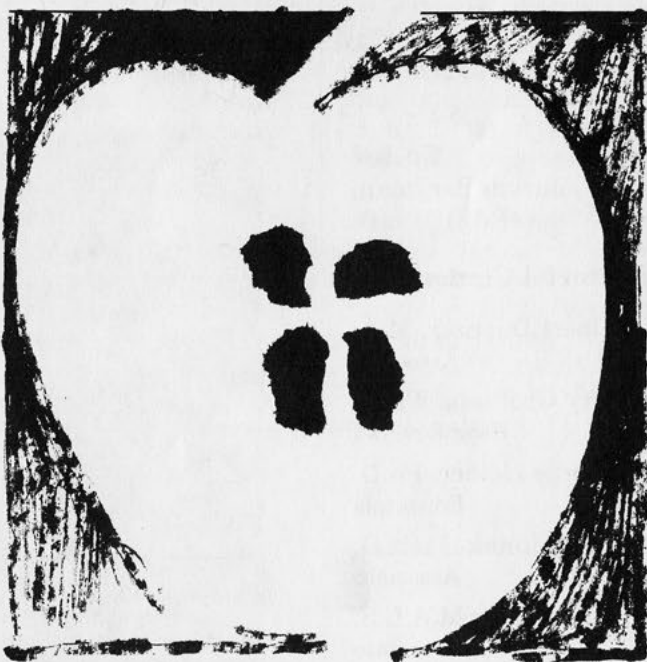
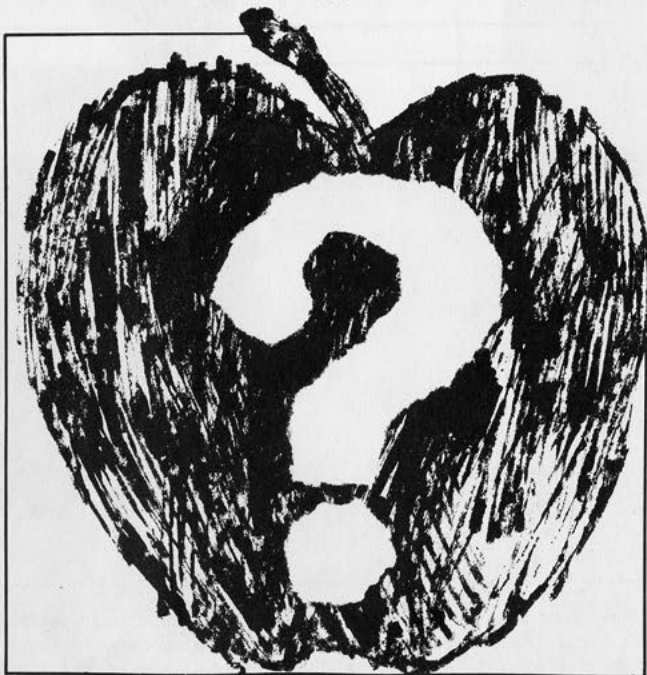
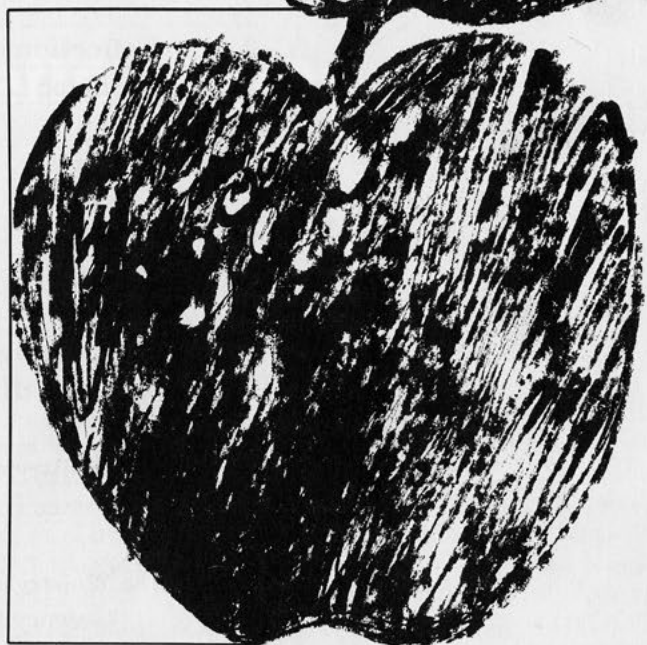
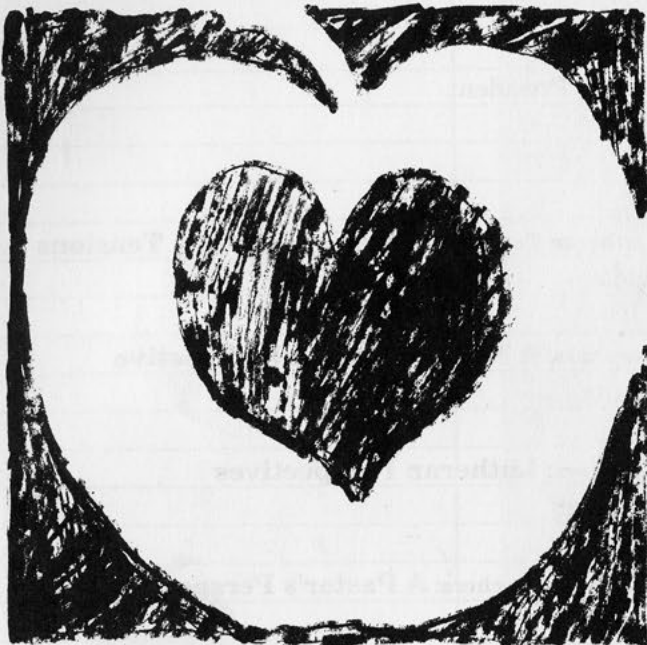


ISSUES

IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Spring 1990

Vol. 24, No. 1



The Ministry of the Lutheran Teacher

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Reflections

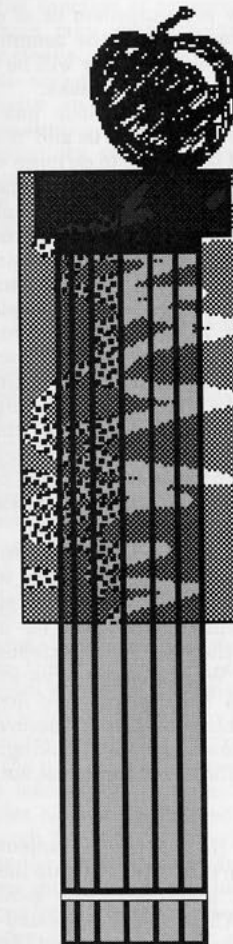
"Teachers affect eternity."

Almost all of us are able personally to identify teachers who have provided documentation to the truth of this quotation in our lives. What a special blessing!

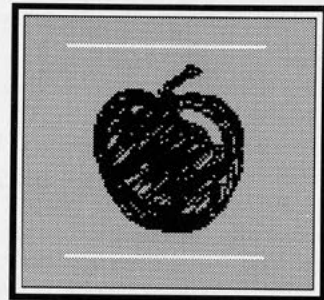
The critical role of teachers in the mission of Christ's church is apparent. The significance of the ministry of teachers was seen in the earliest days of the church. Before the writings of the New Testament were collected, the church taught the stories of Jesus' life and ministry as well as the Old Testament. The meanings of key Biblical events were communicated through the teaching of the creeds and doctrine. The church helped individuals to engage in prayer, worship, the sacraments, and liturgy through teaching. Implications of the Gospel in the vocation of a Christian and in ethical issues received explicit attention by teachers. Helping Christians to extend the outreach of the Gospel through service and witness was an emphasis in the church's teaching ministry. The role of a believer in the Christian community and church's mission was explored through teaching. In these six areas of the church's curriculum, teachers served as "change agents" for the Gospel.

Despite the high calling of teachers, the call and ministry of Lutheran teachers have at times been questioned. Practices associated with their ministry also have sparked questions. In an attempt to address a number of concerns while also highlighting the ministry of Lutheran teachers, the contributors of this edition present important perspectives intended to stimulate further thought and discussion of a central ministry in the church today and tomorrow. The consequences are long-term.

Ralph L. Reinke, President



SPRING 1990



The Lutheran Teacher as Minister

It is appropriate for *Issues* to address the topic of the ministry of the Lutheran teacher. The current debate in the Synod about the proper role and function of lay ministers has raised once more the question of the nature of the office of the holy ministry. Is the pastorate the only divinely instituted ministerial office in the church? Are all other ministries branches of the office of the pastor, and only of human origin? Is the increasing use of scantily trained lay ministers a threat to the welfare of the church? If lay ministers can be used at all, how does the church keep them under control?

In the midst of this debate one needs to consider again the ministry of the Lutheran teacher. Historically the Lutheran teacher has played an important role in the life of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Synod's constitution has always listed Lutheran teachers, along with congregations and pastors, as "members of Synod." Thus they have been distinguished from the laity. Lutheran teachers have properly received divine calls into the teaching ministry. The service and influence of the Lutheran teacher has traditionally extended far outside the classroom—to youth work, confirmation classes, Bible classes, organ and choir, as well as assistance at communion. They have frequently held congregations together during an extended pastoral vacancy. Without a doubt Lutheran teachers have strengthened the spiritual fibre of parishes blessed with their presence.

Nonetheless, today the Lutheran teacher may be classified as an "endangered species."

Synod's colleges in many instances are overrun by general students, sometimes to the detriment of pre-teaching and pre-pastoral students. Moreover, the lowered financial support level from Synod has resulted in greatly increased cost of preparation for these ministries. As a result many able students, especially men, are discouraged from entering the teacher education curriculum. The net result is a decline in the production of male teachers. This trend is linked with an alarming increase of secularly trained teachers in our church's parish schools.

Strong and swift action is needed from the leadership of our Synod and from the Synodical colleges. Such action should include, but not be limited to, the following program:

- Emphasize the importance of the high office of the Christian teacher as a called minister of the Word.
- Continue to emphasize to Lutheran teaching students that the teaching ministry is a ministry of parish service that goes far beyond the school.
- Reverse the tendency of Synod's colleges to become largely liberal arts schools with little emphasis in their recruitment on their prime purpose as "Christian," "Lutheran," and "church-professional."
- Mount a campaign to reduce significantly the cost of a college education for a student preparing for the teaching, diaconess, or pastoral ministries.

