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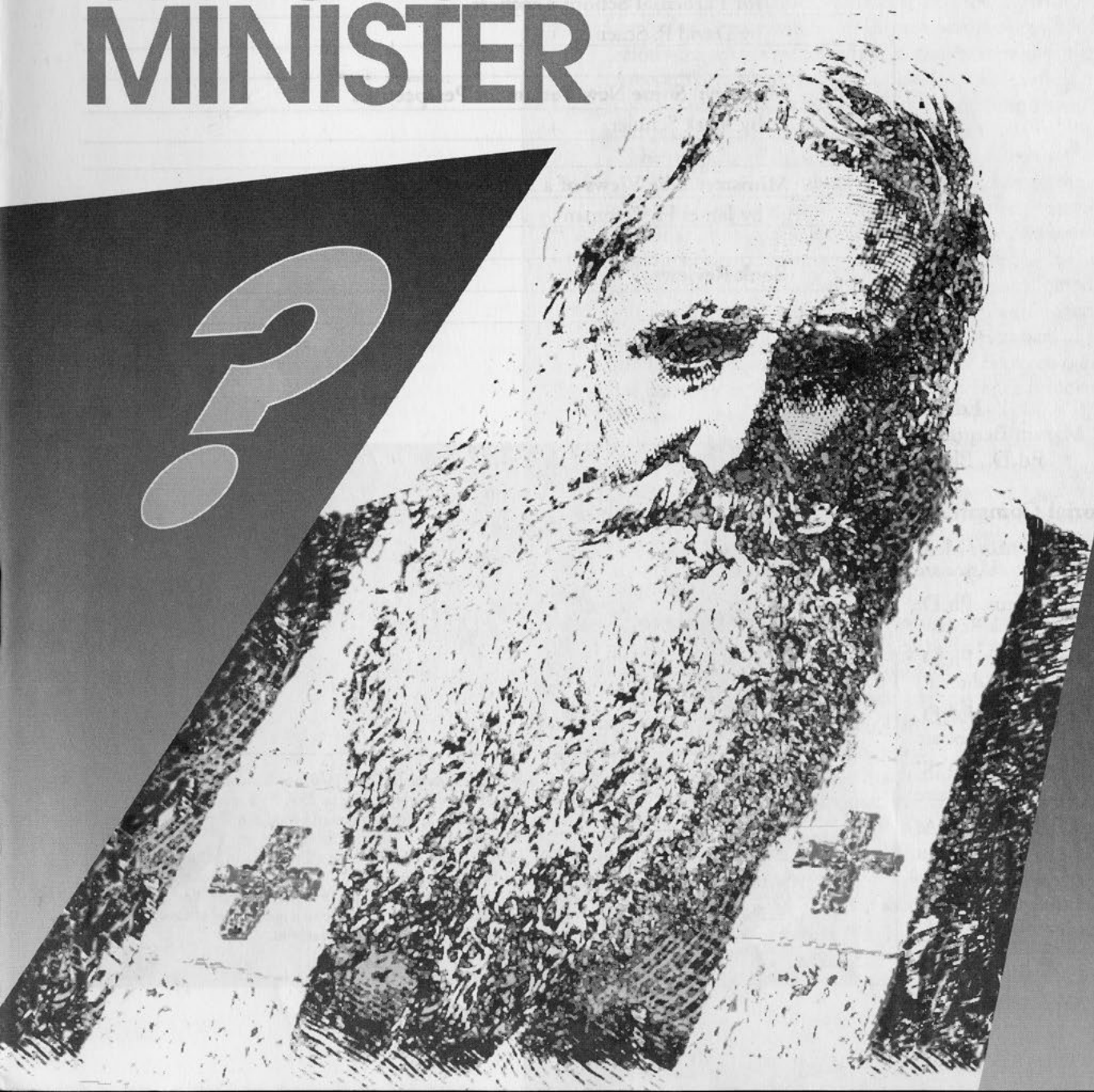
ISSUES

IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Spring 1993

Vol. 27, No. 1

WHO IS A MINISTER



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Who is a Minister???

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reflections

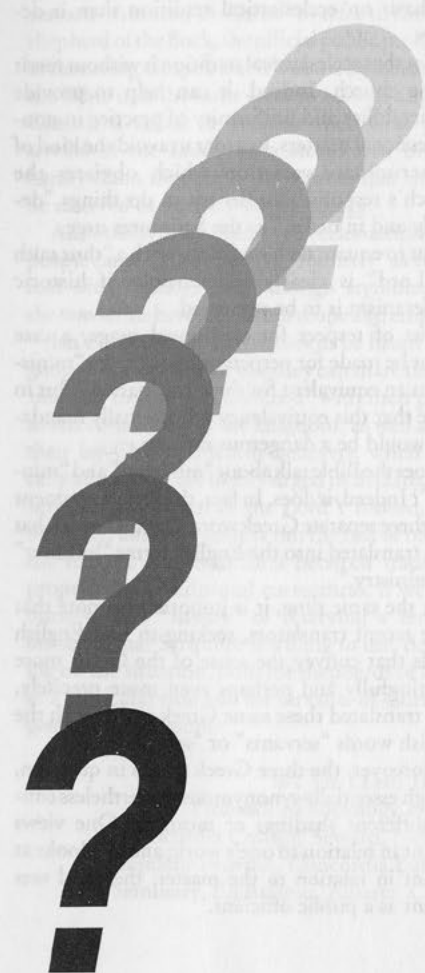
AS I PREPARED to introduce this edition of *Issues in Christian Education*, I reflected upon the title. Occasionally someone will ask me whether I prefer to be addressed as: Rev. Walz, President Walz, Professor Walz, Dr. Walz, Preacher Walz, Minister Walz, etc. If I know the person well enough, I have explained that at one time I was a football and basketball official, and as such I was called many names. Whatever title the individual places in front of my name will be an improvement over what an overly zealous fan may have screamed in the excitement of a hotly contested athletic event. I often conclude by suggesting that Mr. Walz is always proper, and really, is it not more important how one is addressed rather than by what particular title?

The purpose of this edition of *Issues in Christian Education* is to provide a forum to examine questions relating to the identity of a minister. It is our goal to consider several perspectives and give particular attention to Biblical/theological views on ministry.

Some of the questions you will find addressed by three talented theologians of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod include: "Is only the pastor, as a member of the clergy, a minister? What about LCMS Sunday bulletins which declare all members of the congregation to be ministers? Is there a difference between being a MINISTER and being IN MINISTRY? If so, is the difference important? Are some Missouri Synod professionals labeled "Ministers of the Gospel" because of United States government requirements rather than on the basis of Scripture and/or the Lutheran Confessions? Can one ministry be enhanced by denigrating another ministry? Is there only one ministry, for which one has to be ordained? Are some Lutheran church bodies now ordaining Christian day school teachers? Are status, authority, and recognition the important factors in one's ministry?"

Why is determining who is a minister a problem for some and not for others? Rev. Armand Boehme has asked, "What's 'THE' Fuss About?" As you read this issue, note the suggestion made by Mark Schuler that possibly much of this is a fuss, noise that distracts Christians from their Great Commission task of building up the body. James Pragman reminds us: "But God's reasons for giving ministry in His church remain clear and absolute: ministry and ministers are given so that the Word can be preached and taught and the sacraments, which are the visible Word, can be administered for the saving health of the nations. If that focus is obscured or lost, then all the other questions we have about the identity of ministers are quite secondary and irrelevant."

Orville C. Walz, President



The Focus of the Debate

"I DON'T GET IT, Deaconess Kristin. What difference does it really make?" my student asked as she stared at the diagrams on the chalkboard.

"What don't you understand, Theresa?"

"Every one of those perspectives on ministry provides a different identity for the deaconess office. But, really, what difference does it make which view of ministry I hold?"

My response was to review my lecture and diagrams. I admit, I was a bit miffed by her unusual lack of understanding. Later I realized I had entirely missed the intent of her question (as instructors do from time to time). In the mind of the collegiate idealist, it did not matter to whom she was responsible or with which status she served. Theresa wanted only to serve. She knew she could serve the Lord as a deaconess regardless of her view of ministry. So, what was the big deal?

Theresa had a valid point, considering she detected the shift from my typical talk of servanthood to a conversation dominated by the words "authority," "power" and "accountability." My lecture on ministry perspectives sorely needed the word "service." I gave theories without remembering theology, our faith, is *lived*. The

focus of the issue is to determine "What is the office God has given me in which I can best *serve* Him and His people?"

Several pastors have told me, "Those lay ministers (or DCE's or deaconesses) are just out for *my* office." A deaconess once said, "I just don't have the authority to do what I need to do. If I were a *pastor*, I would be treated with more respect." I fear there are many, such as these, who lose sight of their original theology and are motivated by desires for power, authority and equality.

Ever since I realized what Theresa was really asking I catch myself when desires for authority veil my servant heart. I reach into my memory and recite the deaconess motto written by Reverend Wilhelm Loche:

The True Deaconess Spirit

What is my want?
I want to serve.

Whom do I want to serve?
The Lord in His wretched ones and His poor.

And what is my reward?
I serve neither for reward or thanks, but out of gratitude and love; My reward is that I am permitted to serve.

And if I perish in this service?
"If I perish, I perish," said Queen Esther. I would perish for Him who gave Himself for me. But He will not let me perish!

And if I grow old in this service?
Then shall my heart be renewed as a palm tree, and the Lord shall satisfy me with grace and mercy.

I go my way in peace, casting all my care upon Him.

Insofar as the discussion regarding "Who is a Minister?" becomes a debate about "Who's the boss?" or "Who has the *right* to serve?" I say, "Beware of Satan's trap!" There is no room for power struggles among people who say, "I want to serve." As long as the debate focuses on our theology of *service* and multiplies our desire to

serve the Lord in ways pleasing to Him, I say "Amen! Let the debate go on!"

Kristin Wassilak,
Deaconess and Director, Deaconess Program
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Scripture and Tradition on "Minister" and "Ministry"

A CHURCH THAT STANDS as solidly on *Sola Scriptura* as does The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod must avoid all temptation to put more emphasis on ecclesiastical tradition than it deserves.

Not that ecclesiastical tradition is without merit in the church. Indeed, it can help to provide predictability and uniformity of practice in non-confessional matters, in order to avoid the kind of indiscriminate variation which obviates the church's responsibility to try to do things "decently and in order," as the Scriptures urge.

But to equate such traditions with a "thus saith the Lord" is clearly indefensible, if historic Lutheranism is to be preserved.

Out of respect for traditional usage, a case might be made for perpetuating the term "minister" as an equivalent for the term "pastor." But to argue that this equivalency is doctrinally mandatory would be a dangerous mistake.

Does the Bible talk about "ministers" and "ministry"? Indeed, it does. In fact, the New Testament uses three separate Greek words, each of which has been translated into the English terms "minister" or "ministry."

At the same time, it is important to note that more recent translators, seeking to find English words that convey the sense of the Greek more meaningfully and perhaps even more precisely, have translated these same Greek words with the English words "servants" or "service."

Moreover, the three Greek words in question, though essentially synonymous, nevertheless convey different shadings of meaning. One views servant in relation to one's work; another looks at servant in relation to the master; the third sees servant as a public official.

All of this suggests that, from a Biblical point of view, it would be legitimate to use the terms "servant" and "service" wherever we have been accustomed to say "minister" or "ministry." There is some reason to believe that, if we started to make this Biblically defensible terminological change in our everyday conversation, much of the heat would go out of the current debate about the proper use of the words "minister" and "ministry."

The point is that the debate on the use of these terms stems more from terminological tradition than from clear Biblical precept. To put it another way, it appears to be more a question of accustomed usage than of timeless teaching.

