uses."⁸ The WELS recognizes that in the New Testament, "texts parallel to the Great Commission indicate that the Great Commission too is applicable to all Christians."⁹ Of course the Tractate also insists that "the keys belong immediately to the entire Church" (Tr 24).

There have even been those who have maintained that the sacraments,¹⁰ absolution, and the word of God itself¹¹ are efficacious only when used by a called pastor, and not by a layperson. This, to the WELS way of thinking, is a return to Romanism in conflict with the Lutheran Confessions (AC VII; FC SD VII, 24-26, 89). The power of the means of grace is in the Word and promise of Christ, not in the office or person of the pastor.

It seems evident that individual Christians are expected to use the keys on their own without functioning as substitute pastors.

There are also voices that put unscriptural limits on the use of the keys by laypeople. There are those who say that laypeople have been given the keys, but laypeople are to use them only as they collectively call pastors. They say that laypeople relinquish their use of the keys when pastors are called. Thereafter, if laypeople use the keys, they are acting only as surrogate pastors.¹² Some quote Tractate 24 for support.

This seems to be an example of taking a confessional statement and using it to address an issue foreign to its context. The issue in the Tractate was whether or not the Lutheran pastors were true pastors because they had not been ordained by Roman bishops. The answer was that all Christians have the keys, and groups of Christians therefore have the power to call pastors for themselves. The Lutheran pastors were legitimate. The Tractate does not say or imply, however, that this is the *only thing* laypeople can do with the keys. This is one use; it does not deny the ongoing use of the keys by laypeople in their daily lives of service.

Certainly additional Bible passages could be given beyond those in TWB to show that believers are to share the gospel with others. It is not just the called pastors who are to use the keys. In the book of Acts we hear that all the believers "preached the word" when they were scattered (Ac 8:1, 4; 11:19-20). All Christians are to be prepared "to give an answer" (1 Pt 3:15). All Christians are told to "encourage," "teach," "admonish," and "instruct" one another (1 Th 4:18; 5:11; Heb 3:13; 10:24-25; Col 3:16; Rom 15:14). Christian brothers are to "restore" the person who is caught in a sin (Gal 6:1). Parents are to teach their children (Eph 6:4).

One also thinks of Matthew 18:15-18. The first step in the admonition of an erring brother is for the individual Christian to "show him his fault." Only later does one take the matter to the church and involve the public ministers. Here it seems evident that individual Christians are expected to use the keys on their own without functioning as substitute pastors. Their use, however, is not at odds or in competition with the public ministry of the church. It is in addition to and in harmony with the public ministry of the church.

THE PUBLIC MINISTRY

VII:8. We believe that God has also established the public ministry of the Word (Ephesians 4:11), and it is the will of God that the church, in accordance with good order (1 Corinthians 14:40), call qualified individuals into this public ministry (1 Timothy 3:1-10; 1 Corinthians 9:14). Such individuals minister publicly, that is, not because as individuals they possess the universal priesthood but because they are asked to do this in the name of fellow Christians (Romans 10:15). These individuals are the called servants of Christ and ministers of the gospel. They are not to be lords over God's church (1 Peter 5:3). We believe that when the church calls individuals into this public ministry, the Lord himself is acting through the church (Acts 20:28). We believe that the church has the freedom to establish various forms within the one ministry of the Word, such as pastors, Christian teachers, and staff ministers. Through its call, the church in Christian liberty designates the place and scope of service.

Divine Institution

Over the years the WELS has sometimes been accused of denying the divine institution of the public ministry. The WELS has been accused of following Höfling by teaching that the public ministry is just a human innovation designed out of expediency.

Attention in this regard focuses on the Wauwatosa theologians (J. P. Koehler, August Pieper, and John Schaller) who restudied the issue of church and ministry in the early twentieth century. It is true that the Wauwatosa theologians stressed the divine institution of the one gospel ministry given to all believers in the church.¹³ Yet they also insisted that all forms of the public ministry are established by God in that the church develops the forms under the providence of God and the forms carry out the divinely established work of spreading the gospel.¹⁴ In addition, August Pieper stated, "Not only the one species, the local pastorate, but the public ministry of the Word *in genere* is a divine institution."¹⁵ Further study could be done on exactly what the Wauwatosa theologians meant when they

talked about divine institution. But certainly they would have denied that the public ministry is a strictly human creation.

Subsequent WELS writing has made clear that the WELS does teach the divine institution of the public ministry. In 1932, WELS theologians were able to agree with LCMS theologians on thesis 2 of the Thiensville Theses: "2. Again, it is God's will and order, as we learn from the Scriptures, that such local congregations have shepherds and teachers to discharge the common task of the office of the Word in their midst."¹⁶ The 1969 WELS Theses state: "This public ministry . . . constitutes a *special God-ordained way of practicing the one ministry of the Gospel*. . . . It would be wrong to trace the origin of this public ministry to mere expediency (Hoefling)."¹⁷

In the past decade a stream of WELS publications has made clear, along with this paragraph from TWB, that the WELS affirms the divine institution of the public ministry. The People's Bible Teachings book *Church-Mission-Ministry* says, "It is important to know that God himself instituted the public ministry for his church."¹⁸ Recent articles in the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* have provided Bible support beyond the Ephesians passage quoted in TWB.¹⁹

In short, the WELS teaches that the public ministry is not optional. Wherever Christians are, God wants there to be servants who shepherd them with the means of grace as representatives of Christ.²⁰

Relationship between the Royal Priesthood and the Public Ministry

What is the relationship between the royal priesthood and the public ministry? The WELS would say that both have the same overall commission and goal. It is "proclaiming the Gospel in Word and Sacrament" for "the edification of the Church."²¹ Both are driven by a desire to save lost sinners by guiding them to faith in the crucified and risen Savior Jesus Christ.

Yet the royal priesthood and the public ministry are not equated. The WELS defines "public ministry" as ministry that is not done at the initiative of the individual Christian. It is ministry done because a group of Christians have called a person to do it on their behalf. The WELS recognizes that not every believer serves in the public ministry, but only those called by the church to use the means of grace. "Christians are not all equally qualified to perform publicly the functions of the ministry," and "no one may assume the functions of the public ministry except through a legitimate call."²² Some Christians are called by the church to full-time positions of public ministry. Some are called to part-time positions of public ministry, such as Sunday school teaching. But in all cases, the royal priesthood and the public ministry are kept distinct. Believers are to carry out the tasks that have been assigned to the public ministry only when they have been called to do so.

For example, when a layperson is asked to make elder calls on behalf of the congregation or assist in the distribution of the Lord's Supper, the WELS would say he is functioning in a limited form of the public ministry. He is doing this work on behalf of the congregation because he is "called" to do it. When a layperson witnesses about Christ at the work place, however, he is functioning in his capacity as a royal priest.

It would be wrong for a layperson to perform the functions of the public ministry without being called to do so. A layperson

should not set up a Bible study in his home and invite members of the church without the commission and call of the church. A layperson should not baptize his own children or conduct his own Lord's Supper services at home. The royal priesthood and the public ministry are not blended together. Public ministry is to be performed only by those properly called.

WELS teaches that the public ministry is not optional. . . . Yet the royal priesthood and the public ministry are not equated.

In addition, it would be misleading to say that the public ministry is derived from the royal priesthood.²³ The origin of the public ministry is with God himself. God has brought it into existence. The public ministry is not a human innovation, created by people to fulfill a need. We would agree with John Johnson when he says, "Lutheranism keeps the universal and special priesthood in dialectical tension, avoiding the temptation of deriving one from the other."²⁴

Yet it is true that the church fills the offices of the public ministry by calling individuals into the public ministry. As John Johnson also states, "The divine gift of the Office has been given to the church and demands filling. The church, the Priesthood of all Believers, has the authority to fill the Office and to regulate it."²⁵ Perhaps the best way to describe the public ministry, then, is Walther's axiom "by Christ through the church." When a person serves in the public ministry, he is a "servant of Christ" first and foremost. He has authority from Christ as Christ's representative. But he also is serving on behalf of the Christians who called him. One could say he is both a representative of Christ and a representative of the calling body of Christians.

In 1998, as part of the 150th anniversary celebration of the LCMS, a theological convocation was held on the topic of church and ministry, and the essays have been published. Throughout the essays there is a consistent theme that "the Office of the Public Ministry and the Priesthood of Believers are gifts of God; they are givens."²⁶ It is stressed that the priesthood of believers and the public ministry are not to be "at odds with one another, or in competition with each other."²⁷ The church needs both the priesthood of believers and the public ministry doing their parts to spread the gospel with harmony and mutual support. These themes are the same themes that are heard and held to in the WELS.

Various Forms

The objection that WELS readers do have to the recent LCMS anniversary essays, however, is in regard to the forms of the public ministry. Throughout the essays it is assumed consistently that the public ministry is the pastoral ministry. Every single essay displays this understanding. Pastors comprise the public ministry, and no one else.

This understanding has not always been consistently maintained in the LCMS. Authors such as Arnold C. Mueller allowed for Lutheran teachers to be included in the public ministry.²⁸ An instructive essay by Robert M. Toepfer recently laid out the history of this issue in the LCMS.²⁹ But it seems that, since the publication of *The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature* in 1981,³⁰ LCMS leaders have stressed that only pastors are in the office of the public ministry. *LOGIA* has printed an article maintaining that the vocation of a Christian teacher is "in the same category as a butcher, baker, or candlestick maker."³¹

For an outsider to the LCMS, this narrowing of the public ministry is hard to understand. In the LCMS men and women teachers are considered "ministers of the Gospel" for tax purposes. They are called and officially commissioned or installed. They are servants of the church, carrying out gospel work for the church. Yet they are not considered to be in the office of the public ministry. They are only in "auxiliary offices"—not really laypeople and not really in the office of the public ministry.

The New Testament manifests a variety of "forms" and nowhere dictates that only pastors are in the public ministry.

The commonly expressed dividing lines seem arbitrary. Some say that only ordained pastors who serve in a parish or teach the whole church as seminary professors are in the public ministry. Others are not.³² I wonder about my own status by this definition, since I am an ordained pastor who teaches Hebrew to future pastors at the college level. Two *LOGIA* writers, in keeping with this mindset, have argued that missionaries should be included in the office of the public ministry.³³ Such a point would never be an issue in the WELS. Others say that only those qualified for the whole ministry of word and sacrament are in the public ministry. They say those trained as pastors are included, or those who are ordained.