- At the Synodical District level make a vigorous effort to bring teachers' salaries up to an appropriate level.

Our parish elementary and secondary schools and teachers are very special treasures of the church. We cannot allow these treasures to be at risk. With God's continued blessing our Lutheran teachers and schools can be preserved and prosper.

Paul A. Zimmerman

Former President of Concordia College, in Seward, Ann Arbor, and River Forest; now living in Prudenville, Michigan

Lutheran Schools: To Disciple or Evangelize?

When the Concordia Historical Institute looks back on the turn of the century—the 21st century, that is—it will recognize two agencies as instrumental in resolving what has become a basic tension: is Christian education chiefly a ministry of evangelism or of discipleship? One agency will be the community Lutheran high school. The other will be Concordia College in Seward, Nebraska.

The case for school evangelism has progressed steadily through the '70s and '80s. As society has looked to schools to do more while families do less, congregations have expected their schools—especially pre-schools and elementary schools—to play a stronger role in evangelizing unchurched and nominally church families. And with notable success in some schools. Energy and emphasis on school evangelism, however, has diminished the chief function of Christian education which is nurture and discipleship. The Lutheran high school is our key agency for restoring the practice of strong discipleship in our church body. Concordia—Seward, producing nearly 50 percent of our new high school teachers, is our key agency for investing Lutheran high schools with a strong ministry of discipleship.

Evangelism, worship, nurture, fellowship, and service are the functions of the whole church. While these all overlap, no single ministry can be fully responsible for every function. Rather, the Holy Spirit extends the ministry of God's Word through a variety of gifts and offices. *A Theological Word Book of the Bible* (Alan Richardson, editor) accurately summarizes the teaching office, distinguishing it from other offices and functions, such as evangelizing:

To the teacher [in the New Testament church] fell the task of building up the daily thought and life of the local community of Christians by expounding points of belief and conduct. In

Ephesians 4:11 he is coupled with the pastor or shepherd who attends to the daily needs of his flock. His function implied authority; he was not expounding his own opinions, but interpreting the revelation of God in Christ (page 148).

Biblically, then, the task of the Christian teacher and school is to build up the daily thought and life of Christians by applying the revelation of God in Christ. This is discipleship. The Christian school, as a ministry of the congregation to whom all the functions belong, certainly participates in all those functions (chapel worship, service projects, evangelistic invitations, etc.), but its chief purpose is discipling congregation members in following Jesus. Note that though the teaching task does not exclude evangelism, it is much more in reach than outreach. The school is the practical application of the biblical teaching ministry. When we confuse functions, we decrease the effectiveness of the church's total ministry including both evangelism and discipleship. We have reached this point of confusion in Lutheran education.

What's a Lutheran school for? Is it for evangelism or discipleship? Those who would dismiss the tension by waggishly answering, "Yes," ignore the distinct and biblically mandated function of teaching and discipleship. Others may acknowledge the difference in functions but argue that special time—and—place needs of a congregation could require an emphasis on evangelism. Some case studies, especially with pre-schools and elementary schools, may bear this out. Too often, though, the tension goes unexamined and unresolved under some form of this flawed syllogism:

Evangelism is the work of the church.
The school is part of the church.
Evangelism is the work of the school.

Such illogic makes it seem like arguing against school evangelism is arguing against the kingdom, though the conclusion simply does not follow from the premise.

By virtue of the teaching office, Lutheran schools are for nurture and discipleship. Lutheran high schools will more and more become key agencies for clarifying this function and all other functions. This will happen as our high schools increase their growing impact on spiritual direction and discipleship of young Christian men and women. As we move into the next century, the community Lutheran high school will deliberately train local servants and leaders for local congregations. Congregations will recognize their high schools as the primary producers of a renewed, strong lay leadership. This next generation of disciples, trained and skilled in Law—Gospel and church functions, will be prepared to harmonize the dissonant agendas of their congregations' ministries under their pastors' on-going direction. They will devise and organize ministries, including parish schools, to carry out

those functions, and will do so with concord.

The local saints will do this with concord largely because of Concordia—Seward. Even now Concordia is placing into high schools teachers of the Gospel whose primary mission is to disciple young Christians in the Word, equip them as saints for ministry, and send them back into their congregations. Shaped by the Word, these congregational leaders will staff the boards of evangelism, worship, education, fellowship, and social ministry. They will shape the congregation because they have been shaped by called ministers of the Word in their schools who, in turn, have been shaped by the faculty at Concordia. It is for this reason that Lutheran high schools integrally linked with the ministry of Concordia will play a leading role in discipleship into the 21st century and, thus, enhance all other functions of the church.

Russ Moulds

Director of Counseling and Career Planning
Concordia—Seward

Diakonia: The Key to All Ministry

Almost 20 years have passed since the publication of Stephen A. Schmidt's book, *Powerless Pedagogues*, with its thesis that the effectiveness of the Lutheran teaching ministry had dramatically diminished within the church. Among the factors Schmidt cited as having contributed to the weakened position of teachers were a lack of theological clarity concerning their status and a paternalistic training process. "Teachers were taught their proper place in the public ministry," he wrote in 1972. "They were taught to remain subservient to the office of the pastor, both in the training schools of the synod and in the professional literature of the synod. . . the Lutheran teacher has remained a threat to the parish clergyman."

While flaws in Schmidt's argument were readily identified by critics and reviewers, his central point was commonly accepted and echoed by others: the Lutheran teaching profession has suffered primarily from false and confused views of the ministry. The confusion—sad to say—has prevailed among some in the teaching ministry as well as in the pastoral ministry; the root of this confusion lies in the notion of "auxiliary offices" as applied to the concept of public ministry.

The term "auxiliary office" was introduced by C.F.W. Walther to denote a position which helps in the fulfillment of the public ministry of the church. In the Synod's CTCR report on the ministry, the term is applied to teachers, directors of Christian education, and parish workers. Individuals serving in these offices

serve in offices auxiliary to the pastoral office.

In many ways, the term "auxiliary office" is an unfortunate one and has not served us well. It has led some lay people and pastors to the erroneous conclusion that if certain positions are auxiliary to the pastoral office, they must be unimportant and inferior; it has constituted a self-fulfilling prophecy of the esteem in which some teachers hold themselves.

Is there, then, a better term to use in speaking of the ministry of the Lutheran teacher? Perhaps not—at least in delimiting with theological and historical precision the complex category of "public ministry." But surely there is a better way of thinking not only about the ministry of the teacher or DCE but of thinking about the ministry of the pastor as well.

Those who serve in the office of pastor or teacher or DCE are in the ministry. They have responded to that preparatory or "inner" call, as the fathers of the Lutheran dogmatic tradition referred to it, as well as the "external" call extended by the church. But it is one of those many ironies which give substance to the Christian faith, that those called to ministry in the church are called to be servants. God has instituted but one office of the ministry, and if there is only one ministry with which the church must be ultimately concerned, it is the ministry which our Lord inaugurated and still carries on through the Spirit in the church. In other words, the basis of all legitimate ministry is the picture of Jesus' ministry, and as He Himself said, "the Son of man came not to be served but to serve." There are preachers and teachers and parish workers not because individuals have been called just to be preachers, teachers, and parish workers, but because they have been called to be servants. It is this fundamental truth that should regulate the relationship between those in the pastoral office and its "auxiliary offices." As the servants of the church are not lords of the people they serve in congregations, so they are not lords of one another. God did not give pastors and teachers gifts in order that they may debate who is the superior or chief. There is no divinely ordained superiority or subordination among the servants of God's people. To adhere to such is but one instance of confusing Christian and secular models of leadership. The *diakonia* to which Christ calls is not characterized by any exercise of power over each other or those who are served. It is characterized by the service rendered.

Unless this simple concept of servanthood is consciously imbued in the training and personal formation of both the church's pastors and teachers, the situation described by Schmidt and others almost 20 years ago will likely afflict our Synod for another generation.

John F. Johnson, President
Concordia College
St. Paul, Minnesota

QUESTIONS, ISSUES, TENSIONS



by Allan Schmidt

THE PRINCIPAL OF A LUTHERAN HIGH school who spoke recently to a group of preservice teachers said that Lutheran teachers are "Ministers of Religion" and should be designated as such. One of his first acts as a newly called principal was to eliminate contracts which labelled his faculty as mere employees. Any such designation clouds the meaning and mission of Lutheran teachers to congregational children and families. This perceptive principal surely senses the results of a dangerous trend. The approximately six hours a day that teachers spend engaging children in conversation and teaching represent more time than many parents spend with their own children in a week. Teachers, profoundly critical in the development of children, have more opportunities to mold a child than any other single person during that child's school years.

Questions About Teachers and Teaching

The usual questions confront us: "What, then, do we want a teacher to be?" "Is a teacher a passer of cultural ideas and performance skills and nothing else?" While we acknowledge teachers as transmitters of culture and performance skills, we also expect genuine teachers to integrate values within their teaching. We should, of course, instruct our teachers in cultural values, but even more, we should instruct them in applying spiritual values within the communities they serve. Additionally, we should help teachers convey effectively their own faith in God, thereby enriching the spiritual growth of their students.

Shall we entrust all these profound responsibilities to an unspiritual employee? With fervor and righteous indignation the answer is a resounding "never." Teaching and modeling spiritual values to children are emphatically the commission given to Lutheran schools and Lutheran teachers of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Implicit in assertions about

spiritual food is 2000 years of following the Great Commission of Jesus Christ and His superb practice as the Master Teacher. Daily, He taught the twelve disciples about spiritual things, as they in turn taught others of "the things that they had heard and seen" (Acts 4:20). St. Paul speaks further: "And what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (II Timothy 2:2). These faithful disciples did proclaim triumphantly the **Word** according to the methods of the Master Teacher. In Luther's language the Holy Spirit gave these teachers clean pipes (hollow reeds) through which the saving truth flows efficaciously into the heart, miraculously creating and nurturing faith.

