

LUTHERAN SYNOD QUARTERLY



VOLUME 51 • NUMBERS 2–3
JUNE–SEPTEMBER 2011

Public Ministry: ELS Perspective

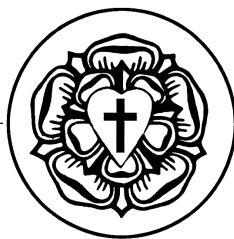
The Role of Men in the Church

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The theological journal of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod

LUTHERAN SYNOD QUARTERLY

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Foreword

LSQ Vol. 51, Nos. 2–3 (June–September 2011)

THIS ISSUE OF THE *QUARTERLY* contains an essay originally presented by President John Moldstad at a conference of Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) pastors in Menomonie, Wisconsin, on May 3, 2010. The article is entitled “Ministry: ELS Perspective.” Pastors in the WELS had asked for a summary of the recent discussions on ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) following the adoption of “The Public Ministry of the Word” in 2005. The article provides a handy overview of the ministry discussion and also includes our synod’s other doctrinal statements in the appendices. While the ministry issue was challenging for our church body, the discussions between ELS and WELS have proved to be fruitful.

The role of men and women has been a contentious topic in recent decades. The “women’s issue” has often been perceived as women trying to usurp the authority of men. While this is at times the case, often men are not fulfilling their responsibility in the church. The Scripture has much to say about the responsibility of men in the church, which is the point of this essay, “The Role of Men in the Church.” It was written by the Rev. Timothy Hartwig, who is pastor of Our Saviour Lutheran Church in Lake Havasu City, Arizona.

The question of homosexual marriage has touched nearly every mainline church body in this country. Satan has belched out a considerable amount of smoke and confusion when it comes to the sin of sexual

activity with someone of the same sex. So much smoke has filled the atmosphere in this regard that even Christians can have a hard time seeing the truth of Christ and of His Word. Sadly, some who claim to have faith in Jesus are among those putting forth the largest black clouds of confusion. The Rev. S. Piet Van Kampen explains the scriptural position concerning homosexuality in his essay, "Venting Out the Smoke." He is the pastor of English Lutheran Church in Cottonwood, Minnesota.

One of the dearest words in our vocabulary is "home." Those away from home harbor pleasant thoughts and memories of the place where they were born and raised. The soldier on the battlefield longs for the day when he can come home and be restored to the family circle. The essay, "The Christian Home," emphasizes the importance of a Christ-centered family. This essay was written by the Rev. Wilhelm Petersen, who served as president of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary from 1980 until 1997.

Probably the most familiar archaeological remains of any bygone era are the pyramids and sphinx of Egypt. These great monuments amazingly were not built as castles for the enjoyment of the living but to house the dead. Into this mystical world a Bedouin's son was dragged in about 1897 BC. He seemed no different from the many other Asian slaves sold in Egypt. But in actuality he was very different. He was Joseph, a great-grandson of Abraham, whose life in many ways is a picture of the life of Christ. The sermon on Genesis 41:39–44 is a summary of this typology.

– GRS

Public Ministry: ELS Perspective

John A. Moldstad
President, Evangelical Lutheran Synod

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CENTRAL TO OUR EXISTENCE AS Christians and certainly to our profession as Lutherans is the article by which the church stands or falls: the doctrine of justification. Sinners are unable to escape from an eternity of damnation except through faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ, God's only-begotten Son and the world's only Savior. The holy life of Jesus and his sacrificial death were vicarious in nature, exchanging the righteousness of Christ for our sins as he carried them to the cross. This is the chief news from God's Word intended for all people, even though all do not believe this news and obtain eternal life. Christ's redemptive work is universal, translating *objectively* into a declaration of forgiveness for every inhabitant, regardless of whether it is believed or not (Romans 4:5). The resurrection of our Lord sealed this fact (Romans 4:25).

The picture often used by pastors is God's reservoir of redeeming love for the world. God has ordained and put into action an aqueduct system: the means of grace, Word and Sacrament. The gospel—whether preached, taught, or read; whether connected with water baptismally or attached to the simple elements at the Lord's Table where the Savior's flesh and blood are tendered—is potent in conveying the water of life, Christ's forgiveness of sins. For the gospel to energize a spiritually dead

soul the law also needs to be proclaimed; without it, the sinner does not understand the desperate need for a gospel rescue.¹

God the Holy Spirit has bound himself to dealing with us sinners this way. He has revealed no other way for piping the water of life. “[O]ur gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit, and with deep conviction” (1 Thessalonians 1:5). Using a conduit for conveying forgiveness and the promise of eternal life in Christ, the Spirit takes from the reservoir and goes to work in the houses of the world community: he effects faith in the hearts of sinners as he so desires (Isaiah 55:11). Many hear the gospel and do not believe the message (Romans 10:16), but for those who do—entirely by God’s grace—the reservoir yields its blessed *objective* results in a *subjective, personal* manner! Peter explained to those gathered at the home of Cornelius: “All the prophets testify about him (Christ) that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name” (Acts 10:43).

The apostle Peter lets us know that by God’s grace through faith in Christ we all have been made special people who have a purpose: “to declare the praises of him who called us out of darkness into his wonderful light” (1 Peter 2:9). Within an established universal priesthood of all believers, God wants us all—pastors, teachers, missionaries, lay members, fathers and mothers in the home, every Christian—to play a part in shining the brilliant light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ on those who yet live under the pall of spiritual doom and gloom. What a challenge we have before us! So many do not care to engage in conversations about God and religion. Of course, what should we expect from those who unknowingly are captives of Satan? But what a blessing it is when another soul is brought out of darkness into the light! And from there, who knows how God will then use the witness of that new Christian to touch the life of another. We love to see the ripple effect. In his Galatians commentary, Dr. Luther expresses the evangelistic attitude of every person who possesses the certitude of salvation as found only in the merits of Christ. The believer, he says, exclaims, “There is

¹ August Pieper: “Law and gospel must always be proclaimed in combination with each other; they must not be torn apart from each other. We must never proclaim one of them alone, as something to use independently for God’s purposes, i.e., for conversion and sanctification, without the other being sufficiently proclaimed. The law in and of itself is God’s Word, and the gospel part of that same Word. Yet neither is God’s Word without the other, just as half a man is not a whole man.” *The Wauwatosa Theology*, II, ed. Curtis Jahn (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1997), 53.

nothing I want more than to make His Gospel known to the world and to convert many people.”²

But God has done more. He has, along with this universal priesthood of all believers, instituted the public ministry of the Word (Ephesians 4, Romans 10:15, etc.). This is for the good of God’s church so that the aqueduct of Word and Sacrament flows forth for the spiritual strengthening of God’s people (Hebrews 10:25) and for a concerted and focused effort to carry out the Lord’s great commission to the world (Matthew 28:19–20). Our two synods, WELS and ELS, know that both sword and trowel are necessary—defending God’s Word in all its teachings (especially rightly dividing law and gospel) and building up the church as the light of Christ’s gospel is proclaimed to those who already believe and to those still living in spiritual darkness.

The Evangelical Lutheran Synod in recent years has—as most of you know—experienced and weathered a controversy concerning the doctrine of the public ministry. You graciously have asked this ELS presenter to provide you with an update and to share with you the recently adopted (2005) “Public Ministry of the Word.” You also may be wondering how this study in the Evangelical Lutheran Synod impacts—if at all—relations with WELS.

Permit me, first of all, to give you some background information on the ELS. Many of you may not be so familiar with its history. Especially in the case of the ministry controversy, some of the synod’s history explains why and how this subject experienced the kind of tension it did.

A Brief History of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod

From Southern Wisconsin to Mankato, MN

Two annual dates—decades apart—define the origin of what today is called the *Evangelical Lutheran Synod*. These are the years of 1853 and 1918. A group of Norwegian Lutheran forefathers met October 3–7, 1853, in southern Wisconsin³ and formed the predecessor body that impacted greatly the scriptural theology and church polity of the present day ELS. This church body was simply known as the Norwegian Synod. The ELS today often is described as a re-organization of the old Norwegian Synod. Doing so demonstrates a strong connection to the pure theological moorings that once characterized the early years of the

² LW 26:379.

³ Luther Valley Church: located to the north and west of Beloit, Wisconsin.

Norwegian Synod as it was led by the likes of men such as the Rev. H.A. Preus, the Rev. Jakob Aal Ottesen, and the Rev. Ulrik V. Koren. The ELS also treasures the bond of confessional unity that had developed between the pioneers of the Norwegian Synod and other confessional Lutheran leaders in America, such as Dr. C. F. W. Walther of the Missouri Synod and Dr. Adolf Hoenecke of the Wisconsin Synod. In 1872 the Norwegian Synod joined in official doctrinal fellowship with the Wisconsin Synod and the Missouri Synod through the formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference.

A controversy erupted in the 1880s that would play a significant role in the life story of the ELS. The doctrine of election, a scriptural teaching intended to convey the certitude that a sinner's salvation depends only on God's grace in Christ, came under attack. Scripture teaches clearly that every aspect and detail of salvation for sinners (the electing done by God from eternity, the redeeming work of Christ, the coming to faith in time through Word and Sacrament, the preservation of faith, and the final transportation of the Christian to eternal life) depends on God's mercy alone and not on any merit in man (Titus 3:5; John 15:16). Some theologians, however, taught erroneously that God predestined individuals to eternal life *in view of* (in the sense of *because of*) *faith* in Christ, which God foresaw they would have. This doctrinal error attributed God's election of the individual not completely to God's grace but to some quality inside the sinner.

In 1890 a new church body (the Anti-Missourian Brotherhood, which became the United Church⁴) formed when nearly one third of the pastors and congregations of the Norwegian Synod sided with the false teachers on election. "Whereas in 1886, the Synod consisted of 193 pastors, 723 congregations, and 143,885 souls; three years later it numbered 138 pastors, 512 congregations, and 93,891 souls."⁵ In years following, the Norwegian Synod recouped its membership losses through active mission work.

While the Norwegian Synod boldly took its stand on doctrine in 1890, less than thirty years later it would find itself drawn into a merger where the former group, known as the United Church, was an active participant. In 1917 the large Norwegian Lutheran Church in America (NLCA) was formed by three Norwegian bodies (the United Church, the Hauge Synod, and the Norwegian Synod) comprising a

⁴ See the chart on Norwegian Lutheranism in America between 1846–1917: Appendix VI.

⁵ ELS *Synod Report* 2003, 50; essay by Rev. Craig Ferkenstad.

total membership of 474,715 baptized souls in 3,009 congregations and served by 1,031 pastors.⁶ The old election error had resurfaced, but this time the vast majority of pastors and laity in the Norwegian Synod were open to compromise⁷ due in large measure to a national wave of merger mania. As expected, however, there was some resistance to this particular ecumenical endeavor.

A remnant of thirteen pastors and their congregations refused to enter the merger. This small group of confessing Lutherans was convinced that participating in such a union would mean yielding to the error that a sinner can to a degree cooperate with God in influencing his own election and/or conversion. So, at Lime Creek Lutheran Church, rural Lake Mills, Iowa, on June 14, 1918, a new “little synod” of Norwegian Lutherans was organized (or, “reorganized”) under the name, Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church. The name was changed to Evangelical Lutheran Synod at the 1957 convention in order to reflect a *more diverse* (read: Deutsch) membership and the synod’s Gospel outreach. The Lime Creek assembly, meager by worldly standards, stood mightily on God’s Word, as also encouraged by President Bjug Harstad in his reference to the prophet Jeremiah: “Stand in the way and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls” (6:16).

The Lord graciously blessed the efforts and the organization of the Lime Creek gathering. The operation of Lutheran elementary schools was a priority for the ELS founders. “It often has been pointed out that of the fourteen Christian day schools which existed at the time of the Merger in 1917, the only schools which continued their existence were in the reorganized synod.”⁸ With the purchase of Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, MN, in 1927, the new synod had its operational base for its Gospel efforts in education and missions. In 1946 a seminary was established on the Bethany campus.

New challenges in the area of doctrine and practice presented themselves for the ELS. When the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), a catalyst in the founding of the Synodical Conference of

⁶ Clifford Nelson, *The Lutherans in North America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980 rev. ed.), 372.

⁷ A document called *Oppgjor* (Settlement) was used in the merger. It contained language that allowed two views of election to stand side by side – election by God’s grace alone or election *in view of one’s faith*.

⁸ ELS *Synod Report* 2003, 64.

1872,⁹ began holding discussions toward fellowship with Lutherans not in full agreement with Scripture and the Confessions, the ELS and its sister synod WELS raised concerns. These concerns, coupled with a growing tendency by the LCMS to fluctuate also in other areas related to the church fellowship, led to the breakup of the Synodical Conference in 1963. Thirty years later, the ELS and the WELS were instrumental in forming a new worldwide alliance, the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC) at Oberwesel, Germany. Today the CELC consists of twenty member churches and one associate, totaling approximately 450,000 souls.

Mission work—both home and foreign—receives much attention in the ELS. In 1968, after years of cooperating in foreign work through the efforts of the Synodical Conference, the ELS undertook the development of its own foreign mission in Lima, Peru. Besides the ongoing work in Peru (also in the Amazona region), the synod currently is working in world missions in the countries of Chile, India, and South Korea. Through the 2009 acquisition of Thoughts of Faith, Inc., a church-related mission organization founded in 1979, the ELS also promotes Gospel outreach in Ukraine, Latvia, and the Czech Republic.

The 2005 convention adopted an initiative known as Lutheran Schools of America (LSA). Goals for LSA include assisting congregations in establishing Lutheran classical elementary education schools, providing curriculum resources, and promoting LSA schools as Gospel-outreach opportunities for the congregations in their communities.

Today the ELS counts 131 congregations in its membership, having 19,945 baptized souls under its care. The synod's clergy roster includes the names of 163 men.

Twenty-six Lutheran elementary schools and preschools, served by 94 teachers, are found throughout the synod. The ELS headquarters is located on its Bethany Lutheran College and Seminary campus at 6 Browns Court, Mankato, MN 56001.

In concluding his yeoman historiography for the synod's jubilee, the late Rev. Theodore Aaberg offered this cogent remark: "If the Synod's membership can be characterized in the future, as it has been in the past, by a people who continue in Jesus' Word, labor to do His will, and commit all their cause to Him in confident trust, the Evangelical

⁹ The newly established ELS rejoined this conference in 1920. The Norwegian Synod temporarily had removed itself not for confessional reasons, but so as not to disrupt unnecessarily the Synodical Conference as it had to battle its Election Controversy.

Lutheran Synod will, under God, continue to be what it has been in the past, ‘*A City Set on a Hill*.’¹⁰

The Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Forum

Due to the Synodical Conference breakup, formally occurring with its dissolution in 1967,¹¹ the ELS and WELS looked for a way to strengthen ties with each other and to “give outward expression to the unity of spirit.”¹² The leadership of the two synods met on November 10, 1966, in a preliminary meeting to discuss organizing a forum whereby joint interest in confessional Lutheran theology would continue and ideas could be shared in areas of missions and education. The first meeting of the Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Forum took place on April 19, 1967, in Milwaukee, WI. The following resolution on the nature and work of the Forum was adopted:

Be it resolved, that the objectives of this forum shall be

- a) to manifest in a tangible and practical way the unity of faith and confession, which exists between the two bodies and to strengthen each other in our endeavor to remain faithful to the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, especially necessary in a day of increasing doctrinal indifferences and confessional laxity.
- b) to execute the above stated purpose in an orderly and beneficial manner, four fields of church activity are proposed as areas in which joint activity between the two synods might be explored to a greater degree. They are: a) Administration, b) Doctrine, c) Missions, and d) Education.¹³

Originally the Forum held annual meetings. At its sessions in 1980 the membership of the Forum agreed to gather biennially. A possible reason for the change may be indicated in the fact that the ELS Doctrine Committee and the WELS Commission on Inter-Church Relations began assembling face-to-face each year. From both the Forum meetings in the 1980s and the joint DC–CICR meetings, steps were taken to organize an international fellowship of churches known

¹⁰ Theodore Aaberg, *A City Set on a Hill* (ELS: 1968).

¹¹ ELS and WELS pulled out in 1963. The Slovak Synod and the LCMS dissolved the organization in 1967, when the Slovak Synod became a district of the LCMS.

¹² ELS *Synod Report* 1965, 45, Resolution 1.