The WELS teaches that the church has freedom to establish different "forms" or positions or offices of public ministry. The *WELS Yearbook* has three categories of full-time public ministers who may circulate from one congregation to another: pastors, men and women teachers, and staff ministers. The term "staff ministry" has come to be used as a catchall category for individuals who are part of a church staff, but are not pastors or teachers. In the "staff ministry" category are ministers of evangelism, ministers of family and youth, ministers of administration, deaconesses, gift planning counselors, and numerous other offices.

The reason why the WELS allows for a variety of "forms" of the public ministry is that the New Testament manifests a variety of "forms" and nowhere dictates that only pastors are in the public ministry. Ephesians 4:11 says that Christ "gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers." This implies different offices or different job descriptions for different people. In 1 Corinthians 12:28–29 Paul says:

In the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles?

In 1 Timothy 3:1–13 Paul gives qualifications for overseers, deacons, and possibly deaconesses (or else deacon's wives).

It is not just WELS writers who have taken note of this variety of forms in the New Testament. Chytraeus³⁴ and Chemnitz³⁵ have been quoted in support of various "grades" or forms of the public ministry. Gottfried Herrmann has pointed out in a recent essay that both Carl Manthey-Zorn and Wilhelm Oesch allowed for the possibility of other forms of the public ministry in addition to the office of the parish pastor.³⁶

It is interesting to note that the Tractate itself uses a variety of titles when it describes church offices. There is the pastor (*pastor/parochus/Pastor/Pfarrherr*), bishop (*episcopus/Bischof*), minister (*minister/ecclesiastes/Kirchendiener*), elder (*presbyter*), teacher (*doctor/Lehrer*), superintendent (*superintendens*), and preacher (*concionator/Prediger*). The Tractate says that a local pastor may ordain suitable persons to the church offices (*zu den Kirchenämtern*) (Tr 65). In neither the New Testament nor the Lutheran Confessions is there an effort to limit the public ministry of the church to one form.

Luther also is commonly quoted as allowing various forms in the public ministry. In his "Sermon on Keeping Children in School" of 1530 he said:

The estate I am thinking of is rather one which has the office of preaching and the service of the word and sacraments and which imparts the Spirit and salvation, blessings that cannot be attained by any amount of pomp and pageantry. It includes the work of pastors, teachers, preachers, lectors, priests (whom men call chaplains), sacristans, schoolmasters, and whatever other work belongs to these offices and persons.³⁷

To maintain that only pastors are in the public ministry, some assume that these various titles were different names for the same office, the "pastoral ministry." Or, they assume that these positions were different "grades" of the pastoral ministry, much in the way that we have senior pastors and associate pastors. In this connection, some say that the deacons in the New Testament were equivalent to pastors.³⁸

To this a WELS person would respond: "How do we know for sure that all these forms were different grades of the pastoral ministry? How do we know for sure that the deacons were equivalent to pastors?" Certainly the title "elder" was interchangeable with "overseer" in the New Testament, and both referred to a position of oversight similar in many ways to our pastors (Acts 20:17, 28; Ti 1:6, 7; 1 Pt 5:1, 2). But there is nothing clearly indicating in the New Testament that all the other positions were different titles for the same office, or different "grades" in the same office. The office of deacon especially seems to be a separate office (Phi 1:1). The fact that the office of deacon has qualifications listed side-by-side with

the office of overseer implies that it was distinctly different (1 Ti 3:8-13). Otherwise, why would there be two lists?

It has also been assumed that some of these New Testament positions were not really in the public ministry. Some say that to be in the public ministry, one has to be entrusted with the full use of the means of grace. An article in *LOGIA* argued that the public ministry is an all-or-nothing proposition. If a person is in the public ministry, he must have all the functions of the ministry. If a person hasn't been entrusted with all the functions, then he is not in the public ministry.³⁹ In keeping with this argument, some would say that the deacons were not really in the office of the public ministry but in an auxiliary office, because they weren't entrusted with the full use of the means of grace.⁴⁰

Again, a WELS reader would ask: "How can we know for sure that to be in the public ministry one needs to be entrusted with the full use of the means of grace?" When Jesus established the public ministry by calling his followers to be "fishers of men" (Mt 4:19; Lk 5:10), by picking the twelve apostles (Lk 6:13), and by sending out the seventy-two (Lk 10:1), it is not clearly articulated that each of these individuals was to carry out all of the functions of the means of grace. In the epistles there are a variety of offices without it being said that each officeholder did everything. For example, can we say for sure that the prophets had the full use of the means of grace, so they were in an office equivalent to the apostles and elders? Can we say for sure that the teachers and evangelists of Ephesians 4:11 had the full use of the means of grace? The WELS would say these are assertions that go beyond what we can know with certainty on the basis of the New Testament. Perhaps the teachers were catechists who left the administration of the Lord's Supper to the elders. Perhaps the evangelists were individuals specially commissioned for outreach who left the administration of the Lord's Supper to the elders. The point is that "nothing in Scripture says every minister of the Word must be called to do all of these things."⁴¹

The issue comes to a head with the deacons. The WELS would say that it is at least a possibility that the deacons were public ministers who were helpers in some way to the elders or overseers in a subordinate office of the public ministry of the word that did not include the full use of the keys. This is how the office of deacon often showed itself in church history. If this were granted, it seems a small step to make a comparison with the school teachers or staff ministers of our modern congregations. Here then is a form of public ministry distinct from the office of overseer that helps in the gospel ministry of the congregation.

Though every comparison limps, some WELS writers have compared the structure of the public ministry of the church with that of the civil government. According to Romans 13:1-6, civil government is something that God has instituted. In addition, each individual governing authority has been "established by God" and should be respected as "God's servant." Yet God's word never mandates any particular form of government or any particular title. So it is also with the ministry of the church. God wants there to be public ministers of the gospel. Each public minister should be received as a servant of Christ who has been put into authority by God. Each public minister serves in the divinely instituted public ministry of the church. Yet no one form or position is mandated, and the forms may vary in scope of work.

How Wide is the Public Ministry?

How wide then is the public ministry? Can there be public ministers of the church who do not minister with the means of grace, but only support the ministry of the church in other ways? Here some WELS writers have been willing hypothetically to allow the possibility of some sort of "public ministry" without any direct use of the keys on the basis of the "Seven" in Acts 6 who were called to a "ministry" of food distribution.⁴² Without a doubt the work of the Seven supported the preaching of the gospel because it permitted the apostles to devote themselves to the "ministry of the word." Yet it could be argued that a different title should be given to service of this sort, since the term "public ministry" has historically been used to refer to the ministry of the gospel itself.

The office of deacon . . . is a form of public ministry distinct from the office of overseer that helps in the gospel ministry of the congregation.

In practice, the WELS thinks of the public ministry only in terms of those who minister directly with the means of grace. TWB in its public ministry section speaks only of the "ministry of the Word." I recently attended a meeting of ELS and WELS leaders where ELS leaders asked the president of the WELS and the WELS seminary president if there are any positions of public ministry in the WELS that do not involve direct ministry with the means of grace. The answer was a clear no. All of the one hundred or so staff ministers in the *Yearbook* minister in some way with the word of God. The "minister of administration" at the church I attend, for example, writes articles for the church newsletter giving Bible encouragement. He has opened meetings with Scripture reading and prayer. He has given stewardship training to the congregation and conducted Bible classes. We consider our schoolteachers on all levels to be in the public ministry, because they serve young people with the Word. They serve on behalf of the church and not just on behalf of the parents of the children. Often they serve children of mission prospects whose parents are not even members of the church. Even the physical education professors at Martin Luther College are called into the public ministry, because they are expected to use the Word of God with students. As coaches, they may lead their teams in prayer. As faculty advisors for students, they are expected to counsel students with God's word. Customarily when a decision is being made in the WELS whether some office in the church should be a "called" position of public ministry or a "hired" position, the decision is made on the basis of whether or not the individual will be using the word of God to instruct, train, and counsel. Whenever a group of Christians calls a person to use the word of God on their behalf, we consider that individual to be in the public ministry.

Though none of the individual forms are directly commanded by God, yet the individuals who serve in each of the forms know they are serving in a divine calling. Each form is a concrete mani-

festation of the public ministry that is established by God. As stated by August Pieper:

It would be false, however, if one would declare the distinctive pastoral office to be a human arrangement. What is human in every species of the public ministry is only the form, the outward arrangement. The content, the command, the commission, the power directed to the Church to preach the Gospel through capable men as also to dispense the Sacraments in an orderly way is and remains divine.⁴³

THE PASTORAL MINISTRY

vii:9. We believe that the church's mission is to serve people with the Word and sacraments. This service is usually done in local congregations. We look upon the pastoral office as the most comprehensive form of the public ministry of the Word. Pastors are trained and called to provide such comprehensive spiritual oversight for the gathering and nurturing of souls in congregations (1 Peter 5:2).

The Most Comprehensive Form

This paragraph is a new addition to TWB. It was added, in part, because the WELS is sometimes accused of having too low a view of the pastoral ministry. Some say that in the WELS the pastoral ministry is just one form on an equal level with many others, and that the pastoral ministry is therefore basically expendable or superfluous. A LOGIA book review stated that in the WELS "pastors and stewardship directors are equally necessary or expendable."⁴⁴ A recent LOGIA article claims that there is a very strong impulse in the WELS "to denounce the clerical office, and to dissolve the office of preaching into functions of people other than the ordained clergy."⁴⁵

What is human in every species of the public ministry is only the form, the outward arrangement.

In reality, the WELS has a high view of the pastoral office. This is the one form of the public ministry that is universally found. Every WELS member belongs to a local congregation; every congregation has a pastor or pastors who shepherd it. The training program for pastors in the WELS continues to be thorough, with a minimum of four years of college at Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minnesota, and four years of seminary at Mequon, Wisconsin, for most students. The majority of our students begin studies for the pastoral ministry on the high school level.