Five centuries have passed since Martin Luther fearlessly admonished errant teachers who contaminated God's Word with human error, leading whole communities astray. Martin Luther nailed to the church door his challenge which warned against such apostasy. Luther constantly held that schools, teachers, and the church are to be the center of learning. He promoted proclaimers of the Word—pastors and teachers—to be powerful instructors of the young as St. Paul had written to Timothy. Accordingly, the Lutheran Church became synonymous with "Christian Education."

Issues Confronting Lutheran Schools and Teachers

At first, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod established schools to preserve community culture. However, the primary purpose of Lutheran congregational schools has been continuously to develop and nurture the faith. Lutheran schools in congregations proclaimed the Word which the Lord blessed through steady and substantial growth. Lutheran parishes and schools produced pastors, teachers, and faithful lay people. Today, as in Luther's day, the teaching church is at risk because it is in danger of losing its primary mission of teaching the Word of salvation to children day by day. From pre-schools through colleges and seminaries, the ministry of the Word, carried on by teachers, is being diluted and thereby threatened.

Allan Schmidt is Professor of Education and Director of Secondary Education at Concordia-Seward

This can be seen by remembering that Jesus, the Rabbi called by the Father to teach the Word, is the Word made flesh who dwells among the Lord's beloved people, among whom Christ accepted the "call" to teach. Throughout His ministry, Jesus was sustained by conversation with His Father, the Word, and the community. In the footsteps of their Mentor, the Apostles integrated the faith into the communities of their "calling," equipping the saints to carry God's will in Jesus Christ throughout the known world. The apostles were charged primarily to be ministers of the Word and secondarily to be engaged in community service; that is, they were **proclaimers of the Law and Gospel**, continuously evangelizing and nurturing the people in their charge. The apostles believed in their call, and the church validated that call as they practiced their service of the Word in the name of Christ Jesus.

Today, a number of conditions have developed which can alter this view of ministry and the concept of the call. For example, practices of giving "called" Lutheran elementary teachers a written contract in which dismissal can be "without cause," contracting new synodically educated Lutheran high school teachers for a year or more before a call is issued, or requiring synodical college professors to sign employment agreements and roll-over contracts may limit a ministry of the Word to acts of service as "at will employees." Today, does not the church need to consider the impact of designating called ministers of the Word as employees hired through contractual arrangements which can encourage collective bargaining, routine hiring and firing, and a diminished view of teaching as ministry?

Another condition that warrants attention today is the practice of turning loose "called workers" in the manner of an independent contractor without offering any assistance in finding a place to continue one's ministry. When veterans who have brought the Good News to thousands of young people experience ten month salaries and two months of other employment, their ministries also are imperiled and denigrated. Surely, dedicated Christian teachers should be granted time to proclaim, teach, and prepare for their continuing function in Christian communities with a living wage. It is important to remember that ministers of the Word are not only called by God, but also sent by the church to do ministry in a world which reflects a desperate need for the Gospel twelve months a year.

Tensions

In parishes across the Synod teachers and pastors minister through Word and Sacrament ministry. Unfortunately, the two offices often seem mutually exclusive. In my experience, most Lutheran teachers are eager team players, but often find no team on which to play. If Christ is our Captain, and our major goal is teaching and preaching the redeemed life, a team approach is an undeniable necessity.

Other tensions surface when practices relating to the selection of personnel are examined. When congregations call a pastor, they do not hire a local university graduate to fill the position. But more and more congregations and high schools are turning to local university graduates first to fill teacher vacancies. The financial demand of calling and moving a theologically educated pastor also often holds a high priority compared to the value placed upon moving the teacher/proclaimer into the parish. When young prospective Lutheran teachers see these discrepancies, they seriously question whether or not congregations and schools really desire, need, or support teaching ministers.

Some leaders in Synod and boards of parish education continually debate in financial terms the value of Lutheran schools and teachers. I would urge the church to look at the statistics which indicate the percentage of the present membership which was brought into the church through Lutheran schools. A Maryland parish (of which I was a member for 26 years), surveyed the congregation and found that 25 percent of its membership **entered** the congregation through its 25-year-old school. The role of the Lutheran school as a mission arm of the church deserves to be recognized and appreciated.

The shopworn issue of teachers having a synodical convention vote is usually interpreted as teachers seeking a power base. To the contrary, teachers are quite able to continue being excellent proclaimers of the Word without vote or voice. Such tensions do, however, bespeak disunity in the ministry of the Word when teaching ministers are excluded from decision making. During my 29 years as a Lutheran teacher, I have steadily observed a sincere desire among teachers to be genuine servants with vision. Indeed, the vision is proclaiming Christ, and the means is a harmonious team of called workers and lay people. Tensions among called workers of the church threaten both the harmony and growth of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

The worst scenario is that Lutheran teachers, as Gospel proclaimers, seem to be decreasing, swallowed up by cultural trends and budgetary concerns. Too many schools, the outreach and inreach life of congregations and best hope for equipping God's people for their mission, are fading away. Christian schools, when mismanaged, can reflect the first symptoms of impending congregational death. Though some teachers, too, have been infected by divorce, alcoholism, and material success, a far greater danger is that the church considers them only professional educators. Educated though they are, teachers are full-time proclaimers who should be free and encouraged, not shackled, to lift up Christ.

The Corporate Image

Another tension is an attempt to give a higher priority to corporate concepts and policies than to ministry. These ideas and strategies may be defensible if they

enhance the proclamation of Jesus Christ. But beware of a reliance on human wisdom.

"Let no one deceive himself. If any one among you thinks that he is wise in his age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, He catches the wise in their craftiness, and again, the Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile. So let no one boast of men. For all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future, all are yours; and you are Christ's and Christ is God's" (I Corinthians 3:18-23).

A corporate "bottom line" which promotes policies which proffer contracts instead of calls, institutionalism instead of whole church ministry, and a concept of called teachers of the Word as mere employees instead of ministers damage God's mission.

Faith and Life

The Gospel is practical for our lives, leading us day by day through the power of the Holy Spirit. I am persuaded that it is God's intention that the faith should be integrated personally with each activity and every decision in business, in church, and in community. We are living dangerously when we separate "professional" decisions from the Gospel. Hiring and firing belong to the world; caring and counseling belong in the church. Politics and power are of the world; teaming and cooperation belong to the church. Taking advantage and practicing deceit are of the world; serving in Christ's love belongs to the body of Christ.

Leadership

A final issue is a dearth of leaders but an abundance of managers. Leadership in ministry means having the Gospel vision, communicating it, and inspiring people to trust a leader enough to follow. The vision is Christ crucified and risen. Managers keep the operation running but don't focus or communicate the vision; therefore, teachers don't choose to follow. And neither do they lead because they are not given an opportunity to lead.

More Tensions and Questions

The concerns listed are real. As one who lives with teachers and has experienced elementary, secondary, and college teaching and administration, I am concerned. How clear is our understanding of the ministry of the Gospel? Where is such ministry being practiced? Where are the leaders? Is the Church a beacon on the hill, a light and influence in the world? My primary concern in asking these questions is the teaching of the Gospel and the ministry of the Word as practiced by the nearly 14,000 teachers of our church. Infection and de-

fection are setting in, and I plead for the men and women of this church to take a close look at the Gospel's teaching. The teaching ministry is in danger of serious dilution. To check the demise we need to study the books of Acts and Mark and St. Paul's letters.

"And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for **building up the body of Christ**, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-13).

As long as there are saints to be equipped, teachers of the Word will be called, educated and nurtured by others who link arms with the Master Teacher over the centuries. A diminished view of teaching as ministry will be contained and superseded by the throngs of those called and compelled to teach Christ.

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A NEW TESTAMENT PERSPECTIVE

The ministry of teaching is commensurate informally with the history of God with His people from the beginning. Already in the Garden God instructed Adam and Eve how to live in their created, wholesome relationship with Him.

After the Fall the teaching in part became condemnation, but it was followed and surrounded by Promise. The twofold Word of judgment and promise has constituted the heart of all God's teaching formally and informally through the ages. The Good News of redemption over-against judgment marks the essence of Christian teaching and designates the substance and spirit of Christ's commissioning the disciples to baptize and to teach all nations. It is also the taught song of the church in worship and witness which will culminate in that worship of praise and thanksgiving about the throne at the Second Coming of the Lamb, High Priest, and Teacher.

What does the New Testament say about teaching, about the teacher? Responding to such questions, one needs to distinguish between (1) the Scriptures, and (2) other writings. Subsequent ecclesiastical developments and practices need to be kept distinct, so that one does not read later designated responsibilities and job descriptions back into Scripture. It is too easy to be caught up with concerns about position, status, or office. Scriptural perspectives and priorities must be maintained.

Old Testament Background

It is well to note, in passing at least, the Old Testament background to ministry in the New Testament.

In the Old Testament the spokespersons for God were the prophets and the priests. The prophets were the primary spokespersons. They proclaimed God's Word and instructed the people accordingly. Moses, the historic type of the prophet Jesus Christ who was to come (Deuteronomy 18:15; Acts 3:22), was followed by prophets equally noted—Samuel, Elijah, and others. Multitalented spokespersons and leaders of Israel, their word and work ministerially and prophetically foreshadowed that of the forerunner John the Baptist, of whom Jesus said that none is greater (Matthew 11:11). The prophetic activity of the Old Testament prophets including

Kenneth Heintz is Professor of Theology at Concordia University-River Forest

that of John culminated, however, in that of the Son of God, through whom the Father has spoken to us in these last days (Hebrews 1:2).

Just as the Holy Spirit spoke by the prophets in the Old Testament, so also in the New Testament the Holy Spirit teaches all things and brings to remembrance all that Jesus Christ, The Prophet, has said (John 14:26) and done for mankind's salvation. Having gifted God's people in a variety of ways for the common good (I Corinthians 12:4-7), the same Spirit now speaks through all the members of the Body and has given some to be apostles, prophets, teachers. . . (I Corinthians 12:28).

Also spokesmen for God in the Old Testament, the priests were given a place primarily in the cultus—the rituals of worship according to the ceremonial law. Along with the prophets, the priests were responsible for the welfare of the people. Some of Yahweh's harshest judgments were pronounced on the prophets and priests for their faithlessness and negligence of the people under their care (e.g., Jeremiah 23; Ezekiel 13; Malachi 1 and 2).