It is true that many times the Bible uses the term "servant (minister) of Christ" to refer to the called shepherd of the flock, the official public proclaimer of the saving Gospel. But it is also true that at times the Bible uses the same term to refer to any or all Christians called to dedicate their lives to the service of the Lord. This means that one can hardly claim that the Bible *requires* that this title be reserved exclusively for the clergy.

Admittedly, over time, as an ecclesiastical habit, people came to use the term "minister" as equivalent with "pastor," even though etymologically the two terms have a different scope and emphasis.

Isn't it unseemly for pastors to be heard wrangling about whether or not they can share the term "minister (servant) of the Lord" with their professional co-laborers in the kingdom, as well as with their lay-Christian fellow believers, when Biblically all of them are in fact urged or declared to be "servants (ministers) of the Lord"? Indeed, more seriously, don't we pastors run the risk of blurring the historic Lutheran lines between traditional propriety and Scriptural correctness, if we allow ourselves the "luxury" of reserving a term for ourselves that Scripture is willing to use, depending on the situation, both for shepherds of a flock as a particular title and for servants of Christ as a generic designation?

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Find the Important Issues in the Ministry Debate

RECENTLY I FOUND IT NECESSARY to read the history book written for the 100th anniversary of my home parish in rural Kansas. I was reminded that the account gives prominence to both pastors and teachers who served in the parish by including individual pictures and brief accounts for each. The reader is left with the impression that persons called to both ministries were equally important.

I also recall as a young boy hearing adults treating with appropriate respect *der Herr Pastor* (the pastor) and *der Herr Lehrer* (the teacher), again suggesting equal respect and prominence. When *der Lehrer* came to visit, as he did frequently, it was as important an event as when *der Pastor* came to see us.

What I personally remember about each of the pastors and teachers I knew when I was growing up is that they were humble people who took foot washing seriously. I never felt they were vying for status. My parents and I certainly never questioned whether they were all in the professional ministry of the church. They never *asked* for status. We *gave* it to them.

I wonder what happened to that view in the last half century. My travels as a part of my work have taken me all over the United States for the last 30 years. I've listened to many frustrated persons in the roles of pastor and teacher, and more recently also as Director of Christian Education. As I reflect on what I've heard, I've realized the dissatisfaction with status for many tends to come because of a number of prevalent feelings:

1. Some are insecure and are looking for affirmation of their status without demonstrating fitness for it.
2. Some feel threatened by others joining them in a team relationship.
3. Some feel their status is being eroded with the addition of other titles of ministry in recent years.
4. Some are reluctant to assume their positions with the humility of a servant modeled by the Master Servant, Jesus Christ.
5. Some are reluctant to equate roles of professional ministry with foot washing as the primary focus of their ministry.

6. Some are the victims of parishes which are trying to apply business principles of "bottom line" measures and "time clock" accountability to ventures of faith and ministries not easily evaluated by secular units of measure.

As the number of people in these categories has increased in recent decades, there appears to have been more of a move toward looking to theological debates about who is a minister to solve their problems. Theological consensus reached by the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the Synod in convention probably will not really help the persons in the situations described above.

I would hope that included among the goals of our debate about who is a minister are those of increasing the effectiveness of persons serving in areas of professional ministry and attracting more persons to such areas of service. If that is the case, might we not be more successful in achieving these goals by reducing our emphasis on *who* is a minister with such a concern about who is and who isn't and increasing our emphasis on *what* makes someone more effective in professional ministry? Then we might be more successful in attracting qualified persons to consider both the traditional roles of professional ministry and the exciting new areas of ministry.

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David P. Scaer

The Clergy as the New Testament Ministers with a Proposal for Parochial School Teachers

IN DOING THEOLOGY, we are tempted to project our situation back on to the New Testament to demonstrate our position. Nothing less could be demanded of a Biblical theology. Such an approach presupposes that our use of terms corresponds in each case to the Biblical usage. The concordance is the solution. This approach is not foolproof, as it ignores the development of theological language beyond the New Testament usage. No one is immune from making these one-for-one equations. The Reformed support their preaching and ruling elders from the Pastoral Epistles. The Roman and Anglican system of bishops claims support from the same sources. Our polity

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of voters assemblies is subject to the same scrutiny. These positions are forced back into the New Testament only with great difficulty. In the New Testament the elders are the pastors themselves and not lay counselors to the pastors, as they are in many congregations. Our use of the word "sanctification" as doing good works does not exhaust the Biblical understanding involving the entire activity of the Holy Spirit on the lives of Christians, including their justification. Theologically, we hold that sanctification is dependent on justification, but Biblical language would say it the other way around and mean something different (1 Corinthians 6:11). Lack of clarity will cause confusion and eventually doctrinal error. We also have to ask whether our use of "minister" and "ministry" have similarly expanded upon the original understandings of New Testament words *diakonos* and *diakonia*.

In normal parlance "minister" means pastor, the preacher and celebrant of the sacraments.¹ Other uses of minister for other church offices are foreign to the New Testament and the Lutheran Confessions. In The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) minister is used now not only of most professional, that is, fulltime church workers besides the clergy,² but of all Christians, as suggested in the title of Oscar Feucht's *Everyone A Minister*,³ a position which has attracted support.⁴ Many church bulletins announce that all members are ministers. Here the puzzlement begins. The hymnal specifically identifies the pastor as minister. Matters are further confused by the 1989 LCMS decision to recognize lay ministers. These persons are not ordained, but are officially authorized to carry out the traditional ministerial functions of preaching and administering the sacraments. Before we even begin to discuss whether parochial school teachers and directors of Christian education are ministers, the distinction between ministers and laity is lost. If all Christians are ministers, is there really any value in distinguishing pastors from other professional workers or in discussing whether the latter should be called ministers?

The matter is further complicated by describing an assortment of activities such as publishing, radio and television shows, and even Disneyland-styled amusement parks with Biblical themes as ministries. Those claiming these ministries often are without formal theological education, call from a congregation, or ordination from a recognized church. The impression is then given that every Christian is entitled to claim and define a ministry as a personal expression of his belief. Tammy and Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swaggert come to mind; however, the pages of such Evangelical publications as *Christianity Today* regularly use ministry of Christian activities not associated with a recognized church. Charles Colson claims a prison ministry. The use of "my ministry" and "our ministry" by Lutheran professional church workers and their wives

shows how influential Evangelical ideas on ministry really are. Our theology and synodical structure, in requiring that professional workers be given assignments by the church and held accountable to it, discourage self-styled ministries. The activities of auxiliary groups as ministries are subject to congregational or synodical supervision.⁵

Still another problem is presented in the varied meanings for the word "deacon," derived from *diakonos*, the Greek word for servant or minister. "Deacon" in the Roman and Anglican communions refers to the order of clergy beneath bishop and priest, and the term has been suggested for LCMS professional lay workers. Precedent for this would be Wilhelm Loehe's designation of the church's charitable enterprises among the poor, sick and orphans as *diakonia* (ministry) carried out by deaconesses. In many congregations deacons are entrusted with the care of property, and elders are the pastor's advisors. The distinction is arbitrary.

In the New Testament both mean pastors. The deacon at the Holy Communion is something else. He is the clergyman or layman who reads the Old Testament and Epistle, invites the congregation to prayer, and assists at the altar the officiating clergyman (who is known as the minister), and distributes the chalice. This history of the terms minister and ministry, deacon and deaconate, is complicated. A distinction between "the ministry of Word and Sacrament" and "the teaching ministry" may have been introduced in the LCMS to address this confusion. But the New Testament does not know of a ministry which is shared by parochial school and pastors.⁶

An attempt for a similar bifurcated definition of ministry was offered in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) by Bishop William Lazareth. The office of the one ministry is divided into two ordained expressions: Word and Sacraments for pastors and bishops, and Word and Service for deacons and teachers. Including teachers in the second category may have been done to accommodate former Missouri Synod teachers now in the ELCA. Karl Paul Donfried objects to this definition as contrary to the New Testament and our confessions.⁷ His critique is equally applicable to a growing understanding of ministry as activities other than preaching of the Word and administration of the sacraments. The ministry in this newer sense becomes like a pie arbitrarily partitioned to fit the circumstances. The New Testament minister becomes one functionary among others, a minister ministering to other ministers. A favorite teaching device in synodical colleges and seminaries is a diagram in the shape of an inverted pyramid. At the top is the congregation, with the pastors and other workers at the bottom. Intermediate layers are the voters and various boards.

A recent scholarly study, *Diakonia*, by John Collins, first received as a University of London doctoral dissertation,

undertakes, as the title suggests, to determine the New Testament meaning of ministry, *diakonia*, and deacons or ministers, *diakonoi*. Examining the broad expanse of ancient secular and Biblical sources, Collins concludes that *diakonoi* or ministers were servants not in the sense of servitude but as representatives of a higher authority. Prime ministers and governmental ministers are responsible as servants to the head of state. Paul, Timothy and Silas are ministers of God; that is, they represent and are accountable to him.⁸ They perform a service to the people for God to whom they are accountable. This is diametrically opposed to congregational sense of ministry, where the minister derives his authority from the congregation who are also ministers and superior to him. There is no suggestion in the New Testament that all baptized Christians were ministers or share a common ministry. The New Testament ministers were the missionaries, preachers, and teachers of the Word, that is, the clergy. Extending the concept of ministry to include other offices is without foundation. Donfried takes Collins' position one step further and argues with good reason that the Lutheran Confessions' uses of minister and ministry follow the New Testament in understanding these terms as references only to the clergy and their office.⁹ Expanding the confessional meaning of ministry to include all Christians has its roots in Pietism¹⁰ and was articulated by Schleiermacher,¹¹ whose views have been promoted as Luther's doctrine of universal priesthood.¹² This means that the minister from the pulpit faces only other ministers. Any distinctions between pastor and people become functional. All do ministry, but the clergy do it professionally. With this view ministry becomes synonymous with the Christian life or sanctification and can be measured, as the Reformed and now the Church Growth Movement do. The redefinition of a more inclusive understanding of ministry was an inevitable conclusion to the egalitarianism removing class distinctions, including pastor and people.¹³ Unavoidably, the distinctions between male and female were removed, and women as men have in major Protestant churches been ordained pastors.

The Roman Catholic Church has shown some interest in an active revival of deacon (minister) as a permanent office, especially for former priests now married, to relieve their shortage of regular clergy. Up to now, deacon was little

“ . . . is there any way in which parochial school teachers may be called ministers?”

more than a temporary but formal step before priestly ordination. This is similar to the suggestion in the Lutheran Church to use this title for lay workers. Pre-Reformation tradition justifies this use, but Collins shows that *diakonos* in the New Testament is a minister and not some other order. Still, like sanctification and other terms, the historic (not Biblical) understanding of deacon could be revived.

Discussion with the government to avoid military conscription propelled the LCMS into designating male teachers as “ministers of the gospel.”¹⁴ This has been re-enforced by their self-employed status with the Internal Revenue Service. Without arguing the merits of these benefits, the government's designation of “ministers of the gospel” cannot, should not, and must not be equated with what church understands by these terms. Would anyone really want to argue that the federal government can provide a theologically acceptable definition of “Gospel”? But this is exactly what is done with the word “minister” in the phrase “minister of the gospel.” On the basis of the government decision that teachers are “ministers of the gospel,” some have claimed authority to preach and administer the sacraments and may in fact be doing so already. The church cannot insist that the government adopt our meanings for theological terms, including minister. At the same time the church cannot let the government determine or even influence our understandings.¹⁵ The government decision, however, did set the stage for a wider meaning for minister, not known in the New Testament or Confessions.