¹³ WELS Proceedings 1967, 37–38.

as the CELC (Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference). These opportunities for personal interaction among the leaders of ELS and WELS have brought considerable blessings in cementing confessional unity and in the fervent resolve to spread the life-saving gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Addressing Doctrinal Concerns

The ELS, as with the WELS, enjoys unity among its clergy and member congregations in profession of doctrine. One should expect this from any church taking its name from the great reformer, Dr. Luther. The mark of a genuine Lutheran synod is commitment to Scripture alone as *the* source and norm (*norma normans*) of all doctrine and the determination to practice accordingly. Furthermore, since this mark includes sounding a clear trumpet, the writings of the Lutheran Confessions serve as the correct exposition (*norma normata*) of what God's Word teaches.¹⁴

The history of Lutheranism demonstrates, however, that mouth and pen assent to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions often ring hollow. As we in America painfully are aware, this is most noticeable on our side of the pond where synods and religious organizations tend to proliferate like dandelions on the ecclesiastical landscape. Gospel Reductionism, presumably first labeled as such by Dr. J. W. Montgomery in 1966,¹⁵ affects so much of what popularly passes for Lutheranism. In light of this vigorous trend to redefine what makes a "confessional Lutheran," there is a need to delineate clearly what a *quia* subscription to the Lutheran Confessions entails and—when necessary—to address

¹⁴ "What does it mean, then, to interpret Scripture according to the confessions? It means simply that the Lutheran confessional writings are the definition of how the Lutheran Church interprets Scripture. Each individual, pastors and teachers of the church particularly, is obligated to compare the teachings of the Scripture and the confessional writings. And if they find that, according to their lights, the Lutheran *Bekennnisschriften* are NOT a correct understanding or exegesis of Scripture, they are free, nay, obligated, to declare that. But thereby, they also declare that they are something other than Lutheran." E. Teigen, "The *Quia* Subscription to the Confessions," *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* 49, no. 4 (December 2009): 275.

¹⁵ We note here Montgomery's *Crisis in Lutheran Theology*, vol. 1, 81–123. The term applies to those "Lutherans" who insist on reducing what is needed for unity in doctrine to only the chief article of the Christian faith, justification. Technically, they insist that all scriptural texts be interpreted with the doctrine of justification as the overarching hermeneutical principle. Such an approach, of course, coincides with a misunderstanding of the *satis est* in AC VII, 2; cf. FC X, 31.

dogmatically certain teachings of Scripture that our Lutheran reformers did not see the need to address but clearly upheld.

We think here of the cooperation between ELS, WELS, and other members of the CELC in producing the excellent 1993 doctrinal booklet entitled, “The Eternal Word: A Lutheran Confession for the Twenty-First Century, Article I., Holy Scripture.”¹⁶ The CELC Theological Commission, entrusted with authoring the document, led with this explanation: “There is a need for a statement on Scripture as we enter into the twenty-first century. In the first place, there is no comprehensive statement on Scripture in the Lutheran Confessions. The inspiration of Scripture was not in controversy at the time of the Reformation.... The situation has changed since the days of the Lutheran Confessions. Most churches today do not accept the Bible as God’s inerrant Word.... A statement on Scripture will fill a great need at this time.”¹⁷

Resolution of Doctrinal Questions in the ELS

Inside each synod, as also inter-synodically, we recognize the same need for clarification *if and when* questions on doctrine threaten the unity we profess. We cite some examples in post-Synodical Conference times: “Theses on the Church and Ministry,” WELS, 1969; “Statement on the Lord’s Supper,” WELS, 1981; “Scriptural Principles of Man and Woman Roles,” WELS, 1993; and the “Theses Concerning the Doctrine of Church and Ministry,” ELFK, 2001.¹⁸

When a church body feels the need to first formulate and then adopt a doctrinal statement, it does so with the full understanding that drafting statements on doctrine and assenting to them—*which we do by vote*—is in keeping with Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions (1 Peter 3:15; 2 Corinthians 4:13; John 8:31, 32; FC SD, rule and norm; Ap IV, 193).¹⁹ The infrequent²⁰ occasions for “new” doctrinal statements occur because we are resolved to “make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3). The apostle Paul

¹⁶ The final edition of this 43-page CELC document appeared in the year 2000. This followed some necessary editing on wording concerning the canon issue.

¹⁷ 1–2.

¹⁸ The Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Germany held a special convention in September of 2001 for the adoption of *Thesen zur Lehre von Kirche und Amt*.

¹⁹ This remark with its references is included in “Guidelines for Adopting Doctrinal Statements,” ELS Handbook.

²⁰ One might dispute the word “infrequent,” given the past few decades where synods have issued more statements than some previous periods!

also wrote these words: “I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought” (1 Corinthians 1:10).

The ELS, during the pastoral life of this presenter (ordained in 1980), has seen the need to formulate and adopt four doctrinal statements.²¹ Each of these has assisted the church body in bringing resolution to questions raised—sometimes heatedly—on controversial and nuanced theological points. How are these answered on the basis of Holy Scripture? Are the answers consistent with our professed subscription to the Lutheran Confessions? In 1980 the ELS adopted “The Doctrine of the Church,” resolving a controversy some would say spanned forty years or more. In 1990 the ELS reaffirmed its position on forbidding women’s voting and women’s ordination by adopting “The Roles of Men and Women in the Church.” This was near the time WELS too was addressing the issue. “The Lord’s Supper Statement” of 1997 took at least twenty years to emerge in its final form. The issue here was the consecratory power of the words of institution effecting the real presence of Christ’s body and blood in the Supper, in connection with the question as to when the sacramental presence is said to begin and end. Finally, the most recent ELS statement (the subject here at hand) is “The Public Ministry of the Word,” 2005. The adoption of this document occurred three years after a failed attempt in 2002 by the synod’s Doctrine Committee to ascertain adoption of a similar but shorter statement on the ministry.

A new set of guidelines for the ELS hopefully will improve the process of developing doctrinal statements should future documents be necessary. The guidelines now indicate: The synod in convention makes the determination on when to move ahead with formulation of a statement through a recommendation from: a) properly submitted memorials; b) the ELS Doctrine Committee, consulting with the presidium; or c) the synod president in consultation with the vice president. It is expected that the synod’s General Pastoral Conference would be involved in arranging pertinent papers and discussion; laity also would be encouraged to participate in the study (circuit conferences, etc.). With the information gleaned, normally the president—as set by the convention—assigns the Doctrine Committee to begin the task of preparing a draft. The draft receives vetting at circuit meetings and at the General

²¹ For your accessibility, we include them in the appendix to this essay. Please see Appendices II.a., VIII., IX., and X.

Pastoral Conference. Gathering the comments, the DC is expected to place its set of theses before the convention. The normal course should be that at least one more year be devoted to further study prior to taking a vote on adoption. After any necessary editing, the proposed statement then is read at two consecutive conventions before the delegates act on an official adoption. To adopt, normally an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds is expected.²² It is acknowledged, of course, that the synod in convention retains the right to set aside these governing procedures.

Background for the Ministry Discussions

How should we view the local church, together with its pastors and teachers? How should we view the synod and its called servants of the Word? What exactly is instituted by God?

The origin of the church and ministry discussions for the Synodical Conference ostensibly dates from 1899.²³ The immediate question prompting a ten-year controversy with a latent spillover in succeeding decades came from a situation involving an LCMS congregation in Cincinnati, OH. The congregation was suspended from membership in the LCMS because of an improper use of excommunication. The suspended church and its two pastors then applied for membership in WELS. In his book, *The Synodical Conference Ecumenical Endeavor*, Armin Schuetze notes that the resultant query as to which is supreme, the congregation or the synod, contained a tinge of irony. Missouri seemed in this case to be siding with the synod as supreme. “This is surprising when we consider what became known as the ‘Missouri’ and ‘Wisconsin’ positions in the church/ministry controversy.”²⁴ (Missouri: local congregation = the *only* divinely instituted form of church; Wisconsin: both congregation and synod = divinely instituted forms.)

In the seventy-year span from 1899 to the time WELS adopted its theses in 1969, there existed fraternal bantering inside the Synodical Conference concerning the differences, but neither side officially raised

²² The reason for the guidelines, and in particular a suggested percentage for adoption, was a concern for the margin of votes in passing the 2005 “Public Ministry of the Word.” Sixty-two percent of the delegates who were present cast an affirmative vote.

²³ Earlier the Missouri Synod had to wrestle with these subjects, when Dr. C.F.W. Walther reacted scripturally and confessionally to Grabau and Loehe in the 1840s and 1850s. In the 1870s WELS had some discussions taking place regarding Christian day school teachers and the nature of their call (see the next footnote: 233–235).

²⁴ Armin Schuetze, *The Synodical Conference Ecumenical Endeavor* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2000), 235.

the charge of false doctrine.²⁵ “These differences appear not to have been regarded by either synod as divisive of church fellowship, and they arose between church bodies already in fellowship.... Had no other disturbances arisen between the synods, discussions probably would have continued and the issue may have been fully resolved.”²⁶

Since the doctrine of church and ministry had remained unsettled within the Synodical Conference,²⁷ and since WELS officially moved ahead with adoption of its “Theses on the Church and Ministry” in 1969, it seemed natural for the ELS to produce results of its own study. What made this all the more imperative for the ELS was a heavy Missouri influence,²⁸ coupled with the firm resolve by the ELS to strengthen ties with WELS as fostered by the new Forum arrangement (1967).

²⁵ “Representatives of the St. Louis faculty met with the Thiensville faculty in 1932 and drew up the ‘Thiensville Theses’ as a preliminary step toward a settlement of the controversy. No further steps were taken, however. In 1946 the Synodical Conference established an Interim Committee to address these issues, but the question remained unsettled” (from *Doctrinal Statements of the WELS*, 41). In the decade-plus that followed, the Synodical Conference found itself so embroiled with the doctrine of church fellowship matters, that at least a temporary hiatus on church and ministry concerns seemed to be understood by all the entities involved. The *Northwestern Lutheran* of August 3, 1947, gave this assessment: “We grant that marked differences of opinion have been expressed in discussions of this doctrine of the ministry and the church. We maintain, however, that this has been due solely to a failure to understand the position of Wisconsin. We maintain that there is no difference in the doctrine. Whatever difference there may be is confined to the application of doctrine” (245).

²⁶ Mark E. Braun, *A Tale of Two Synods* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2003), 73. Braun also refers in his volume to the remark by E. Fredrich where he suggests that much patience was extended since “Missouri practiced what Wisconsin preached and Wisconsin practiced what Missouri preached.” E. Fredrich, “Wisconsin’s Theological-Confessional History,” 98.

²⁷ In an article by T. A. Peperkorn, “C.F.W. Walther’s Kirche und Amt and the Church and Office Debate Between the Missouri and Wisconsin Synods in the Early Twentieth Century” (*Concordia Theological Quarterly*, vol. 65:4), surprise is expressed that August Pieper could have voiced a “major attack” on Walther’s *Kirche und Amt* and yet received no public rebuff from the Missouri Synod. Peperkorn also contends that the relationship between the two Pieper brothers (Franz and August) “made it difficult or impossible for charges of false doctrine to come forward” (317).

²⁸ Before 1946 when Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary was formed, the vast majority of ELS pastors received seminary training in the Missouri Synod. In the ELS Archives, Bethany Regents’ Minutes (1982 report), we came across this assessment:

The old Norwegian Synod and also the ELS had not delved into the matter so closely. They often used expressions which would lead one to believe that they held to the so-called Missouri position, but just as often spoke in terms similar to the Wisconsin position. To a degree, it seems that those trained at Luther Seminary tended toward the WELS view, while those trained after

Here we should digress just for a moment. We need to mention that certain dangerous emphases regarding pastoral ministry have surfaced in recent years (1990s to the present) in parts of Lutheranism close to our circles.²⁹ These emphases, resembling old errors of Grabau or Loehe, did not so much trouble those allied in the Synodical Conference. Yet today for both ELS and WELS it is beneficial to have their established theses on the ministry.³⁰

In its report to the 1976 convention, the ELS Doctrine Committee³¹ noted that the Thiensville Theses apparently were “subject to various interpretations” in the synod and therefore more study and discussions were needed. It was decided that the doctrine of the church should be treated first, with the understanding that soon afterward the doctrine of the ministry would follow.³² This concluding comment appears in the Doctrine Committee’s report to the 1977 convention: “We can proceed with the important and necessary study of the doctrine of the

1917 at St. Louis held the Missouri position, sometimes tenaciously, regarding any departure from it as a departure from the honor of C. F. W. Walther.

The same notes state that former BLC president, Dr. Sigurd Ylvisaker, leaned toward the WELS position. We quote again: “Among others, B. W. Teigen, T. A. Aaberg, and T. N. Teigen put forth the position [WELS] held by Ylvisaker and Lillegard.”

²⁹ In 1996, for example, the Lutheran Confessional Synod (Rev. Randy DeJaynes, Decatur, IL) broke fellowship with ELS and WELS over the doctrine of the ministry. John Brug has put it this way: “There is a temptation facing Lutheran pastors today to direct people to ordination and the office of the pastor for assurance. Some are even seeking ordination from Catholic or Orthodox or Episcopal bishops thinking that this can give them an ‘apostolic succession’ that will give greater authority and assurance to their words of absolution.... Confessional Lutherans have always looked for authority and assurance in the Word alone.” *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 105, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 6–7.

³⁰ “It is becoming increasingly difficult to determine what the LCMS position is. This goes beyond the issue of a limited number of individuals walking to the right or left of their synod’s position (a situation that WELS faces too). The problem is more than a widening of the spectrum. If the old Missouri-WELS differences of the first half of the 20th century stand at 5 and 6 on a scale of 1 to 10, the views within Missouri today seem to span at least a spectrum from 3 to 8. More significantly, the widening span involves significant differences within the LCMS leadership (synod administration, CTCR, seminary faculties).” John F. Brug, *The Ministry of the Word* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2009), 473.

³¹ In 1976 the “Board for Theology and Church Relations” took on the new designation of “Doctrine Committee.” Members of the committee at this time were: Prof. J. B. Madson, chairman; Prof. B. W. Teigen, secretary; Rev. T. A. Aaberg; Rev. W. Granke; Dr. W. Anthony, and Mr. A. Hammer; also, Pres. G. Orvick, advisory member.

³² It was reported that Prof. C. Lawrenz of WELS commented to then ELS President W. Petersen (1976–1980): “Why don’t you strike while the iron is hot and go for the ministry also?”

Public Ministry, as directed by the 1976 General Pastoral Conference, when we agree on the doctrine of the church....”³³ When the study on church appeared to stall, the president of the synod, Rev. Wilhelm Petersen, drew up a short statement that finally was adopted in 1980 at the ELS convention (Appendix VIII). This was not an easy matter. This writer recalls a prominent pastor charging the synod president with false doctrine at the end of a spirited debate in the chapel at Bethany College. The charge, however, quickly dissipated.

While many might have assumed the synod now was primed for tackling the doctrine of the ministry, this did not occur for two reasons. There seemed to be the desire for a breather on the part of many who had dug in their heels on the church debate. Also, another controversy came to the fore and demanded immediate attention from ELS and WELS. Discussions on the Lord’s Supper, with special focus on the words of institution and the moment of the real presence in the Supper, began in the late 1970s. The Lord Supper subject surfaced in discussions between the ELS DC and the WELS CICR, as well as in connection with influences from certain pastors in the country of Sweden. The Lord’s Supper controversy occupied a major portion of theological study time for the ELS, until in 1997 a final edition of “The Lord’s Supper Statement” was adopted.³⁴

Already in 1997, while the grill was hot from discussions on *Abendmahl*, the ELS Doctrine Committee “requested prayers of the members of the synod concerning the ongoing study by the Doctrine Committee on the doctrine of the ministry of the church,” and the synod concurred with this request. Pastors and congregations were urged to “convey their thoughts on this matter to the Committee.”³⁵ In 2000 the ELS recommended its Doctrine Committee bring a draft set of theses before the pastors for discussion. The resolution urged that “public synodical discussion of this document begin at the [next] General Pastoral Conference.”³⁶

A major item for discussion was the question of whether male and female teachers of our Lutheran elementary schools are in the public

³³ ELS *Synod Report* 1977, 65.

³⁴ There were four “adoption” moments for the LS Statement: 1981, 1985, 1996 and 1997.

³⁵ ELS *Synod Report* 1997, 76.