Whereas the priests in the Old Testament had a dominant position, the role and function of priests culminated in the person and ministry of Jesus Christ. Although "priest" as an ecclesiastical term has designated a role in many segments of Christendom, the formal priesthood was an Old Testament, not a New Testament, concept. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ is the One Priest. He is both the Lamb and the Eternal High Priest, the Mediator, who has ascended into heaven (Hebrews 8:1-2). Believers in Him, His Body—the Church—are the priesthood (I Peter 2:9) as promised (Exodus 19:6).

Jesus' Ministry

Jesus was called and acknowledged as Rabbi, Teacher, Master. He who was and is Prophet, Priest, King, and teacher proclaimed and modeled the "ministry," i.e., servanthood. It is that which He carried out for our salvation, and which He proclaimed and taught.

As given in the four Gospels it was as Teacher, Master (*didaskalos*), Rabbi that Jesus was more commonly known and addressed—together with "Lord," a title of respect as well as a confession of faith in Him.

Jesus Christ was not only called Teacher, which He acknowledged (John 13:13), but He also, obviously, taught. At the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, we read that Jesus "opened his mouth and taught them,



by Kenneth Heintz

saying. . ." (Matthew 5:2). Just prior to that, Matthew summed up Jesus' early ministry by writing that He "went about all Galilee, teaching (*didasko*) in their synagogues and preaching (*kerusso*) the Gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people" (4:23).

In the four Gospels the words "teach" and "teacher" are commonly used. As expected, the concept of teacher and teaching characterizes Jesus' ministry. We find a good example of this in the Gospel of John. The sequence of Jesus' references to His own teaching and that of His disciples in the future provides insight and structure to the ministry of the Word as a whole.

As recorded in John's Gospel, Jesus emphasized that He came to do the work and will of the Father (Chapter

5), and that He spoke as the Father taught Him (8:28). Later, before the high priest's false accusations, Jesus responded that He had always spoken openly, and that He had always "taught in synagogues and in the temple" (18:20). Earlier, when Jesus was speaking to the disciples before He went to the Garden to be betrayed, He promised the Holy Spirit who would "teach" them all things and bring to their remembrance all that He had said to them (14:26).

This emphasis on teaching the Word, centered in the redeeming work of the Word Incarnate, was carried through to the disciples and the church in general. After His resurrection, Jesus exhorted Peter to "Feed my lambs. . . tend my sheep" (John 21:15-16)—a mission to include teaching, no doubt. That commission had its

counterpart in Matthew when Jesus sent the disciples to baptize and to teach all nations (28:19-20). And when they would be brought before rulers and authorities, they were not to be anxious about their response. The Holy Spirit would "teach" them in that very hour what they ought to say (Luke 12:11-12).

There is no exclusive pattern in the language and imagery of Jesus, however. With reference to the verbs, Jesus characteristically said, "I say," "I tell you," "I have spoken" (e.g., John 16). As Mark, for instance, described the beginning of Jesus' ministry, Jesus "healed" people and "expelled" demons (1:34). He went "preaching" (*kerusso*) throughout Galilee (1:39). Appointing twelve, Jesus "sent" (*apostello*) them out to proclaim/preach (*kerusso*; 3:14). And Jesus Himself, as Mark recorded, taught (*didasko*) the people (4:1), taught in parables (4:2), and taught the disciples (8:31).

As one reviews the verbs that Jesus used both in the synoptic Gospels and in John, there is no one pattern that dominates—although "teaching" stands out as much as any other. The characteristic verbs recorded in the four Gospels in general—like those of Jesus' speaking—are those of ordinary discourse: say, speak, answer, do. In regard to ministry, one could single out "teach," "proclaim/preach," "serve," (*diakoneo*). One might add "sent" and "witness." "Bring or announce good news" (*euaggelizo*) stands out by virtue of the vocable itself, but it is not tied to any one type of position or servant. Position and status are just not part of Jesus' commissioning, exhorting, or sending. Servanthood is: "it is enough" that a teacher and servant be like his master (Matthew 10:25).

Also, one observes that there is no apparent distinction in the verbs in regard to authenticity, primacy, or importance. The three more dominant verbs that characterize Jesus' ministry and discourse are "bring good news" (*euaggelizo*), "proclaim" (*kerusso*, often translated "preach"), and "teach" (*didasko*). In Matthew 11:1, for example, we read that after Jesus had finished instructing the disciples He went on from there to "teach" and to "proclaim" in their cities. Following that, in His response to the question of John the Baptist's disciples, Jesus spoke of the poor having "the good news preached to them" (*euaggelizo*; 11:5). But of those three verbs—"bring good news," "proclaim/preach," and "teach"—not one appears to carry more weight or authority than the others.

It is interesting to note that in his Gospel John did not use *kerusso* (proclaim/preach; *Konkordanz*, I, 1, 691). Neither Mark nor John used the verb *euaggelizo* (bring or announce good news), although Mark employed the noun eight times. Luke used the verb *euaggelizo* ten times, and Matthew only once (*Ibid.*, 462-463). The word "teach" was commonly used in all four Gospels, however, to describe Jesus' ministry and to record His sayings (*Ibid.*, 244-245).

The nouns "overseer" (or bishop) and "elder" with

reference to the disciples and others who had been sent came later with the disciples' own ministry as recorded in Acts and the Epistles.

Over-all, as recorded in the Gospels, as Jesus taught and sent the disciples, His emphasis was not on status, office, or position, but on proclaiming the kingdom of God, healing the sick, and casting out demons. The emphasis is on believing, life, servanthood, and the follow-through of faith in Him.

Acts of the Apostles

The book of Acts uses a variety of vocables, but their usage is generally in keeping with what we have found in the Gospels. There is no set or dominant pattern. In his opening remarks to Theophilus, Luke referred to his first account, i.e., his Gospel, about all that Jesus "began to do and to teach" until He ascended (1:1-2).

As Luke began to record the history of the disciples after Jesus' Ascension, he wrote that before casting lots to select a successor to Judas the disciples prayed the Lord to direct them in choosing another to take part in this ministry (*diakonia*) and apostleship (*apostole*; 1:24-25). Later, after the revelation of the Holy Spirit, we read that these early Christians continued steadfastly in the "apostles' teaching and fellowship," the breaking of bread and in prayers (2:42).

In Acts 4 we read that the priests and others were annoyed because Peter and John continued "teaching" the people and "proclaiming" (*kataggello*) "in Jesus the resurrection of the dead" (v. 2). Warned not to speak in Jesus' name they replied that they could not but speak (*laleo*) what they had seen and heard (v. 20). In Chapter 5 we read that after the apostles had been arrested, the angel who released them said that they should go to the temple to speak "to the people all the words of this Life" (v. 20). Luke recorded that when they heard this they "entered the temple at daybreak and taught" (v. 21). Luke wrote further that the disciples, continuing to teach, were reported and forbidden (vs. 25 and 28, respectively), and in a type of summary statement recorded that they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as "the Christ" (v. 42).

This varied, yet ordinary, vocabulary characterizes the book of Acts in general. After the stoning of Stephen and the persecution which followed, we read that those who were scattered went about announcing or preaching the Word (8:4). After his conversion Paul proclaimed that Jesus was the Son of God (9:20). To Cornelius, Peter explained that the Lord had charged them to proclaim Him and to testify fully that He was the One "designated of God to be the judge of the living and the dead" (10:42). In Acts 11, Luke recorded that some of the scattered "spoke" the Word only to Jews, but that others spoke to the Gentiles "preaching the Lord Jesus" (vs. 19-20). Speaking to the people at Antioch of Pisidia, Paul referred to the "witnesses" of Christ's resurrection (13:31). It was this good news that Paul "announced" to

them (13:32). After the Jerusalem Council, following their report to the congregation at Antioch, we read that Judas and Silas "exhorted" the brethren with many words and strengthened them (15:32). Luke recorded that Paul and Barnabas remained there, "teaching and preaching the word of the Lord" (15:35). In Acts 20, Paul said to the elders at Ephesus that he had declared (*annaggello*), taught (*didasko*; v. 20), testified (*diamarturomai*; v. 21), and proclaimed (*kerusso*; v. 25) the kingdom.

In keeping with the varied vocabulary, especially the verbs, which Luke used in Acts (as well as in his Gospel), it is interesting to note the four verbs used to describe Philip's ministry—one of the seven chosen to "serve tables" (6:2) and called evangelist (21:8). We read that going to a city in Samaria Philip proclaimed (*kerusso*) Christ to them (8:5). The multitudes gave heed to what he said (*lego*; v. 6). To these people in Samaria as well as to the Ethiopian eunuch, Philip announced the good news (*euaggelizo*; 8:12,35, respectively). Philip also baptized (8:12,38).

In Acts, just as in the four Gospels, Luke focused attention on the Gospel of Christ itself. The emphasis is on speaking, proclaiming, declaring, teaching, and announcing the Good News. In the four Gospels, as well as in Acts, it appears that the proclamation itself and the verbs receive more emphasis and are more important than the speakers and the title or position of any one speaker, whether apostle, evangelist, "prophets and teachers" (13:1). In Acts, as in the four Gospels, no one verb has primacy over another, and no one verb designates position or office, and especially no one position or title over another.

Alongside this observation it is interesting to note that Luke and Paul used the noun "apostle" more than did Matthew, John (each once), and Mark (twice). This is distinct from the verb *apostello* (send), which was commonly used by Matthew (22 times), Mark (21), Luke (26), and John (28), although Paul used the verb only four times. One can speculate that Luke, not having been an eyewitness (Luke 1:2), perhaps in deference to the "twelve" and to Paul, used the noun "apostle" more frequently (seven times in the Gospel, 30 times in Acts; *Konkordanz*, I, 1, 85-86).

Paul used the noun "apostle" regularly in the salutation of his letters. Throughout his correspondence, he referred to himself in various ways, however, e.g., servant (Titus 1:1), ambassador (Ephesians 6:20), fellow-worker (I Corinthians 3:9), steward (I Corinthians 4:1). Writing to Timothy in his first epistle, Paul referred to himself as herald/preacher (*kerux*), apostle, teacher (2:7).

But neither Luke nor Paul was hierarchically minded. It is evident that Paul, chief of sinners (I Timothy 1:15), persecutor and the least of the apostles (I Corinthians 15:9), was still quite conscious of his apostleship. The two characteristic "uses" of the term other than in his salutations were to assert the authenticity of his teach-

ing which he received from the Lord (e.g., Galatians 2:6-9) and to defend his ministry against false apostles (e.g., 2 Corinthians 11:12-13).