There is a theological history prior to the LCMS's accommodation to the government's definition: the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) with a functional view understood ministry in the wider sense, a position contested by Francis Pieper. WELS sees the pastor and parochial teacher as historical and not divinely mandated developments from a general ministry. Fundamental for this approach is its peculiar exegesis of Ephesians 4:11 which sees *diakonia* as referring to a general ministry and not a specific office. The use of only one definite article in the phrase, “the pastors and teachers,” suggests one office and not two, and effectively challenges that parochial school teachers are in any sense in view. Not surprisingly, this exegesis gained acceptance in the LCMS to support the position of the parochial school teacher as a divinely mandated office.

Consistent with this broader view of ministry, WELS allows its teachers as ministers to preach and celebrate the sacrament and recently, quite logically, be ordained. When such thinking is transposed into the Missouri Synod, then both men and women teachers could also ask for ordination. One suspects that this has already been proposed.

Against this view, the New Testament uses the terms teaching, *didache*, and teacher, *didaskalos*, respectively of the divinely given doctrine and the one entrusted with it. These terms do *not* embrace the modern concept of education at any level. Only with the Reformation were the clergy trained at the universities. Jesus, Paul, and the clergy are all called teachers because they have been entrusted to preserve and teach the church's message. The parochial teacher is a called teacher according to the modern and not Biblical definition. Eliminate the arguments for calling teachers “ministers,” which were required for exemption to military service which is no longer required, and for self-employed tax status, which some see as a burden, and the reasons for the introduction of the term are abolished. But only rarely are the wheels of history reversed. This does not erase the fact that the uses of the word “minister” for parochial school teachers do not fit the Biblical and Confessional meanings.

When Biblical terms are extended beyond their original definitions, confusion is inevitable. We are at that point now. What does the lay person understand when Paul speaks about his ministry? This means his preaching the Gospel. Instead, the laity may think of the ministry of television evangelists, of music ministers, of ministers of education and of all Christians, just to mention a few.

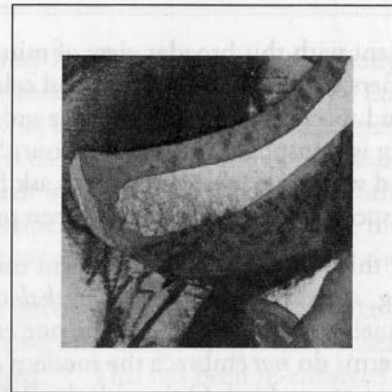
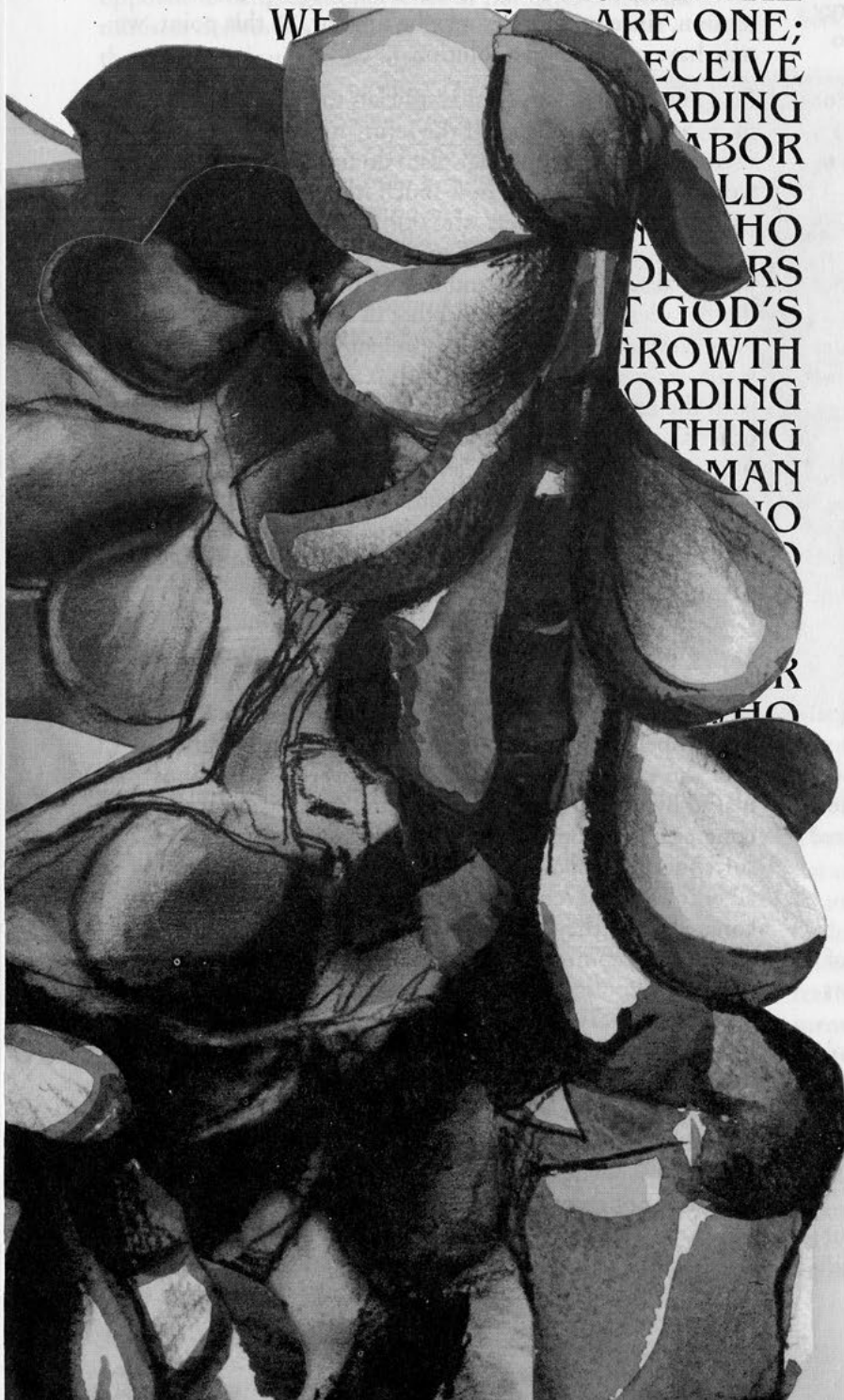
But is there any way in which parochial school teachers may be called ministers? They do not fit the New Testament and confessional definition of ministers of the Gospel and Sacraments. Church history may provide a clue to our dilemma. Our parochial school system evolved in Europe. Through Constantine's establishment of Christianity, the church especially through its monastic orders was entrusted with education. The Reformation expanded upon this alliance between church and state to make education universally available. All schools were in fact parochial schools, because religious education was provided in all of them. Secular schools in our sense were unknown. Pastors and teachers were called with the consent of the civil authorities. For example, Johann Sebastian Bach, a school teacher in Leipzig and the organist at St. Thomas church, was accountable to the town council and assumably to the pastor also. Our parochial schools were an attempt by German immigrants to continue what is still a universal European system in America, where state support for religious schools was constitutionally disallowed. Still, our schools were never completely free of state control. Synodi-

cal colleges and even seminaries comply with state regulations. The church cannot invade the public sector, but the state exercises residual rights in church-sponsored education. The parochial school teacher is accountable to the state *through* the church. To put it another way, the state by establishing educational standards and recognizing the credentials of parochial school teachers, exercises control over church-owned and operated schools. Education is the function of the state. Luther's *Address to the German Nobility* suggests as much. In providing education, albeit a religious education, the church is voluntarily making itself accountable to the state. This alliance is not without its tension, since boundaries may be unclear. At this point, we may have come upon a solution.

Paul allows for governmental officials to be called God's ministers (Romans 13:4). If the term “ministers” can be used of government officials who do not know how God is working through them, how much more can it be used of parochial school teachers who do? In doing this we are no more making an equation between the ministry of the parochial school teacher and that of the pastor than Paul did between his ministry and that of the emperor. Certain New Testament concepts must remain in place. The pastor is the *didaskalos*, the teacher, and *diakonos*, the minister, with the responsibility of preaching and sacraments. On the other side the parochial teacher is for the government's purposes a servant, that is, a minister responsible for education. The parochial school teacher has a dual responsibility as the government's minister for education and as the pastor's surrogate in the teaching of religion. If the pastor is the minister of God for the preaching of the Gospel, the parochial school teacher is the minister of God under the state for the education of the community's youth. Each position lives in its own tension. The pastor lives between what God expects of him in the preaching of the Gospel and the actual historical life of the congregation. The parochial school teacher lives between expectations placed by the congregation and state. The pastor of the congregation sponsoring the parochial school cannot surrender his responsibility for the religious instruction of all enrolled children. Even if they are not members of his congregation, they belong to his mission responsibility towards the community at large. He does this as the minister (representative) of Christ and not the state. The pastor's ministry as a preacher of the Gospel does not detract from teacher's ministry as a representative of society for educating the youth.¹⁶ The danger of confusing the church's ministers with the state's is always present, but it can be overcome when these distinctions are made clear. Perhaps we have failed in formulating our distinctions, but this need not deter us in the future.

Please turn to page 24

WHAT THEN IS APOLLOS?
AND WHAT IS PAUL? SER-
VANTS THROUGH WHOM YOU
BELIEVED, EVEN AS THE
LORD GAVE OPPORTUNITY
TO EACH ONE. I PLANTED,
APOLLOS WATERED, BUT
GOD WAS CAUSING THE
GROWTH. SO THEN NEITHER
THE ONE WHO PLANTS NOR
THE ONE WHO WATERS IS
ANYTHING, BUT GOD WHO
CAUSES THE GROWTH. NOW
HE WHO PLANTS AND HE
WHO WATERS ARE ONE;



1 Corinthians 3:5-7

Mark Schuler

Ministry: Some New Testament Perspectives

Dr. Mark Schuler is a pastor who serves Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Glidden, Iowa.

“WHAT IS THE FUSS all about?” queries a Missouri Synod pastor.¹ Indeed, there is much “fussing” going on, for the CTCR, the ELCA, and the WCC have all produced documents on the ministry.² The debate seems to be who is a “minister” and what is “a/the ministry.”

It is tempting, as an exegete, to point out that the word “ministry” is a non-biblical term which derives from the Latin *ministerium*, a general word for office, service, occupation, work, or employment. Its application to the New Testament comes, then, via the Vulgate (never highly prized by Lutherans) or our attempts to translate a number of Greek concepts (more on those concepts later). Likewise, “laity” is not a biblical concept, for the distinction between the ordained and the laity does not appear until the late third century.³ Yet, in modern usage, “ministry” has come to refer to some sort of leadership or special service among the people of God.

Therefore, to sort out some of the fuss about ministry, we shall return to the New Testament and examine the language used there to describe those people who led and served in some special way in the Christian community. We shall start with terminology, and then look at the ministry of Jesus and the writings of Paul. Finally, we shall offer some suggestions for sorting out the fuss about ministry today.

Terminology

At the dawn of the Christian era, first-century Judaism was served by at least three types of leaders.⁴ The priestly ministry in Jerusalem flourished and was central to Jewish piety. The prophetic ministry had waned, but the people still gave heed to the daughter of the prophetic voice—the voice from above⁵—as they awaited the “prophet like Moses” (Deuteronomy 18:15; Matthew 16:14) who in the expectations of some would be the Messiah (Psalm of Solomon 17:43). One can also identify a teaching/oversight ministry of sorts in the leadership at Qumran,⁶ the scribes who bore much authority, local synagogue leaders, and perhaps the heads of leading families (Luke 19:47).