When the CICR wrestled with the writing of this paragraph, it considered a number of different adjectives to describe the pastoral ministry. We considered saying that the pastoral ministry is the "most common" form of the public ministry. In the WELS, if a group of Christians has only one form of the public ministry, it

inevitably is a pastor. Every single one of the approximately 1250 congregations of the WELS has a pastor (or vacancy pastor) to shepherd it. Many congregations do not have any other full-time forms of the public ministry, inasmuch as there are about 365 Lutheran elementary schools in the WELS and about 100 staff ministers. But "most common" was rejected as a description for the pastoral ministry because numerically across the synod there are more teachers than pastors. According to the WELS *Statistical Report*, there are about 1300 active parish pastors and missionaries. In contrast, there are about 2750 active male and female teachers.⁴⁶

Other adjectives considered were "essential" or "necessary." Again, the way things are structured in the WELS, there are no free-floating members of the WELS. All WELS members find themselves under the oversight of a local pastor. Every congregation has a pastor. This is the one form that is universal and in a sense required, in the way that we operate. Yet theoretically, we would say that if a congregation somewhere wanted to structure itself differently, this would not necessarily be sinful, because the New Testament doesn't give regulations about church polity and forms of ministry. If a group of Christians had a committee of elders who took turns preaching and conducting services or divided up the public ministry duties in some other way, we could not say that this arrangement is contrary to God's word. Actually the situation in Corinth according to 1 Corinthians 14 may have been more like this than our usual arrangement.

The CICR also considered referring to the pastoral ministry as the "foundational" or "basic" form of ministry. These words could be properly understood. The pastoral ministry is the most basic form in that it is the one that will always be put in place first among us. If a congregation has only one form, it will be a pastor. Yet these adjectives were rejected because they too could be subject to misunderstanding. Christian theologians often talk about the apostolic ministry as the foundational form of ministry in the church, and certainly the church is not built on pastors in the way that it is built on the apostles. In addition these words could convey the notion that other forms of ministry are direct offshoots or branches off of the pastoral ministry. The WELS would not say this.

Finally the commission considered calling the pastoral ministry the "most important" form of the public ministry. Without a doubt, I sometimes say to pastoral students that I think more good can be done for the kingdom of God by a pastor than any other position on earth. Pastors shepherd congregations and preach God's word week in and week out. Tremendous good can come to the kingdom through this office. August Pieper was bold enough to state, "The parish ministry in the form familiar to us is the chief species, the most complete, most important, and most necessary species of the ecclesiastical ministry."⁴⁷ The apostle Paul himself called some offices greater than others because of their usefulness in edifying the church (1 Cor 12:28, 31; 14:5). Yet the term "most important" was rejected because it too could be open to misunderstanding. We don't want the people in other forms of the public ministry to sense in any way that they are not important. We don't want pastors to develop wrong notions of self-importance. True greatness in all forms of ministry comes through humble service (Mt 18:1-4; Mk 10:42-44).

In the end, the adjective that was agreed upon was the adjective "comprehensive." The way the pastoral ministry has been designed

among us and among Christians generally, is as an office that involves the general spiritual oversight of congregations. It is wide-ranging and broad in scope. The ministry of teachers is limited to one activity and often to a selected age-group of students. Staff ministers are not trained and called to lead worship or preach. Pastors, however, are trained as general practitioners who serve as the overall shepherds of all the members of the congregation.

We would say that the pastoral office is the one office that is not limited by its nature in the use of the means of grace. The calls of pastors are not from the beginning circumscribed in the way that the calls of teachers and staff ministers are. Certainly not every pastor uses all of the means of grace in every way possible. C. F. W. Walther once said it is impossible for any one person anywhere to carry out all of the possible functions of the keys.⁴⁸ For example, parish pastors usually do not train their own successors. Yet the pastoral ministry is the "most comprehensive" form. It could be said that the pastoral ministry includes the possibility for using the keys in every way imaginable.

The Relationship between the Pastoral Office and Other Forms

This puts one in a position to understand the relationship between the pastoral office and other forms of ministry in the WELS. All forms are received as gifts of God. Individuals in all forms are to respect each other and work together in love and harmony. Yet according to the way the forms have been designed, the pastoral office has overall leadership responsibilities. The following was written in 1992 when the WELS staff ministry program was coming into existence:

Those called to staff ministry positions are not called to supplant the pastor, to whom a congregation assigns oversight of the entire ministry of the gospel. Rather, working hand in hand with the pastor and under his leadership, those serving in staff ministry positions will see themselves as assisting the pastor in the congregation's ministry in accordance with their gifts and the scope of their call. Unless extraordinary circumstances prevent it, the norm for the spiritual leadership of our congregations certainly should continue to be that they are served by one who has both the thorough theological training and the gifts that enable him to oversee the whole spiritual ministry of the congregation. Staff ministers, whose training will be relatively narrow in scope, can hardly qualify as a replacement for the pastor, no more than can a teacher in one of our elementary schools.⁴⁹

The pastoral office is also the form of ministry in the WELS that is specially trained and called for worship leading, preaching, and the administration of the sacraments. It has been said that the "WELS allows its teachers as ministers to preach and celebrate the sacrament."⁵⁰ This is too broadly stated. In forty-five years as a WELS worshiper, I have never witnessed a teacher preach in a congregational worship service or celebrate the sacrament. That is not to say it has not happened or could not happen. Certainly in cases of a pastoral vacancy or absence, a congregation could call a teacher, staff minister, or lay elder to conduct services, and some WELS congregations may do this regularly. In high school and college chapel

services teachers will often take their turn in leading devotions, but this is natural in a setting where they have been called as spiritual leaders for the students. Yet teachers and staff ministers are not trained for congregational worship leading, preaching, or the administration of the sacraments. It is our regular practice to call individuals to carry out the functions for which they are trained and qualified, and pastors are trained for these three functions.⁵¹

So if someone says that all forms of public ministry in the WELS are equal and on the same level,⁵² this is not a fair and complete statement. If someone says that pastors in the WELS are expendable, it is an inaccurate representation of our position and our practice. All forms pursue the same goal through the means of grace. Yet the different forms of ministry have different duties. The pastoral ministry is unique and special as the "most comprehensive" form for general spiritual oversight. It is the form that is universally found in our congregations. It has been called the "primary form which the ministry will usually take."⁵³

The pastoral office is the one office that is not limited by its nature in the use of the means of grace.

Also, if someone says that the WELS doctrine will lead to the other forms of ministry challenging the authority of the pastor and supplanting him, I can simply say that this has not been my experience. Having served and worshiped in three congregations with teachers and/or staff ministers in addition to pastors, I have only seen blessings in this arrangement. When the individual duties are spelled out in the individual calls, there is no reason why the various forms cannot work together in love with each individual serving in the capacity to which he was called in keeping with his training. This is not to say there cannot or will not be abuses. But the possibility of abuse lurks on every hand with every doctrinal position, and one does not reject sound doctrine simply out of a fear of possible abuse.

"Missouri" versus "Wisconsin"

I suspect that when one reads about this relationship between pastors and other offices in the WELS, one may conclude that it sounds very similar to the "Missouri" position. It is likely that the way church life operates in everyday practice according to the "Wisconsin" view is probably not much different in most cases than according to the "Missouri" view. Pastors are called for general spiritual oversight. Other offices may or may not exist to help with the work in the congregation. These other forms work under the leadership of the pastor.

To a certain extent one may even conclude that the differences between the "Wisconsin" view and the "Missouri" view are a matter of terminology. Certainly the term "public ministry" has to a degree been understood differently. This term, of course, is not found in the Bible, and it therefore necessarily receives ecclesiastical definition. The difference can be illustrated by this comparison:

	LCMS	WELS
Pastors	= the public ministry	= universal and most comprehensive form of the public ministry
Teachers/ Staff ministers	= auxiliary offices	= other forms of the public ministry
The Public Ministry	= the pastoral office	= called workers using the keys on behalf of others according to the scope of the call

If the difference is only a matter of terminology without a difference in substance, the difference should be tolerated.

There is a difference in substance, however, if Missouri proponents say that the pastoral office is a divine office directly instituted by God and all other forms or offices in contrast are human innovations. The WELS Theses on Church and Ministry state:

There is, however, *no direct word of institution for any particular form of the public ministry.* The one public ministry of the Gospel may assume various forms, as circumstances demand. . . . We hold it to be untenable to say that the pastorate of the local congregation (*Pfarramt*) as a specific form of the public ministry is specifically instituted by the Lord in contrast to other forms of the public ministry.⁵⁴

The Authority of the Pastor

If pastors are to be comprehensive overseers of local congregations, the next question naturally is, How much authority do they have?

In the eyes of this writer, some unfortunate positions have been articulated in LOGIA on this point. There has been an article advocating that pastors are to “rule” the congregation, and no distinction was made between spiritual matters decided by the Word of God and adiaphora.⁵⁵ There has been an article suggesting that Grabau was more on target than Walther on the topic of the ministry.⁵⁶ Another article has advocated that the pastor is the “ecclesiastical embodiment” of Jesus.⁵⁷

On this point the WELS would stand side by side with Walther against Grabau. Grabau and the Buffalo Synod said that congregations owe obedience to their pastors in everything that is not contrary to the Word of God. The Second Synodical Report of the Buffalo Synod said:

Lutheran Christians know that when God’s Word says “obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves,” this does not merely apply to preaching but to all good Christian things and affairs which are bound up with the Word of God and desired by it, which also belong to the good government of the churches and to Christian welfare in life and work, and that honor, love, and obedience is demanded according to the third and fourth commandment. . . . Here the demanded obedience is throughout a matter of conscience.⁵⁸

Walther responded with his Thesis ix, “To the ministry there is due respect as well as unconditional obedience when the pastor

uses God’s Word. But the minister must not tyrannize the church. He has no authority to introduce new laws or arbitrarily to establish adiaphora or ceremonies. He has no right to inflict and carry out excommunication without his having first informed the whole congregation.”⁵⁹

TWB quotes 1 Peter 5:3. Public ministers are not to lord it over the church. In matters decided by the word of God, we acknowledge that public ministers need to be obeyed. They have authority by divine right in such matters. But in matters not decided by the word of God, public ministers have no right to bind the congregation to their opinion. In matters of adiaphora, public ministers have authority only if the congregation chooses to give them authority by human right.