³⁶ ELS *Synod Report* 2000, 83, Resolution 2.

ministry of the church.³⁷ The committee³⁸ in 2001 asked the convention to adopt a set of theses it had prepared. Along with the theses, the committee provided much historical documentation and prepared a suggested resolution asserting “the ELS reaffirm its historic position that CDS teachers are also in the public ministry of the Christian Church.” No action was taken on either item, however. There was expressed interest that **antitheses** be included, and more time for consideration was requested. In the months that followed, various suggestions were entertained from individual pastors and from a specially appointed “Conciliation Committee” at the 2001 General Pastoral Conference. The Doctrine Committee then returned to the 2002 convention with its revisions and appended antitheses. Once again, the convention failed to adopt the theses.³⁹

Attendees to the 2002 convention might have debated among themselves what the failed vote intended to convey. Some said the vote was a rejection of the theology set forth in the theses. Others said the vote simply indicated the synod was not yet ready to adopt a set of theses on the ministry, fearing adoption of any theses to be potentially divisive. One thing was certain: The declination of the convention to adopt meant the ELS *no longer had any official study document* as the ministry discussions moved forward.⁴⁰

Where to go from here? The undersigned as the newly elected synod president (2002), in consultation with others, desired to find an approach that could assist the ELS in resolving the apparent doctrinal differences. “Apparent” was the word, for not in every case were the differences on the previously proposed theses *doctrinal* in nature. A

³⁷ The undersigned had the privilege of sharing with the 2000 GPC an exegetical brief on two key sections of Scripture, Ephesians 4:11–12 and 1 Corinthians 12:27–31. See Appendix I. a. and I. b.; also found in the *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (June 2001): 168–175.

³⁸ The 2001 ELS Doctrine Committee members were: Seminary Pres. Gaylin Schmeling, chairman; Prof. Juul Madson, secretary; Prof. Wilhelm Petersen; Rev. Paul Zager; Prof. John Moldstad, Jr.; Mr. James Schneck; and Mr. Allen Quist.

³⁹ A WELS summary of the 2002 ELS convention included this remark: “A veteran pastor of the synod, with no right to vote but able to address the convention, offered that there should be a third option open to the delegates – that of voting neither for nor against the theses, but of voting not to vote on them and to continue the study and discussion of the ministry question, for thirty or forty years, if need be. When the question was called at 4:35 Wednesday afternoon, the theses failed to be adopted. Nor was the vote close.” *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 100, no. 1 (Winter 2003): 58.

⁴⁰ However, the 1992 adopted ELS *We Believe Teach and Confess* (Appendix VII.), and its *The Roles of Men and Women in the Church* (1990, Appendix X.), already contained aspects/implications pertinent to the synod’s ministry discussions.

confessional Lutheran synod takes seriously all matters of doctrine and practice. The ELS could not sit back and do nothing, expecting tensions to vanish over time. This would not be honoring God and his Word. Nor would it be wise. The synod was striving to work together in true harmony. Scripture calls upon us to “make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3). To move ahead in the spirit of the unity expressed in Ephesians 4, the synod president appointed a special committee to study the issues and assist the ELS in developing a statement on the doctrine of the public ministry. In October of 2002, the Presidium’s Committee on Ministry (PCM) was appointed (see names below).⁴¹

The committee, over the course of the next two and a half years, went about its work diligently and harmoniously. Members of the synod prayed that the Lord would grant wisdom, confessional commitment, integrity, and a true evangelical spirit. As the committee went about its work, the ELS president reminded all that the lack of adoption in 2002 was not to be characterized as a *repudiation* of the theology set forth in the Doctrine Committee’s theses, nor was it to be understood as a *rejection* of the WELS position on the ministry. Assurance also was given that the practice of issuing divine calls to the Lutheran elementary teachers would continue in the ELS.⁴²

On February 2, 2004, the PCM turned over its initial draft to the president. A cordial and fraternal meeting of the PCM with the synod’s elected Doctrine Committee occurred on March 22, 2004. After editing its February 2 draft, the PCM was asked by the president to prepare the statement for general distribution to all ELS pastors and their congregations. Copies of the “Public Ministry of the Word” were made available to all delegates at the 2004 convention, but the theses were not offered for adoption. Ample time for discussing the ministry statement was scheduled for that fall at the General Pastoral Conference.

On October 6–8, 2004, the ELS General Pastoral Conference met at the Schwan Retreat Center. The main item for discussion was the PCM’s document on the doctrine of the Public Ministry. A number of concerns were voiced, but it appeared a large majority of the synod’s pastors were pleased with the statement. Following the conference, the synod’s president and vice president did some editing of the “The Public Ministry of the Word” and consulted with the PCM, as well as with

⁴¹ Serving on the committee were co-chairs, Pastor Erwin Ekhoﬀ and Prof. Erling Teigen; Pastor Alexander Ring, secretary; Pastors Karl Anderson, Mark Bartels, and Jerome Gernander.

⁴² ELS *Synod Report* 2003, 37.

the Doctrine Committee. Added to the document at this time were the expressions “narrower sense” and “wider sense.” (The statement is included in Appendix II.a.; included in Appendix II.b. are the support references.)

The 2005 ELS Convention

In his published report for the 2005 convention, June 19–23, the president stated:

During the last two years we have had considerable harmony in our study of the Public Ministry under the guidance of the PCM (Presidium’s Committee on Ministry). At this year’s convention we hope that our synod will adopt the PCM statement. *Abide In My Word*, our theme for the 2005 convention, means staying only with the Word of God and confessing the truth in all matters of doctrine. We are convinced from our study that what is stated in the document is in complete conformity with God’s Word and also our study of the Lutheran Confessions. As pastors, teachers and lay people who are deeply concerned about confessing God’s Word in its truth and purity on all points of doctrine, it is important to make a clear confession on this subject of the Public Ministry—a subject long debated over the years.⁴³

The president’s oral message to the same convention mentioned six reasons why the ELS should adopt the theses and not delay or postpone indefinitely. These were: a) for the sake of confessional integrity toward the Word of God; b) for the sake of unity among ourselves; c) for the sake of letting the church bodies of our fellowship (CELC) know where we stand; d) for the sake of letting pastors and congregations outside of our fellowship know where we stand; e) for the sake of conducting future colloquies; and f) for the sake of instructing our seminarians.⁴⁴

One month prior to the ELS 2005 convention, a lengthy memorial was submitted urging the synod not to adopt the theses produced by the PCM but instead to adopt what was called “The Circuit 8 Revision of the Public Ministry of the Word.” The chief contention of those submitting the revision was noticeable by certain omissions, but especially in

⁴³ ELS *Synod Report* 2005, 28.

⁴⁴ ELS *Synod Report* 2005, President’s Message, J. A. Moldstad, 22–23.

an endnote⁴⁵ where *only* the pastoral office was declared to be *divinely instituted*.

On Wednesday, June 22, 2005, the convention was poised for action on “The Public Ministry of the Word.” The floor committee included an emended sentence suggested by a pastor on the day before: “The wider sense refers, in addition to a presiding office, to offices having a limited public use of the keys, offices that the church in her freedom, may establish.” When the vote was taken by written ballot, the record showed 131 in favor and 79 opposed.⁴⁶ Immediately the president urged patience toward those with an opposing viewpoint but reminded all that propagandizing against the newly adopted scriptural and confessional statement would be out of order. Encouragement was given to foster brotherly unity.⁴⁷ On Thursday, former ELS president, Rev. George Orvick, spoke to the assembly and said, “Please, out of love for each other and what the Lord has done for this little synod, be circumspect about what is said and done in the coming weeks.”

The 2005 convention also resolved that the ELS Presidium and the PCM prepare a written response to the “Circuit 8 Revision of The Public Ministry of the Word.” This response was prepared and posted on the synod’s webpage. (For our purposes here, we include in Appendix III a portion of the prepared “ELS Presidium’s Response to Circuit 8.”)

Dissension following adoption

On December 6, 2005, the Rev. Rolf D. Preus, who served the ELS congregation in East Grand Forks, MN, disseminated widely his personal critique of the PCM’s response to ELS Circuit #8. In his critique he made it clear that the 2005 adopted statement on the public

⁴⁵ ELS *Synod Report* 2005, 143: “The pastoral office is called the Public Ministry of the Word in the strict sense because it is specifically instituted by God and is therefore necessary for the church. Other Sacred Ecclesiastical Offices ... are called the Public Ministry in a Wider Sense because they are not specifically instituted by God and they are not a necessity for the church, but they are established by the church in her Christian freedom.”

⁴⁶ After the official vote was taken, 12 pastors and 5 lay delegates registered their negative votes.

⁴⁷ In spite of this encouragement, a pin-dropping moment occurred on the floor of the convention that Thursday. A synod pastor openly alleged that the statement on the ministry adopted on Wednesday was false doctrine. The comment was hasty; so was the resultant quick suspension from the president. Due to the rush of the moment, it was agreed the exchange would be removed from the record; time would be needed to explore where the pastor stood in relation to the adopted document. According to ELS bylaws, congregations have six months to challenge a decision of the convention, if they choose to do so.

ministry contained teachings that were “unscriptural” and were not presenting the “biblical and confessional doctrine.” He contended the model it sets forth “breaks with the clear teaching of God’s Word and the pattern of sound words set forth in the Lutheran Confessions.” He also made this firm remark: “I will not permit it [the adopted statement] to be a standard for my teaching and I do not acknowledge it as having any authority over me whatsoever.” To have questions and concerns about the ELS adopted doctrinal statement was one thing, but to berate and denounce what the synod had adopted by labeling it “unscriptural” and “not in keeping with sound doctrine” was quite another. On February 1, 2006, the synod president regretfully informed the members of the synod of the suspension of Pastor Rolf D. Preus from the clergy roster of the ELS. The reason given for the suspension was “sowing seeds of discord among brethren” (Proverbs 6:19). An elected Commission on Appeals in 2006 upheld the suspension.

In the months that followed, 8 congregations and 5 active pastors who publicly sided with Rev. Preus were declared to be no longer members of the ELS.⁴⁸ Nine memorials regarding the ministry were sent to the 2006 convention. The synod, however, resolved to uphold “The Public Ministry of the Word” as its official doctrine and practice while continuing to study it in pastoral conferences.⁴⁹

Although the ministry controversy presented serious challenges for the ELS, including severed relationships with many who were so close to the same page in confession but disunited on ministry, the Lord has blessed the synod with harmony. Reporting for the WELS on the 2007 ELS convention, Prof. Thomas P. Nass wrote, “Happily...the annual ELS convention held on June 17–21 ... was by and large a peaceful convention. There were still some rumblings on the ministry issue.... But perhaps the peaceful tone suggests that the ELS by God’s grace may come through their difficulties more unified.”⁵⁰

The WELS Reaction to “The Public Ministry of the Word”

The WELS CICR issued a rather comprehensive review of the ELS statement on the public ministry. It appeared in the *Wisconsin*

⁴⁸ Six of the congregations declared themselves to be in a “selective fellowship” protest, refusing to commune the president and the members of the Commission on Appeals. One pastor and his congregation openly charged false doctrine. Two small congregations left in order to retain pastoral services by Rev. R. Preus. The East Grand Forks, MN, church, which had been served by Rev. Preus, chose to remain in the synod.

⁴⁹ ELS Synod Report 2006, 91–92, Resolution 7.

⁵⁰ *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 104, no. 4 (Fall 2007): 291.

Lutheran Quarterly, Summer 2006 (216–219). The author of the article was Prof. Nass. To summarize the WELS response, we highlight here three sections of the CICR article.⁵¹

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

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

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

So, we have seen nothing in the events of the past years and in the adoption of “The Public Ministry of the Word” to disrupt our fellowship with the ELS. We have noticed that outside observers (non-ELS or WELS) who have commented on the document have concluded that it is in essential agreement with the doctrine of WELS. This is undoubtedly because the document, as noted above, stands with Scripture and WELS on the two most crucial points⁵² in the debate.

In the fall of 2006 (October 16–17) the Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Forum met at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon,

⁵¹ These three sections were also highlighted by Prof. Nass orally when he presented “Issues in Ministry – With a Special View toward our Sister Synod, the ELS,” WELS Nebraska District Convention, June 9–10, 2008.

⁵² The two points of agreement cited in the CICR article are 1) the possession and use of the keys by all believers, and 2) offices of public ministry other than the pastoral office are declared to be in the divinely instituted public ministry.

Wisconsin. The doctrinal division of the Forum held a discussion on the subject of the 2005 adopted ministry statement of the ELS. The minutes from the Forum simply record the following: “There is a growing consensus and agreement on the meaning of this document though there are 21 ELS pastors who continue to express concerns.”⁵³ (Appendix IV provides a summary explanation of the PMW.)

ELFK and the Ministry

Another church body in the CELC was struggling with church and ministry concerns. Our sister church, the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Germany, produced and accepted theses in September of 2001. While this brought settlement of the issue, the ELFK suffered the loss of three pastors as a result of its official statement. The set of ministry theses for the ELFK can be found in translated form in the *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, December 2002. The statement, closely paralleling the ELS Doctrine Committee’s document of 2002, shows that Scripture does not mandate external forms of the public ministry, just as the external form of the church is not divinely mandated. Of special note in the ELFK document are these sentences: “The pastor’s office is the most comprehensive and fundamental form of the public ministry of proclamation Because Christ wills to have responsible shepherds for His flock, such an office is indispensable. (Matthew 28:18–20; Acts 20:28–31; Titus 1:6–9; 1 Peter 5:1–3; Hebrews 13:17)⁵⁴

The WELS Revision of *This We Believe*

Both the ELFK statement of 2001 and the “Public Ministry of the Word” by the ELS in 2005 say more regarding the pastoral office than had been the case in corresponding documents from WELS. This does not mean there is a doctrinal difference. It is of interest to observe a paragraph addition to the WELS *This We Believe*, undertaken by the WELS CICR and produced for the WELS Conference of Presidents in 1999. We include here the entire VII (Church and Ministry), 9 of TWB, with the addition in bold:

We believe that the church’s mission is to serve people with the Word and Sacraments. This service is usually done in the local congregations. **We look upon the pastoral office as the**

⁵³ Mr. James Brandt served as secretary for the Forum.

⁵⁴ Gaylin R. Schmeling, “A Brief History of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Germany Including Its Recent Ministry Discussion,” *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* 42, no. 4 (December 2002): 319.

most comprehensive form of the public ministry of the Word. Pastors are trained and called to provide such comprehensive spiritual oversight for the gathering and nurturing of souls in congregations (1 Peter 5:2).⁵⁵

Prof. Nass in an article for *Logia* provides insight on why such a change was forthcoming:

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

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

When the CICR wrestled with the writing of this paragraph, it considered a number of adjectives to describe the pastoral ministry. We considered saying that the pastoral ministry is the “most common” form of the public ministry. In the WELS, if a group of Christians has only one form of the public ministry, it inevitably is a pastor.... But “most common” was rejected as a description for the pastoral ministry because numerically across the synod there are more teachers than pastors.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ WELS COP document, *This We Believe*, 1999 edition, 30.

⁵⁶ Thomas P. Nass, “The Revised *This We Believe* of the WELS on the Ministry,” *Logia*, Holy Trinity, 2001 (X:3):36; see (*) (***) footnotes in the original article.

Of possibly greater significance, the same 1999 revision of *This We Believe* references Ephesians 4 as a *sedes* for the divine institution of the public ministry.

While WELS consistently has maintained the public ministry is divinely instituted (even as the universal priesthood of all believers is similarly divinely instituted), the specific statement as such did not appear in earlier editions of *TWB*. The current wording of Article VII, 8 reads: “We believe that God has also established the public ministry of the Word (Ephesians 4:11), and it is the will of God that the church, in accordance with good order (1 Corinthians 14:40), call qualified individuals into this public ministry (1 Timothy 3:1–10; 1 Corinthians 9:14).” In the 1980 *TWB* the sentence simply read: “We believe that it is the will of God that the church in accordance with good order (1 Corinthians 14:40) call qualified men (1 Timothy 3) into the public ministry.”⁵⁷

WELS and ELS Meetings in Recent Years

The very year the ELS adopted its PMW brought another challenge for WELS/ELS relations. The 2005 convention of the ELS passed a resolution expressing concern over certain remarks in WELS pertaining to women and ministry issues. The resolution read:

Whereas, three memorials have been received expressing concern regarding public statements made by clergy of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) regarding the role of women in the church, and,

Whereas, these concerns have already been a topic of discussion between the ELS and WELS on an official level, and,

Whereas, these concerns will be further addressed at a September meeting of the WELS Committee on Inter-Church Relations and the ELS Doctrine Committee, therefore,

A. Be it resolved, that the synod refer these memorials to the Doctrine Committee and the synod further direct the

⁵⁷ The interchangeable use of “individuals” (current edition) and “men” (earlier edition) is noted, yet not regarded as substantive in nature. The inclusivity of both called men (pastors and teachers) and called women (teachers) was a given. Similarly, the ELS 2001 edition of *An Explanation of Dr. Martin Luther’s Small Catechism* offers the following in answer to the question, “How do Christians publicly administer the Office of the Keys?” “Christians publicly administer the Office of the Keys by calling qualified men to forgive and retain sins on their behalf (Office of the Public Ministry). The Bible forbids women to serve as pastors” (question #307).