In Greek circles, there were four terms available to describe official religious leadership: *τέλος* for a perfectly fulfilled office or free service rendered by a citizen; *τιμή* for that office or task which bears a certain dignity with its practice; *ἀρχή* for the leading of those who will follow; and *λειτουργία* for a public service performed at personal expense for the good of the community or the gods.⁷

Of the available Greek terminology, none, with the exception of *λειτουργία*, is “ever used in the New Testament for the ministry of one or several believers (as distinguished from the whole body).”⁸ Paul does speak of himself once as

a *λειτουργός* in the priestly service (*ἱερατεύω*) of the Gospel of God (Romans 15:16). But this relatively rare word seems to be used in parallel with priestly language (Isaiah 61:6 LXX) for actions indicative of God’s people (cp. Acts 13:2, Philippians 2:17, 25, 30). Indeed, the church as a whole is called a body of priests (*ἱεράτευμα*, 1 Peter 2:5, 9).

New Testament writers, in speaking of those who led and served in the Christian community, for the most part avoided the language of Greek religious leadership and the priestly language of Judaism. Instead, commissioned service (*διακονία*) and oversight (*ἀπόστολος*, *ἐπίσκοπος*, *πρεσβύτερος*) were the primary concepts, the latter reflecting antecedents in Judaism.

The Greek words *διακονία*, *διακονέω*, *διάκονος*, as a family form the most inclusive concept for Christian workers in the New Testament. Paul used the *διακον*-word family for the tasks of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:4) and for his special commission as an apostle (2 Corinthians 3:6). Paul’s co-workers are so described (1 Corinthians 3:5; Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 1:7; 4:17), both male and female (Romans 16:1). In the Gospels the same family of words is used for Jesus and his mission (Mark 10:45) and for the work of the disciples (Matthew 20:26). In Hebrews and Acts it is used for the church’s concern for human needs (Acts 6:2; Hebrews 6:10). And in a key passage, various gifts are given to the church specifically “for the work of ministry” (*εἰς ἔργον διακονίας*, Ephesians 4:12). “The pervasiveness of this term . . . to identify the work of the whole church and its special servants suggests that ‘ministry’ was not a term employed only in Pauline, Petrine, or Johannine circles. There was a shared vision that the task of the church and its leaders was *διακονεῖν*.”⁹

Precise definition of *διακονία* in the New Testament is significant, for the concept is rare in the Septuagint. It is popular to translate *διακονία* as “service,” perhaps because it seems to be used at times for “waiting on tables” (Luke 10:40; 17:8; John 12:2; Acts 6:2; and perhaps Mark 1:13). So Herman Beyer gives two primary meanings to *διακονία*: “waiting at table” or “any discharge of service in genuine love,”¹⁰ a sort of Christian philanthropy. Sadly, such an understanding has become the basis for a redefining of the primary work of the church as (social) service to the world:

The Church manifests the Lordship of Christ over the world also by its humble service (*diakonia*) to the world. The Church’s service is the making real in human life of Christ’s own love for the world for the salvation of which he died, and thus it effects the restoration of man’s true humanity as it was intended by God in creation.¹¹

John Collins, in a significant though technical and verbose

work, re-examines pagan, Jewish, and Christian sources for their use of *διακονία*, *διακονέω*, and *διάκονος*.¹² His extensive word studies suggest that the word family carries more the connotation of “messenger,” “courier,” “mouth-piece,” “agent,” “emissary,” or “administrator.”¹³ A *διάκονος* is an authorized representative of another who bears a certain authority and dignity.

Collins provides a helpful corrective to those who would suggest that ministry (in a broad or narrow sense¹⁴) consists essentially of humble and human service to others. But the pendulum may also be swung too far in the other direction so as to suggest that *διακονία* points primarily to an ordered ministry of the word that is the exclusive realm of the clergy. There is ministry, even commissioned ministry, beyond “the ministry” and it does entail humble service. One cannot escape the parallelism of Matthew 20:26-27 so easily.¹⁵

Διακονία, *διακονέω*, and *διάκονος* form the most all-embracing Biblical concept for “ministry.” One who so ministers does so as a representative of another (ultimately Jesus), carrying out a specific commission with an attitude of service.

Among those who led and served in the Christian community, there were those designated as leaders whose special task was to supervise or oversee the community. The twelve chosen by Jesus were to judge the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:28-30). They were given a missionary task to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 10:5-6)¹⁶ and after the resurrection of Jesus to all nations (Matthew 28:16-20). Specific supervisory authority is granted in Matthew 18:18. In Acts, the Apostles exercised “a type of collective influence in meetings that decided church policy” (Acts 6:2; 15:6).¹⁷ The twelve even viewed their position in “episcopal” terms.¹⁸ Still there is no New Testament evidence that the twelve ever headed local churches. Raymond Brown concludes:

... there is the image of a collective policy-making authority of the Twelve in the NT; and in the case of Peter, the best known of the Twelve, the memory of pastoral responsibility. Otherwise the NT is remarkably vague about the kind of supervision exercised by the members of the Twelve.¹⁹

Another church leader who bore the title of “apostle” is Paul. For Paul, his apostleship consisted in a responsibility to proclaim the Gospel (1 Corinthians 15:3-11; 2 Timothy 1:11); but as his letters demonstrate, he also viewed his position as one of supervising the lives, teachings, and ethics of the members of the churches to which he wrote. Supervision is a key ministry in the church from New Testament times.

Moreover, the apostles placed others in offices of oversight

and commissioned them to do the same (Acts 1:23-26; 6:1-6; 14:23; 1 Timothy 5:22; 2 Timothy 2:2; Titus 1:5). The key terms here are *πρεσβύτερος* and *ἐπίσκοπος* (to which one might also add the early *προϊστάμενοι* of 1 Thessalonians 5:12). As William Arndt has demonstrated, the uses of such terms are early and widespread.²⁰ Certainly, there was fluidity in the manner and exercise of supervision in the first century. More uniform structures developed later in the century.²¹ Yet the continuation of that supervisory role/office from the time of Jesus and the apostles onward serves as a legitimate basis for surmising a divine mandate for the pastoral office.²²

As to the terminology for ministry in the New Testament, the Biblical writers for the most part avoid priestly language as well as the language for Hellenistic religious service. If one term is sought to describe ministry, it is *διακονία*. If one office is mandated for ministry, it is (pastoral) oversight. Yet the roles and titles for those who are leaders and workers in the New Testament are many.²³ More must be said about ministry, and it can be gleaned from the example of Jesus and the writings of Paul.

The Ministry of Jesus

The words and works of Jesus are paradigmatic for any modern discussion of ministry. “The Christian ministry would be misguided if it were to lose its roots in the character of that one life.”²⁴ Jesus went about proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease (Matthew 4:23) and gave authority to his disciples to do the same (Matthew 10:7-8). The tasks connected with his ministry—preaching, teaching, and healing—were part of his proclamation of the kingdom, as was his controversial call to repentance (Mark 1:14-15). That he ministered especially among the lost, the tax collectors, and sinners (Luke 15:1-2; 19:10) was part of that invitation to repentance.

In speaking to his disciples about their place in the kingdom (dare we say as ministers of sorts?), Jesus spoke specifically of his ministry. Following Jesus’ third passion prediction, the mother of the sons of Zebedee sought a special place for her offspring, and knowledge of that request led to a dispute among the disciples (Matthew 20:20-24). Jesus responded: “Whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant (*διάκονος*), and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave (*δούλος*); just as the Son of Man came not to be served (*διακοινηθῆναι*) but to serve (*διακοινησαι*) and to give (*δοῦναι*) his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:26b-28). Here Jesus draws together three concepts: the status of a slave (*δούλος*), the activity of commissioned work (*διακοινησαι*), and his ultimate soteriological purpose.

These are descriptive of himself (cf. Luke 22:27) and prototypical for the ministry of his disciples.

The connection of ministry and soteriology, witnessed by Jesus, is recognized by Paul: “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation (*τὴν διακονίαν τῆς καταλλαγῆς*) So we are ambassadors (*πρεσβεύομεν*) for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us” (1 Corinthians 5:18, 20). Those who follow Jesus and minister in his name participate in his salvific work. He accomplished it; they proclaim it. He embodied it; they represent it. It is a ministry of the Spirit and of righteousness (2 Corinthians 3:8-9). And in at least one sense, it involves all Christians (1 Corinthians 12:1).

Jesus is the paradigm for ministry—in terms of its tasks (preaching, teaching, healing), its status (one of commissioned service), and its purpose (salvation). Ministry which departs from parameters of Jesus is not his ministry.

Pauline Materials

By virtue of their significant place in the New Testament, the writings of Paul are important for any discussion of ministry. Paul says much on ministry, but we shall concentrate on two principal characteristics of Christian ministry in his writings: ministry as a gift of the Spirit and the diversity of ministry. On the basis of these categories, we shall explore what Paul has to say about those who lead and work in the Christian community.

For Paul, ministry is first of all a gift, a charism, a product of the Holy Spirit. Here Paul shares a common perspective with Johannine materials where the Spirit is the one who represents Jesus after his resurrection (John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26-27; 16:7-14). Likewise, Luke gives credit for the growth of the church to the Spirit (Acts 1:8; 2:4, 33; 4:8, 31; 5:32; 7:51; 9:31; 10:44-45; 13:2, 52; 15:8, 28; 16:6; 20:28).

Paul has a keen sense that he was called by God to a special position with a special function (1 Corinthians 1:1; Romans 1:1). His apostolate is not of human origin but due strictly to the grace of God (Galatians 1:11-2:21; cf. Romans 1:5; 1 Corinthians 3:10). To the Corinthian pneumatics he claims, with a touch of sarcasm, to possess the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 7:40) and later states that his work is certified by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Corinthians 3:17). His ministry as an apostle is by the grace and call of the Lord and is

affirmed by the Holy Spirit.

However, when Paul speaks of the charismatic nature of his ministry,

... he can never be found making a claim to the Spirit that is higher, greater, or superior than that which any member of the Church could claim. It is characteristic of his thought that he stresses the one Spirit at work in the whole church, in the entire body of Christ with all its members as they function in a plurality of ministries, all of which have the same essential function to perform.²⁵

To Paul, the apostolate is but one of many ministerial gifts given to the church (1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11).

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul credits to the Spirit (almost redundantly) everything that happens in the church, from the confession of Christ (v. 3), to various ministries and

works (vv. 5-6), to speaking in tongues (vv. 4-10). What the Spirit gives is for the common good (v. 7), sovereignly distributed (v. 11), and is bestowed on each member of the community (v. 11). Likewise, when Paul writes to the Romans about the church as one body, he speaks of “grace” and “gift” when describing the individual functions of members of the body (Romans 12:6-8). Ministry, therefore, is not simply the product of one’s own effort, nor can it derive solely from institutional action. It is from above and it is for the building up of the body of Christ. If one is to speak of the work of ministry (*ἔργον διακονίας*), one must from Paul’s perspective speak

the language of grace and gift (Ephesians 4:11-12).

Secondly, if one is to speak of ministry as a gift of the Spirit, from Paul’s perspective one must reckon with the diverse nature of the gifts, as well as their plurality. The lists of divine gifts in 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and Ephesians 4 are pluriform. Paul is specific: there is a variety of gifts (*διαρέσεις χαρισμάτων*), a variety of ministries (*διαρέσεις διακονιῶν*), and a variety of works (*διαρέσεις ἐνεργημάτων*, 1 Corinthians 12:4-6). To claim that there is only one ministry and that the ordained ministry is that ministry is contrary to the clear words of Paul.²⁶

The ministry is diverse as the gifts of the Spirit are diverse, both in status and in kind. There are verbal and non-verbal gifts.²⁷ Certain gifts are accorded a priority (1 Corinthians 12:28). “Most are directed toward the congregation, but

“... ministry is first of all a gift, a charism, a product of the Holy Spirit.”

evangelistic gifts, which may include apostleship and miracles and healings, are directed toward the world.²⁸ Some gifts may even be “ordered” (1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6).