Ordination

Careful readers will notice that nothing is said about ordination in the revised TWB. This is because the WELS agrees with Walther that ordination is not a matter of Bible doctrine. Walther’s Thesis vi.b states, “The ordination of the called [persons] with the laying on of hands is not a divine institution but merely an ecclesiastical rite [*Ordnung*] established by the apostles; it is no more than a solemn public confirmation of the call.”⁶⁰ The WELS continues to use ordination to give public recognition that an individual is qualified and called to serve in the public ministry. But the WELS looks upon ordination as a church custom and not something mandatory according to God’s Word.

Teachers are ordained into the “teaching ministry” and pastors into the “pastoral ministry.”

It should be mentioned that discussion is continuing in the WELS about who should be ordained. Since 1991 the WELS has been ordaining its male teachers when they begin their public ministries. There has been ongoing debate within the WELS about this decision, however. It was restudied and reaffirmed at the 1995 synod convention. Some would like it to be reconsidered again at the 2001 convention.

When the WELS ordains male teachers, however, this does not equate the office of teacher with the office of pastor. Teachers are ordained into the “teaching ministry” and pastors into the “pastoral ministry.” This action is also not a novelty in the history of the church. The Roman Catholic Church has traditionally ordained its deacons, and yet the ministry of the deacons is kept separate from that of priests and bishops.⁶¹ The “Seven” in Acts 6:1–6 went through a ceremony of the laying on of hands that seems like an ordination (Acts 6:6). Luther himself ordained George Roerer into the office of deacon in 1525. Those in the WELS who have misgivings about the decision to ordain male teachers are concerned that this action is insensitive to the way the

term "ordination" has been used generally in the Lutheran heritage. Yet all participants in this discussion in the WELS realize that the matter is an adiaphoron upon which brothers can disagree, because ordination is not commanded in Scripture.

There have been *LOGIA* articles that have taken the position that ordination is a necessity for one to serve in the pastoral ministry.⁶² This was the position held by Grabau, and it once again smacks of Roman Catholicism to WELS readers. The WELS would hold the thoughts of Adolf Hoenecke: "Whoever has the legitimate call of a congregation is a pastor and needs nothing further to be a pastor. Ordination is nothing more than the church's act of recognizing and confirming someone's calling. . . . We therefore teach that ordination gives the ministerial office to no one, because Scripture does not say so or command it."⁶³

THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN

VII:10. We believe that women may participate in offices and activities of the public ministry except where that work involves authority over men (1 Timothy 2:11, 12). This means that women may not serve as pastors nor participate in assemblies of the church in ways that exercise authority over men (1 Corinthians 11:3; 14:33-35).

This paragraph is also an addition to the revised TWB, needed for current conditions. Here the WELS finds itself defending its practice on both sides. Some say that women should not be in the public ministry at all. One *LOGIA* article goes so far as to say that women do not have the keys, and "can therefore neither bind nor loose a person in respect to sin."⁶⁴ Others say women should serve in all forms of the public ministry, including the pastoral office. The WELS says women may be in the public ministry in positions that do not involve authority over men. Presently the WELS has over 1,600 women active in the full-time teaching ministry. There are a growing number of deaconesses listed in the staff ministry section of the *Yearbook* who minister in some way to women and children. But there are no women pastors, and women do not vote in the decision-making assemblies of the church.

To defend the practice of calling women into some forms of the public ministry, the WELS appeals primarily to the variety of forms in the New Testament and the freedom given to the church to establish the forms necessary to carry out its work. It is certainly true that there were many women involved in the work of the early church (Romans 16). There may have been an embryonic deaconess office already at Paul's time. When Phoebe is called a *diavkono* (Rom 16:1), many assume this is a technical term for "deaconess."⁶⁵ The qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:11 may well be for such deaconesses.⁶⁶ Without a doubt the church made use of deaconesses in many locations in its subsequent history, and in some circumstances they were even ordained.⁶⁷ It is no novelty for the WELS to involve women in the work of the church.

To defend its limitation of women to roles that do not involve authority over men, the WELS again appeals to the New Testament. First of all, women in the New Testament were not selected to be apostles, and women are never associated with the office of elder or overseer. But even more importantly, there are clear prescriptive passages based on God's creation order that place limitations on the

service of women. Paul says, "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve" (1 Ti 2:12-13). In a section concerned about preaching at the worship services, Paul says, "Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says" (1 Cor 14:34). This is the same argument presented by Jobst Schöne in a *LOGIA* article:

Women have been given a specific position according to creation which places them into a specific relationship to men. The New Testament does not cancel this created order; rather the Holy Spirit affirms this order explicitly through apostolic instruction. There are clear passages of Scripture which support this position: Eph 5:21-33; 1 Cor 14:33-38; 1 Tim 2:11-15.⁶⁸

When writing this paragraph of TWB, the CICR had to decide whether or not to include the word *pastor*. Could a woman be called, for example, to be the "pastor" of a group of women? Luther once said, "If, however, only women were present and no men, as in nunneries, then one of the women might be authorized to preach."⁶⁹ The CICR decided to state clearly that women should not serve as pastors. The reason for this strong statement is that the word *pastor* is used among us for the office of general congregational oversight. This office invariably involves the teaching of men and authority over men, and women therefore should not be called into it. The CICR also sensed that an unambiguous statement on this crucial point would be useful in our current age. This is not to deny, however, that women may be called into positions of public ministry that serve women and children. Increasingly there are WELS congregations who are calling women into such wholesome positions for the good of the church. The CICR assumes the title *deaconess* will be used for such positions.

Women may be called into positions of public ministry that serve women and children.

Past *LOGIA* articles, to my knowledge, have spoken with one voice on the prohibition of women's ordination into the pastoral ministry. This may be the only aspect of the doctrine of the ministry where such uniform agreement has been evident in this publication. Nevertheless, I am not sure that the reasons have always been equally valid.

The LCMS in recent years has allowed women to vote in decision-making assemblies, to serve on decision-making boards and committees, and to serve as elders and congregation presidents. To the WELS way of thinking there has been a capitulation on the basic principle of headship; women are allowed to serve in many positions of authority. Now it is a difficult task to draw the line so that they are not ordained as pastors. More and more the reason given in the LCMS for women not serving as pastors seems to be that

Christ was male and pastors represent Christ.⁷⁰ More and more the argument is made in the arena of the public ministry, and not in the arena of the creation order, that "the head of the woman is man" (1 Cor 11:3). There is an appeal to precedent rather than precept.

This is a weaker argument, and I wonder if it can be sustained. Rome has always insisted that priests must be celibate because Christ was celibate, but Lutherans haven't followed. How far can one go in constructing one's doctrine on the basis of analogy? I also wonder whether this situation does not exacerbate the need in Missouri to draw a tight circle around the pastoral office and not to speak of any other office as "the public ministry" except the pastoral office. Limiting the public ministry to the pastoral office, I suspect, is considered useful in opposing women's ordination.

As is evident in TWB, the WELS charts a different course. The WELS prefers to use the Pauline passages about men's and women's roles as the basis for its practice. Then we are free to admit women into appropriate offices of public ministry without fear that they will enter into the pastoral office or other positions of authority over men.

CONCLUSION

I would not be surprised if there are readers who have always imagined that the WELS is on the extreme fringe in Lutheranism when it comes to the doctrine of the ministry, based on impressions (or sometimes misinformation) that have circulated.

As a person who has grown up in the WELS and preached and taught in the WELS, however, I have just the opposite impression. The doctrine found in this revision of TWB presents itself as the teaching of God's word, and in this discussion, as in all doctrinal discussions, the Bible must remain on center stage as the source of all doctrine. The doctrine of TWB shows itself to be in harmony with the Lutheran Confessions and the conservative Lutheran her-

itage. The doctrine of TWB also *avoids* the extremes on both sides.

First, consider the relationship of the royal priesthood to the public ministry. On one extreme are those who highlight the public ministry to the detriment of the royal priesthood. Some say the public ministry is a means of grace, the only channel through which God works. Some say the royal priesthood does not have the keys. On the other extreme are those who highlight the royal priesthood to the detriment of the public ministry. Some say the public ministry is not important or divinely necessary. Some say the royal priesthood can carry out all the public functions of the ministry. In contrast TWB gives full value and importance to both the royal priesthood and the public ministry.

Second, consider the relationship of the pastoral ministry to other forms of the public ministry. On one extreme are those who say that only pastors are in the public ministry. On the other extreme are those who say that pastors are not important or are on an equal plane with all other forms. TWB gives the honor of the public ministry to all who are called to use the means of grace on behalf of the church. But TWB also recognizes the pastoral ministry as a special form, in that it exercises comprehensive spiritual oversight over local congregations.

Finally, consider the role of women in the church. On one extreme are those who deny that women can serve in any form of the public ministry. On the other extreme are those who ordain women into the pastoral ministry and put them into any and all positions of leadership in the church. TWB opens the door for service in the public ministry to women in roles that are appropriate. TWB, in faithfulness to God's Word, limits their service to roles that do not involve authority over men.

One could argue that the doctrine of TWB presents a wholesome middle ground that avoids saying more or less than Scripture on the topic of the ministry. **LOGIA**

NOTES

1. *This We Believe* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1999).
2. John F. Brug, "Current Debate Concerning the Doctrine of the Ministry," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 91, no. 1 (Winter 1994): 31.
3. Mark Nispel, "Office and Offices: Some Basic Lutheran Philology," *LOGIA* 6, no. 3 (Trinity 1997): 6.
4. David P. Kuske, *Luther's Catechism* (Milwaukee: WELS Board for Parish Education, 1982), 270.
5. *Doctrinal Statements of the WELS* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1997), 48.
6. Lowell C. Green, "Grabau and Walther: Theocentric versus Anthropocentric Understanding of Church and Ministry," *LOGIA* 5, no. 2 (Easteride 1996): 25.
7. Thomas M. Winger, "The Office of the Holy Ministry according to the New Testament Mandate of Christ," *LOGIA* 7, no. 2 (Easteride 1998): 42.
8. AE 40: 27.
9. John F. Brug, "The Ministry of the Apostles and Our Ministry," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 92, no. 3 (Summer 1995): 171.
10. Douglas Fusselman, "Only Playing Church? The Lay Minister and The Lord's Supper," *LOGIA* 3, no. 1 (Epiphany 1994): 48.
11. Jonathan Lange, "How Are They to Believe?" *LOGIA* 7, no. 3 (Trinity 1998): 40.
12. James D. Heiser, *The Office of the Keys in the Ecclesiology of C. F. W. Walther and the Lutheran Confessions* (Decatur, IL: Johann Gerhard Institute, 1996): 14-16.
13. John Schaller, "The Origin and Development of the New Testament Ministry," trans. Roger Fleming, Mark Jeske, Daniel Schaller, and Wilbert R. Gawrisch, in *The Wauwatosa Theology* (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1997), 3:

78, previously published in *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 78, no. 1 (January 1981): 35.