Doctrine Committee to address these concerns with the CICR of the WELS using section “I A” of the adopted doctrine statement “The Public Ministry of the Word,” and

B. Be it resolved, that the Doctrine Committee report back to the 2006 Synod Convention with the results of its study and discussions with the WELS.⁵⁸

Seminary President G. Schmeling, chairman of the ELS Doctrine Committee, furnished on behalf of the committee a summary of these discussions occurring in the last three years. Below we include his combined reports given on behalf of the ELS DC to the 2008 and 2009 ELS conventions.

The **2005 Synod Convention** received three memorials expressing concern about public statements made by some of the clergy of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) regarding the role of women in the church. The convention resolved, “That the synod refer these memorials to the Doctrine Committee and the synod further direct the Doctrine Committee to address these concerns with the CICR of the WELS using section ‘II A’ of the adopted doctrine statement ‘The Public Ministry of the Word,’ and...That the Doctrine Committee report to the 2006 Synod Convention with the results of its study and discussion with the WELS” (*Synod Report*, 2005, p. 72).

It was reported to the **2006 Synod Convention** (2006 *Synod Report*, pp. 85–86) that a joint meeting between the CICR of the WELS and the Doctrine Committee of the ELS was held September 16, 2005, followed by a number of teleconferences of a subcommittee of the two commissions. This subcommittee included: President Karl Gurgel, Vice President Wayne Mueller, and Prof. Forrest Bivens of WELS; President John Moldstad, Vice President Glenn Obenberger, and Prof. Gaylin Schmeling of the ELS. These were cordial, brotherly, and beneficial meetings. Three points were discussed concerning the role of women in the church: **women serving as pastors to women, women serving as lectors in the divine service, and women communing women.**

On the basis of 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2:11–14, all were agreed that **women are not to be in teaching roles**

⁵⁸ ELS *Synod Report* 2005, 72.

where they have authority over men in the church. On the basis of these Scriptural texts, those present at these meetings agreed that the term “pastor” should not be used for women serving like deaconesses in the public ministry of the Word. Also it was agreed that women should not serve as lectors in the divine service because this would involve authoritative teaching, exercising authority over men contrary to 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 1 Timothy 2:11–14. The discussion concerning women communing women was not completed by the 2006 Synod Convention. But it should be noted that the WELS Conference of Presidents (COP) had issued an indefinite moratorium on the practice of women privately distributing the Lord’s Supper to women. According to the WELS COP the reasons for the moratorium were the following:

- Concern for misunderstanding within our own synod and our sister synods here and abroad;
- Concern about whether a staff minister has sufficient theological training to preside at the celebration of the Lord’s Supper;
- Lack of any formal discussions with our brothers over an issue that could at the very least cause some confusion;
- Lack of a clear need for this to be done;
- Concern that such action could cause confusion about the role of women, especially in regard to the pastoral ministry, since it may appear that some women are now functioning as pastors;
- Historically this has not been the practice in the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

The 2006 Synod Convention encouraged the Doctrine Committee “To continue its discussions with the CICR on the matter of women communing women noting that we unanimously agree that Scripture clearly teaches that women are not to be in the pastoral office, because this presiding office includes the exercise of authority over men (1 Corinthians 14:34–35, 1 Timothy 2:11–12). Also, when Scripture refers to one who officiates at the Word and Sacrament liturgy it speaks in male terms (1 Timothy 3:2, 1 Timothy 4:13). Therefore women shall not read the Scripture lessons in the divine service, preach the sermon, administer Baptism or distribute the Lord’s Supper, for these things are intimately related to the pastoral office

(1 Timothy 4:13–14, 1 Corinthians 4:1)” (*Synod Report*, 2006, p. 90)

The issue of women communing women was discussed at the Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Forum on October 16–17, 2006. There were subsequent teleconferences of the subcommittee of the two theological commissions. During this time a statement was formulated that the WELS COP adopted on March 27, 2007. Much of this statement was a joint effort of President John Moldstad and President Karl Gurgel (for the full statement see *Synod Report*, 2008, p. 81).

The statement lists several areas of concern, including that of proper spiritual care of communicants and that of causing confusion about the role of women in the public ministry, recognizing that “the logical inference from the study of pertinent passages of Scripture leads us to conclude that the administration of communion is usually one of the responsibilities of the overseeing minister of the church (1 Corinthians 4:1), and this oversight position for congregations is restricted to males (e.g. 1 Timothy 2:11–12, 1 Timothy 3:1ff).” It then concludes by stating: “For these above reasons, we conclude that the practice of women privately or publicly distributing the Lord’s Supper to women is something from which we will refrain.”

The 2007 Synod Convention resolved “That we rejoice in the WELS COP statement ‘Concerning Women Administering Communion to Women,’ as a demonstration of unity in practice that exists between our two synods in this matter, and, That the Doctrine Committee be directed to continue its discussion with the WELS on the matter of women communing women and related issues, clarifying terms and seeking agreement concerning the meaning of the proof passages which prohibit the practice of women officiating at services of Holy Communion” (*Synod Report*, 2007, p. 62).

Following the directive of the 2007 Synod Convention, the Doctrine Committee scheduled a meeting with the WELS CICR to discuss these matters. This meeting occurred on September 28, 2007, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Here papers were presented by both committees. These papers centered on the question of whether there is historical and exegetical basis for not allowing a woman to commune a woman. From these discussions it was evident that this was not a practice

promoted by our WELS brethren. It was agreed that the CICR of WELS and the Doctrine Committee would meet again on September 26, 2008, to continue discussion on clarifying terms and seeking agreement concerning the meaning of proof passages which prohibit the practice of women officiating at services of Holy Communion. The 2008 Synod Convention expressed its thankfulness for the fraternal discussions and encouraged them to continue (*Synod Report*, 2008, p. 86).

At the meeting on September 26, 2008, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, papers were presented by Prof. John Brenner and Rev. John Vieths for the WELS and by Prof. Erling Teigen, Mr. Allen Quist, Rev. Paul Zager, and Rev. Thomas Rank for the ELS. In the afternoon session, there was discussion on questions that the two commissions raised. In this session, Pres. Mark Schroeder of the WELS gave the assurance that the WELS continues to abide by the COP statement, “Concerning Women Administering Communion to Women” of March 27, 2007. A meeting is planned for September 25, 2009, where the WELS CICR will have an opportunity to respond formally to the papers given by the ELS in 2008 and the ELS DC will have an opportunity to respond to the papers given by the CICR members. There is one paper by a WELS presenter, which was not able to be delivered because of time restraints, that will be presented in 2009. Also there will be informational material presented by both of the theological commissions.⁵⁹

Present Situation

Prof. Nass, now serving as chairman of the WELS CICR, included this “Prognosis” at the conclusion of his presentation (referenced earlier) given to the Nebraska District: “I am hopeful that these discussions will turn out well. Pres. Moldstad and Seminary Pres. Schmeling of the ELS have assured me that they do not see a rift coming on this topic. Certainly the main principles of Communion administration are agreed on. Communion administration requires spiritual oversight and authority. Therefore one needs to have a high level of spiritual understanding and maturity, and a woman should not commune a man. In addition, whoever administers Communion on behalf of the congregation should be properly called into the public ministry. I personally

⁵⁹ ELS *Synod Report* 2008, 80, 81, and ELS *Synod Report* 2009, 56.

would be happy if the statement ‘Concerning Women administering Communion to Women,’ imperfect though it may be, could serve to reflect an adequate level of agreement between our synods on this topic.”⁶⁰

We are pleased to say that the joint meeting of ELS and WELS at 2929 Mayfair on September 25, 2009, went well. Per usual, a wide range of topics was covered. The subject of women communing women consumed much of the agenda. The outcome of the meeting is that, since both synods accept the COP statement of March 27, 2007,⁶¹ and the statement represents the position of both synods and is therefore operative, the ELS is not asking for more discussions on this matter. We note that as the ELS and the WELS continue to meet on topics of ministry and vocation, this provides opportunity to address further any items of concern, should they arise.

The fellowship enjoyed by WELS and ELS, together with the other members of the CELC, is a tremendous gift from our Lord that should never be taken for granted. “How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity” (Psalm 133:1). The bond we have in our determination to confess the truth, to be zealous for missions, and to want to work together for the glory and honor of our Savior is a bond unlike any other human alliances. We praise God for the unity we enjoy, even as we strengthen and encourage one another along the narrow path. “And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Colossians 3:17). LSQ

⁶⁰ Unpublished paper distributed to the WELS Nebraska District Convention, June 9–10, 2008, 9.

⁶¹ See Appendix V for this statement. The opinion brief also appeared in the 2007 fall edition of the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*. The statement’s approval date is listed in the *WLQ* as March 16, 2007.

Appendix I.a: A Closer Look at the *Sedes Doctrinae* for the Public Ministry, Ephesians 4:11, 12

Ephesians 4:11 – Καὶ Αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους, τοὺς δὲ προφήτας, τοὺς δὲ εὐαγγελιστάς, τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους,

Ephesians 4:12 – πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων εἰς ἔργον διακονίας εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ...

Translation: *“And He gave some (to be) apostles, and some (to be) prophets, and some (to be) evangelists, and some (to be) shepherds/pastors and teachers, for the purpose of the preparation/equipping of the saints for the work of service/ministry, for the edification of the body of Christ...”*

αὐτὸς – The *Lord Jesus* is the one who places individuals in the office of the public ministry. This occurs when the divine call is extended.

ἔδωκεν – The aorist is constative: the fact is stressed, without denying that the event is also iterative in nature.

τοὺς μὲν...τοὺς δὲ – Here we have an idiom: “some...others.”

Does the fact that the last noun in the series (διδασκάλους) lacks the previous τοὺς δὲ mean that this noun is to be taken as a unit with ποιμένας? It is true that usually when there is one definite article for the two nouns there is a connection between the two. It can be demonstrated, however, that the Greek at times makes an exception. To change the syntax of the last item in a series is a common stylistic technique in Greek and especially in Paul.

A couple of examples are Galatians 3:28 and Romans 2:21–23. In Galatians 3:28 the οὐκ...οὐδέ pattern is followed consistently in the statement “There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free....” But with the last items of the set οὐκ...καὶ is found as the list concludes: “neither male nor female.” Four articulated participles (ὁ διδάσκων, ὁ κηρύσσων, ὁ λέγων, ὁ βδελυσσόμενος) appear in Romans 2:21–22, but then—contra pattern—Paul finishes with a relative pronoun (ὅς) at the start of verse 23.

ἀποστόλους – The fact that apostles are mentioned first seems to imply that we are speaking only of the New Testament era. This is buttressed by the foregoing, where Jesus’ descent into hell and his ascension are discussed. In other words, we are looking at the time period basically beginning with Pentecost.

προφήτας – What precisely is meant by this term in relation to the *New Testament*? At least the example of Agabus comes to mind: Acts 11:28; 21:10,11.

εὐαγγελιστάς – We think here of Philip: Acts 8:6–14, 21:8. Also we find Timothy’s call specifically indicating he was to “do the work of an evangelist” (2 Tim. 4:5). Obviously the office or form we have here is that of serving as missionary, especially doing pioneer work in bringing the Gospel to those who have not heard it before.

ποιμένας – The question arises: Are these “shepherds/pastors” given a separate designation in distinction from διδασκάλους? (We will discuss this further in a moment.) At the very least we can say that the “pastors” of the New Testament era apparently are those designated by the similar New Testament titles ἐπίσκοπος and πρεσβύτερος, and their function involves oversight of doctrine. (1 Peter 5:2–3)

καὶ διδασκάλους – Is the καί coordinate (“pastors *and* teachers” as two separate entities) or is it expegetical (“pastors, *that is*, teachers”)? The so-called “Granville Sharp Rule” comes into play. D. Wallace in his *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, defines this kind of construction: “In Greek, when two nouns are connected by καί and the article precedes only the first noun, there is a close connection between the two.... When the construction meets three specific demands, then the two nouns *always* refer to the same person. When the construction does not meet these requirements, the noun may or may not refer to the same person(s)/object(s).” (p. 270) The three criteria are then listed as the following: a) neither of the substantives is impersonal; b) neither is plural; and c) neither is a proper name (p. 272). A clear example of a case where the Granville Sharp Rule applies is in 1 Peter 1:3, ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Here we have two personal names joined with καί, plus the definite article at the forefront. Since it meets the three criteria above, the translator can note that the terms “God” and “Father” are here referring to the very same entity.

As an example of an *ambiguous* “Granville Sharp” passage, Wallace lists Ephesians 4:11. The reason this verse must be regarded as ambiguous in terms of fitting the rule is that the nouns are plural (pastors/teachers). Wallace states: “There are no clear examples of *nouns* being used in a plural [Granville Sharp construction.]” (p. 284) A case in point for illustrating the problem above is the expression τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ προφητῶν in Eph. 2:20, where it appears that two distinct groups are indicated within the one category.

Wallace goes on to say that it is likely, however, that the ποιμένας were a part of the διδασκάλους. In other words, “Eph. 4:11 seems to affirm that all pastors were to be teachers, although not all teachers were to be pastors.” (p. 284) In Romans 12:7, 1 Cor. 12:28–29,

Heb. 5:12, and Jas. 3:1 we are left with the impression that the term “teachers” is not to be fully equated with the term “pastors.”

At best, one simply concludes that in Ephesians 4:11 there is not enough grammatical evidence to prove conclusively that the two plural substantives must refer to the very same entity. Since the evidence is lacking grammatically, we cannot dogmatically *insist* that the terms “pastors” and “teachers” in this verse signify only one office.

πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων – Literally we translate: “for the purpose of the completion/preparation of the saints.” Here the genitive is objective, for preparing *the saints* is the issue. The various offices/forms of public ministry given in Ephesians 4:11 all serve the purpose of fully preparing the believers spiritually as they comprise the entire work/mission of the Holy Christian Church.

εἰς ἔργον διακονίας – This phrase (“for the work of service”) has been taken by some to refer to “ministry work” in the sense that *all* Christians are—to a greater or lesser degree—public ministers. This is erroneous. A *call* is needed for one to be in the work of the public ministry. (Rom. 10:15ff.) We look upon the genitive διακονίας as descriptive: “ministering/serving work.” (Although it has no definite article, ἔργον is followed by the genitive, thereby making this a *definite* kind of work.) Lenski in his commentary on Ephesians remarks: “It is a task of ministering to each other, for ‘ministry’ signifies a service rendered to benefit others. All the saints have this blessed work to do and are to get their complete outfit for it from the apostles, etc., given to the church, i.e., from the Word.” (p. 530)

εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ – We classify the two genitives as objective and subjective, respectively. The building of Christ’s body, the church, is the goal of all the service/work of the believers. Not merely numerical concern but internal edification is indicated by the following verse (13).

Conclusion

There is a *mandate* for the public ministry. Our Lord Jesus Christ himself is the one who establishes the public ministry and is thus the one who divinely calls those who serve. Such calling is done via the church. The institution of the public ministry does not come about simply as a workable system set up by the church for the sake of good order. Nevertheless, in this divinely established public ministry for the New Testament, we can see that various offices/forms are enumerated. It would be legalistic to insist that *only* the role of the pastor can do *all* teaching in the domain of the church. Certainly he is one who teaches (1 Tim. 3:2), but this does not preclude the church from calling teachers apart from the pastoral office to train fellow believers so that all may

work together in building up the body of Christ. This spiritual training always is done by God's divinely appointed means, Word and Sacrament.