When speaking of the diversity of gifts, it is legitimate to ask, to whom are such gifts given? Clearly the giving of gifts is within the church, to members of the body of Christ. To the Romans, Paul speaks corporately of gifts that differ “according to the grace given to us” (12:6). To the Corinthians, Paul notes that gifts are given “to each” (1 Corinthians 12:11). It would seem on the basis of these two texts that everyone is gifted and that in at least this sense everyone is a minister. But the diverse gifts of the Spirit noted in these two letters include by Paul’s own description (1 Corinthians 12:4-6) both ministries (*διακονίαν*) and works (*ἐνεργημάτων*). Of great interest, then, is Ephesians 4:11-13, where Paul lists only gifts of inspired speech, gifts most often associated with “the ministry.”

Crucial for the interpreting of the Ephesians passage are the three prepositional phrases in 4:12: “for (*πρός*) the equipment of the saints,” “for (*εἰς*) the work of ministry (*διακονίας*),” “for (*εἰς*) the building up of the body of Christ.” While there are a number of proposed interpretations,²⁹ the debate is whether the phrases are co-ordinate, placing all three tasks under the purview of those gifted to speak; or whether the second phrase is subordinated to the first, in which case the work of ministry (*ἔργον διακονίας*) is the task of the saints who have been equipped by those gifted to speak. The latter interpretation is the *locus classicus* for those who argue that everyone is a minister and that the pastor’s primary task is to equip the saints.³⁰

Grammatically, the evidence is inconclusive. While the use of different prepositions (*πρός*, *εἰς*, *εἰς*) seems contrary to the co-ordinate interpretation,³¹ A. T. Robertson thinks there is hardly a distinction.³² Henry Hamann, on the basis of a lexical study, concludes “that there is no case of the noun *καταρτισμός* being used in the way that the popular translations use it”³³ (subordinating the second prepositional phrase—“equipping the saints for the work of ministry”). Likewise, when the verb *καταρτίζω* occurs along with a prepositional phrase beginning with *εἰς* as in Romans 9:22, Hamann reasons that the prepositional phrase is always adverbial and never adds to the basic idea of the verb.³⁴ Therefore, in his view only the co-ordinate interpretation is possible. The equipping of the saints, the work of ministry, and the building up of the body of Christ would then be the responsibility of the gifted ones alone.

Again, the evidence is not so conclusive. We have found another example of *καταρτισμός* delimited by a prepositional phrase beginning with *εἰς*.³⁵ In the writings of Clement of Alexandria, the verb occurs with a double

accusative, which the editor clarifies by adding an *εἰς*.³⁶ In a letter from Gregory of Nazianzus to Gregory of Nyssa, we read, “He equipped you for every good work,”³⁷ an interesting variation on Hebrews 13:21 (*εἰς* plus the accusative for *ἐν* plus the dative).³⁸ In Gregory’s letter, the prepositional phrase is more than adverbial; it completes the idea of the verb. Thus, it is possible to subordinate the second prepositional phrase to the first, so that the gifted ones build up the body by equipping the saints for the work of ministry.

What can be said with confidence is that there is a certain ambiguity to Ephesians 4:12, and perhaps that very ambiguity is the key. One could take the first *εἰς* as subordinate to *πρός* and the second *εἰς* as dependent on both. Then those gifted with inspired speech are instituted by Christ to equip individual believers to exercise their gifts (Ephesians 4:7, 16!) to the end that by means of both (the special ministry of the Word and the common service of believers) the body of Christ may be built up.³⁹ In other words, everyone has a role to play in the work of the church which is rooted in the gifts of the Spirit. But not everyone has the special gift of the ministry of the Word instituted by Christ.

To Paul, ministry is a gift of the Spirit, and the Spirit gives gifts for diverse ministries. All members of the body are given gifts by that Spirit to accomplish the ministry of the church, but diversity and ranking point to different members of the body doing different works and ministries.

Sorting Out the Fuss

Much of the fuss about ministry strikes this writer as an attempt on the part of oft-times embattled pastors to maintain their status and authority or an attempt on the part of other church workers to gain status and recognition. If we who minister are interested in status and authority and recognition, then we do not know the first thing about ministry. “It ought not be so among you” (Matthew 20:26). The servant model is the New Testament model.

Those who have a formal, ordered ministry are not just servants, however. Ministry from a New Testament perspective is commissioned work (*διακονία*). We who minister represent someone. We have been placed in our positions by the Lord of the church through the working and gift of his Spirit. A college or seminary diploma does not alone make a minister; the grace of God does. Any work of ministry must harken back to its divine source. In one sense, the highest office in the church is that of Christ himself and from His office through the working of the Spirit all other ministries derive.

Within the church of Christ there is a diversity of ministries. Some ministries are “of the Word” and these are of ultimate importance (1 Corinthians 12); others may be

better described as works (less formal and ordered, 1 Corinthians 12:6); but all serve one purpose—the building up of the body. There is, however, one mandated ministry, namely, the ministry of oversight (the pastoral office) which continues the apostolic work. It is public, and it is essential. While one may in a narrow sense call this office “the ministry,” New Testament usage suggests that the pastoral office is only one of many ministries. God calls pastors, but God also calls others to do works of ministry on his behalf.

Perhaps this final point offers some clarity in the debate about who is a minister. Those who make the simplistic claim that “everyone is a minister” are not dealing honestly with the diversity of ministry and its gifted nature. Gift and call coalesce in the New Testament (1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6). By Baptism, God calls people into the community of the faithful, but Baptism is not a call to a specific task or work of ministry. Likewise, those who make the simplistic claim that “members of congregations are not ministers” have confused the pastoral office with what the New Testament calls ministry and thereby limit the gift and grace and call of God. The whole church possesses the Spirit and the gifts of grace.

Perhaps all this fuss about the ministry is just that—fuss—so much noise that distracts us from our commissioned task of building up the body. All of us who do works of ministry would do well to adopt the attitude of Paul: “What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Ministers through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth” (1 Corinthians 3:5-7).

Notes

- ¹Armand J. Boehme, “What’s ‘THE’ Fuss All About?” *The Bride of Christ* 13.1 (1988): 5-17.
- ²*The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature*, a Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (September 1981). Division for Ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, *The Study of Ministry: Report to the 1991 Churchwide Assembly* (Chicago: ELCA, 1991). World Council of Churches, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (Geneva: WCC, 1982).
- ³Bernard Cooke, *Ministry to Word and Sacraments* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 63-64.
- ⁴E. Earle Ellis, *Pauline Theology: Ministry and Society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 1-2.
- ⁵Matthew 3:17; 17:5 and parallels. For more on the *bat qol* and its place in verifying new teaching among the rabbis, see A. Guttman, “The



Significance of Miracles for Talmudic Judaism,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 20 (1947): 363-406.

- ⁶B. E. Thiering, “*Mebagger and Episkopos*,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 100 (1981): 59-74.
- ⁷We summarize here from R. Eduard Schweizer, “Ministry in the Early Church” in David Noel Freedman, ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, volume 4 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 835-836.
- ⁸*Ibid.*
- ⁹James W. Thompson, “Ministry in the New Testament,” *Restoration Quarterly* 27 (1984): 144-145.
- ¹⁰Herman Bayer, “*Διακονέω—Διακονία*” in Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 2, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 87.
- ¹¹*The Ecumenical Review* 11 (1958-1959): 443.
- ¹²John N. Collins, *Diakonia: Re-interpreting the Ancient Sources* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).
- ¹³*Ibid.*, 335.
- ¹⁴CTCR, *Ministry*, II.
- ¹⁵There *διάκονος* is a clear parallel to *δοῦλος*. Collins strongly downplays servant overtones in the *διακονία* family of words (150-168), admitting perhaps some such activity but no such a status to be implicit in the verb (151). Where Collins has been helpful is to identify the *διάκονος* as an authorized representative carrying out a

commissioned task which often bears a message. However, his attempts to preclude “service” overtones are strained and, by his own admission, employ a different methodology (150). When Collins then buttresses his argument by citing the “small number of these instances of the verb” (151), we must object. Collins cites some 500 instances of *διακονι*-word group in non-biblical sources as the basis for his study. Our search of the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae CD-ROM (C) found 3069 instances. Obviously, there is a significant body of material yet to be examined.

¹⁶Matthew 10:2 and 5 are the first occurrences of “apostolic” vocabulary in the Gospel.

¹⁷Raymond Brown, “*Episkope and Episkopos*: The New Testament Evidence,” *Theological Studies* 41 (1980): 325.

¹⁸τὴν ἐπισκοπὴν αὐτοῦ λαβέτω ἕτερος (Acts 1:20 quoting Psalm 109:8).

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰Cited from Elmer J. Moeller, “Concerning the Ministry of the Church,” *Concordia Theological Monthly* 22 (1951): 395-396.

²¹Most theologians point to the Pastorals as indicating a later development of institutional church life. Part of such theorizing is that the letters are Pseudo-Pauline. In contrast, we operate from the perspective that the Pastorals are Pauline. Further, we are not surprised that the church seems more structured in them, for they recount a time when leadership is being passed from one generation to the next.

²²The mandate for the pastoral/supervisory office is an inferred mandate based on the example of Jesus in calling and commissioning the twelve and on the relatively uniform practice of the early church in appointing supervisory leaders. In honesty, it must be said, however, that this mandate is not of the same kind as Jesus’ direct mandates in Matthew 28:16-20 or Luke 22:19 (1 Corinthians 11:25). Those who would elevate the pastoral office and/or ordination to sacerdotal levels do so without sound exegetical support.

²³E. Earle Ellis, “Paul and His Co-Workers,” *New Testament Studies* 17 (1971):437.

²⁴Thompson, 146.

²⁵V. C. Pfitzner, “Office and Charism in Paul and Luke,” *Colloquium* 13.2 (1981):29.

²⁶“Variety of ministries” becomes especially significant in Missouri Synod discussions of the “teaching ministry.” Is the “teaching ministry” a ministry of itself or merely an auxiliary ministry? Is there one ministry or many? (CTCR, *Ministry*, 16-19).

Jesus’ paradigm for ministry involved teaching (Matthew 4:23). He commissioned his disciples to do the same (Matthew 28:20). Teaching was one of the tasks for which Christ gave gifts (Ephesians 4:11; here exercised by those who also were in the position of exercising oversight); it was done privately (Acts 18:26) and in homes (2 Timothy 1:5). Teaching was a function and task of church leadership (1 Timothy 3:2). Where it gets more difficult is to determine whether, in NT times, there were those who exercised a teaching office separate from the office of oversight, or whether the task of teaching was at all ordered as an office. The evidence is, in our view, inconclusive.

Moreover the question itself is problematic. Today’s highly structured institutional church is far different from the non-structured and quite charismatic church of the NT. To try to project current situations and structures back into the NT is precarious at best, just as it is dangerous to make NT descriptions (often clearer in

the mind of the interpreter than in the text) prescriptive for today; for the church in each age has Christ as its head and the Spirit as its guide.

What can be said is that teaching is a critical part of ministry in the NT. Those who teach are in ministry, doing work that Jesus did and commands to be done. And within the NT a variety of individuals exercised the gift of teaching (Romans 12:7; 1 Corinthians 12:28) in a variety of ways and contexts. Whether teaching is “office” or “function” or “auxiliary” is unclear and ultimately unimportant (see comments later about “sorting out the fuss”).

²⁷For the non-verbal, consider generous giving and cheerful compassion in Romans 12:8 or forms of assistance (social ministry?) in 1 Corinthians 12:28.

²⁸Ellis, *Pauline Theology*, 49.

²⁹Ronald Y. K. Fung, “The Nature of the Ministry According to Paul,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 54 (1982):139-141.

³⁰Even the CTCR seems to allow this interpretation (*Ministry*, 11).

³¹Compare Ephesians 4:13 where three co-ordinate prepositional phrases are all introduced by *εἰς*.