14. August Pieper, "Are There Legal Regulations in the New Testament?" trans. Carl J. Lawrenz, *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 86, no. 1 (Winter 1989): 50-51. Similar thoughts are found in August Pieper, "Concerning the Doctrine of the Church and of Its Ministry, with Special Reference to the Synod and Its Discipline," trans. H. J. Vogel, *The Wauwatosa Theology* (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1997), 3:115, previously published in *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 59, no. 2 (April 1962): 106; and in August Pieper, trans. Harold R. John, "Luther's Doctrine of Church and Ministry," *The Wauwatosa Theology* (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1997), 3:200-201, previously published in *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 60, no. 4 (October 1963): 257-558.

15. Pieper, "Luther's Doctrine of Church and Ministry," 200.

16. Three recent publications where the Thiensville Theses may be found are Edward C. Fredrich, *The Wisconsin Synod Lutherans* (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1992), 183-184; John M. Brenner, "Forward in Christ: Doctrinal Challenges and Language Change," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 97, no. 3 (Summer 2000): 169-170; and Mark F. Bartling, "Book Review on *The Wauwatosa Theology*," *LOGIA* 9, no. 4 (Reformation 2000): 57.

17. *Doctrinal Statements of the WELS*, 49-50.

18. Armin W. Schuetz, *Church—Mission—Ministry* (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1995), 99.

19. Brian R. Keller, "Church and Ministry: An Exegetical Study of Several Key Passages with Reference To Some Contemporary Issues," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 93, no. 4 (Fall 1996): 267; and John F. Brug, "Current Debate," 33.

20. An interesting but unpublished WELS essay on this topic is Joel Fredrich, "The Divine Institution of Gospel Ministry," presented at a pastors' conference in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin, on October 18, 1994.
21. *Doctrinal Statements of the WELS*, 48–49.
22. *Ibid.*, 49.
23. John F. Brug, "The Priesthood of All Believers and the Ministry," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 91, no. 2 (Spring 1994): 124.
24. John Johnson, "The Office of the Pastoral Ministry: Scriptural and Confessional Considerations," in *Church and Ministry: The Collected Papers of The 150th Anniversary Theological Convocation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*, ed. Jerald C. Joerz and Paul T. McCain (St. Louis: LCMS Office of the President, 1998), 89.
25. *Ibid.*, 91. Dr. Johnson has some very sensible things to say about the words "function" and "office" in regard to the public ministry. The way some people describe the "functional" view, it would not fit with the WELS.
26. Lance G. Steicke, "Response to the Convocation," *Church and Ministry: The Collected Papers*, 253.
27. J. A. O. Preus III, "Response to the Convocation," *Church and Ministry: The Collected Papers*, 252.
28. Arnold C. Mueller, *The Ministry of the Lutheran Teacher* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1964).
29. Robert M. Toepper, "Is the Lutheran Teacher a Minister?" *Lutheran Education*, Nov/Dec 1995, Jan/Feb, 1996, May/June 1996. This article is in error; however, when it says, "Women teachers in the WELS are not called" (262). Women teachers in the WELS do receive divine calls in the same way that male teachers do.
30. *The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature* (LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations, 1981).
31. Daniel S. Johnson, "The Ministry and the Schoolmaster," *LOGIA* 6, no. 3 (Trinity 1997): 22.
32. Robert David Preus, *The Doctrine of the Call in the Confessions and Lutheran Orthodoxy*, 16–21.
33. Naomichi Masaki, "Confessing Christ: Office and Vocation," and Klaus Detlev Schulz, "Christ's Ambassadors," both in *LOGIA* 7, no. 3 (Trinity 1998).
34. David Chytraeus, trans. John W. Montgomery, *On Sacrifice* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1962): 98–102.
35. Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, trans. Fred Kramer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978), 2: 682–688.
36. Gottfried Herrmann, "The Path of the Evangelisch-Lutherischen Freikirche (ELFK) into the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC) and the Doctrine of Church and Ministry," trans. Michael Seifert and John Brug, unpublished essay delivered in Finland in June 2000, 9.
37. AE 46: 220. Similar thoughts are found in AE 37: 364.
38. David P. Scaer, "The Clergy as the New Testament Ministers with a Proposal for Parochial School Teachers," *Issues in Christian Education* 27, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 7.
39. E. W. Kähler, "Does a Congregation Ordinarily Have the Right Temporarily to Commit an Essential Part of the Holy Preaching Office to a Layman?" trans. Mark Nispel, *LOGIA* 6, no. 3 (Trinity 1997): 41. Similar argumentation is found in "A Response to an Overture to Establish an Ordained Diaconate," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (July 1999): 213–215.
40. Kurt E. Marquart, *The Church, Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics* 9, ed. Robert Preus (Fort Wayne, IN: International Foundation for Lutheran Confessional Research, 1990), 140, 144.
41. John F. Brug, "An Ordained Diaconate for the LCMS?" *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 97, no. 2 (Spring 2000), 137. This article is a WELS response to the CTQ article of July 1999 on an ordained diaconate.
42. Armin J. Panning, "Acts 6: The 'Ministry' of the Seven," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 93, no. 1 (Winter 1996): 17.
43. Pieper, "Luther's Doctrine of Church and Ministry," 248. Similar thoughts are found in Carl Lawrenz, "An Evaluation of Walther's Theses on the Church and its Ministry," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 79, no. 2 (Spring 1982): 127.
44. David P. Scaer, "Book Review on Church—Mission—Ministry: The Family of God," *LOGIA* 6, no. 1 (Epiphany 1997): 47.
45. Lowell C. Green, "The Discipline of Church Law and the Doctrine of Church and Ministry," *LOGIA* 9, no. 3 (Trinity 2000): 44.
46. *Statistical Report of the WELS for 1999* (Milwaukee: WELS Statistical Office, 2000), 2, 116. In addition there are about 175 pastor-trained workers who serve as professors, teachers, administrators, or other church workers. Sometimes such workers are loosely referred to as "pastors" because they have been trained for the pastoral ministry, they may be called back into the parish ministry, and they often fill in on a temporary basis as pastors. Technically they are not pastors in the pure sense, however, since they are not serving as overseers of congregations.
47. August Pieper, "Zur Verständigung in der gegenwärtigen Diskussion über Kirche und Amt," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 9, no. 3 (Juli 1912), 204–205. The translation is from Joel Fredrich, "The Divine Institution of Gospel Ministry," 40.
48. C. F. W. Walther, "Sermon at the Installation of Two College Professors," trans. J. W. Klotz, *Lutheran Sentinel* 32 (March 28, 1949): 85.
49. David J. Valleskey, "Coworking of Pastors, Teachers, Staff, and Member Ministers," *WELS Ministry Compendium* (Milwaukee: WELS Parish Services, 1992), 2: 815.
50. Scaer, "The Clergy as the New Testament Ministers," 9.
51. Thomas P. Nass, "The Pastoral Ministry as a Distinct Form of the Public Ministry," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 91, no. 4 (Fall 1994): 259–262.
52. James Kalthoff, "The Pastor: God's Servant for God's People," *Church and Ministry: The Collected Papers*, 130.
53. Harold E. Wicke, "Is the Pastorate in the Congregation the Only God-ordained Office in the Church?" *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 68, no. 2 (April 1971): 120.
54. *Doctrinal Statements of the WELS*, 50–51.
55. Paul R. Harris, "Angels Unaware," *LOGIA* 3, no. 1 (Epiphany 1994).
56. Green, "Grabau and Walther."
57. Douglas D. Fusselman, "It's Jesus! The Minister as the Embodiment of Christ," *LOGIA* 6, no. 1 (Epiphany 1997): 28.
58. T. Johannes Grosse, *Unterscheidungslehren* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1889), 5. Translation is from Carl Lawrenz, "An Evaluation of Walther's Theses," 99.
59. C. F. W. Walther, trans. J. T. Mueller, *Church and Ministry* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1987), 303.
60. *Ibid.*, 219.
61. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1994), 384 ff.
62. Roger D. Pittelko, "The Office of the Holy Ministry in the Life of the Church: A View from the Parish," *LOGIA* 2, no. 1 (Epiphany 1993): 37.
63. Adolf Hoenecke, *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics*, trans. Joel Fredrich, Paul Prange, Bill Tackmier (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1999), 4: 201. People interested in this newly published translation should read the recent review by John F. Brug, "Review of *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics: Volume IV*," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 97, no. 4 (Fall 2000), 315–317. Hoenecke died of pneumonia on January 3, 1908, so his *Dogmatics* was completed prior to the writings of the Wauwatosa theologians on church and ministry that began about 1911. Some have assumed that his position on church and ministry was different than the current WELS position. It is fair to say that not everything in Hoenecke is expressed the way the WELS expresses things today. Yet the differences should not be overblown. Brug in his review minimizes the differences. Certainly Hoenecke was not privy to the later discussion, and it is unfair to make judgments about how he would have reacted if he had been a participant. When the decision was made to print an English translation of Hoenecke, it was decided not to encumber the translation with notes on this issue.
64. Ulla Hindbeck, "Women and the Ministry," trans. Milton Tweit, *LOGIA* 9, no. 1 (Epiphany 2000): 22.
65. Marquart, *The Church*, 140.
66. Michelle Gallmeier, "The Diaconate: A Misunderstood Office," *LOGIA* 6, no. 3 (Trinity 1997): 24.
67. Jeannine E. Olson, *One Ministry Many Roles* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), 58.
68. Jobst Schöne, "Church & Ministry: Part II: Systematic Formulation," *LOGIA* 2, no. 2 (Eastertide 1993): 40.
69. AE 30: 55.
70. David P. Scaer, "The Integrity of the Christological Character of the Office of the Ministry," *LOGIA* 2, no. 1 (Epiphany 1993): 16.