J. Moldstad, September 2000

Appendix I.b: A Closer Look at the *Sedes Doctrinae* for the Public Ministry, 1 Corinthians 12:27–31

1 Cor. 12:27 – ὑμεῖς δέ ἐστε σῶμα Χριστοῦ καὶ μέλη ἐκ μέρους.

1 Cor. 12:28 – Καὶ οὐς μὲν ἔθετο ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ πρῶτον ἀποστόλους δεύτερον προφήτας τρίτον διδασκάλους, ἔπειτα δυνάμεις, ἔπειτα χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων, ἀντιλήψεις κυβερνήσεις, γένη γλωσσῶν.

1 Cor. 12:29 – μή πάντες ἀπόστολοι; μή πάντες προφήται; μή πάντες διδάσκαλοι; μή πάντες δυνάμεις;

1 Cor. 12:30 – μή πάντες χαρίσματα ἔχουσιν ἰαμάτων; μή πάντες γλώσσαις λαλοῦσιν; μή πάντες διερμηνεύουσιν;

1 Cor. 12:31 – ζηλοῦτε δὲ τὰ χαρίσματα τὰ μείζονα. Καὶ ἔτι καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ὁδὸν ὑμῖν δείκνυμι.

Translation: “*Now you are Christ’s body and members individually. And whom God appointed in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helpers, leaders, kinds of languages. Not all are apostles, not all are prophets, not all are teachers, not all are miracles (workers of miracles), are they? Not all have gifts of healing, do they? Not all speak in languages, do they? Not all interpret, do they? Now seek zealously the greater gifts. And now I will show you the highest way.*”

The immediate context of this section is that of Christ’s body, the church, which is comprised of individual members with different gifts and abilities for service in God’s kingdom. For the Corinthian church in particular, where gifts and abilities were an issue, it was important to realize how the use of all God’s gifts serve in a unifying way for the up-building of the body of Christ. No feelings of superiority or inferiority were to be imposed. Paul writes: “*Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*”

Within this context, the apostle describes certain gifts/abilities in the church that God has appointed. The word he uses is ἔθετο, the aorist indicative of τίθημι. This is the same word used in Acts 20:28 (τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον

ἔθετο ἐπισκόπους), where it is used of God having established overseers for his flock. In 1 Timothy 2:7 Paul employs the word to describe his own calling as an apostle (εἰς ὃ ἐτέθην ἐγὼ κήρυξ καὶ ἀπόστολος). With the use of the historical aorist here in 1 Corinthians 12:28 (used also in 12:18), the institution of the public ministry for the benefit of his church is being addressed.

Notice the list of those “appointed” or “established” in this realm of the public ministry:

- apostles – undoubtedly referring to the 12 apostles (Matthias among the number) and others such as Paul (1 Tim. 2:7) and Barnabas (Acts 14:14)
- prophets – the word order apparently indicating *N. T.* prophets intended
- teachers – ones who publicly instruct in the Word, whether pastors or not
- miracles – ones who, during the early church period, performed miracles in general
- gifts of healing – ones who specifically did miracles involving physical restoration
- helpers – (ἀντιλήμψεις); specific assistants; possibly like those in Acts 6 (?)
- leaders – probably identifies so-called “lay leaders” who “play a vital role in keeping the congregation on a steady course” (Gregory Lockwood, *1 Corinthians*, Concordia Commentary, CPH: 2000; p. 451)
- kinds of language – noting those who have linguistic abilities to communicate the Gospel among various ethnic groups

Concerning the gifts of miracles and healing, as well as the miraculous gift to communicate instantly in other foreign languages (no doubt mentioned last, since the Corinthians were tending to give it undue focus), suffice it to say that these were gifts which seem to have been limited to the apostolic era. In 2 Corinthians 12:12 we read: “*The things that mark an apostle—signs, wonders and miracles—were done among you with great perseverance.*” Only when apostles had been on the scene in any given place do we find recorded in Acts and 1 Corinthians the miraculous gifts extended beyond the Twelve. At the time when the apostles’ era came to a halt, we have no indication that the so-called “miraculous gifts” continued in the life of the church. “We are compelled to conclude that the only means of distributing the prophetic gifts in the New Testament era was the apostolate, so that once the last apostle died, no more prophetic gifts were available” (D. Judisch’s, *An Evaluation of the Claims to the Charismatic Gifts*, Baker: 1978; p. 33).

In the above list of gifts, we observe that teachers, helpers and leaders are of a more everyday nature and are gifts which continue in the church to the present. Although we cannot determine with absolute certainty the responsibilities which each of these forms/offices encompasses, yet we do know that these are gifts/ministries which the Lord himself has established for the good of his church [1 Corinthians 12:5, “*And there are differences of ministries (διακονιών), but the same Lord.*”] Thus, no *single* form of public ministry at the exclusion of others can be proven to have been instituted by God. But we do see that God

has ordained *one* public ministry with various forms, even as there is *one* true church with many members in that body.

How did Martin Chemnitz understand this section of 1 Corinthians 12? In his *Examen*, under his discussion concerning the seven holy orders of the ministry canonized by Rome, Chemnitz refers to 1 Corinthians 12:28–30 as an example of the various forms of ministry apparent in the church at Corinth in Paul’s day: “There were in the church at Corinth apostles, prophets, and teachers; some spoke in tongues, some interpreted, some had psalms, some prayers, benedictions, and giving thanks, **not in private exercises but in public assemblies of the church**” (Chemnitz’ *Examination of the Council of Trent, II*, Kramer edition, CPH: 1978; p. 683). After a lengthy treatment of the way in which the early church made use of numerous “orders” in the one public ministry, Chemnitz states: “This distribution of ranks in the more populous churches was useful for the sake of order, for decorum, and for edification by reason of the duties which belong to the ministry. In the smaller or less populous churches such a distribution of ranks was not judged necessary, and also in the more populous churches a like or identical distribution of these ranks was not everywhere observed. For this reason, for this use, and **with this freedom** many of these ranks of the ancient church are preserved also among us... For we do not outrightly reject or condemn the distribution of these ranks, such as it was in the apostolic and in the ancient church, **but use them in our own churches where necessary and for edification**, in the way we have just said” (*Ibid.*, p. 687 & 688). [bold print, mine]

In summary, the list of gifts mentioned by Paul here in 1 Corinthians 12 shows that God has appointed (ἑθέρτο) helpers and leaders in the work of the public ministry *no less than* he appointed apostles, prophets and teachers. These forms—obviously used for the building up of the church—are understood as utilizing the office of the keys *on behalf of the church and in the stead of Christ*, each according to its own “stall” determined by the specific call. God has instituted **one** divine public ministry, out of which **various forms** may arise as the church sees necessary.

J. Moldstad, October 2000

Appendix II.a: THE PUBLIC MINISTRY OF THE WORD (adopted 2005)

Salvation Won by Christ and Received through Faith

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

Salvation Distributed

That we may obtain this faith, the office of teaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments was instituted. For through the Word and sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Spirit is given, who works faith where and when it pleases God in those who hear the Gospel. That is, God, not because of our own merits, but for Christ's sake, justifies those who believe that they are received into favor for Christ's sake. (AC V, Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary, 9)

We reject the teaching that

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

The Role of the Church in Salvation Distributed

1. The Office of the Keys

God has given to His church on earth the Office of the Keys (Matthew 16:19, Matthew 18:18–20, John 20:21–23; also see Smalcald Articles, Part III, Art. VII, 1). “The Office of the Keys is the special authority which Christ has given to His Church on earth, to forgive the sins of the penitent sinners and to retain the sins of the impenitent as long as they do not repent” (Luther’s Small Catechism, “The Office of the Keys and Confession”, ELS 2001 ed.; “Doctrine of the Church,” Thesis III, ELS Synod Report, 1979, p. 31 and 1980, p. 76). The church uses the keys to preach the Gospel, administer the sacraments, and practice church discipline. The keys are used privately or unofficially⁶² when individual Christians, on behalf of Christ, speak the Gospel of

⁶² In this document when we speak of the *private or unofficial* use of the keys we mean the duty and authority belonging to individual believers (the Universal Priesthood of All Believers) which is their personal responsibility toward their neighbor. When we

forgiveness to others; when they forgive the sins of those who sin against them; when they retain the sins of those who do not repent, e.g., when they confront in a brotherly way those who need to repent of their sins; and when in “the mutual conversation and consolation of the brethren” they comfort one another with the words of the Gospel (1 Peter 2:9, Matthew 18:15–18, Matthew 6:12 – The 5th Petition of the Lord’s Prayer; SA Part III, Art. IV). Christians also use the keys publicly or officially when scripturally qualified individuals, who have been called by Christ through the church, forgive and retain sins on behalf of Christ and His church (Romans 10:14–17, Acts 14:23, Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, 67). Christians also use the keys to judge the teaching of their pastors and teachers; they are to beware of false prophets (Matthew 7:15–16, 1 John 4:1, 2 Timothy 3:16).

1. We reject any teaching that denies individual Christians the use of the keys privately in their calling as the Universal Priesthood of All Believers.

2. We reject any teaching that treats the Universal Priesthood and the Public Ministry as one and the same thing.

II. The Public Ministry of the Word

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

3. We reject any teaching that the Public Ministry is a development of the church and not a divine institution.

speak of the *public or official* use of the keys we are referring to the duty and authority of those who are called to act on behalf of Christ and His believers.

4. We reject any teaching that holds that the Public Ministry is established merely by the orderly carrying out of the Universal Priesthood according to 1 Corinthians 14:40.

A. The Public Ministry of the Word in a Narrower Sense: The Pastoral Office in its Various Manifestations.⁶³ The church is commanded to appoint ministers who will preside over the churches (2 Timothy 2:2, Titus 1:5, Ap XIII, 12), who must have the scriptural qualifications for a full use of the keys: “The Gospel requires of those who preside over the churches that they preach the Gospel, remit sins, administer the sacraments, and, in addition, exercise jurisdiction, that is, excommunicate those who are guilty of notorious crimes and absolve those who repent...[T]his power belongs by divine right to all who preside over the churches, whether they are called pastors, presbyters or bishops” (Treatise 60–61). God commands that properly called men publicly preach, teach, administer the sacraments, forgive and retain sins, and have oversight of doctrine in the name of Christ and the church (1 Timothy 2:11–12). Therefore a presiding office, whether it is called that of pastor, shepherd, bishop, presbyter, elder or by any other name, is indispensable for the church (Luke 10:16, 1 Corinthians 12:27–31, Matthew 28:18–20, Hebrews 13:17, Acts 20:28, Ephesians 4:11–12, 1 Peter 5:1–2).

5. We reject any teaching that denies the exercise of spiritual oversight by the pastoral office.

6. We reject any teaching that the apostolic authority of the Public Ministry of the Word or the validity of the sacraments depends on or is derived from ordination by a bishop standing in an unbroken chain of succession from the apostles, or the necessity of maintaining a “historic episcopate.”

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

⁶³ The term “pastoral office” has been used historically according to a more restrictive meaning (referring only to those men who are called to the pastorate of a local congregation), and according to a less restrictive meaning (referring to all those men who are called to a ministry of pastoral oversight in local congregations, as well as in other specialized fields of labor). In this document the term is being used according to its less restrictive meaning.

or distribute the Lord's Supper, for these things are intimately related to the pastoral office (1 Timothy 4:13–14, 1 Corinthians 4:1).⁶⁴

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

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

B. The Public Ministry of the Word in a Wider Sense: Other Offices That Have a Limited Public Use of the Keys. The church has freedom⁶⁵ in dividing the labors of the public ministry (for example, vicars, principals, Lutheran elementary school teachers and other teachers), but must not go beyond the bounds of God's commands when calling men or women to carry out a limited public use of the keys (1 Corinthians 14:34, 1 Timothy 2:12ff, etc). The extent to which one is authorized by the call of the church to exercise the keys publicly is the extent to which one is in the Public Ministry of the Word. Authorization to exercise a limited part of the Public Ministry of the Word does not imply authorization to exercise all or other parts of it (1 Corinthians 12:5, 28, Romans 12:6–8, Philippians 1:1, 1 Timothy 3:8, 5:17).

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

Extending calls to teachers who have spiritual care of children in Christian schools is not merely a laudable custom, but is in accordance with Romans 10:14–17 and Augsburg Confession XIV, not only for the sake of good order, but also because these teachers carry out a specific part of the Public Ministry. It is by human right that the church separates a limited portion of the

⁶⁴ Certainly emergency situations may arise, such as when our catechism states “Q: Who should administer baptism? A: Ordinarily the called minister of Christ should administer Baptism, but in emergency any Christian may and should do so” (ELS Catechism, p. 182). For further discussion of emergency situations, see the 1862 Lay Ministry Theses, parr. 5–7 (*Grace for Grace*, p. 139).

⁶⁵ Christian freedom is given to the church by God. “By divine right” refers to those things which are commanded by God. “By human right” refers to those things neither commanded nor forbidden by God which Christians may arrange according to their needs and circumstances (Acts 6:1–7, 15:22–29, 4:32, 5:29, 1 Cor 3:21,22, 14:40, Gal 5:1)

office to one individual. But it is by divine right that one exercises that work on behalf of the Christians through whom the call has come.

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

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

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

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

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

III. The Divine Call Into the Public Ministry

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

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

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

IV. Ordination and Installation

In the Lutheran Confessions ordination is understood as the rite by which the church confirms a man to be suitable for a call to the pastoral office (SA Part III, Art. X, Treatise 66–69). Historically the Lutheran church has reserved this rite for those entering the pastoral office.

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

Appendix II.b: Passages and Confessional References Cited in the Document

All Scriptural citations are from the NIV unless otherwise noted. Citations from the Augsburg Confession are from the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary*. Other confessional citations are from the *Triglotta*.

1. The Office of the Keys

Matthew 16:19 – “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

Matthew 18:18–20 – “I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by My Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in My name, there am I with them.”

John 20:21–23 – Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you.” And with that He breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

1 Peter 2:9 – You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Matthew 18:15–18 – “If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

Matthew 6:12 – The 5th Petition of the Lord’s Prayer – Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors (NKJV; Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.)

Romans 10:14–17 – How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

Acts 14:23 – Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust

Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, 67 – For wherever the church is, there is the authority [command] to administer the Gospel. Therefore it is necessary for the Church to retain the authority to call, elect, and ordain ministers. And this authority is a gift which in reality is given to the Church, which no human power can wrest from the Church, as Paul also testifies to the Ephesians, 4:8, when he says, *He ascended, He gave gifts to men*. And he enumerates among the gifts specially belonging to the Church *pastors and teachers*, and adds that such are given for the ministry, *for the edifying of the body of Christ*. Hence, wherever there is a true church, the right to elect and ordain ministers necessarily exists. Just as in a case of necessity even a layman absolves and becomes the minister and pastor of another; as Augustine narrates the story of two Christians in a ship, one of whom baptized the catechumen, who after Baptism then absolved the baptizer.

Matthew 7:15–16 – “Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them.”

1 John 4:1 – Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

2 Timothy 3:16 – All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.

II. The Public Ministry of the Word

John 20:21–23 – Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you.” And with that He breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

John 21:15–17 – When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you truly love Me more than these?” Yes, Lord,” he said, “You know that I love You.” Jesus said, “Feed My lambs.” Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you truly love Me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, You know that I love You.” Jesus said, “Take care of My sheep.” The third time He said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love Me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love Me?” He said, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.” Jesus said, “Feed My sheep.”

Matthew 28:18–20 – And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen. (NKJV)

Matthew 9:36–38 – When [Jesus] saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field.”

Ephesians 4:11–12 – He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints, for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. (NKJV)

1 Peter 5:1–4 – To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ’s sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers —not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

Acts 20:28 – Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with His own blood.

1 Corinthians 4:1 – Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. (NKJV)

Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, 10 – [Paul] teaches that the authority of the ministry depends upon the Word of God, and that Peter was not superior to the other apostles and that it was not from this one individual Peter that ordination or confirmation was to be sought, [that the office of the ministry proceeds from the general call of the apostles, and that it is

not necessary for all to have the call or confirmation of this one person, Peter, alone].

Luke 10:16 – “He who listens to you listens to Me; he who rejects you rejects Me; but he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me.”

Augsburg Confession XXVIII.21–22 – No jurisdiction belongs [to the bishops] except to forgive sins, to discern doctrine, to reject doctrines contrary to the Gospel, and to exclude from the communion of the Church wicked people whose wickedness is known, and this without human force but simply by the Word. Herein the congregations are bound by Divine Law to obey them, according to Luke 10:16, “He who hears you, hears Me.”