³²A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934), 624. When John Chrysostom quotes the passage, he at times uses an *εἰς* for the *πρός* (MPG 50.534.17) and at other times leaves out one of the prepositional phrases (*ibid.* and MPG 61.69.18).

³³Henry P. Hamann, “The Translation of Ephesians 4:12—A Necessary Revision,” *Concordia Journal* 14.2 (1988):43.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 44.

³⁵*Hippiatrica Berolinesia* 95.2.1 in E. Oder and K. Hoppe, eds., *Corpus Hippiatricorum Graecorum*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Tuebner, 1924).

³⁶*Pedagogus* 1.11.97.

³⁷*Ad Gregorium Nyssenum*, MPG 35.841.12. See also Marcarius, *Epistula Magna* 3.8.

³⁸Interestingly, Hamann does not deal with Hebrews 13:21 where *καταρτίζω* is followed by *εἰς* in a purpose clause.

³⁹Fung, 141.

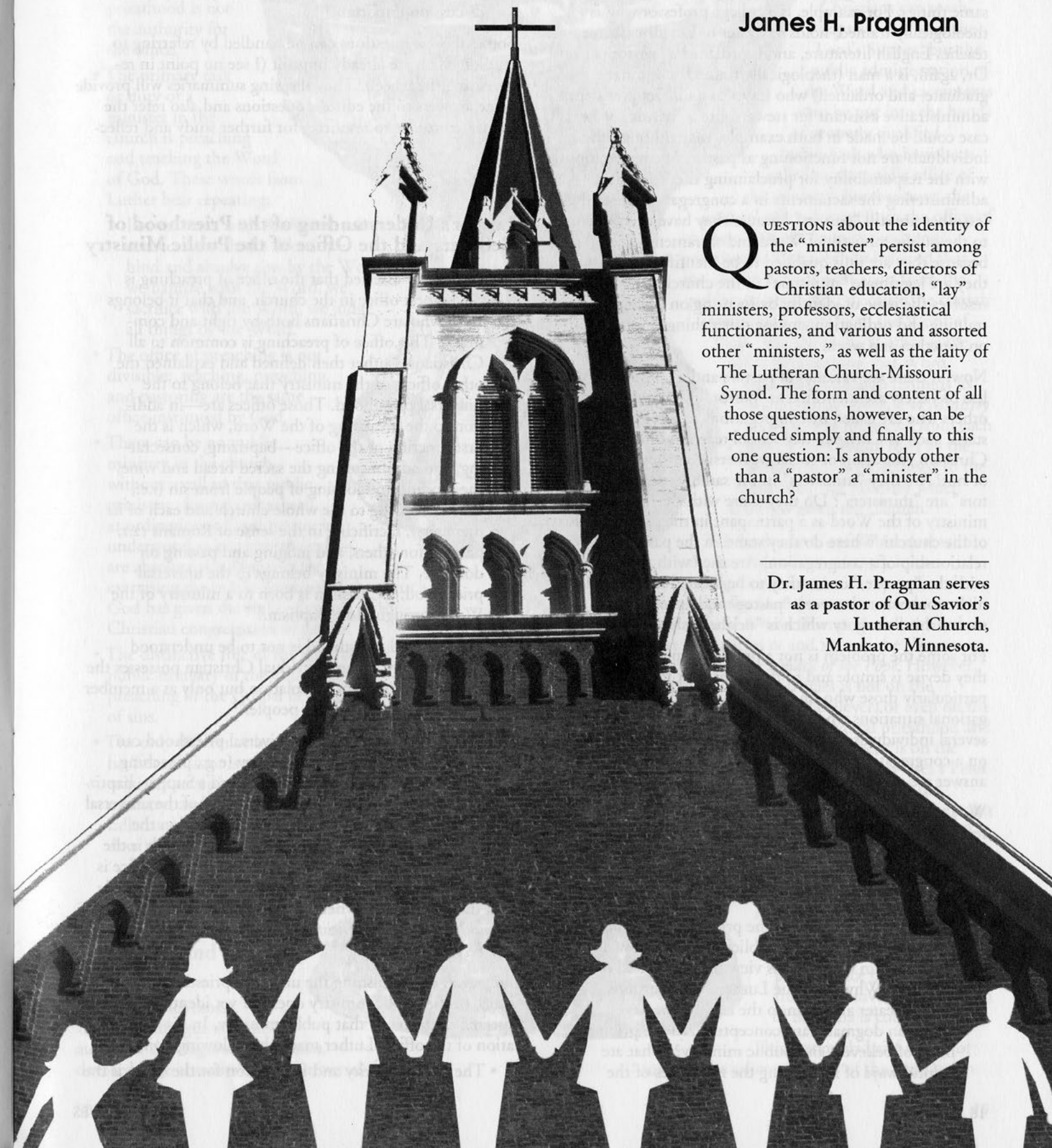


Ministry: The Views of a Lutheran Pastor

James H. Pragman

QUESTIONS about the identity of the “minister” persist among pastors, teachers, directors of Christian education, “lay” ministers, professors, ecclesiastical functionaries, and various and assorted other “ministers,” as well as the laity of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. The form and content of all those questions, however, can be reduced simply and finally to this one question: Is anybody other than a “pastor” a “minister” in the church?

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If we assume that, of course, a "pastor" is a "minister," we have to acknowledge nevertheless that not all pastors do the same things. For example, is a college professor who is theologically trained, holds a Master of Divinity degree, teaches English literature, and is ordained a "pastor" or not? Or, again, is a man (theologically trained, a seminary graduate, and ordained) who serves as a district president's administrative assistant for stewardship a "pastor" or not? A case could be made in both examples that although these individuals are not functioning as pastors of congregations with the responsibility for proclaiming the Word and administering the sacraments in a congregation, nevertheless, they are still "pastors" because they have been ordained to the public ministry of Word and sacrament. And because they are thus qualified to be identified as "pastors," they are legitimate "ministers" in the church. This rationale resolves the issue of identity by focusing on preparation and training and ordination, among other things, rather than on function and work.

Now, if there are varieties of pastors and all pastors regardless of variety are identified as "pastor," what about the others who are called by congregations to serve on their staffs, such as Christian day school teachers or directors of Christian education or social workers? Are they "ministers" or not? Are they "ministers" in the same sense that "pastors" are "ministers"? Do they share with the "pastor" in a ministry of the Word as a participant in the public ministry of the church? Where do they stand in the pastor/people relationship of a congregation? Are they with the "pastor," with the "people," or are they to be located in a special niche somewhere between "pastor" and "people" (i.e., some sort of third category which is "neither fish nor fowl")?

For some the problem is not a problem, and the answer they devise is simple and to the point. But for others, particularly those who find themselves involved in congregational situations where "ministry" is carried forward by several individuals with different titles and job descriptions on a congregation's professional staff, the question and the answer are more complex.

We Lutherans love to handle questions of this sort by referring to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. And that is precisely what the editor of this journal asked me to do. At the risk of revealing "in-house" thinking, these are the questions the editor asked me to handle:

What is Luther's view of the priesthood of believers and the office of the public ministry? How do the Lutheran Confessions view the priesthood of believers? Why don't the Lutheran Confessions direct greater attention to the laity? How have Lutheran dogmatists conceptualized the priesthood of believers and public ministry? What are helpful ways of identifying the ministries of the

called workers of the church, such as pastors, teachers, and DCEs, as well as the laity? Why is this discussion important?

Some of these questions can be handled by referring to studies which are already in print (I see no point in re-inventing the wheel). The following summaries will provide some answers to the editor's questions and also refer the interested reader to resources for further study and reflection.

Luther's Understanding of the Priesthood of Believers and the Office of the Public Ministry

... Luther asserted that the office of preaching is the highest office in the church, and that it belongs to all who are Christians both by right and command. This office of preaching is common to all Christians. Luther then defined and explained the other offices of the ministry that belong to the universal priesthood. Those offices are—in addition to the preaching of the Word, which is the first function of the office—baptizing, consecrating, and administering the sacred bread and wine, the binding and loosing of people from sin (i.e., the keys belong to the whole church and each of its members), sacrificing in the sense of Romans 12:1, praying for others, and judging and passing on doctrine. The ministry belongs to the universal priesthood; a Christian is born to a ministry of the Word through Holy Baptism.¹

But the universal priesthood is not to be understood individualistically: "The individual Christian possesses the universal priesthood not in isolation but only as a member of the congregation of God's people."²

The fact that members of the universal priesthood can perform various functions of ministry (e.g., preaching, consecrating bread and wine for the Lord's Supper, baptizing, etc.) does not mean that the members of the universal priesthood are "pastors" or public "ministers" in the church: "While the public ministry of the church is the business of the universal priesthood, the pastoral office is not the business of each individual priest."³ Luther made that distinction clear when he wrote: "A priest is not identical with *Presbyter* or *Minister*—for one is born to be priest, one becomes a minister."⁴

However, distinguishing the universal priesthood from the office of the public ministry does not yet identify the specific character of that public ministry. In his consideration of the office, Luther made the following points:⁵

- The only authority and foundation for the office is the

Word of God. The universal priesthood is not the authority for the office.

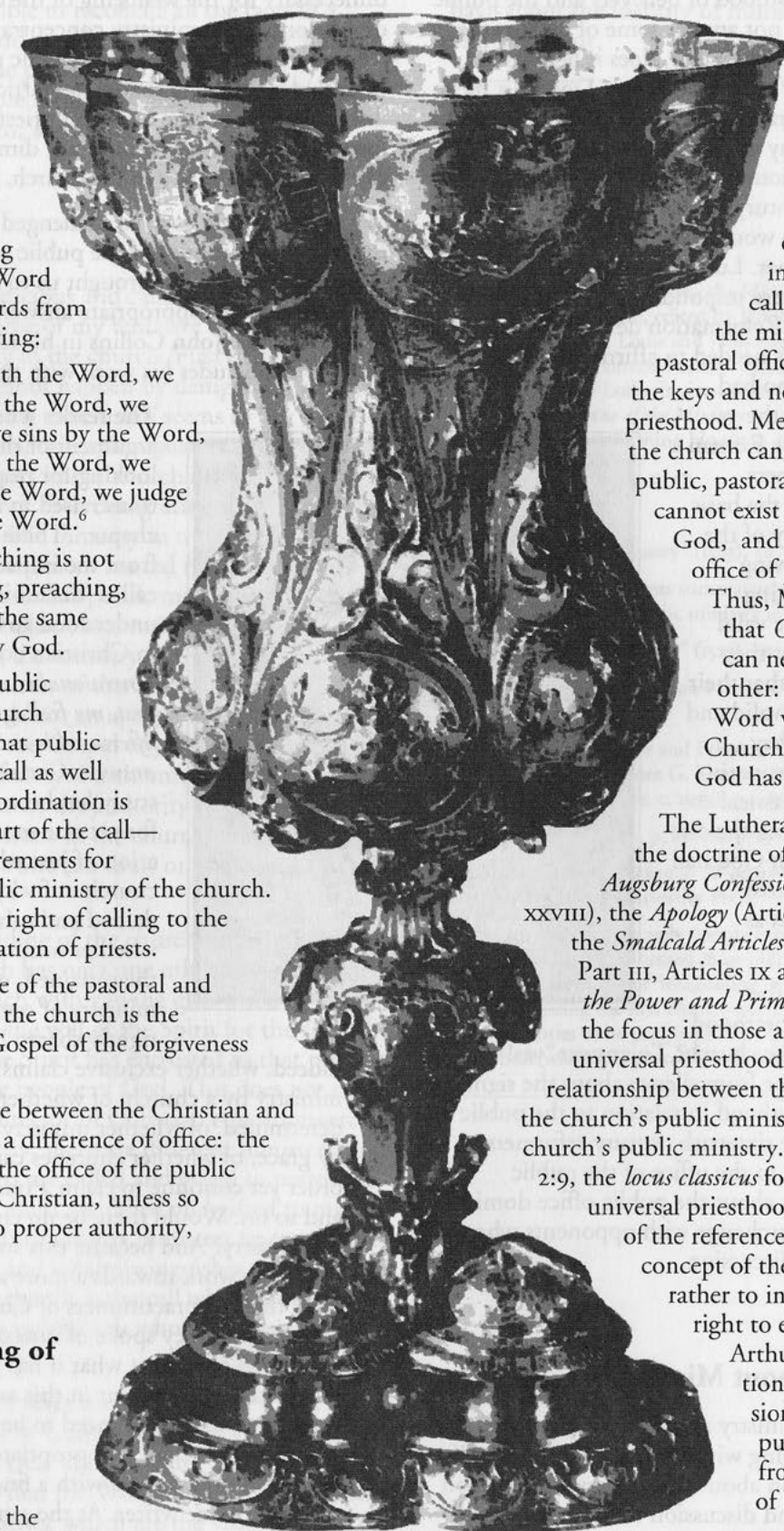
- The primary task or duty of a minister in the church is preaching and teaching the Word of God. These words from Luther bear repeating:

For we teach with the Word, we consecrate with the Word, we bind and absolve sins by the Word, we baptize with the Word, we sacrifice with the Word, we judge all things by the Word.⁶

- The office of preaching is not divisible: teaching, preaching, and pastoring are the same office instituted by God.
- There can be no public ministry in the church without a call to that public ministry: formal call as well as ordination—if ordination is understood as a part of the call—are absolute requirements for exercising the public ministry of the church. God has given the right of calling to the Christian congregation of priests.
- The distinctive role of the pastoral and public ministry of the church is the preaching of the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins.
- The only difference between the Christian and his/her minister is a difference of office: the minister occupies the office of the public ministry, and the Christian, unless so called according to proper authority, does not.

The Understanding of the Lutheran Confessions and Confessions

Philip Melancthon, Luther's colleague and the author of the *Augsburg Confession*, devoted little attention to the universal priesthood



of believers. He acknowledged that all Christians can teach, baptize, and bless the Lord's Supper, but the public administration of the Word and sacraments is to be put into the hands of properly qualified individuals who have been called to the public office of the ministry. Furthermore, the pastoral office derives from the office of the keys and not from the universal priesthood. Melancthon believed that the church cannot exist apart from the public, pastoral office because the church cannot exist apart from the Word of God, and the pastoral office is the office of preaching that Word. Thus, Melancthon reminds us that *Church, Word, and Ministry* can never be separated from each other: the Church lives by the Word which is proclaimed to the Church by the Ministry which God has given the Church.⁷

The Lutheran Confessions deal with the doctrine of the ministry in the *Augsburg Confession* (Articles v, xiv, and xxviii), the *Apology* (Articles xiii, xiv, and xxviii), the *Smalcald Articles* (Part II, Article IV, and Part III, Articles IX and X), and the *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope*. However, the focus in those articles is not on the universal priesthood of believers or even on the relationship between the universal priesthood and the church's public ministry; the focus is on the church's public ministry. Melancthon cites 1 Peter 2:9, the *locus classicus* for the doctrine of the universal priesthood, only once, and the point of the reference is not to underscore the concept of the universal priesthood but rather to insist on the congregation's right to elect and ordain ministers.⁸ Arthur Carl Piepkorn's observation that the Lutheran Confessions nowhere derive the public office of the ministry from the universal priesthood of believers is correct.⁹

This extremely brief review of some of the salient features of the connection

between the universal priesthood of believers and the public office of the ministry does not answer some of our (or the editor's) questions. Nor, in particular, does it help us identify who is a "minister" and who is not. Does this mean that Luther and the Lutheran Confessions are not as helpful as we want them to be? Any attempt to understand Luther and the Lutheran Confessions without a knowledge of the history of the sixteenth century Lutheran Reformation is much like a carpenter who would attempt to build a house without the use of a hammer. Luther, Philip Melancthon, and the other confessors were responding to the needs of their age. As the Lutheran Reformation developed, the reformers realized that they needed to affirm the legitimacy of the ministry of those who had separated themselves from the episcopal supervision of the Roman church. That is, the reformers needed to demonstrate on the basis of Scripture and the history of the church that the pastors serving congregations of the emerging evangelical movement were valid ministers of the Word, that they were not schismatics, and that their calls and ordinations were valid and legitimate. Furthermore, they insisted that their pastors, superintendents, and other ecclesiastical office holders were exercising the one office of the ministry which God had given His church when Christ commissioned His disciples as witnesses to Him.

Does all of this mean that the concept of the universal priesthood is irrelevant to the life of the church? To answer "yes!" at this point would be to argue from silence about the significance of the universal priesthood in relation to the public ministry of the Word. The sixteenth century reformers directed primary attention to the office of the public ministry because questions about the public office dominated their theological interchange with opponents when ministry was the topic of discussion.

Today's Questions About Ministry

Today, questions about ministry are different. And the questions have been changing within the contemporary life of the church. The question about the universal priesthood is not the focus of study and discussion today—unless the affirmation of the universal priesthood is interpreted to mean that the office of the public ministry is irrelevant or

unnecessary for the wellbeing of the church. Today, discussions about ministry concentrate more narrowly on who or what the office of the public ministry includes and/or excludes. I believe that most participants in these discussions affirm the universal priesthood of believers, as long as that affirmation does not diminish the unique office of the public ministry in the church.

While recent studies have challenged the church to rethink the role and authority of the public ministry in the church, those studies have not brought us to the point where we can respond with appropriate answers to all the questions we have. Thus, John Collins in his recent excellent study of *διακονία* concludes his work with this "Afterword":

The reader who has followed the argument of this book will be looking for responses to questions raised in the opening chapter. These questions arose from the impact of a notion called 'diakonia' on what is understood to constitute ministry in Christian communities.

Unreasonable as it may appear at first, my feeling is that this afterword is not the place for answers. Certainly one aim of the study has been to clear the decks for yet one more close consideration of just who does what in a church: of why some are ordained and others are not, of whether ministry pertains only to the ordained, of whether the ministry of one communion is rightly shared by another—

indeed, whether exclusive claims can be laid upon ministry by a church, of whether ministry is sex-determined, of whether ministry is authenticated by grace, of whether churches can modify their order yet continue to claim a tradition of ministry, and so on. Would there be no end to an afterword on ministry? And because this study has aimed mainly to work towards a more accurate view of what the first practitioners of Christian ministry meant when they spoke of *διακονία*, and has attempted to correct what it has presented as misconceptions current in this area for the last fifty years, its implications need to be worked through in more detail than is appropriate at the end of an already long book and with a finesse beyond the capacity of one writer. At the same time, when one reads a recent writer's discouraging view that in regard to first Christian perceptions of ministry it

is 'almost impossible to reconcile all the facts in a single coherent and convincing account', one must hope that with the perceptions of *διακονία* proffered in the preceding chapters we might edge closer to a coherent account.¹⁰

Conclusions

In spite of Collins' judicious and cautionary "Afterword," I will share with you some of my tentative conclusions about ministers and ministry in the church. First of all, enhancement of a ministry cannot happen by denigrating another ministry. Of course, that conclusion seems to beg a question: Are office holders, other than pastors, really occupants of and participants in the church's public ministry? If they are not "ministers," then denigrating them has no implication for the public ministry in the church. But my reading of the New Testament has led me to believe that the one office of the church's public ministry consists of more than one office holder, i.e., various ministers in the New Testament share the ministry of the Word. Thus, for example, Paul is a minister of the Gospel as an apostle, but the fact that Timothy is not an apostle does not mean that his work on behalf of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not the work of the public ministry. Furthermore, I believe that God has given the church the authority to create additional ministries and/or ministers in the church: that seems to be one of the conclusions one can draw on the basis of Acts 6:1-6.¹¹

Within the understanding of the church's one ministry—I believe that the church has only one ministry—there are a variety of ministers each with varying gifts fitted to the minister according to the will of the Spirit for the sake of the ministry which the Spirit has entrusted to that minister through the call of the people of God. This does not mean that pastor=teacher=director of Christian education=etc. Within the one ministry, there are different ministers, and some of those ministers are called and gifted to pastor the people of God while others are called and gifted to minister in other ways. What distinguishes ministers from people in the church is the call, and what distinguishes ministers from ministers in the church is the call which God extends through the church to individuals whom He separates out for ministry in His name.

This answer—if that is what it is—will satisfy some, and it will dissatisfy others. But God's reasons for giving ministry in His church remain clear and absolute: ministry and ministers are given so that the Word can be preached and taught and the sacraments, which are the visible Word, can be administered for the saving health of the nations. If that focus is obscured or lost, then all the other questions we

have about the identity of ministers are quite secondary and irrelevant.

Notes

¹Martin Luther, "Concerning the Ministry" (1523), *Luther's Works*, American edition, edited by Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann (St. Louis and Philadelphia: Concordia Publishing House and Fortress Press, c. 1955ff.), XL, 21-32. The quotation is the summary of Luther's views in my *Traditions of Ministry: A History of the Doctrine of the Ministry in Lutheran Theology* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c. 1983), p. 16.

²*Traditions of Ministry*, p. 17.

³*Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁴"Concerning the Ministry" (1523), *LW*, XL, 18.

⁵The following statements summarize parts of the analysis of Luther's thought on the public ministry in *Traditions of Ministry*, pp. 20-33.

⁶"Concerning the Ministry" (1523), *LW*, XL, 21.

⁷A summary of Melancthon's views is presented in *Traditions of Ministry*, pp. 35ff.

⁸"Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope," *The Book of Concord*, edited by Theodore G. Tappert et al. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c. 1959), pp. 331-332, 69-70.

⁹*Traditions of Ministry*, p. 47; cf., pp. 189-190, n. 51 and n. 53.

¹⁰John N. Collins, *Diakonia: Re-interpreting the Ancient Sources* (New York: Oxford University Press, c. 1990), p. 253. *Emphasis added.*

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 231: "... the only members of the sacred community who thus far have been instituted in an office, and by the Lord himself, choose to speak of 'ministering' at the moment when they are authorising the first church-made office [in Acts 6:1-6]. Whether the duties to be performed occur at tables where people eat or at those where people receive financial assistance is not said."

book reviews



DIAKONIA by John N. Collins. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

In order to understand ministry, one must examine the origins and development of the concept. In examining the Greek word group normally translated "ministry," "a minister," "to minister" in the New Testament, Collins skillfully rehearses a shift in definition which began in 19th century Germany. Ministry, it was argued, originally expressed the concept "table waiter." The early Church then expanded the term to include any lowly service done to benefit others (traditionally designated "works of charity"). As a result, the term "ministry" is now commonly used to express the duty every Christian or the Church as a whole is to perform in behalf of the poor, the needy, and others.

Collins critiques this definition of New Testament ministry by "re-interpreting the Ancient Sources" (his subtitle). Nearly half of his book analyzes the sense conveyed by the *diakonia* word group in other Greek writers. Aside from an unfortunate "Afterword," admittedly comprised of the author's personal opinions in reaction to his study, this book is thoroughly documented, and its main argument, as follows, seems rock solid.

The root idea of *diakonia* is "a go-between." It describes an action done or an agent/emissary who acts "in the name of another," with a mandate, and with the "rights and powers" that mandate extends. *Diakonia* words often indicate "something special, even dignified, . . . they have wide religious connotations" (p. 194).

In the New Testament, then, the *diakonia* word group does not describe the activities every believer ought to be selflessly doing for others (Law). Ministry, rather, comprises actions done by and in behalf of God which are mediated

through His "go-betweens" and received by the Church from outside itself (Gospel).