With respect to the nouns it is almost a cliché to state that "elders" (*presbuteroi*) and "overseers" or bishops (*episkopoi*) are used interchangeably in Acts 20:17 and 28 respectively. We read in Acts 14 that on their first missionary journey Paul and Barnabas returned from Derbe to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, and "appointed elders" (plural) in every church (v. 23). In both Acts 14 and 20, whether the elders were older men, leaders of the synagogue as in the Jewish tradition (cf. Acts 15:2,4,6), or formally designated servants is not particularly clear. No doubt a transition was taking place.

In his letter to Titus, Paul instructed him to appoint "elders" (plural) in every town (1:5), and then proceeded to describe the qualifications of a bishop (1:7-9). Following that, Paul directly addressed Titus and wrote: "But as for you, teach what befits sound doctrine" (2:1). It is interesting to note that in his epistles Paul used the term "elder" with reference to the public ministry only three times (I Timothy 5:17,19 and Titus 1:5; *Konkordanz*, I, 2, 1165).

It becomes clear that these terms, qualifications, and responsibilities implicitly interrelate. There are no sharp lines of demarcation. As recorded in Acts 20, Paul stated, and in his own writings implied (Titus 1:5), that elders were to be "overseers" and caretakers (cf. I Peter 5:1-2: elders shepherd the flock by oversight). Paul instructed Timothy to do the work of an evangelist (2 Timothy 4:5), and also referred to Timothy as a servant with him (Philippians 1:1). In his first epistle to Timothy, Paul described qualifications for bishops (3:1-7), deacons (3:8-13), and (in effect) elders who labor in preaching and teaching (5:17). The responsibilities and qualifications overlap, and in substance are practically identical. In a sense Paul summed up the matter in his second epistle to Timothy when he wrote: "You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2:1-2).

A Ministry Together

It is evident that these appellations are not definitively set and that the terms as well as the qualifications and responsibilities overlap. It is also evident that "office" is not a category, nor a concern as such. One can not single out any one responsibility or person or title and assign to it exclusively the office of the public ministry. In this respect, for example, neither Stephen nor Philip was limited by the description of his work as described in Acts 6:1-3. Whereas the disciples asked that faithful people be selected to provide attention to the economically needy so that they could devote themselves fully to the ministry of the Word, we read that Stephen and Philip proceeded to proclaim the Word of God and to perform signs. There is no record of either the disciples

or the assembly being upset about this. In fact, hearing about Philip's work in Samaria, Peter and John in effect confirmed his proclaiming the Gospel and baptizing by laying their hands on those who had believed and were baptized (Acts 8:14-17).

Prior to that, Stephen "full of grace and power did great wonders and signs" (6:8). His opponents "could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke" (6:10). Philip, as stated before, proclaimed the Gospel (8:5,12,35,40), performed signs (8:6), and baptized (8:12,38).

Even with respect to the responsibility given to overseers and elders (including deacons, cf. I Timothy 3:8-13), in no instance is it exclusive. We must also keep in mind that we are here speaking about nomenclature following Jesus' Ascension. He did not use these terms as such. Somewhat unexpectedly we find that, as recorded in Acts and in his epistles, Paul did not refer to himself as an elder, and Peter did only once (I Peter 5:1; *Konkordanz*, I, 2, 1164-1165). In regard to responsibility one might well remember that James, by writing that not many should become teachers, implied an unlimited scope of responsibility when he further wrote that "we" (including himself) shall "receive greater judgment" (3:1).

The term "prophet" continued in the New Testament but evidently gradually ceased to be used—perhaps ironically in view of the term "priest" which came into increasingly common usage in the second century and following. With reference to John the Baptist, Jesus said that "all the prophets and the law prophesied until John" (Matthew 11:13). This implies that both have served their purpose, for Jesus proceeded to say "... and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear" (vs. 14-15).

In Acts, for instance, people continued to be called prophets (13:1). In First Corinthians Paul wrote that, in contrast to the ecstatic speaker, the one who prophesies "speaks to men for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation... [and] edifies the church" (14:3-4), i.e., one who explains, teaches, and proclaims the Word. Generally, it can be said that "by and large the New Testament understands by the prophets the Biblical proclaimer of the divine, inspired message" (*Kittel*, VI, 828).

To Conclude

As evident throughout the New Testament, there were teachers. Teachers and teaching are a constant in the Gospels, Acts, and the epistles. There were teachers along with apostles, prophets, workers of miracles, healers, etc.—enumerated rather than ranked in view of the previous context of the harmonious parts of the one body (I Corinthians 12:14-29). There were also evangelists, bishops, deacons, deaconesses, and elders. The term "teacher" overlapped with other terms, such as prophet, proclaimer/preacher, apostle, bishop, and

vice versa. Teaching was a responsibility held in common. Yet, it was a term distinct in itself. Also, "teaching" was a term used to refer to the Word of God in general that was proclaimed and handed on for the salvation and edification of mankind (2 Timothy 3:16).

In the New Testament one does not find any particular concentration on "office" itself, such as the high priesthood of Aaron in the Old Testament. In the New Testament any such designation, appellation, or nomenclature was not an issue or an end in itself but always part of the larger matter of proclaiming the Gospel to all nations, to baptize (Matthew 28:19-20). Paul's point about himself, Cephas, and Apollos in I Corinthians, for instance, dealt with the factions at Corinth, the singleness of the Gospel, and the unity of faith in Christ, not with office *per se*.

As expressed in the Gospels, Jesus' concern was the proclamation of the kingdom and servanthood. In several instances, the emphasis on servanthood was made in contrast to the disciples' discussion about who would be the greatest (Mark 9:33-36) and to the request of the sons of Zebedee (Mark 10:35-45).

The whole spirit, thrust, and perspective of the New Testament in general is the worship of God, servanthood, the community firm in its trust in Christ, and the fruitful use of the Spirit's gifts to proclaim forgiveness and peace, to baptize, to teach the Word, to cast out demons, to heal the sick, to visit those in prison, and to provide food and clothing to the needy.

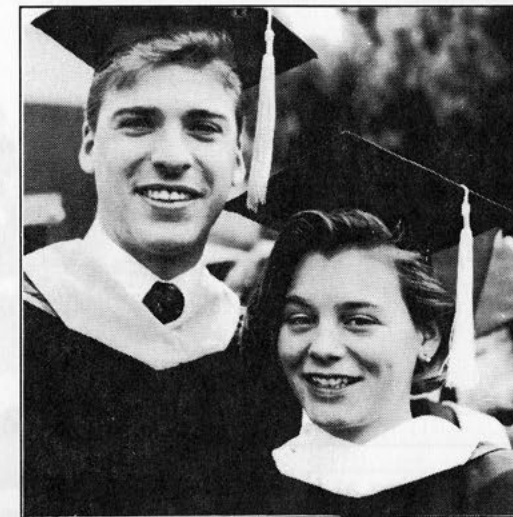
To that end, teachers together with proclaimers/preachers, deacons, bishops, elders, and evangelists are to teach and proclaim the Gospel and lead the way, so that the ministry of the Church is carried out. Indeed, there *is* a formal, public ministry of the church as distinct from the priesthood of all believers, but according to the New Testament within that one public ministry there are various ministries.

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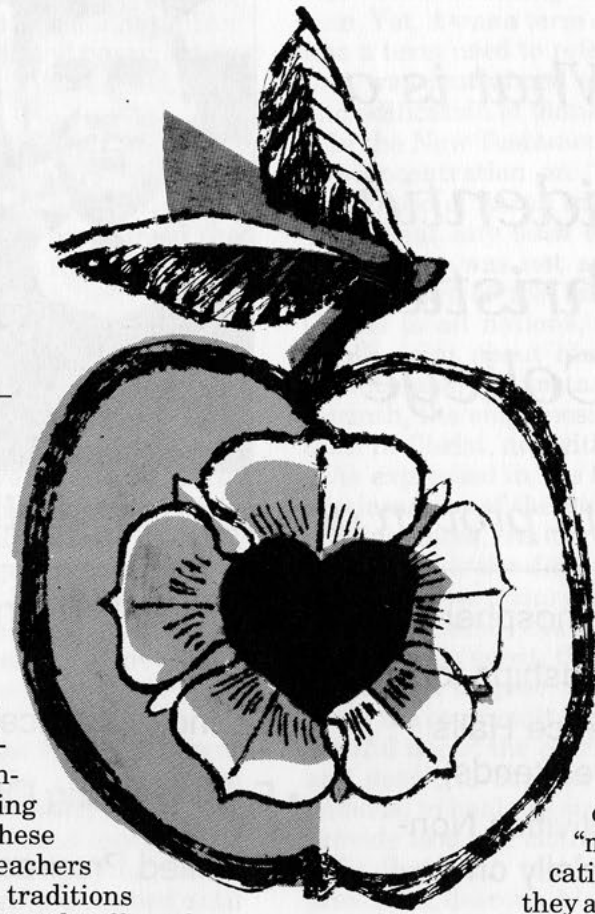
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The title for this essay suggests that there are some specific, identifiable "Lutheran perspectives" on the ministry of teachers in the church. Is that suggestion valid? Perhaps, perhaps not . . .



Let us begin by looking at the questions which the editor and the editorial committee of this journal asked me to consider in the preparation of this essay:

"How do the Lutheran Confessions view teaching and the teaching office? What was Luther's view of the ministry of teachers? How have the traditions of the Lutheran Church interpreted the call to the teaching ministry of the church? How do these traditions view the ministry of teachers and public ministry? Do these traditions see the office of the pastor as the only office of public ministry in the church? How do contemporary statements of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod view the office and ministry of teachers? What do Lutheran perspectives disclose concerning the questions and issues identified in [the article by Allan Schmidt, 'The Ministry of Lutheran Teachers: Tensions and Theological Perspectives']?"

I perceive from these questions, "thought-starters," and suggestions that the old issue is the continuing issue: do teachers have a right—either human or divine—to consider themselves part of the public ministry of the church in a sense similar to the way in which pastors think of themselves as (a part of) the church's public ministry?