Apology of the Augsburg Confession VII & VIII, 28 – Neither does the fact that the Sacraments are administered by the unworthy detract from their efficacy, because, on account of the call of the Church, [the ministers] represent the person of Christ, and do not represent their own persons, as Christ testifies, Luke 10:16: *He that heareth you heareth Me*. [Thus even Judas was sent to preach.] When they offer the Word of God, when they offer the Sacraments, they offer them in the stead and place of Christ. Those words of Christ teach us not to be offended by the unworthiness of the ministers.

Apology of the Augsburg Confession VII & VIII, 47 – The entire Eighth Article has been approved, in which we confess that hypocrites and wicked persons have been mingled with the Church, and that the Sacraments are efficacious even though dispensed by wicked ministers, because the ministers act in the place of Christ, and do not represent their own persons, according to Luke 10:16: *He that heareth you heareth Me*.

1 Corinthians 14:40 – Let all things be done decently and in order.

A. *The Pastoral Office.*

2 Timothy 2:2 – And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

Titus 1:5 – The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.

Apology XIII, 12 – For the Church has the command to appoint ministers, which should be most pleasing to us, because we know that God approves this ministry, and is present in the ministry [that God will preach and work through men and those who have been chosen by men].

1 Timothy 2:11–12 – A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent.

Luke 10:16 – “He who listens to you listens to Me; he who rejects you rejects Me; but he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me.”

1 Corinthians 12:27–31 – Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having

gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But eagerly desire the greater gifts.

Matthew 28:18–20 – And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen. (NKJV)

Hebrews 13:17 – Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.

Acts 20:28 – Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with His own blood.

Ephesians 4:11–12 – He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints, for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. (NKJV)

1 Peter 5:1–2 – To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ’s sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve.

1 Corinthians 14:34–35 – Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says.

1 Timothy 2:11–12 – A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent.

1 Timothy 3:2 – Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach.

1 Timothy 4:13–14 – Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you.

1 Corinthians 4:1 – So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God.

1 Corinthians 1:17 – For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel — not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

1 Corinthians 12:4–6 – There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.

B. A Limited Use of the Keys in Other Offices.

1 Corinthians 14:34 – Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says.

1 Timothy 2:12 – I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent.

1 Corinthians 12:5 & 28 – There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.... And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.

Romans 12:6–8 – We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

Philippians 1:1 – Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons.

1 Timothy 3:8 – Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain

1 Timothy 5:17 – The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.

C. Teachers of Children in Christian Schools

Deuteronomy 6:1–7 – These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. Hear, O Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, promised you. Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

Matthew 15:4 – For God said, 'Honor your father and mother' and 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.'

Ephesians 6:1–4 – Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise—"that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the

earth.” Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

John 21:15–17 – When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you truly love Me more than these?” Yes, Lord,” he said, “You know that I love You.” Jesus said, “Feed My lambs.” Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you truly love Me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, You know that I love You.” Jesus said, “Take care of My sheep.” The third time He said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love Me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love Me?” He said, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.” Jesus said, “Feed My sheep.”

Large Catechism I, 141 (The Fourth Commandment) – In this commandment belongs a further statement regarding all kinds of obedience to persons in authority who have the command to govern. For all authority flows and is propagated from the authority of parents. For where a father is unable alone to educate his [rebellious and irritable] child, he employs a schoolmaster to instruct him; if he be too weak, he enlists the aid of his friends and neighbors; if he departs this life, he delegates and confers his authority and government upon those who are appointed for the purpose.

III. The Divine Call

Romans 10:14–17 – How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

Augsburg Confession XIV – Our churches teach that nobody should preach publicly in the church or administer the sacraments unless he is regularly called.

Acts 13:2–3 – While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

Acts 14:23 – Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

Acts 20:28 – Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with His own blood.

1 Corinthians 3:4–9 – For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not mere men? What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe —as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made

it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

1 Corinthians 3:21–23 – So then, no more boasting about men! All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future — all are yours, and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.

IV. Ordination and Installation

Smalcald Articles III, X – If the bishops would be true bishops [would rightly discharge their office], and would devote themselves to the Church and the Gospel, it might be granted to them for the sake of love and unity, but not from necessity, to ordain and confirm our preachers; omitting, however, all comedies and spectacular display [deceptions, absurdities, and appearances] of unchristian [heathenish] parade and pomp. But because they neither are, nor wish to be, true bishops, but worldly lords and princes, who will neither preach, nor teach, nor baptize, nor administer the Lord's Supper, nor perform any work or office of the Church, and moreover, persecute and condemn those who discharge these functions, having been called to do so, the Church ought not on their account to remain without ministers [to be forsaken by or deprived of ministers].

Therefore, as the ancient examples of the Church and the Fathers teach us, we ourselves will and ought to ordain suitable persons to this office; and, even according to their own laws, they have not the right to forbid or prevent us. For their laws say that those ordained even by heretics should be declared [truly] ordained and stay ordained [and that such ordination must not be changed], as St. Jerome writes of the Church at Alexandria, that at first it was governed by common priests and preachers, without bishops.

Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, 66–69 – Therefore, when the regular bishops become enemies of the Church, or are unwilling to administer ordination, the churches retain their own right. [Because the regular bishops persecute the Gospel and refuse to ordain suitable persons, every church has in this case full authority to ordain its own ministers.]

For wherever the church is, there is the authority [command] to administer the Gospel. Therefore it is necessary for the Church to retain the authority to call, elect, and ordain ministers. And this authority is a gift which in reality is given to the Church, which no human power can wrest from the Church, as Paul also testifies to the Ephesians, 4:8, when he says, *He ascended, He gave gifts to men*. And he enumerates among the gifts specially belonging to the Church *pastors and teachers*, and adds that such are given for the ministry, *for the edifying of the body of Christ*. Hence, wherever there is a true church, the right to elect and ordain ministers necessarily exists. Just as in a case of necessity

even a layman absolves and becomes the minister and pastor of another; as Augustine narrates the story of two Christians in a ship, one of whom baptized the catechumen, who after Baptism then absolved the baptizer.

Here belong the statements of Christ which testify that the keys have been given to the Church and not merely to certain persons, Matt. 18:20: *Where two or three are gathered together in My name*, etc.

Lastly, the statement of Peter also confirms this, 1 Ep 2:9: *Ye are a royal priesthood*. These words pertain to the true Church which certainly has the right to elect and ordain ministers since it alone has the priesthood.

Regarding footnote 3, the committee was concerned that not everyone might have a copy of *Grace for Grace*. If such is the case, the quote is printed here:

5. It is both a right and a duty in case of actual need for anyone who is capable of doing so to exercise the public ministerial office in a Christian and orderly manner.

6. The only correct definition of “need” is that there exists a need when a pastor is not at hand and cannot be secured; or when, if there is a pastor, he either does not serve the people properly but teaches false doctrine, or cannot serve them adequately but only so rarely that the people cannot thereby be brought to faith or be kept in it and defended against errors, so that the Christian must faint for lack of care.

7. When such need exists, efforts should be made to relieve it by definite and proper arrangements according as circumstances will permit.

Appendix III: PART OF “A Response from the ELS Presidium to Circuit #8 Concerning the Circuit’s Memorial to the 2005 Convention” (October 11, 2005)

The two antitheses not appearing in the revision of Circuit #8 are these:

- “We reject the teaching that only those qualified to carry out a full use of the keys are in the Public Ministry.”
- “We reject the teaching that the Public Ministry is limited to any one divinely fixed form, that is, limited to the pastoral office to the exclusion of other teachers of the Word.”

The purpose of antithetical statements is to sharpen the points of doctrine where misunderstandings or misinterpretations could easily and/

or inadvertently occur. “The Public Ministry of the Word” contains thirteen antitheses. The two that are listed above were intended to clarify or to sharpen the substance expounded in the document. It needs to be noted that these are missing in the revision document of Circuit #8.

While the revision document does acknowledge “theological professors” for example, as falling within the divine institution of Public Ministry, it does not grant this status to other offices such as those listed in section II. B. of “The Public Ministry of the Word.” If the contention is being made by the omission that only those trained theologically with a seminary education, i.e., trained to be a parish pastor, or who are ordained, constitute the Public Ministry to the exclusion of other offices with a limited public use of the keys, we note that our adopted statement rejects such a dogmatic assertion. Scripture itself does not restrict the matter.

We believe that the non-inclusion of these antitheses conflicts with the definition of the Public Ministry as adopted by the synod. The revision document seeks to prescribe for the church a certain confined definition of the Public Ministry that cannot be substantiated from Scripture.

- 1) The placement of AC XIV and its primary Scripture reference, Romans 10:14–17, is in the revision document under the section called “The Pastoral Office”; whereas, in the adopted statement it appears as a separate point that encompasses both the narrower and the wider sense of Public Ministry.

The question of using AC XIV for divine calls other than pastors has been before us in our discussions over the years. The basic requirement stated here not only applies to pastors of congregations, but to anyone who represents the church in doing public ministry work. The formality of the call, of course, may vary in different circumstances.

But Scripture itself (Romans 10) necessitates the call. Yet Scripture does not prescribe exactly *how* the call is issued.

Our understanding of AC XIV is that this article of the Augsburg Confession provides us with a safeguard against anyone presuming to hold and occupy a teaching/preaching position in the life of the church without the prerogative and direction/authorization of the group of Christians doing the calling. There appears to be nothing in this article that absolutely forbids this rule from applying to more than the ones who serve as the pastors of congregations; in fact, the principle behind AC XIV needs to be upheld. For this reason, the adopted statement scrupulously reads: “Extending calls to teachers who have spiritual care of children in Christian schools is not merely a laudable custom, but is **in accordance with Romans 10:14–17 and Augsburg Confession XIV...**” [bold emphasis added].

The primary verse that this document draws attention to as the reason for the confessors including AC XIV is Romans 10:14–17, which is a major proof passage for the doctrine of the call. The word “preach” here is a more general use of the term, not limited to parish pastors. The word κηρύσσω in Romans 10

is used much in the same way as it is found in Mark 16:15, where “preach” is not restricted to the sermonizing of those in the pastoral office. In Romans 10 κηρύσσω is used in a general way to describe the proclamation of the Gospel by all whom the church sends out.

Dr. U. V. Koren wrote: “So the office also belongs to the congregation. But Christ has given the congregation the command and the explanation concerning the public execution of the office, which has just been mentioned and which our church confesses in the 14th article of the Augsburg Confession. Therefore it is also the congregation which calls **its preachers and teachers** and which has to see to it that these do the work they are called to do.” (“The Right Principles of Church Government,” 1899, quoted in *Faith of Our Fathers*, pp. 125, 126) [bold emphasis added].

In the Treatise, par. 67, we find this important remark: “For wherever the church exists, the right to administer the Gospel also exists. Wherefore it is necessary for the church to retain the right of calling, electing and ordaining ministers. This right is a gift given exclusively to the church, and no human authority can take it away from the church. It is as Paul testifies to the Ephesians when he says, ‘When he ascended on high he gave gifts to men’ (Eph. 4:8, 11, 12). He enumerates pastors and teachers among the gifts belonging to the church...” [Please note that Ephesians 4, where teachers also are listed, is in the Treatise a proof passage for the church to issue calls.]

One must be called in order to teach the Word on behalf of the church and in the name and stead of Christ. If one has a divine call to teach the Word, that person is in the public ministry. There is no divine call but the divine call to the public ministry. It is unscriptural and unconfessional to teach the Word of God on behalf of a group of believers without having received a divine call to do so. The adopted statement confesses:

The church in an orderly way extends divine calls in the name and stead of Christ and on behalf of the believers. **Those who possess divine calls are serving in the Public Ministry of the Word in either a narrower or a wider sense** (Acts 13:2–3, 14:23, 20:28; 1 Corinthians 3:4–9, 21–23). [bold emphasis added]

- 2) The revision document states that what is carried on by human right cannot be divinely instituted, and thus cannot be an office whereby one enters through a divine call.

The revision document refers to “Sacred Ecclesiastical Offices,” but does not view these offices, such as Lutheran elementary school teachers and other teachers, as existing within the divine institution of the Public Ministry. Defenders of the revision document have held: “Incumbents of such offices do sacred work but they do not hold the office of divine institution. The office they hold is by human right.” | “Offices of churchly origin are not divinely instituted.” | “It is wrong to teach that what the church in her divinely given freedom may do or leave undone is an institution of God.” [These citations are

taken from a paper entitled, “Does the Bible Teach a Limited Public Use of the Keys?” delivered at the northern MN circuit on April 24, 2005.] Once again, we refer to footnote #1 in the revision of Circuit #8:

Other **Sacred Ecclesiastical Offices** (see III. Below) are called the Public Ministry in a Wider Sense because **they are not specifically instituted by God** ... [bold emphasis added].

Our Evangelical Lutheran Synod has considered offices such as the office of a Lutheran elementary school teacher as a part of the overall institution of the Public Ministry. The revision document of Circuit #8 speaks of a “call” for the Lutheran elementary school teacher, but does not acknowledge it to be the type of call that is “**in accordance with AC XIV**,” a phrase that is found in our adopted statement.

How can there *not* be a divine call for anyone who is put in the place of publicly teaching the Word of God on behalf of the congregation? AC XIV itself states, “No one should publicly teach in the Church or administer the sacraments unless he is rightfully called.” How can a confessional Lutheran be willing to permit someone to teach God’s Word regularly in the church without being rightfully called by God to do so, through the mediation of the church?

The practice of the ELS down through the years has been to extend divine calls to our teachers, and practice is intended to reflect doctrinal principles. Our synod’s Guidelines state: “The designation of duties and the call meeting concerning a teacher should be conducted in the same manner as for pastors in Article I.C. above” (“Handbook of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod,” 19–A). The church extends to them a divine call to teach God’s Word publicly to the children.

The adopted statement confesses:

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

Appendix IV: Reminder of what is stated in the PMW

1) On the subject of divine institution:

“This divinely instituted Public use of the Word includes both a narrower and a wider sense. The narrower sense refers to a presiding office that is indispensable for the church; see II A. The wider sense refers, in addition to a presiding office, to offices having a limited use of the keys, offices that the church, in her freedom, may establish; see II B.” We speak of the Public Ministry in a narrow sense as being divinely instituted, and we also speak of the Public Ministry in a wider sense as being divinely instituted.

2) On the subject of the pastoral office:

The adopted statement says with certainty that God in his institution of the Public Ministry “commands that properly called men publicly preach, teach, administer the sacraments, forgive and retain sins, and have oversight of doctrine in the name of Christ and the church (1 Timothy 2:11–12). Therefore a presiding office, whether it is called that of pastor, shepherd, bishop, presbyter, elder or by any other name, is indispensable for the church (Luke 10:16, 1 Corinthians 12:27–31, Matthew 28:18–20, Hebrews 13:17, Acts 20:28, Ephesians 4:11–12, 1 Peter 5:1–2).”

- Since the expression “pastoral office,” *very carefully and notably defined in this document in footnote 2,*⁶⁶ is the office of oversight, and since it is necessary that duties of oversight be carried out for the good of the church, such a presiding office is indispensable for the church. This means that God has willed or commanded such an oversight office for the welfare of his church.

3) On the subject of offices with a limited use of the keys:

The adopted statement says with certainty that God in his institution of the Public Ministry *allows* offices that have a limited public use of the Means of Grace.

- Since the church “in her freedom, may establish” offices with a limited use of the keys; and since the church “has freedom in dividing the labors of the public ministry; and since the public ministry is not “limited to the pastoral office to the exclusion of other teachers of the Word;” and since these are offices which “Christians may arrange

⁶⁶ * “The term ‘pastoral office’ has been used historically according to a more restrictive meaning (referring only to those men who are called to the pastorate of a local congregation), and according to a less restrictive meaning (referring to all those men who are called to a ministry of pastoral oversight in local congregations, as well as in other specialized fields of labor). In this document the term is being used according to its less restrictive meaning.”

according to their needs and circumstances,” therefore these offices are found within the wider instituted realm of the public ministry.

- This means that, while God has not specifically *commanded* his church to employ limited usage of the keys offices, God has willed or commanded the use-of-the-Word duties within these offices for the welfare of his church.
- “It is by human right that the church separates a limited portion of the office (Public Ministry) to one individual,” or, for that matter, to several individuals.

“But it is by divine right that one exercises that work on behalf of the Christians through whom the call has come.” This latter phrase is the reason we speak not only of a divine call for the pastoral office but also speak of a divine call for those who are involved in limited usage of the keys offices. The pastoral office, while necessary for oversight, is not instituted *to the exclusion of* other teachers of the Word.