Does this mean that only those in what we call "the Office of the Holy Ministry" are doing *diakonia*? The answer given here is clearly "No." The word group, initially used of Jesus and the Apostles, was quickly expanded and applied to those in the "local office" (what we would call "pastor"), as well as others in the church. Examples of the latter include those in the "first church-made office" (Acts 6; pp. 230-1) and those given the actual title *diakonos* ("deacon") for whom "the preaching of the word has no place . . . in the earliest documents" (p. 244; see pp. 235-44). Thus, while Collins properly notes distinctions between offices, those distinctions do not strictly hold in terms of *diakonia*. Both those in the divinely mandated office and those in "church-made" offices (e.g., day school teachers, directors of Christian education, etc.) are engaged in "ministry." That is to say, their *diakonia* is done for the sake of and under the commission of God to benefit His people.

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THE SAINTS AMONG US by George H. Gallup, Jr., and Timothy Jones. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1992.

The Gallup polls have been gathering information about American political public opinion since the mid-1930's. In recent years, the Gallup organi-

zation has sought information concerning the attitudes of Christians and the direction of the Christian Church. This recent book by George H. Gallup, Jr., and Timothy Jones continues that trend.

The Saints Among Us analyzes data gathered over a two-year period that helps identify who the saints are in our midst, and according to Gallup and Jones, they do exist. Over 1,000 persons responded to 12 questions asked by the Gallup organization that touched on topics ranging from seeking God's will through prayer to putting one's faith into action. Respondents that "agreed" or "strongly agreed" to the statement were deemed to be saints. Based on the survey, Gallup and Jones found nearly 13 percent of those who answered could be classified as saints. As a group, the saints seem to be more predominant in nonwhite, female and Southern populations.

In addition, the saints were those that society might not consider when attempting to identify saints. We are reminded that God's ways are foolishness to the wise. While readers may not be impressed with the 12 questions used to determine sainthood, they may find merit in the responses of those asked. It seems evident that those who qualify for sainthood according to the poll are persons who draw little attention to themselves, are eager and indeed look for opportunities to help others. They frequently have had a spiritual encounter of some type that helped clarify their relationship to God. They are folks who believe in the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ.

The book may be helpful for a reflective Bible study. An appendix in the book offers questions "For Further Reflection" that could prove to be challenging for a small group study. The last chapter of the book provides suggestions for "nurturing sainthood in a secular world." *The Saints Among Us* may be useful to church and laity alike not only as a source of information but also as an action plan.

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CULTURE WARS: THE STRUGGLE TO DEFINE AMERICA by James Davison Hunter. New York: BasicBooks, 1991.

I saw two bumper stickers yesterday on a local car. The one on the right read, "Lutheran Schools Care a Lot"; the one on the left side read, "Gun control is a tight grip on my Smith & Wesson." One bumper . . . two stickers . . . two thoughts . . . one consistent cognitive attitude, according to Hunter's paradigm.

Hunter points out that, while conflict among the major religious bodies in the United States has

continued to wane, it has been replaced by an "issues-related" conflict uniting conservatives of all faiths against progressives. Protestants no longer battle Catholics nor do Catholics battle Jews with the intensity that is now reserved for the infighting across religious lines. The social problems of the day have occasioned "strange bedfellows."

Key social problems which have served as pivotal points of collaboration among heretofore disparate religious bodies are family values, prurient rock music, free condoms in public schools, date rape, NEA funding for erotic art, the freedom to burn the American flag, the appropriate drinking age, legalization of marijuana. These issues have pushed traditional national concerns to the side: a burgeoning national deficit, famine in developing countries, the wild fluctuation in the European economy, the aftermath of Desert Storm, trade imbalance. Eight years ago, Rev. Richard John Neuhaus lamented over the "naked public square," fearing that a vacuum of values would be the logical extension of an overly keen interpretation of the separation of church and state. Though the Moral Majority and its cohorts have waned over the decade, the glowing ember was not extinguished. Prominent researchers and authors like Robert Bellah, M. Scott Peck, Garry Wills, Peter Berger, William Bennett and Francis Moore Lappe, to name a few, have since argued that the country needs to regain a moral high ground.

Anyone who has been the least bit aware of contemporary issues can sympathize with the frustrations experienced by the protagonists. In some parts of our country, children walk past pornographic theaters on their way to school, side-stepping discarded liquor bottles and drug needles. They are oblivious to the noise around them because they have their favorite rock station blaring through their Walkman. At school, they pass through metal detectors, learn what the latest is in the argument over beginning with prayer, and then sit in classes with either poorly trained teachers or substitutes. On a good day, neither they nor their teachers will fear for their lives. At the end of the day, they might pass by the nurse's office to pick up some free condoms so that, if they are sexually active, they can avoid unwanted pregnancy or STDs.

Hunter has done a remarkable job of condensing a vast volume of literature into a coherent whole. He has also given us a working paradigm: the conservatives vs. the progressives. However, there are some concerns which must be raised. Can all Americans really be classified in one of two camps? Is there no middle ground on some issues? For example, most people are neither totally accepting nor rejecting of abortion; the vast majority of Americans are repulsed by the thought of using abortion as a form of birth control but are also amenable to considering it as a difficult

option in certain traumatic situations (e.g., pregnancy resulting from rape or incest). Also, after centuries of religious integrity within the bounds of Protestantism, Catholicism and Judaism, a less ambitious reading of the current alliances might suggest temporary accommodation rather than a literal realignment as Hunter suggests. Regardless, the battles being waged are not so much theological as cosmological; participants are able to compartmentalize their theology while joining forces with those of other faiths on specific social problems. It is hard to believe that the religious lines of centuries duration will be breached over cultural concerns.

There is perhaps both an element of good news and of bad news in the current "war." The good news is that it is hard to see the non-theologically based alliances among religious bodies lasting very long in their efforts to bring social pressure to bear on political decisions. In other words, it is hard to visualize the unique integrity of the various religious organizations succumbing to non-theologically based ecumenism. On the other hand, alliances within religious organizations are severely strained, frustrating meaningful dialogue. The conservatives close their ears to the progressives; the progressives throw invectives at the entrenched conservatives. Neither side can accept compromise; neither side is interested in listening. We will have these cultural wars around for a while yet.

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PATTERNS OF MINISTRY AMONG THE FIRST CHRISTIANS by Kevin Giles. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1989.

After reminding us that discussions of leadership in the church were especially lively during the first hundred years of the Christian era and the Reformation age, the author notes the high level of interest in this topic in our own day shown by Christian groups throughout the world. Of particular interest to many are the origins and development of leadership in the early church.

The most widely accepted word to designate leaders in the Christian community is ministry. Ministry as introduced by Jesus and developed by the early church became a revolutionary paradigm which established service as the goal of all of life. Through the transforming power of the Gospel, ministry, despised by society, became the purpose of life for disciples of Jesus.

In investigating the origins of ministry and patterns of leadership in the early church, the author of this study gives special attention to the office and function of house-church leadership,

bishops, deacons, elders, teachers, prophets, and apostles. His method is to focus on New Testament sources, especially the Gospels, the Book of Acts, 1 Corinthians, and the Pastorals, while also considering Old Testament/Jewish roots and evidence presented by the Apostolic Fathers.

The New Testament perspective on ministry that is presented asserts that every ministry is a grace-gift (charisma) from God. The author shows that the New Testament does not allow restricting ministry to particular offices. Rather, all disciples have a ministry, with the church being like a body in which every member has a contribution to make. At the same time, individuals within the church emerge as leaders who make distinctive contributions to the body. Instead of seeing a community with a fixed division between leaders and learners, this scenario depicts a leadership that emerges to bring about the maturity of every member so that the ministry function of the whole church can be realized.

The author presents a view of ministry that expands a hierarchical view of leadership consisting of bishops, elders, and deacons. For example, in the Pastorals a bishop (overseer) is seen as a leader of a house church, while deacons in some contexts are specific Christian leaders, such as Epaphras who appears to be the founder of the church at Colossae. Elders (presbyters) identified in Acts 20 are not seen as holders of a specific, ecclesiastical office, but as a group of senior men who provided leadership of a general nature to the Christian community. While the twelve and Paul are apostles in a unique sense, other "apostles of Christ" appear in the early church. An important leader, Timothy, is not named as a bishop, elder, or deacon.

While ministry is portrayed as a gift of the Spirit which cannot be restricted to certain categories, the development of an office of ministry is seen to occur early in the New Testament. For example, in 1 Thessalonians and in 1 Corinthians, Paul endeavors to strengthen the authority of those who are leading churches as well as a respect for their ministry. Persons designated as office holders and payment to those who minister to the saints are well known in Pauline churches. The gift of an office of ministry as a leader and the gift of the ministry of every Christian belong together. As grace-gifts, both are indispensable.

Though one will not agree with all conclusions and inferences presented by the author, his study of the ministries of men and women in the early church is a perceptive, comprehensive, and challenging resource that raises a question, "For the sake of the mission, can we get it together?"

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Notes

- ¹See the rubrics in *Lutheran Worship* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1982), 168. "The minister gives thanks for the faithful departed, especially for those who have recently died."
- ²*The Lutheran Annual* 1992 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992) 3. With ordained ministers of religion, ministers of religion—commissioned include certified teachers, directors of Christian education and deaconesses. Certified professional church workers include lay ministers, but directors of evangelism, lay teachers, parish assistants and parish workers are still called ministers. The reason for this distinction is not obvious to this writer.
- ³(Saint Louis: Concordia, 1978).
- ⁴Eugene F. Klug, "Augsburg V: Intent and Meaning of the Confessors on 'Ministry,'" *Concordia Journal* 17 (January 1991):41.
- ⁵*Reporter* (18 [June 22, 1992] 12:3) uses the terms "Lutheran Hour ministries" and "LCMS ministries."
- ⁶This was, however, the position offered by the Board of Parish Education in "The Status of the Lutheran Male Teacher," prepared by A.C. Mueller, S.J. Roth, and A.C. Stellhorn. "Inasmuch as the office of the teacher is a branch of the general ministry, which Christ has instituted, it is a divine office, like the pastorate and all other offices of the Word." Taken from John C. Wohlrahe, Jr., *Ministry in Missouri Until 1962* (published privately, 1992), 43.
- ⁷"Ministry: Rethinking the Term *Diakonia*," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 56 (January 1992):1-15.
- ⁸John N. Collins, *Diakonia: Re-interpreting the Ancient Sources* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990). As Karl Paul Donfried is indebted to Collins (*op. cit.* 13), so I am indebted to Donfried.
- ⁹Donfried, 10-2.

- ¹⁰Tim Maschke, "Philipp Spener's *Pia Desideria*," *Lutheran Quarterly* 6 (Summer 1992):198, 203, n. 48.
- ¹¹Walter H. Conser, *Church and Confession* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1984), 46.
- ¹²Walter Sundberg, "Ministry in Nineteenth-Century European Lutheranism," *Called and Ordained*, ed. Todd Nichol and Marc Kolden (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 81. "Schleiermacher's work is a reaffirmation of the controversial Reformation principle of the priesthood of all believers restated for a new age."
- ¹³See the review of Michael Root in *Lutheran Quarterly* 6 (Summer 1992): 220-3 of *Called and Ordained: Lutheran Perspectives on the Office of the Ministry*. See note 12.
- ¹⁴See Wohlrahe, 40-1.
- ¹⁵Wohlrahe describes how the Synod did adjust its terminology in speaking of ministry to fit government requirements. *op. cit.*
- ¹⁶The idea of double responsibility is not an entirely novel view, as indicated by Wohlrahe, *op. cit.* 40. "Some continued to maintain that the teacher had dual calling that corresponded to both the office of the ministry and the office of parents." The ministry of teacher falls under the ministry of the parents and state. He may exercise some functions of ministry given apostles and pastors, but *that* ministry does not become his.



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