THE PUBLIC MINISTRY OF THE WORD

(adopted 2005)

Salvation Won by Christ and Received through Faith

5 *We teach that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits or works, but are freely justified for Christ's sake through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, who by His death, has made satisfaction for our sins. This faith God accounts as righteousness in His sight, Rom. 3 and 4 (Augsburg Confession IV, Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary, 9).*

10

Salvation Distributed

That we may obtain this faith, the office 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 works faith where and when it pleases God in
15 *those who hear the Gospel. That is, God, not because of our own merits, but for Christ's sake, justifies those who believe that they are received into favor for Christ's sake. (AC V, Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary, 9)*

We reject the teaching that

the Holy Spirit comes without the external Word but through their own preparations and
20 *works (AC V, Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary, 9).*

The Role of the Church in Salvation Distributed

I. The Office of the Keys

25 God has given to His church on earth the Office of the Keys (Matthew 16:19, Matthew 18:18-20, John 20:21-23; also see Smalcald Articles, Part III, Art. VII, 1). "The Office of the Keys is the special authority which Christ has given to His Church on earth, to forgive the sins of the penitent sinners and to retain the sins of the impenitent as long as they do not repent" (Luther's Small Catechism, "The Office of the Keys and Confession", ELS 2001 ed.;
30 "Doctrine of the Church," Thesis III, ELS Synod Report, 1979, p. 31 and 1980, p. 76). The church uses the keys to preach the Gospel, administer the sacraments, and practice church discipline. The keys are used privately or unofficially¹ when individual Christians, on behalf of Christ, speak the Gospel of forgiveness to others; when they forgive the sins of those who sin against them; when they retain the sins of those who do not repent, e.g., when they
35 confront in a brotherly way those who need to repent of their sins; and when in "the mutual conversation and consolation of the brethren" they comfort one another with the words of the Gospel (1 Peter 2:9, Matthew 18:15-18, Matthew 6:12 – The 5th Petition of the Lord's Prayer; SA Part III, Art. IV). Christians also use the keys publicly or officially when scripturally qualified individuals, who have been called by Christ through the church, forgive
40 and retain sins on behalf of Christ and His church (Romans 10:14-17, Acts 14:23, Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, 67). Christians also use the keys to judge the teaching of their pastors and teachers; they are to beware of false prophets (Matthew 7:15-16, 1 John 4:1, 2 Timothy 3:16).

¹ In this document when we speak of the *private or unofficial* use of the keys we mean the duty and authority belonging to individual believers (the Universal Priesthood of All Believers) which is their personal responsibility toward their neighbor. When we speak of the *public or official* use of the keys we are referring to the duty and authority of those who are called to act on behalf of Christ and His believers.

1. We reject any teaching that denies individual Christians the use of the keys privately in their calling as the Universal Priesthood of All Believers.
2. We reject any teaching that treats the Universal Priesthood and the Public Ministry as one and the same thing.

5

II. The Public Ministry of the Word

This public use of the keys is the Public Ministry of the Word. "That we may obtain this faith, the office of teaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments was instituted" (AC V). This divinely instituted Public Ministry of the Word includes both a narrower and a wider sense. The narrower sense refers to a presiding office that is indispensable for the church; see II A. The wider sense refers, in addition to a presiding office, to offices having a limited public use of the keys, offices that the church, in her freedom, may establish; see II B. The divine institution of this preaching and teaching office is not located in just one particular passage. Rather, throughout the New Testament, a divine ordering, establishment, and institution of the preaching and teaching office is indicated and presupposed (John 20:21-23, John 21:15ff, Matthew 28:18-20 [NKJV], Matthew 9:36-38, Ephesians 4:11-12, 1 Peter 5:1-4, Acts 20:28, 1 Corinthians 4:1; see also Treatise 10). Those in this office by virtue of God's call through the church perform their duties on behalf of the church and in the name and in the stead of Christ, so that whenever we hear Christ's servant we hear Christ Himself speak (Luke 10:16, AC XXVIII, 22, Apology of the Augsburg Confession VII & VIII, 28, 47).

3. We reject any teaching that the Public Ministry is a development of the church and not a divine institution.
4. We reject any teaching that holds that the Public Ministry is established merely by the orderly carrying out of the Universal Priesthood according to 1 Corinthians 14:40.

A. The Public Ministry of the Word in a Narrower Sense: The Pastoral Office in its Various Manifestations.² The church is commanded to appoint ministers who will preside over the churches (2 Timothy 2:2, Titus 1:5, Ap XIII, 12), who must have the scriptural qualifications for a full use of the keys: "The Gospel requires of those who preside over the churches that they preach the Gospel, remit sins, administer the sacraments, and, in addition, exercise jurisdiction, that is, excommunicate those who are guilty of notorious crimes and absolve those who repent... [T]his power belongs by divine right to all who preside over the churches, whether they are called pastors, presbyters or bishops" (Treatise 60-61). God commands that properly called men publicly preach, teach, administer the sacraments, forgive and retain sins, and have oversight of doctrine in the name of Christ and the church (1 Timothy 2:11-12). Therefore a presiding office, whether it is called that of pastor, shepherd, bishop, presbyter, elder or by any other name, is indispensable for the church (Luke 10:16, 1 Corinthians 12:27-31, Matthew 28:18-20, Hebrews 13:17, Acts 20:28, Ephesians 4:11-12, 1 Peter 5:1-2).

5. We reject any teaching that denies the exercise of spiritual oversight by the pastoral office.
6. We reject any teaching that the apostolic authority of the Public Ministry of the

² The term "pastoral office" has been used historically according to a more restrictive meaning (referring only to those men who are called to the pastorate of a local congregation), and according to a less restrictive meaning (referring to all those men who are called to a ministry of pastoral oversight in local congregations, as well as in other specialized fields of labor). In this document the term is being used according to its less restrictive meaning.

Word or the validity of the sacraments depends on or is derived from ordination by a bishop standing in an unbroken chain of succession from the apostles, or the necessity of maintaining a "historic episcopate."

5 Scripture clearly teaches that women are not to be in the pastoral office, because this presiding office includes the exercise of authority over men (1 Corinthians 14:34-35, 1 Timothy 2:11-12). Also, when Scripture refers to one who officiates at the Word and sacrament liturgy it speaks in male terms (1 Timothy 3:2, 1 Timothy 4:13). Therefore women shall not read the Scripture lessons in the divine service, preach the sermon,
10 administer Baptism or distribute the Lord's Supper, for these things are intimately related to the pastoral office (1 Timothy 4:13-14, 1 Corinthians 4:1).³

The church is free to divide the labors of the pastoral office among qualified men (1 Corinthians 1:17, 1 Corinthians 12:4-6). While every incumbent of this office must be
15 qualified for a full use of the keys, not every incumbent must be responsible for full use of the keys. Missionary, assistant pastor, professor of theology, synod president (who supervises doctrine in the church), and chaplain are some examples of this.

20 7. We reject the teaching that the Public Ministry of the Word is limited to the ministry of a parish pastor.

B. The Public Ministry of the Word in a Wider Sense: Other Offices That Have a Limited Public Use of the Keys. The church has freedom⁴ in dividing the labors of the public ministry (for example, vicars, principals, Lutheran elementary school teachers and other teachers), but must not go beyond the bounds of God's commands when calling
25 men or women to carry out a limited public use of the keys (1 Corinthians 14:34, 1 Timothy 2:12ff, etc). The extent to which one is authorized by the call of the church to exercise the keys publicly is the extent to which one is in the Public Ministry of the Word. Authorization to exercise a limited part of the Public Ministry of the Word does not imply authorization to exercise all or other parts of it (1 Corinthians 12:5, 28, Romans
30 12:6-8, Philipians 1:1, 1 Timothy 3:8, 5:17).

Teachers of Children in Christian Schools. In the Old and New Testaments, our Lord commands parents to train their children in the fear of the Lord. He also has commanded His church and the Public Ministry of the Word to feed the lambs of His flock with His
35 saving Word. Teachers of children in Christian schools established by the church therefore have their authority from both of these divinely established estates (Deuteronomy 6:1-7, Matthew 15:4, Ephesians 6:1-4, John 21:15-17, Large Catechism I, 141).

40 Extending calls to teachers who have spiritual care of children in Christian schools is not merely a laudable custom, but is in accordance with Romans 10:14-17 and Augsburg

³ Certainly emergency situations may arise, such as when our catechism states "Q: Who should administer baptism? A: Ordinarily the called minister of Christ should administer Baptism, but in emergency any Christian may and should do so" (ELS Catechism, p. 182). For further discussion of emergency situations, see the 1862 Lay Ministry Theses, parr. 5-7 (*Grace for Grace*, p. 139).

15⁴ Christian freedom is given to the church by God. "By divine right" refers to those things which are commanded by God. "By human right" refers to those things neither commanded nor forbidden by God which Christians may arrange according to their needs and circumstances (Acts 6:1-7, 15:22-29, 4:32, 5:29, 1 Cor 3:21,22, 14:40, Gal 5:1)

Confession XIV, not only for the sake of good order, but also because these teachers carry out a specific part of the Public Ministry. It is by human right that the church separates a limited portion of the office to one individual. But it is by divine right that one exercises that work on behalf of the Christians through whom the call has come.

5 8. We reject the teaching that only those qualified to carry out a full use of the keys are in the Public Ministry.

9. We reject the teaching that the Public Ministry is limited to any one divinely fixed form, that is, limited to the pastoral office to the exclusion of other teachers of the Word.

10 10. We reject any teaching which would conclude that the means of grace are effective only when used by a pastor.

11. We reject any teaching that makes the office of the Lutheran elementary school teacher, Sunday school teacher or any other limited office in the church equivalent to the pastoral office.

15

C. Qualifications. Those in the Public Ministry of the Word by virtue of a regular call are to conform to the specific and general qualifications given in Scripture (see especially 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus, as well as directives such as Matthew 28:19, 20, John 21: 15-17, Acts 14:23, 20:28, and Romans 12:6-8).