I must confess that I do not see why or how further discussions of this issue will do much good. I say that because I think most folks in the church have already fixed

James H. Pragman is Pastor and Director of Ministries at St. John Lutheran Church in Seward, Nebraska

in their own minds what the "proper" and "correct" answer must be. Those who are anxious to affirm the ministry of pastors as *the* public ministry of the church do not wish to affirm, also, the ministry of teachers as *the* public ministry of the church. Those who understand the ministry of teachers as the public ministry of the Gospel in the church are disturbed to discover that other "ministers" denigrate their dedication and service by suggesting that they are "ancillary" or "auxiliary." "Ancillary," according to my dictionary, is "subservient" or "subordinate." "Auxiliary," which my dictionary lists as a synonym for "ancillary," is defined in the same terms: "subsidiary," "accessory," and "subservient." People who have devoted themselves to a ministry of teaching in and for the church do not like to think of themselves merely as "ancillary" or "auxiliary."

Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions

But let us not get ahead of ourselves in this essay. We should deal more or less directly, at least, with some of the questions the editor and editorial committee of this journal sent me. First of all, how do the Lutheran Confessions which were written in the sixteenth century view "teaching" and the "teaching" office in the twentieth century?

When our Lutheran fathers in the faith composed the Lutheran Confessions in the sixteenth century, there was no such thing as a Lutheran Day School teacher as we know that twentieth century office and ministry. When the Lutheran Confessors commented about "teachers," they were referring to the work of the public ministry, i.e., those who preached the Word and administered the sacraments as parish pastors and priests.

Does that historic truism, however, eliminate the

The Ministry of Teachers

Lutheran Perspectives

by James H. Pragman

issue? Of course not! An approach to the understanding of the office of the public ministry which draws a straight line, as it were, from one era in history to another without regard for the reality of the passage of time and the developing needs of the church as they manifest themselves over time is neither legitimate nor realistic. God is not going to ask us at Judgment Day if we stood where Luther stood: God is going to ask us if we stood where He wanted us to stand in our age. As St. Paul remarked, "whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction . . ." (Romans 15:4). Thus, we study the Lutheran Confessions and the Tradition/traditions of our theology so that we might learn and be instructed, but our calling is to take that knowledge and exercise it in present circumstances, responding to the opportunities for ministry which the Lord of the Church is giving the Church in the present age.

What I seem to be hearing in the Synod these days—at least, from some quarters—is that there is *only one office* of the ministry and that *one office* is co-terminous with the office of the pastor. Moreover, the conclusion is reached that this singular arrangement is Biblical and Confessional. Other "ministers" are merely "ancillary" and "auxiliary," i.e., dispensable. Perhaps this summary is a "straw man," but—be that as it may—this summary is the perception of more than a few who function in the church as "teaching ministers" in Lutheran Day Schools. Is that perception and the reality it seeks to reflect valid as a correct assessment of the ministry of a Lutheran Day School teacher?

At the risk of running roughshod over the feelings of others, let me express the tension this way: is the Church's public ministry "monolithic" or "multifaceted"? Is there more to the office of the ministry than the office of the pastor? And if we want to say that there are ministers other than pastors, does that mean that the office of the pastor is being diminished and belittled? My reading of Holy Scripture teaches me that the office of the public ministry in the church in the first century consisted of apostles, prophets, evangelists, healers, helpers, widows, pastoring teachers, and others. In other words, St. Paul's letters reveal a multifaceted

public ministry. To insist that all of those "offices" or "functions" in the twentieth century have now of necessity, i.e., by divine decree, been absorbed into the singular office of the pastor is an assumption which requires proof.

"Office" versus "Function"

What we are skirting in this essay is the issue of "office" vs. "function" in our understanding of the public ministry. This issue, in my judgment, can easily force us into a corner where we find ourselves constrained to make choices between and among false alternatives (cf. St. Paul's response to false alternatives in I Corinthians 3:18-23). It is folly to pit "office" against "function" when discussing the public ministry of the Church: what is the "office of the public ministry without the 'functions' of the public ministry? Some in the tradition of Lutheran theology have attempted to separate office from function, but those who participated in the development of the theological tradition of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod¹ recognized that office and function cannot be separated. The office of the public ministry has been established so that the functions of preaching the Word and administering the sacraments actually happen. If the office of the public ministry does not perform the functions of the public ministry, then, according to the Lutheran Confessions, is there an office any longer? On the other hand, the functions of the public ministry are also the functions of the spiritual priesthood of all believers. Those functions, according to Luther, are preaching the Word, baptizing, consecrating and administering the Lord's Supper, binding and loosing sin, sacrificing, praying for others, and judging doctrine.² But the fact that functions are identical does not mean that public ministry and universal priesthood are identical. A Christian can and must speak the Word of Law and Gospel to others, even though that activity does not mean that such a Christian is now an occupant of the Office of the Church's Public Ministry. The office apart from the functions of the office of the ministry is irrelevant; functions exercised by Christians who do not

occupy the office of the public ministry (e.g., one Christian admonishing another Christian and speaking the word of forgiveness) do not render the office obsolete and redundant. "Office" and "function" must not be stuck at the two opposing ends of a continuum as though they were in diametrical opposition to each other: they live in mutual relationship with each other and at times in tension with each other but never apart from each other.

What does this have to do with "Lutheran perspectives" on the ministry of the Lutheran Day School teacher? The church in the present age has inherited an understanding of public ministry which, in practice, has demonstrated itself normally in the work of the parish pastor. The experience of many congregations is that the only "public minister" in the church is their pastor. For other congregations (and, surprisingly, for the majority of those who are listed in the ministerial rosters of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod), the ministry consists of pastors, teachers, directors of Christian education, directors of music, social workers, counselors, and other professionals. Congregations which have staffed themselves with a variety of "ministers" have done so because they were led by God's Spirit to share Word and Sacrament through a variety of individuals performing in public various functions of the one office of the public ministry. These arrangements in the actual life of the parish have not led to confusion about ministers and ministries (i.e., who is the "pastor" here? or who is the "teacher" here?)—even though the working out of individual responsibilities and accountability, as well as the question of ministerial authority, can create tension and difficulty in some situations. My own experience, as pastor of a large and multistaffed congregation, is that teachers do not come forward to occupy the pulpit on Sunday morning, nor do I go into a classroom on Monday morning to teach the daily lessons.

The Church's Various Ministries

When we broach the topic of this essay, we have to understand the tradition(s) of the past, evaluate them against the Word of Holy Scripture, and then by the light which God the Spirit gives us put into practice the ministry of Word and sacrament. We do that by receiving with appreciation and joy the various ministries which the Lord has allowed the church to create for the functioning of His ministry in this age, even as we affirm the oneness of the office of the public ministry as that ministry is performed by pastors, teachers, directors of Christian education, and other professionals who *work with* one another as ministers of the Word in the church.

Perhaps as we continue to reflect on the ministry of pastors, teachers, and others called by the Church to minister in God's name, this perspective can help:

"Lutheran theology declares as its central doctrine that the sinner is justified alone by

God's grace, for Christ's sake, through faith. To impart the free gift of justification to mankind, the Holy Spirit employs the gospel, using preaching and other forms of proclamation as well as Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper as instruments of conveyance. Through these means of grace, God reveals and declares to men that he is fully reconciled to all the world, and through them the Holy Spirit creates, sustains, and strengthens faith in the forgiveness merited by God's Son, Jesus Christ.

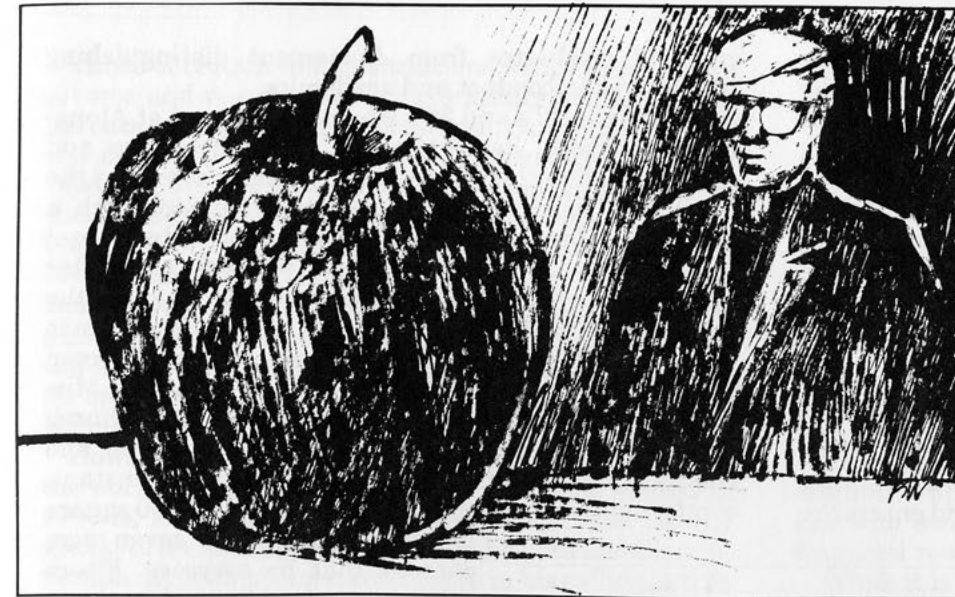
"Thus, 'all this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation' (2 Corinthians 5:18). This ministry is the determinative goal for the church's message under which the church is to perform all of its functions. It is in the light of its gospel ministry that the church must appraise the validity of all of its activities. . ."³

Notes

¹Cf., the writings of C.F.W. Walther on church and ministry. Walther's views are summarized in my book, *Traditions of Ministry: A History of the Doctrine of The Ministry in Lutheran Theology* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1983), pp. 140ff. Various bibliographical sources are identified in notes 53-98 on pp. 201ff.

²Martin Luther, "Concerning the Ministry" (1523), *Luther's Works* (American edition; Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958), XL, 21-32. Cf., *Traditions of Ministry*, pp. 15-16.

³Frank W. Klos, *Confirmation and First Communion: A Study Book* (Minneapolis, Philadelphia, and St. Louis: Augsburg Publishing House, Board of Publication of the Lutheran Church in America, and Concordia Publishing House, 1968), p. 192.