4) On the distinction between II A and II B in the PMW:

Some people carry out the work or activity of administering the Word of God *to the full extent* – as do pastors, who teach and preach the whole counsel of God, officiate at the sacraments, etc – and other people carry out the work or activity of administering the Word of God *only to a limited extent* – as do catechists, religion teachers in parochial schools, and others who teach the rudiments of Christian doctrine to children and others, but who do not exercise pastoral oversight through the full use of the power of the keys.

J. Moldstad, 2008

Appendix V: Concerning Women Administering Communion to Women

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

- Concern that speaking of such action as permissible without confining it to unusual circumstances, especially cases of casuistry, causes confusion about the role of women in public ministry, and it may appear that women are now functioning in a role historically assigned to the pastoral ministry.

In addition, historically women communing women has not been a practice within the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

- Concern for the proper spiritual care of communicants; the logical inference from the study of pertinent passages of Scripture leads us to conclude that the administration of communion is usually one of the responsibilities of the overseeing minister of the church (1 Corinthians 4:1), and this oversight position for congregations is restricted to males (e.g., 1 Timothy 2:11–12, 1 Timothy 3:1ff). This does not mean that in every case only the overseeing ministers are the administrators of the sacrament; properly trained male leaders in congregations may, when properly called and under appropriate supervision and when the need arises, serve as administrators.
- Concern about whether others have sufficient theological training and ongoing experience to preside at the celebration of the Lord's Supper; generally the one trained as the overseeing minister is entrusted evangelically to determine whether a communicant in a worthy manner is receiving the Lord's true body and blood for the forgiveness of sins.
- Concern that the reception of the Lord's Supper not be regarded as an emergency situation; unlike Baptism, the Lord's Supper is not an emergency sacrament, and generally sacraments are administered by the overseeing minister; we do acknowledge, however, that there may be an exceptional case of casuistry, in which the law of love would require a woman to administer communion to another Christian, so as not to deprive a communicant of grace and comfort.
- Concern that circumstances may arise in which such a practice would blur the biblical roles of man and woman.
- Concern that when the Lord's Supper is offered both male and female communicants, generally, should be welcome to attend. The gender of the administrator should not be considered as a reason for prohibiting someone from taking the sacrament.

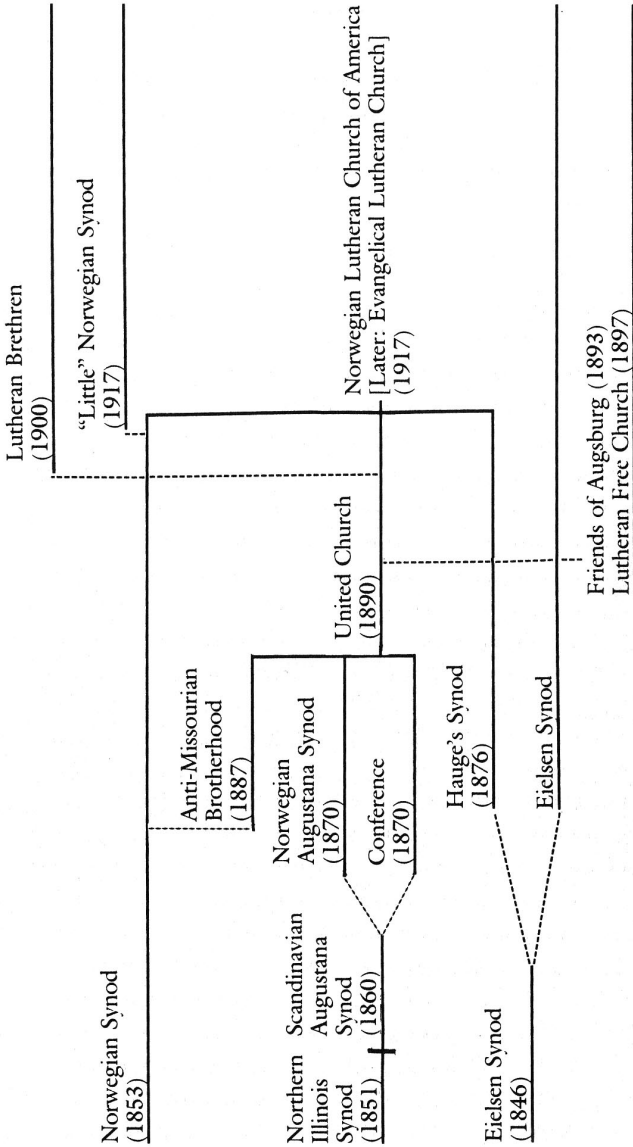
The above remarks are not to be understood as implying that the efficacy of the sacrament depends on the kind of call held by the administrator.

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

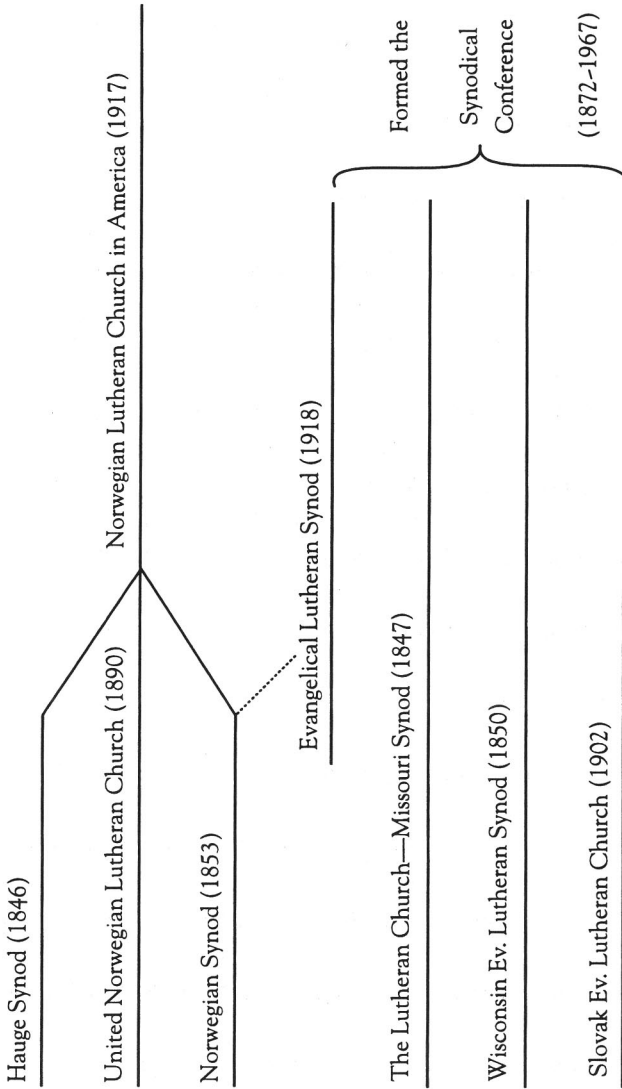
adopted by WELS COP, March 27, 2007

Appendix VI:

NORWEGIAN-AMERICAN LUTHERANISM, 1846-1917



Norwegians in the Synodical Conference



John A. Moldstad, *Predestination*, 94

Appendix VII: WE BELIEVE, TEACH, AND CONFESS: A Concise Doctrinal Statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (1992)

8. *THE CHURCH AND THE MINISTRY*

We confess that there is one holy Christian Church which consists of all those who from the heart truly believe in Christ as Savior and Lord. This Church, in its essence, is invisible to our eyes, since no one can judge the sincerity of another's heart, but it is known to God. We believe that the Church is to be found wherever the Word of God and the Sacraments are in use. The Church of Jesus Christ is not to be equated with any particular denomination or church body, or with the sum total of all Christian denominations and church bodies. It is the will of God that Christians should gather together regularly for mutual edification through Word and Sacrament, and that they should work together to promote the extension of God's pure Means of Grace throughout the world. See Luke 17:20, 2 Tim. 2:19, Eph. 4:4–6, Heb. 10:25, Mark 16:15.

We confess that the Lord has instituted the office of the Public Ministry so that His Means of Grace may be publicly administered for the well-being of His Church. Those in this office by virtue of God's call through the church perform their duties on behalf of the church and in the name and in the stead of Christ. We believe that no one should publicly preach or administer the Sacraments without a proper call. When God's Word says that women are not to teach or "exercise authority" over men in the church, this means that the pastoral office cannot be conferred upon women, and that it is God's will that only properly qualified men be called to this office. According to this same principle women should not exercise authority over men in the congregational decision-making process, such as by holding voting membership in an assembly which makes the final decisions for a church. (Because Christian men and women are all members of the Body of Christ and share in the privileges and duties of the "priesthood of all believers," the views of women should be taken into account when such decisions are made.) See John 21:15–18, Acts 20:28, Rom. 10:14–15, Eph. 4:11, 1 Tim. 3:1–7, Titus 1:5, 1 Cor. 14:34, 1 Tim. 2:12, 1 Pet. 2:9, Gal. 3:28.

Appendix VIII: THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

- I. Our Lord has created one church. Jesus refers to it as “my church.” In speaking to Peter, He said, “*And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*” (Matt. 16:18) All true believers in Christ belong to this one church. (Ephesians 2:19–22) We give expression to our faith in this church in the Apostles’ Creed: “I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints.”
- II. This church is found where the Word of God is proclaimed and the Sacraments are rightly administered. It is through these means that the Holy Ghost builds this church. We have assurance that the Word will not return void but that it will accomplish that which God pleases. (Cf. Isaiah 55:11)
- III. God has given to the church (believers) the authority to preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments. This is known as the office of the keys. Believers have the authority to exercise the keys individually and collectively. (John 20:21–23 and I Peter 2:9)
- IV. It is God’s will “that Christians unite in order to preserve the means of grace pure and unadulterated, to use these means of grace for their own edification, to show the unity that exists among them, and to join hands in bringing the good news of salvation in Christ to others. Jeremiah 23:28; John 8:31–32; Acts 2:42; Psalm 133:1; Matthew 28:19–20.” (ELS Catechism question 247, pp. 146–147)
 This normally is done through the external forms of the local congregation, synod, and denomination. Although it is God’s will that Christians gather for public worship, these external forms, as such, however, are not divinely instituted. “*The kingdom of God cometh not with observation.*” (Luke 17:20) Luther correctly says, “There is not a single letter in Holy Scripture saying that such a church (i.e., a ‘physical, external Christendom’), where it is by itself, is instituted by God ... If they can show me that a single letter of Scripture speaks of it, I will recant my words.” (LW 39, 70)
 The local congregation is the primary grouping because this is where Christians live and where they can readily and practically carry out the commands of God on a regular basis.
- V. The authority in the church is the Word of God. When the Word is spoken by an individual, a local congregation, synod, or denomination, it is as valid as if the Lord himself spoke it from heaven. “*He that heareth you heareth me.*” (Luke 10:16)
- VI. “As those who love God and want to remain true to His Word, we must see to it that we remain members of the true Church by sincere faith in Christ as our Savior; that we adhere to the congregation, synod, or denomination which teaches the Word of God in all its purity; that we do all in our power to maintain, promote, and

extend God's Kingdom and work by prayer, personal service and financial support; and that we avoid all false churches and all other denominations that profess a religion which is false. II Cor. 13:5; II Cor. 12:15; Matt. 7:15; I John 4:1; Romans 16:17; II Cor. 6:14." (ELS Catechism Question 249, pp. 147–148)

- VII. So far as the relationship among the various external groupings is concerned, Christians will be governed by the law of love and will want to do things decently and in order. In external matters we uphold the autonomy of the local congregation; also the advisory capacity of synod to the congregations, as asserted in our synodical constitution. (Ch. 5, Par. 4) This is the practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

ELS 1980

Appendix IX: THE LORD'S SUPPER STATEMENT

On the basis of the Words of Institution (Matthew 26:26, 27; Mark 14:22, 24; Luke 22:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 11:23–25) and other Scripture passages concerning the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 10:16, 17 and 11:26–29)

1. We hold with Luther that "[the Sacrament of the Altar instituted by Christ himself] is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, given to us Christians to eat and to drink." (SC VI, pp. 351)

2. We hold that "in the Holy Supper the two essences, the natural bread and the true body of Christ, are present together here on earth in the ordered action of the sacrament, though the union of the body and blood of Christ with the bread and wine is not a personal union, like that of the two natures in Christ, but a sacramental union ... " (FC SD VII 37, 38, p. 575f)

3. We hold that this sacramental union is in effect during the *usus* or *actio*: "Nothing has the character of a sacrament apart from the divinely instituted action (that is, if one does not observe Christ's institution as he ordained it, it is no sacrament). This rule dare not in any way be rejected, but it can and should be profitably urged and retained in the church of God. In this context 'use' or 'action' does not primarily mean faith, or the oral eating alone, but the entire external and visible action of the Supper as ordained by Christ: the consecration or words of institution, the distribution and reception, or the oral eating of the blessed bread and wine, the body and blood of Christ." (FC SD VII 85, 86, pp. 584f)

4. We hold that “it is the institution of this sacrament, performed by Christ, that makes it valid in Christendom, and that it does not depend on the worthiness or unworthiness of the minister who distributes the sacrament or of him who receives it, since, as St. Paul says, the unworthy receive the sacrament too. Therefore (we) hold that, where Christ’s institution and command are observed, the body and blood of Christ are truly distributed to the unworthy too, and that they truly receive it.” (FC SD VII 16, p.572)

5. We hold that it is the almighty Word of Christ “which distinguishes it from mere bread and wine and constitutes it a sacrament which is rightly called Christ’s body and blood... ‘When [if] the Word is joined to the external element, it becomes a sacrament’... The Word must make the element a sacrament; otherwise it remains a mere element.” (LC V 10, p. 448)

6. We hold that “no man’s word or work, be it the merit or the speaking of the minister, be it the eating and drinking or the faith of the communicants, can effect the true presence of the body and blood of the Christ in the Supper. This is to be ascribed only to the almighty power of God and the Word, institution and ordinance of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (FC SD VII 74, p. 583)

7. We hold that the words of consecration repeated by the minister in a proper celebration of the Sacrament are the effective means by which the real presence of Christ’s body and blood is brought into being. “For wherever we observe his institution and speak his words over the bread and cup and distribute the blessed bread and cup, Christ himself is still active through the spoken words by the virtue of the first institution, which he wants to be repeated ... ‘No human being, but only Christ himself who was crucified for us, can make of the bread and wine set before us the body and blood of Christ. The words are spoken by the mouth of the priest, but by God’s power and grace through the words that he speaks, “this is my body,” the elements set before us in the supper are blessed.’ ... ‘This his command and institution can and does bring it about that we do not distribute and receive ordinary bread and wine but his body and blood, as his words read, “this is my body,” etc., “this is my blood,” etc. Thus it is not our work or speaking but the command and ordinance of Christ that, from the beginning of the first Communion until the end of the world, make the bread the body and the wine the blood that are daily distributed through our ministry and office.’ Again, ‘Here, too, if I were to say over all the bread there is, “This is the body of Christ,” nothing would happen, but when we follow his institution and command in the Lord’s Supper and say, “This is my body,” then it is his body, not because of our speaking or of our efficacious word, but because of his command in which he has told us so to speak and to do and has attached his own command and deed to our speaking.’” (FC SD V11 75–8, pp. 583–5)

8. We hold that “the words of institution are to be spoken or sung distinctly and clearly before the congregation and are under no circumstances to be omitted. Thereby we render obedience to the command of Christ, ‘This do ...’ And thereby the elements of bread and wine are hallowed or blessed in (for)

this holy use, so that therewith the body and blood of Christ are distributed to us to eat and to drink, as Paul says, ‘The cup of blessing which we bless,’ which happens precisely through the repetition and recitation of the words of institution.” (FC SD VII 79–82, p. 584)

9. We hold that we cannot fix from Scripture the point within the sacramental *usus* when the real presence of Christ’s body and blood begins, yet we know from Scripture and we acknowledge in the confessions that what is distributed and received is the body and blood of Christ.