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III. The Divine Call Into the Public Ministry

One cannot hold the office of the Public Ministry of the Word unless called by God (Romans 10:14-17, AC XIV). Some men, such as the apostles, were called immediately, directly by God, to the Public Ministry. Since the time of the apostles God calls mediately (Acts 1:15-25:26) through the church so that there will always be qualified individuals who have been set apart to administer publicly His means of grace for the salvation of souls. The church in an orderly way extends divine calls in the name and stead of Christ and on behalf of the believers. Those who possess divine calls are serving in the Public Ministry of the Word in either a narrower or a wider sense (Acts 13:2-3, 14:23, 20:28; 1 Corinthians 3:4-9, 21-23).

30 12. We reject the teaching that every Christian is a public minister of the Word.

13. We reject any teaching that one may publicly teach, preach, or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call (AC XIV).

IV. Ordination and Installation

35 In the Lutheran Confessions ordination is understood as the rite by which the church confirms a man to be suitable for a call to the pastoral office (SA Part III, Art. X, Treatise 66-69).

Historically the Lutheran church has reserved this rite for those entering the pastoral office.

The church also has used rites of installation for all those called into the Public Ministry, in
40 both the narrow and the wide senses. Through such rites, the church makes clear that those installed in office have been properly called to it and invokes the Lord's blessing on them. At the same time those who are called to serve the people of God give public testimony to their submission to the Word of God as it is taught in the Lutheran Confessions. Rites of installation also have been used among us for congregational officers and occasional teachers
45 in Christian congregations (Sunday school teachers, etc).

Word of God as it is taught in the Lutheran Confessions. Rites of installation also have been used among us for congregational officers and occasional teachers in Christian congregations (Sunday school teachers, etc).

CICR Reaction to "The Public Ministry of the Word"

It is fair to say that there have been varying reactions to "The Public Ministry of the Word" since its adoption in June 2005. Many look upon it as a gift of God's grace that the ELS could come together to the point where it could pass a document like this. Some have wondered if it is a compromise document, trying to blend two diverse positions.

The CICR reviewed "The Public Ministry of the Word" and visited with ELS leaders about it. What the CICR would like to say, first and foremost, is the following. We are happy to see that "The Public Ministry of the Word" stands with the truth of Scripture on what are perhaps the two most crucial points in the debate among the churches of the former Synodical Conference.

The first crucial point has to do with the possession and use of the keys. "The Public Ministry of the Word" unequivocally states that all believers have the keys and may use the keys. Unfortunately there have been "Romanizing" Lutherans in recent years who have argued that only the clergy have the keys, or that only the clergy may use the keys. This latter position, for example, was articulated by the Lutheran Confessional Synod when it broke fellowship with the WELS and ELS in 1996. So it is refreshing to see a strong statement in the opening paragraph about the use of the keys by the universal priesthood.

The second crucial point has to do with offices of public ministry other than the pastoral office. "The Public Ministry of the Word" clearly confesses that there are offices other than the pastoral office in the divinely instituted public ministry. In the long Wisconsin-Missouri debate on the ministry, of course, this has been a perennial source of contention. Many Missouri Synod theologians say that either you are a pastor or you are not in the public ministry established by Christ. So we can rejoice to see a strong confession on the part of the ELS that teachers of children in Christian schools, for example, are in the public ministry of the church.

To be sure, the ELS statement uses some terminology different from common terminology in WELS. It speaks about the public ministry "in a narrower sense" and "in a wider sense." It speaks about an office with "a full use of the keys" and offices with "a limited use of the keys." It does not talk about different "forms" of public ministry, as is common in WELS. But there is no reason why we as sister synods must use exactly the same terminology, as long as the substance of the doctrine is the same.

There are some things, however, that the CICR thinks could have been worded differently in "The Public Ministry of the Word." At a day-long meeting on September 16, 2005, the CICR was able to share some of these observations with the ELS Doctrine Committee and to hear the responses of our ELS brothers. Conscious of possible misunderstandings of doctrinal statements, we also invited the ELS brothers to comment, if they desired, on the WELS "Theses on the Church and Ministry" from 1969 about things that could have been worded differently there.

One surprise for the CICR with "The Public Ministry of the Word" was the placement of Augsburg Confession V in the section on the public ministry. It has long been understood among theologians of the former Synodical Conference, including the ELS's forefather Ulrik Koren, that AC V is speaking about the means of grace and not the public ministry. In response, the ELS brothers said they consider AC V to be speaking first of all about the means of grace, but that the public ministry is also included. They pointed out that AC V is referred to and quoted also at the beginning of "The Public Ministry of the Word" where the document speaks in general about how salvation is distributed.

The CICR thought the following was an awkward or unusual sentence: "The extent to which one is authorized by the call of the church to exercise the keys publicly is the extent to which one is in the Public Ministry of the Word." We are not accustomed to speaking this way, as if a person can be partly or to a certain extent in the public ministry.

Another sentence that we felt could be improved was this one: "Therefore women shall not read the Scripture lessons in the divine service, preach the sermon, administer Baptism or distribute the Lord's Supper, for these things are intimately related to the pastoral office." First, how can one be sure that only a pastor should do these things? In the history of the church, male deacons and lectors have sometimes been entrusted with the reading of the liturgical lessons, for example. In limiting the service of women in the church, WELS focuses on those activities that involve authority over men, based on 1 Timothy 2:12. WELS doesn't put together a list of duties that only a pastor can do.

In addition, the CICR was concerned that this statement may be raising applications to the level of absolute principle. In this regard, we had extensive discussions at our September 16 meeting on the topic of women lectors. Though the WELS was concerned about possible overstatement on the part of the ELS, it can be said that there was a consensus among all participants that women should not be reading the lessons in our regular Sunday services. President Gurgel and Vice President Mueller said they were aware of only one WELS church where this was an issue, and the situation was being dealt with. In WELS, the reading of the liturgical lessons in our Sunday services is recognized to

be authoritative teaching. Therefore men should do it. In the desired practice, WELS and ELS representatives were agreed.

Perhaps the greatest concern of the CICR about "The Public Ministry of the Word" was in its statements about the pastoral office. We hope the document is not going beyond Scripture in its statements about this particular form of public ministry.

When the ELFK (Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Germany) passed a doctrinal statement on the ministry in 2001, the ELFK said that the office of congregational shepherd is "indispensable" (*unverzichtbar*) in the church (cf. *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, December 2002, 42:4, p. 319). The WELS did not object to this wording. It has always been the doctrine and practice of WELS that congregations need overseers. The position of congregational overseer or pastor is the most fundamental and most necessary of all positions of public ministry in the church, because the congregation is the most fundamental form of the church where the day-to-day work of distributing the means of grace takes place. All WELS churches have pastors. All WELS members are under the guidance of a pastor.

But this ELS document seems to push the language a little farther when it says that the church is "commanded to appoint ministers who will preside over the churches," whereas the other offices of public ministry are set up by the church in Christian freedom. We wonder: Is there really a command in the Bible for one specific form of public ministry? Do the passages cited speak for sure about the "public ministry in a narrower sense?"

Here is where debate surfaces on what is "divinely instituted" in regard to the public ministry. In WELS writing, all are agreed that the public ministry itself is something "divinely instituted." Christ wants there to be specially called servants of the gospel who go out in his name. Some WELS writers continue with the thought that all the individual forms of public ministry are therefore also "divinely instituted," because they originate under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and they are part of the divinely instituted public ministry. Other WELS writers prefer not to use the phrase "divinely instituted" for any particular form, because God has not commanded that any particular form be established by all Christians in all places. The difference between these writers comes down to the precise understanding of the phrase "divinely instituted."

But the WELS "Theses on the Church and Ministry" state, "We hold it to be untenable to say that the pastorate of the local congregation (*Pfarramt*) as a specific form of the public ministry is specifically instituted by the Lord in contrast to other forms of the public ministry" (*Doctrinal Statements of the WELS*, p 51). No one in WELS wants to say something about the divine institution of the pastorate that is different

A:18

from other forms. We don't see institution statements in the New Testament directed only to this one particular form of public ministry.

Still, in our discussions with the ELS brothers, we have been assured that there is not a doctrinal difference. We have been pleased with the way that ELS leaders have explained the document to us and others. As noted above, "The Public Ministry of the Word" clearly says that the public ministry in general is divinely instituted, and this divinely instituted public ministry includes various forms. We all agree that the office of congregational shepherd is unique and primary. There may be a slightly different emphasis and way of stating it. There are different fears and concerns. But the basic truths are the same.

So, we have seen nothing in the events of the past years and in the adoption of "The Public Ministry of the Word" to disrupt our fellowship with the ELS. We have noticed that outside observers (non-ELS or WELS) who have commented on the document have concluded that it is in essential agreement with the doctrine of WELS. This is undoubtedly because the document, as noted above, stands with Scripture and WELS on the two most crucial points in the debate.

People knowledgeable about the ELS are aware that ministry discussion is still going on in the ELS. We pray that God will bless them. We are thankful for the production and adoption of "The Public Ministry of the Word."

Thomas P. Nass

A STRANGE, SAD STORY

In 2005 Concordia Publishing House brought out a new edition of the Book of Concord, intended especially to encourage the study of the Lutheran Confessions by laypeople. This new edition, which is based on an updating of the English translation of the *Concordia Triglotta*, was greeted with a lot of enthusiasm, and more than 40,000 copies were sold in the first months. It must come as quite a shock then to many people to find that a panel of the Doctrinal Review Commission of the LCMS has revoked the doctrinal certification of this edition of the Book of Concord. This decision was a response to official challenges filed against the volume. The panel's evaluation of these challenges is provided in a detailed report which can be downloaded from the LCMS web site. The commission did not rule that *Concordia* contains material that disagrees with the Scriptures or the Lutheran Confessions, but that *Concordia* contains "numerous passages and features" which are "inadequate, misleading, ambiguous, or lacking in doctrinal clarity." The president of the LCMS has announced that it is very important, especially given the critical significance of the Lutheran Confessions for the doctrinal confession of the synod, that every effort be expended in insuring

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT of the **Association of Confessional** **Lutheran Churches (ACLC)**

PART ONE: **OUR CONFESSIONAL SUBSCRIPTION**

(Adopted - Tuesday, January 29, 2008)

Thesis 1

We confess that the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God and the only rule and norm according to which all teachings and teachers in the church are to be judged. The canonical Scriptures are inspired by God and are therefore infallible. Even as God cannot lie, deceive, or err, the Holy Scriptures cannot lie, deceive, or err. The Holy Scriptures are the only source of divine doctrine. All of the church's doctrine is to be drawn from the clear Scriptures. It must be established by what the biblical text clearly means. It may not be established by what the biblical text might mean.