The Ministry of Lutheran Teachers

A Pastor's Perspective

the teachers, eating with us at lunchtime, playing sports with the kids at recess. Now it seems like a chore for them to do chapel once in a while and go to school board meetings."

"Teaching isn't what I thought it was going to be," sighed Karen Jones, new second grade teacher at Zion School. "Over half my children come from non-traditional, broken, and even dysfunctional homes. When I get home from school in the evenings, I'm exhausted. I have my lesson plans to prepare, papers to grade, and then the phone starts ringing with parents who have a litany of concerns, complaints, and special requests."

"I don't know how long we can keep our children at the Lutheran School now that tuition is being charged even to members," observed Betty Norris, a mother of a 2nd and 6th grader. "Although I went to a Lutheran school and certainly enjoyed the Christian education I received there, I can't help but be envious of the superior curriculum and technological aids available at the public school. When I think of all the taxes that we're paying and not receiving any of the benefits, I seem to be troubled about it more and more."

These are only a few of the comments that one hears frequently at pastoral and teachers conferences, congregational school board meetings, parents groups and informal get-togethers about the changing face of

Gregory K. Smith is Pastor of Christ Memorial Lutheran Church in Affton, Missouri.

Lutheran Day School education. Certainly, we affirm that our schools have played an important role in the growth and spiritual health of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod throughout its history. We have taken seriously Christ's Great Commission to disciple the nations, teaching them to observe all things He has commanded us. But the confluence of Synod's traditional approach to Christian education and contemporary societal needs has created a "culture shock" in many of our congregations and schools.

What a Difference Eight Decades Make!

The year is 1927. Calvin Coolidge is President. The young candidate, John Mueller, graduates with 51 other young men from Concordia, River Forest, and enters the all-male teaching ministerium of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. His first assignment is to serve Atonement Lutheran Church and School, a two-year-old mission, in Dearborn, Michigan, as its sole teacher. There are eight grades and 25 pupils in one room. The building, a "bungalow" chapel, serves as a church on Sunday morning, a school during the weekdays, and a meeting place on evenings. (The pastor's living quarters are on the upper level!)

As part of John's assignment in addition to teaching all eight grades, he is to be in charge of all the music programs and serve as youth director. He performs various janitorial functions including clean-up and set-up before and after school and is in charge of

stoking the furnace. When the pastor is ill, he performs various pastoral duties, including conduct of worship services. (By the way, the same is true of the pastor, who teaches school in John's absence!) For these services, he is paid the handsome salary of \$85 per month. Interestingly, this is considered one of the more "prestigious" calls that a candidate could have received in 1927!

John does remember many good times throughout his 15 years at Atonement, Dearborn. Most of the children come from traditional families where the fathers work and the mothers stay home. Discipline and respect are exceptional in the school. Rarely, if ever, do people complain about anything. Mostly, they are appreciative, supportive and helpful. Students are well disciplined and, if there is an extraordinary case of disciplinary action (John recalls two cases in 15 years!!!), the parents support **wholeheartedly** the teacher. John often remembers the congratulatory comments that he received from the principal of the nearby public school who

received graduates from Atonement distinguishing themselves in conduct and academics.

During the 20's and 30's when John served at Atonement-Dearborn, he recalls frequent joint pastor and teacher conferences. There pastors and teachers in the Michigan District enjoyed good relationships with a remarkable familiarity, knowing one another **by name**¹

It is early January, 1990, sixty-three years after Teacher Mueller arrived at school early to stoke the furnace with coal, sweep the floors, and set the chairs to begin the school day. Principal Gene Menzel of Green Park Lutheran School in south St. Louis County, Missouri, arrives at the 17-teacher, 500+ pupil, four-church association school before six o'clock in the morning and checks the zone heating to make sure there is a constant, comfortable temperature throughout the 50,000 square

feet building on the seven acre campus that he oversees. Floors are swept; classrooms are clean. Custodial and secretarial staff will soon arrive. Cooks will begin preparing meals in modern, up-to-date facilities. The cavernous music room will soon be filled with melodious (!) harmonies. The spacious science lab will be welcoming students to begin their experiments. Apple II's in the computer center will soon be downloaded with the day's programs. A special education teacher along with a separate special education consultant, teachers' aides, upper division specialists in art, English, and foreign language will arrive to carry out their specific assignments. In comparison to the 1927 world of John Mueller, we have "time warped" to

a world of sophistication and convenience.

But much has changed over the past 63 years. Most parents expect that Christian day schools should reach a level of educational competence which competes with the local public school programs in quality and excellence. This involves curriculum **pressures** for our schools to provide a complete menu of electives to cope with a changing society, including specializations in science, foreign language, music, art, computer, and math. And that means dollars.

Mr. Menzel peruses recent education manuals updating him on legal requirements for teachers, warning them against certain disciplinary tactics, cautioning them against personal liability, and obtaining adequate insurance coverage. Another opened envelope reminds him that soon an accrediting team from the State of Missouri will be visiting.

Phone calls begin to arrive at the office with a variety of complaints; others plead for special understanding

because of certain family situations which may involve divorce and re-marriage, single family homes, grandparents raising their grandchildren, children with special needs. A "latch key" program begins at 7:15 a.m. Students are dropped off at school well in advance of classtime by parents hurriedly on their way to work. A teacher expresses a concern that one of his students has been consistently tardy this month and proceeds to lecture Gene about the loss of student values such as punctuality, care for personal belongings, and self-respect that have diminished greatly over the past 30 or so years. It's now 8:35 a.m. and the school day begins!²

However, what seems to stand out most in comparing the worlds of John Mueller in 1927 and Gene Menzel in 1990 is, simply stated, **joy in ministry**. John readily speaks of the satisfaction of serving the Lord and Church, familiarity with pastors, confidence in his calling, a true belief that he loves and is loved by parents and students alike, that he is making an important contribution in the lives of young people and falls asleep with a contentment in the Lord. True, times are hard. Money is scarce. Conveniences are non-existent. But there is much joy in ministry.

For Gene and his teaching staff, many of the conveniences at Green Park rival comparable public schools, but "people" pressures, largely unknown in 1927, overwhelm them. Joys in ministry tend to be celebrated with individual triumphs. For example, a first grader, child of a 19 year-old single parent, is brought by its grandparents to the waters of Holy Baptism with teacher and principal invited to witness this blessed event. A child, suffering the rejection of her mother who has recently re-married and now being forced to live with her father, receives much-craved special time and personal attention from her teacher. There are many similar examples of Christian witness and service.

Let's Be Realistic

The call to serve Jesus Christ in the teaching ministry remains the same from 1927 to 1990. But the cultural context has changed dramatically. How will our teachers continue to serve God's people in the decade ahead, as we approach the new millenium?

Pastors would do well to acquaint themselves with the conditions that exist in our Christian Day schools (present tense). Far too often, pastors tend to believe that the situation in the day schools is similar to that of 20 or 30 years ago (past tense). Could it be that some teachers may have the same understanding of parish life and expectations of pastors?

The days when teachers taught all day and then served the congregation in multiple capacities such as church musician, janitor, and youth director are simply unrealistic in contemporary terms. The days when pastors could spend a good portion of their day interacting

with students and teachers in the school also have come and gone.

In his book, *It's a Different World*, well known church analyst, Lyle Schaller, notes that "until recently, however, the practice of medicine, teaching, and the parish ministry were widely perceived as Christian vocations. Parents usually were delighted and proud when a child decided to become a minister, a nurse, a physician or a teacher."³ In the world of John Mueller in the 1920's it was understood that his choice to become a teacher (his father at first wanted him to become a pastor) would not produce a high income. The presumption was that this was a worthy profession for a Christian and a lifetime vocation. In the world of 1990, these "helping" vocations often turn out to be entry level jobs especially for teachers who switch to secular jobs that provide greater financial rewards.

While it is difficult to find a counterpart for a clergyman in the secular world, comparisons in the teaching profession are readily available. In many respects, Gene Menzel and his staff at Green Park find their public counterparts better paid, enjoying even more conveniences, well organized into advocacy groups such as the NEA and its local affiliates and, in some instances, apathetic to the emotional (here read "spiritual") needs of the children they serve. It truly is a different world!

Some Recommendations

- A pastor who is called to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus and care for souls in a congregation that has also established a Christian Day School must remember that he is the shepherd of the faculty as well as the students in the school. To that end, his prayers, activities, and energies need also to be shared for the spiritual well-being of the Christian Day School.

Although tensions may exist between school and church interests, the truth remains that parents, students **and teachers** look to the pastor for leadership and spiritual guidance. An abandonment or abdication of pastoral presence will certainly lead to conflict, tension and disappointment. The command of St. Paul to "take care of the flock over which the Lord has placed you as overseer" (Acts 20:28) applies directly in many congregations to the ministry of the Christian Day School.⁴

- The relationship between the pastor and teachers needs to be a positive one. Beyond professional respect for each other's callings, it is the duty of the pastor to provide pastoral care for the teachers: praying for them regularly and **by name**, upholding them in their ministry, helping them find joy in their work, and supporting them in times of personal difficulty. It may also be helpful if the teachers recognize that, in some

respects, pastors play a dual role: one as an "overseer of all the flock" who takes into account all the ministries of the church. The other, of course, is his pastoral, spiritual, care-giving role.

• We need to be respectful of one another's time and not make unreasonable demands or expectations of the other. A teacher's day may begin at 7 a.m. and proceed without break until 4:00 or 4:30 p.m. During that time, they will have served as recess co-ordinator, PE instructor, nurse, music teacher, counselor, art teacher, religion instructor, lunchroom attendant, bathroom supervisor, not to mention everything involved with educating a pupil. Then they may well be involved in one or more after school activities. Upon returning home, they soon may expect to receive several phone calls from parents who have varying complaints, special appeals or who need counsel because of family difficulties. They have additional demands to serve on faculty committees, curriculum reviews, and various district and synodical committees. They may be involved in continuing education toward an advanced degree or refinement of their own skills. It sounds exhausting. These teachers may find it difficult to participate actively (or at least as actively as the pastor or other lay leaders may think they should participate) in congregational life.