Antithesis 1

We reject and condemn any teaching that would deny the inerrancy, inherent clarity, and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures or that would promote any authority over our teaching than that of Scripture alone.

Thesis 2

We subscribe unconditionally to the Ecumenical Creeds: the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian creeds, because their doctrine is drawn from the Holy Scriptures and is in complete agreement with God's Word. We subscribe unconditionally to the doctrine of the Lutheran Confessions as contained in the Book of Concord of 1580: the Unaltered Augsburg Confession; the Apology of the Augsburg Confession; the Smalcald Articles, and the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope; the Small and Large Catechisms of Martin Luther; and the Formula of Concord. We subscribe to the Book of Concord because it is drawn from and is faithful to the Holy Scriptures in all points of doctrine.

Antithesis 1

We reject and condemn any approach to the Lutheran Confessions that would deny their relevance to the church today or their suitability to settle doctrinal disputes among us.

Thesis 3

We commend as useful for study and guidance the following:

1. CFW Walther's *Theses on Church and Ministry* of 1852 (German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other States).

2. "Theses on Lay Preaching" of 1862 (Norwegian Synod).
3. "The Third Commandment and the Christian Sunday" of 1863 (Norwegian Synod).
4. "Absolution" of 1874 (Norwegian Synod).
5. "An Accounting" of 1884 (Norwegian Synod).
6. "Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod" of 1932 (Lutheran Church Missouri Synod).
7. "Unity, Union, and Unionism" of 1936 (Little Norwegian Synod).
8. "A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles" of 1973 (Lutheran Church Missouri Synod).
9. "The Evangelical Lutheran Synod: Character, History, Doctrine, Mission" of 1981 (Evangelical Lutheran Synod).

We agree with and welcome examination based on *Ministry, Word, and Sacraments: An Enchiridion* by Martin Chemnitz, (Concordia Publishing House in 1981 et. al), the standard for the Orthodox German Lutheran church from the time of Chemnitz on.

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PART TWO:
OUR CONFESSION IN LIGHT OF MODERN TRENDS
(Adopted - Tuesday, January 29, 2008)

In response to certain movements and trends in the church today we make the following confession:

Thesis 1

We confess that justification by grace alone through faith alone for Christ's sake is the central article of the Christian doctrine and may not be set aside to the periphery in favor of any other article (Romans 3:21-28; Romans 4:5; Ephesians 2:8-10).

Antithesis 1

We reject and condemn any effort to replace justification with a doctrine of sanctification or indwelling or recreation as the central article of the faith (Galatians 1:6-12).

Thesis 2

We confess that the Holy Spirit works graciously through the gospel and the sacraments of Christ and we do not seek the Holy Spirit's guidance in our lives apart from the external Word of God (Psalm 119:105; Ephesians 1:13-14; 2 Peter 1:19-21; 1 John 4:1; SA III, VIII, 10). We follow the historic liturgies of the church for the sake of the faithful proclamation of the gospel and the right administration of Christ's sacraments (Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; 1 Corinthians 14:33,40).

Antithesis 1

We reject and condemn any reliance on extra-biblical revelations. We reject and condemn the modern Charismatic Movement with its claim to "speaking in tongues" as the sign of being "baptized in the Holy Spirit" as unscriptural and dangerous (John 3:5; 1 Corinthians 12:30-31; 1 Corinthians 13:8; 1 Corinthians 14:4).

Antithesis 2

We reject and condemn the replacement of the church's historic liturgies and hymns with forms that neglect the objective means of grace in favor of celebrating religious feelings (Romans 10:8-9; Matthew 28: 18-20; Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; John 20:21-23).

Thesis 3

We confess that the church is the gathering of believers among whom the gospel is preached purely and the sacraments are administered rightly (AC VII) and that Christ has established in and for His church a specific office whose incumbents are to preach the gospel and administer His sacraments through which the Holy Spirit, where and when God pleases, works faith in those who hear the gospel (Matthew 28:16-20; John 3:8; John 20:21; Titus 1:5; AC V).

Antithesis 1

We reject and condemn the formless doctrine of church and ministry that teaches that every use of God's Word "on behalf of believers" is the divinely instituted public ministry of the word (1 Corinthians 4:1; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Timothy 3:1) and that every gathering of Christians is to be regarded as church (Matthew 16:16-18 and Matthew 28:17-20; Acts 2:42).

Antithesis 2

We reject and condemn any teaching that would deny that Christ has entrusted this holy office to the royal priesthood of the baptized or that would challenge the right of a Christian congregation to choose its own pastor, though we affirm the duty of every congregation to involve, when possible, the pastors of their fellowship in the call and installation of pastors. (Matthew 7:15; 1 Corinthians 3:21-22; 1 John 4:1).

Antithesis 3

We reject and condemn the ordination of women and we deny that God calls women to preach, teach, or administer the sacraments in the church (Jeremiah 23:21; 1 Corinthians 14: 34-37; 1 Timothy 2:11-14; AC XIV).

Thesis 4

We confess that the unity of the church is established by the Holy Spirit through the Word and that false doctrine is the source of division. The church must uphold the truth of God's Word and must not tolerate false doctrine in her midst but must faithfully identify errorists, refute their errors on the basis of God's Word, and refuse to express church fellowship with them (Matthew 7:15; Romans 16:17-18; 2 John 10-11).

Antithesis 1

We reject and condemn religious unionism, that is, the expression of church fellowship with persistent errorists (2 Corinthians 6:17).

Antithesis 2

We reject and condemn separatism, that is, the refusal to express church fellowship with churches whose doctrine and practice is in agreement with God's Word (1 Corinthians 12:13-14, 25; Ephesians 4:1-6).

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attended every WELS/ELS Forum from the beginning in 1967 through 2000. Rev. Madson, a 1945 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, will be remembered as a careful Christian gentleman and a good friend of WELS. Elected to replace him on the Doctrine Committee was Prof. Erling Teigen from Bethany Lutheran College.

WELS readers should be aware that discussions have been continuing on the topic of women giving communion to women. During the past year the presidents of the ELS and WELS drafted a short statement on the topic with input from others. This statement was approved by the WELS Conference of Presidents in March 2007. For the public record, this statement is attached to this article. Discussions on this topic will continue with the CICR and ELS Doctrine Committee in September.

Speaking on behalf of WELS at the ELS convention was First Vice President Wayne Mueller. The undersigned was privileged again to serve as the WELS CICR observer.

Thomas P. Nass

Concerning Women Administering Communion to Women
(Approved by the WELS COP on March 16, 2007)

While Scripture does not address the specific action of a woman administering communion to another woman, we will refrain from this practice for the following reasons:

- Concern that speaking of such action as permissible without confining it to unusual circumstances, especially cases of casuistry, causes confusion about the role of women in public ministry, and it may appear that women are now functioning in a role historically assigned to the pastoral ministry. In addition, historically women communing women has not been a practice within the Evangelical Lutheran Church.
- Concern for the proper spiritual care of communicants; the logical inference from the study of pertinent passages of Scripture leads us to conclude that the administration of communion is usually one of the responsibilities of the overseeing minister of the church (1 Corinthians 4:1), and this oversight position for congregations is restricted to males (e.g., 1 Timothy 2:11-12, 1 Timothy 3:1ff). This does not mean that in every case only the overseeing ministers are the administrators of the sacrament; properly trained male leaders in congregations may, when properly called and under appropriate supervision and when the need arises, serve as administrators.
- Concern about whether others have sufficient theological training and ongoing experience to preside at the celebration of the Lord's Supper; generally the one trained as the overseeing minister is entrusted evangelically to determine whether a communicant in a worthy manner is receiving the Lord's true body and blood for the forgiveness of sins.

- Concern that the reception of the Lord's Supper not be regarded as an emergency situation; unlike Baptism, the Lord's Supper is not an emergency sacrament, and generally sacraments are administered by the overseeing minister; we do acknowledge, however, that there may be an exceptional case of casuistry, in which the law of love would require a woman to administer communion to another Christian, so as not to deprive a communicant of grace and comfort.
- Concern that circumstances may arise in which such a practice would blur the biblical roles of man and woman.
- Concern that when the Lord's Supper is offered both male and female communicants, generally, should be welcome to attend. The gender of the administrator should not be considered as a reason for prohibiting someone from taking the sacrament.

The above remarks are not to be understood as implying that the efficacy of the sacrament depends on the kind of call held by the administrator.

For these above reasons, we conclude that the practice of women privately or publicly distributing the Lord's Supper to women is something from which we will refrain.

THE SO-CALLED JESUS TOMB

It must be the Easter season again. (This article is being written a couple weeks after Easter 2007.) You can tell, not by the spring weather, or the calendar, or the lilies and white paraments decorating our churches' altars. A much more certain indicator is the rise of another novel, film, or TV documentary to challenge the biblical witness about Jesus and what Christians believe concerning him. In the past we have had the *Da Vinci Code* and the fuss about the so-called Gospel According to Judas and other Gnostic writings. Now comes speculation about a tomb discovered in March of 1980 in the Talpiyot neighborhood of Jerusalem to the south of the Old City. Finding old tombs in and around Jerusalem is not all that unusual. Excavators digging for new foundations and contractors building new housing do it all the time. But this tomb was different.

This tomb was excavated from March 28 to April 14, 1980 by Yosef Gath on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority. Helping him were Amos Kloner and Eliot Braun. What the archaeologists found was a spacious and carefully carved out 1st century AD rock tomb containing ten ossuaries along with other bones scattered on shelves and the floor. (For those who might be wondering, an ossuary is a limestone bone chest used to store an individual's bones about a year after burial when decomposition is complete.) Each ossuary was described by the excavators. Two were decorated and had the names "Mariamene, who is