Common Ground

Where is the prudent middle ground? The Lord has called us to be gifts to His people, and He has gifted us with the blood of His own Son for the forgiveness of sins and endowed us with faith and never-ending life through Holy Baptism. He has called us to a blessed Gospel ministry. He has given us resources sufficient to carry out our tasks and even "bonus" resources to bless God's people. He has enabled us through the power of the Holy Spirit to be Gospelers to our people as pastors and to our children and their families as teachers. This is a high calling, a special calling, a unique calling: one that only the Lord of the Church can issue to pastors and teachers. We rise every morning bathed in the afterglow of our baptismal remembrance, redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, and enabled by God the Holy Spirit to serve Him one more day. We fall asleep in rest, comfort, and surety knowing that we have given the Lord our very best during the day, pleading for His forgiveness when at times we have fallen short, but confident always in His grace.

Whether John Mueller in 1927 or Gene Menzel in 1990, there is still "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all," one calling, one ministry.

Teachers uphold their high calling and ministry by

serving as "model" parishioners in the congregations. In the *Lutheran Worship Agenda*, the installation of one called to the teaching ministry includes this question asked of a candidate: "Will you, trusting in God's care, seek to grow in love for those you serve, strive for excellence in your skills, and adorn the Gospel of Jesus Christ with a godly life?"⁵ Whereas it is the responsibility of every Christian to adorn the Gospel of Jesus Christ with a godly life, it is especially incumbent on teachers, who hold such a sacred office, to offer their lives as an "acceptable sacrifice" to Jesus Christ.

According to a description of the duties of teachers at Green Park Lutheran School, "All teachers shall be assigned by the Board to one of the Association congregations. There they shall manifest active membership in the life of the congregation and practice weekly worshiping, frequent communing, and regular contributing." Can there be any better way of adorning the Gospel of Jesus Christ, consecrating oneself to the teaching ministry, providing a model of the Christian life to parents and students, than by being regular in worship, exhibiting a love for the total ministry of the congregation, upholding the pastor in his office and church leaders in theirs, showing oneself a true servant of Christ through a life of prayer, eager worship, frequent communing and financial support of the congregation? This may be the most important function teachers contribute to the life of the congregation and the students they serve.

Lastly, there is the persistent question about "extra duties" performed in the local congregation, above and beyond countless teaching responsibilities and duties. Many have come to the conclusion that the days of Teacher Mueller when he was required to serve as janitor, church musician, and director of youth, have come and gone. Better, perhaps, is to support a concept of "extra pay for extra duties." Instead of including extra duties as part of a teacher's Call, a more workable approach is to give teachers an opportunity to apply for extra duties within the congregation according to the gifts that God has given them and thusly be compensated for them.

The following is a proposed table of extra pay for extra duties.

- Music director, 15%—35% of base salary (depending on congregational size and job description)
- Various music assistants and choir directors, 5%—10% of base
- Youth Director, 10%—25% of base (again depending on job description)
- Other duties such as Confirmation and Mid-week School instruction and any other professional function performed by a teacher should also be rightly compensated.

(Continued on page 24)



book reviews

RELIGION AND THE LIFE CYCLE by Robert C. Fuller. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988

In his attempt to use academic psychology to help locate the place of religion within the overall structure of the human experience, Robert Fuller, a professor of religious studies at Bradley University, has written a book which he intends for students or lay persons interested in the psychological study of religion. Erikson's eight stages of psychosocial development are the focal point of the discussion which involves religion in each of the stages of human development. The ambitious author actually goes beyond the eight stages and aptly discusses conversion phenomenon: Maslow's "peak experiences," the significance of ritual, and the various powers of prayer.

The author admittedly struggles to define "religion" in terms that are precise and suitable for readers with a variety of philosophical approaches to a supreme being. The effort produces one of the strengths of the book, and without the generic use of the ideas of religion, the book would miss its thesis.

Fuller uses theologian David Tracy's concept of "limit experience" as his definition of the religious life. A limit experience is any moment of life that forces us to acknowledge the limits or limitations of a strictly rational or empirical approach to life. Thus, religion or the religious experience is a phenomenon beyond the resources and perspectives of the finite personality.

Fuller admits that the approach may cause concern for persons accustomed to thinking about religion in terms of belief in God or commitment to the Bible. His concern is real as a person who considers himself/herself as a believer may have difficulty with the generic concept of religion or the religious life.

The author proves a reliable guide to life cycle research and does a commendable job of exploring the ways religion influences each life cycle from the infant's need to acquire a sense of trust to the elderly's need to contribute to the sequence of generations.

Christians and psychologists will appreciate the scholarly efforts of Fuller to integrate psychology and religion in a readable book of approximately 150 pages. At times, the reader may perceive the author as a capable psychologist rather than as a theologian. There is need for further attempts to fuse religion and psychology.

Herman Glaess
Professor of Education
Concordia-Seward

learning to be "more whole and holy," as they identify themselves as "a faithful, forgiven community in Christ."

Nuechterlein's field research reveals a handful of interesting and debatable findings. For example, "staff members tended to recreate their family of origin, within their teams, when it comes to birth order role, level of desired closeness, and conflict style." In addition, she asserts that staff members of different birth orders have better quality relationships than teammates of the same birth order (i.e., all first borns working together).

Focused in twelve readable chapters, the author has written a very useful resource for a staff desiring to systematically improve its life together. Not only does she raise pertinent questions for a staff to discuss, but she includes a number of exercises for each member to complete. For example, she provides a listing of family roles and encourages the reader to identify those he or she tended to play within his or her family of origin.

As one might suspect, Nuechterlein also focuses her attention upon gender issues within staffs. To her credit she focuses in a fairly objective and accurate manner four of the typical relationship patterns that this reviewer has witnessed in mixed gender teams.

Limitations in this helpful resource are minor. Most notable to people within the LC-MS is a relative down playing of the importance of congruent theological views between staff members, and a lack of reference to the unique staff dynamics created by parishes having a called day school staff.

Wisely, the author avoids the pitfall of suggesting that there is one model of teaming. Rather, she suggests that the "ideal staff structure is the one which the staff members expect and prefer."

Improving Your Multiple Staff Ministry is the best recent resource designed to strengthen teams that are already working together. This reviewer heartily endorses both its strong biblical accent on the importance of covenant relationships and the various psychological "windows" used to understand the unique dynamics of team ministry.

Bill Karpenko
Director of DCE Ministry
Concordia-Seward

IMPROVING YOUR MULTIPLE STAFF MINISTRY by Anne Marie Nuechterlein. Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1989.

The past 25 years have produced a growing volume of literature on team ministry or multiple staff relationships. Rightly so, given the potential parish staffs have to hinder or enhance the local congregation's ministry. In fact, so vital are effective parish staff relationships that The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, through its Board for Higher Education Services and Board for Parish Services, recently conducted an extensive research project on DCE—pastor teams within the Synod.

How does one begin to understand and describe team ministry? Kenneth Mitchell, in his landmark study of pastor-pastor teams in 1966, concluded, "No one body of knowledge, no one discipline, can hope to make sense of it." Anne Nuechterlein's book amply reflects this multifaceted nature of staff relationships.

Beginning with a theological perspective as her foundation, Nuechterlein also relies upon theoretical insights from family therapy systems, psychological typology, communication theory, birth order dynamics, and feminist psychology. In addition, her book uses face-to-face, in-depth interviews with 10 male/female and 10 female/male teams of Lutheran (ELCA) clergy.

Nuechterlein's view of "good quality staff relationships" is based upon 10 relationship spokes, foremost of which is the biblical idea of covenant. It is this "binding agreement, made in trust and faithfulness to God and to our staff members" that undergirds and empowers all else that happens within the team. Whether discussing conflict, gender dynamics, self-esteem or personal power within a staff, the author repeatedly draws the reader's attention to the fact that well-functioning staffs see themselves as "empowered by God's grace,"

(Continued from page 22)

Whether pastor or teacher, "the office of the public ministry includes within it all of the functions of the leadership of the church."⁶ That aspect of calling has not changed from the days of Teacher Mueller to Principal Menzel. Times and circumstances may change (or perhaps, recycle), but the Gospel ministry of Jesus Christ remains the same. We are to be about proclaiming the Gospel in its purity according to God's Holy Word as expressed in our Lutheran Confessions, discipling all nations and teaching them to observe all that He has commanded us, and adorning the Gospel with a godly life. May the Holy Spirit who has called us into the office of the preaching and teaching ministry continue to enable us to be leaders in our congregations and models of the Christian life.

Footnotes

¹After leaving the teaching ministry at Atonement-Dearborn, John Mueller later distinguished himself as Membership Director of the Lutheran Laymen's League for nearly 25 years and also served on the Board of Directors of Synod. At 83, he continues to serve in the Christian Guidance Department at the LLL and serves as an organist at his home congregation, Christ Memorial-Afton. This article acknowledges 63 years of consecrated ministry to Lord and Church.

²Gene Menzel, a Concordia-Seward '69 graduate, has served as principal of Grace School, Huntsville, Alabama, and Green Park School, St. Louis, Missouri. This article acknowledges his consecrated ministry of 20 years to Lord and Church.

³Lyle Schaller. *It's a Different World!* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987, page 199. Although the chilling premise of this book predicts the irretrievable decline of "old-line" denominations, many will find Schaller's insights compelling and helpful in understanding today's socio-economic environment and finding ways of meeting those challenges in ministry.

⁴Pastoral leadership and support will certainly be tempered by the relationship of the congregation to the school depending on whether the school is tuition-based, part of a multiple-parish association, or a one church-one school unit. The pastor is best advised to understand the leadership expectations of those associated with the school. On the subject of pastoral leadership, I recommend, in addition to the work of Walther and Fritz, Bruce Jones, *Ministerial Leadership in a Managerial World*, Wheaton: Tyndale Press, 1988, which offers insights for the contemporary pastor as a loving minister and a wise manager. If that title seems too secular, then try Eugene Peterson, *The Pastor* (three books with middle titles of *Busy*, *Guilty*, *Contemplative*) published by Word Publishing. Offered is a self-described "welcomed refreshment for parched pastors" which attempts to separate pastoral, eternal, and busy-work.

⁵*Lutheran Worship Agenda*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1984, page 256.

⁶"The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature." A report of the CTCR, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, 1981, page 16. This concise pamphlet provides a basis for a discussion of the preaching and teaching ministries as well as an extensive list of qualifications for the teaching ministry on page 18.



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