We understand Thesis Nine in the light of the following statements:

a) The words of consecration effect the real presence of Christ’s body and blood in a valid administration of the Lord’s Supper (consecration, distribution and reception).

b) Because of this consecration by virtue of our Lord’s original institution “the true body and blood of Christ are really present in the Supper of our Lord under the form of bread and wine and are there distributed and received.” (AC X, p. 34; see AC XXII 6, p. 50; Ap X I, p. 179; Ap XXIV 80, p. 264; FC SD VII 10–11, p. 571) The Scripture and the Confessions, therefore, teach that in the Supper the body and blood of Christ are received by the communicant and also that the “minister who consecrates shows forth [tenders] the body and blood of the Lord to the people” (Ap XXIV 80, p. 264; see also SC VI 1–2, p.351; SA Part III VI 1, p. 311; AC XXII 6, p. 50; Ap X 4, pp. 179–80), that they are “truly offered with the visible elements” (FC SD VII 10–11, p. 571; see also Ap X 1, p. 179), and that they are “really present in the Supper ... under the form of bread and wine.” (AC X, p. 34)

c) We reject any attempt to fix the mathematical point or exact moment when the real presence begins.

d) We reject the teaching that the presence of Christ’s body and blood is in any way effected by the eating and drinking of the elements by the communicants.

e) We reject the doctrine of transubstantiation, i.e., that the earthly elements cease to exist when the real presence of Christ’s body and blood begins.

f) We reject any celebration of the Lord’s Supper without communicants.

g) While one may hold a private opinion as to when the real presence begins, yet we reject the dogmatic assertion that in a valid celebration of the Lord’s Supper it must be maintained that the body and blood are immediately present after the Words of Institution have been spoken by the pastor or the dogmatic assertion that it must be maintained that the body and blood are present only in the reception.

h) We reject the dogmatic assertion that the remaining elements in a valid celebration of the Lord’s Supper must be consumed; rather, we continue to uphold the practice of the church down through the years that the remaining elements may be consumed, or be disposed of in a reverent manner, or be saved for future sacramental use.

NOTE: References to and citations from the Book of Concord are according to the Tappert Edition.

ELS 1997

Appendix X: Roles of Men and Women in the Church

On the basis of such Scripture passages as Genesis 1–3; 1 Corinthians 11:3–16; 1 Corinthians 14:33b–36; Ephesians 5:22–26; Galatians 3:28; 1 Timothy 2:11–15; 1 Peter 3:1–7; Romans 16 and Philippians 4:3 we teach:

1. God created man and woman in his own image, that is, he created them with a true knowledge of Him and with perfect righteousness and holiness. Even though our first parents lost this image in the fall into sin, yet God in his grace promised the Savior and in Him restored this image.

2. This spiritual equality of man and woman is a blessed reality, as St. Paul writes in Galatians 3:28: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

3. Through faith in Christ all Christians are members of the universal priesthood of believers and as such are in full possession of all its rights and privileges and are exhorted to exercise them.

4. At the creation of man and woman God established an order, or structure, by assigning individual identities and roles to each sex. According to Genesis 2, Eve was created to be a helper to Adam and as such was to be under his headship.

5. The headship principle is clearly taught in the Old Testament. In Genesis 3:16 the Lord says to the woman: “Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.” The original structure at creation remained in effect after the fall into sin.

6. The headship principle is clearly set forth also in the New Testament. In I Corinthians 11:3 Paul says, “the head of the woman is man,” and in Ephesians 5 the apostle tells wives to submit to their husbands “for the husband is the head of the wife.” (Eph. 5:22–23) The apostle Peter refers to this headship principle when he singles out Sarah as an example in obeying Abraham and calling him lord. (cf. I Peter 3:1–7)

7. The headship of man in his role of leadership to which the woman is subordinate is therefore God’s arrangement for good order. (Genesis 1:31)

8. The prime example of the goodness and necessity of the headship principle is found in the relationship between God the Father and God the Son. (cf. I Corinthians 11:3) Biblical Christianity has always taught that the Father and the Son are equally God; there is no difference in their degree of divinity. And yet in I Corinthians 15:28 the Son himself is said to be subject to the Father. It is interesting to note that here the same verb is used for the Son's subjection to the Father as is used for the woman's subjection to the man in Ephesians 5 and I Timothy 2. In I Corinthians 15:28 the purpose of the Son's submitting to the Father is not to put the Son in an inferior position, but to bring about a beautiful plan. The purpose of the wife's submitting to her husband and of the woman's being submissive within the Christian congregation is also to carry out a beautiful plan, viz., the establishment of a marriage that not only lasts but is also a wonderful harmony, and the establishment of an orderly and harmonious fellowship within the congregation.

9. Our Lord has revealed that He wants the headship principle to be upheld in the church. It is for this reason that the Lord has restricted the pastoral office to men. (cf. I Timothy 2:11-14 and I Corinthians 14:34ff)

10. The same principle applies to woman suffrage in the church. Scripture forbids the women "to have authority over a man." (I Timothy 2:12)

11. However, this principle does not forbid consultation between men and women in the church. Informal meetings or forums may be held, therefore, at which women may have opportunity to seek information and express their views. But the final decisions are to be made by the men. The Lord himself has placed this responsibility upon the men and they are to carry this out in a manner that is sensitive to the feelings and wishes of also the women.

12. Scripture encourages women to use their talents in areas of church work which do not conflict with the headship principle or the public administration of the means of grace. As members of the priesthood of believers there is much for women to do in the church. In Romans, chapter 16, the apostle Paul commends Phoebe to the Christians at Rome as a servant (*diakonos*) of the church at Cenchreae and sends greetings to women who had been of assistance to him. He mentions Priscilla and her husband Aquila as "fellow workers in Christ Jesus" (v.3) and a certain Mary "who labored much for us." (v.6) And in his letter to the Philippians he urges the congregation to "help those women who labored with me in the gospel." (4:2) Nor should we forget the many women who ministered to our Lord during his earthly ministry whose names are recorded in the Gospels. Women may, for example, lend their counsel in open congregational forums; teach parochial school, Sunday school, vacation Bible school; direct choirs; serve on committees in advisory capacities; assist the pastor and elders in calling on the sick, shut-ins and singles; and also assist in works of charity in the congregation and community.

13. From the above passages it is evident that women used their talents in the Lord's service and they were commended for it. The church today can learn from the early church to do the same, but always within the parameters which

God himself has established. In the past there has been perhaps too much emphasis on what women are *not* to do rather than on what they *are* to do, thus giving some the impression women's talents are neither needed nor appreciated.

14. While we must continue to uphold the scriptural principles so far as ordination of women and their exercising authority over the man is concerned, it is clear from the passages under study that women's participation in the work of the Gospel is a blessing to the church. God has given the ministry of the Gospel to all believers; it is the office of the pastoral ministry that he has restricted to qualified men.

15. Finally, Christian men ought to take their leadership responsibilities seriously, and Christian women also have the responsibility of encouraging men to fulfill their obligations and duties of leadership.

16. When men and women labor together in the Gospel, taking heed to the Word and working within the scriptural limits, then truly God is glorified and the church is edified.

ELS 1990

The Role of Men in the Church

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THE ROLE OF MEN AND women has been a contentious topic in recent decades. The “women’s issue” has often been perceived as women trying to usurp the authority of men. To address this problem, the church has outlined the scriptural teaching of the role of men and women, particularly from the perspective of what a woman can and cannot do. The question that needs to be answered is, “Why are Christian women desiring to usurp the God-given authority of men in the church?” It would be insufficient simply to say that they are sinful. There is more at work here than sinful women.

Throughout history, we see people endeavoring to fill the voids that they perceive in the world and the church. The Reformation, for instance, was the result of taking the truth of God’s Word from the church. Luther restored God’s Word and the void was filled. (This is a very simple view and is only used as an illustration.) The pietistic movement was caused by a perceived hypocrisy in the church. It was thought that Christians were taking God’s grace too freely and not bearing the fruits of faith; hence, good works were over-emphasized. Inactive men have caused a void in the church and women’s suffrage is an unscriptural attempt to fill it.

To the author’s knowledge, very little has been written in our theological circles specifically addressing the responsibilities of men. Even our synodical statement, “The Role of Men and Women in the Church,”¹

¹ See Appendix X in the previous article, 204–206.

which does much to establish the headship principle, says very little about the responsibilities God has given to men. The Rev. E. Bryant makes an insightful comment:

There is a lot here that is very wholesome for us to consider in our day, when there is so much concern about “my rights” and so little concern about “my responsibilities.” Many today would say that there are no certain obligations simply due to our station in life, and that if there are, there ought not to be. Paul here [1 Co 3:13-11] shows us that our relationships to each other are actually more hierarchical. He makes it clear that not only is the man the head of the woman, but Christ is the head of man.²

Has the church, in its defense of the truth, over-emphasized the role of women and forgotten about the men? To properly address the situation, the church needs to “pull” not only the women into line but also the men. The church needs all of its parts to perform according to their divine purpose if it is to function as God wills. St. Paul said, “...God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.”³ It is, therefore, the purpose of this paper to look closely, though not exhaustively, at the responsibilities that God has placed on men in the church.

The First Abdication

Many authors, in defining the role of men and women, point to Genesis 3:8–13.

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?” He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.” And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat

² Edward Bryant, “The Scriptural Role of Men and Women in the Church” (unpublished paper), 21–22.

³ 1 Corinthians 12:24–26 (NIV). All Scripture quotes hereafter are taken from the NIV unless noted otherwise.

from?” The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.” Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

Here we clearly see that God held Adam responsible for Eve’s actions. However, what seems to be overlooked is Adam’s reaction to God’s questions. Adam’s “passing the buck” and trying to blame Eve for the situation is obvious, but at a deeper level, Adam is abdicating his authority. God had appointed him as head of the family. He was responsible not only for his own actions, but also for the actions of his wife. Rightly, God came to him asking, “What have you done?” Adam should have answered, “I have allowed my family to disobey you and fall into sin,” but the answer that he gave shows the corruption by sin of all that God had established.

Likewise, Paul shows that God held Adam responsible when he wrote to the Romans:

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.... Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.⁴

God’s response to Adam in Genesis 3:17 is relevant to our discussion:

To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.”

The NIV has translated שָׁמַעַתָּה, “listened to,” but another legitimate translation would be “obeyed.”⁵ Adam’s obedience to Eve was the first sin that God addressed. It was not wrong for Adam to listen to Eve, but when she suggested that which was evil, he sinned by submitting to her will and eating. Therefore, God called Adam to account not just for

⁴ Romans 5:12, 14.

⁵ It is translated this way in Genesis 22:18; Deuteronomy 28:45,62; 1 Samuel 15:19, 28:18; and 1 Kings 20:36.

eating the fruit, but also for obeying Eve. Instead of following her into sin, he should have exercised his authority over her.

Since the Fall, man has been abdicating his God-given authority. Moses refused to circumcise his son. If it were not for his wife Zipporah, who circumcised Gershom, God would have killed Moses.⁶ Barak refused to go to war without Deborah, who was judge of Israel. (God did not condemn Deborah's leadership, but he never expressed approval of it either.) The conversation between Barak and Deborah implies shame upon Barak because the victory honor would be given to a woman.⁷ Eli refused to discipline his sons and as a result he and his sons died on the same day.⁸

If sin affected our fathers this way, should we be surprised to see the same sin at work today? Only with the proper motivation and attitude can we correctly define the Christian man's responsibilities and encourage him to fulfill them.

Motivation

How can we motivate Christian men to fulfill their Christian duties? Organizations like *Promise Keepers* have tried to encourage men to live up to their responsibilities. However, the theology behind such organizations reveals rabid legalism and decision theology. Following is the list of "The Seven Promises" of Promise Keepers.⁹

1. A Promise Keeper is committed to honoring Jesus Christ through worship, prayer and obedience to God's Word in the power of the Holy Spirit.
2. A Promise Keeper is committed to pursuing vital relationships with a few other men, understanding that he needs brothers to help him keep his promises.
3. A Promise Keeper is committed to practicing spiritual, moral, ethical, and sexual purity.
4. A Promise Keeper is committed to building strong marriages and families through love, protection and biblical values.
5. A Promise Keeper is committed to supporting the mission of his church by honoring and praying for his pastor, and by actively giving his time and resources.

⁶ Exodus 4:24–26.

⁷ Judges 4.

⁸ 1 Samuel 2.

⁹ Copied from <http://www.promisekeepers.org/faqs/core/faqscore24.htm>.

6. A Promise Keeper is committed to reaching beyond any racial and denominational barriers to demonstrate the power of biblical unity.
7. A Promise Keeper is committed to influencing his world, being obedient to the Great Commandment (see Mark 12:30–31) and the Great Commission (see Matthew 28:19–20).

Jesus Christ is mentioned only once, in Promise 1, and then He is used in an application of the law. The emphasis is not on what Jesus did to save us, but what we must do to honor Him. This is not the type of motivation that Paul used when he addressed husbands about their duties. Paul motivated with the love of Christ: “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.”¹⁰ The relationship between husband and wife should reflect the relationship between Christ and the church. As husbands ponder all that Christ did to save them, they will be motivated to love their wives, children, and all people. As in every aspect of our lives, Christ’s love is the motivation for Christian men to fulfill their duties.

Christ’s love is the only motivation that endures. All others are legalistic and detract from Christ. Many Christian men want to be “good” husbands or “good” fathers, but if that desire is their motivation, they are building on shaky ground. In such cases, the individual is driven by his desire to achieve rather than by what Christ has achieved. When they fail, they have no comfort to fall back upon. Where is the comfort in “The Seven Promises”? The Christian, motivated by Christ’s love, uses his failings to be refreshed with God’s grace, to be empowered by the Holy Spirit, and to continue the good fight.

So far we have only considered the husband and wife relationship. If Christ’s love is to be pictured in the love of a husband for his wife, it should be reflected much more in the concern of Christian men for their sisters in Christ! As Jesus commanded the whole church, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”¹¹ Just as a husband’s love should be the overriding factor in how he interacts with his wife, love should rule the relationship between men and women in the church.

¹⁰ Ephesians 5:25.

¹¹ John 13:34–35.

Attitude

Paul provides the manner in which husbands are to love their wives in Ephesians 5:25.¹² Much has been written on the sacrificial aspect of ἀγαπάω. When the world and our sinful nature ask, “What can I gain?” this type of love asks, “What can I give?” God wills that husbands unselfishly love their wives and be willing to even give their lives for them. “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”¹³

Nowhere in Scripture does God specifically command wives to love their husbands. But God points to the husbands and says, “You are the head and you are to be the source of love in this relationship. Just as My sacrificial love for you motivates you to love and submit to Me, so your sacrificial love will cause your wife to love and submit to you.” Husbands are to have the same attitude towards their wives as Christ’s towards the church.

So often, many of our statements on the role of men and women make the women feel less important. But this is not the case! We need to remind women that God thinks so highly of them that He equates them with His beloved church and commands husbands to love them. The truth of the matter is that God cares so much for women that men are given a special command to love them. This point does much to ease tension when considering the roles of men and women.

Men, on the other hand, often add fuel to the fire by displaying a careless or unloving attitude. We make the women feel as if they are lesser. This is not the way in which God wants us to love them. Another facet of ἀγαπάω is that it is a love of *action*. Christ didn’t just love the church. He did something for it! He lived a perfect life and died on the cross. As St Paul said, “But God *demonstrates* his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”¹⁴ How often has our inactivity led our wives to question our love for them? How much more the women in our church?

How do we overcome this problem? We begin with confession. We acknowledge our failings in the past and cling in faith to the blessed words of absolution. Assured of the Lord’s forgiveness, we turn from the past and ask the Lord of the church to give us a loving, caring, and servatile attitude. For Christ said, “For even the Son of Man did not

¹² “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.”

¹³ John 15:13.

¹⁴ Romans 5:8 (emphasis added).

come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”¹⁵

We also need to take to heart the humility of our Savior. Though He is the head of all creation, He was willing to suffer humiliation and death on the cross. As Paul reminds us in Philippians 2:1–8:

Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. (NKJV)

May God move our hearts by the power of His Spirit to serve Him in humility and lovingly care for our sisters in the faith. With God’s love as our motivation and a caring attitude, we can now properly consider the role of men in church.

Leadership

Every organization needs a head. Even democracies, in which the masses rule by their vote, need a president or prime minister. In the church, God has ordained that men are the head. Paul states this very clearly, “I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent.”¹⁶ Ultimately, someone must be responsible—and God points to men.

In the mining industry, the Mine Manager is responsible for everything that happens on the mine site. If a worker breaks a mining regulation, the Mine Manager can be fined. As a consequence, Mine Managers are very diligent to see that everything is carried out in a safe and legal manner. The writer of the book of Hebrews said, “Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men

¹⁵ Mark 10:45.

¹⁶ 1 Timothy 2:12.

who must give an account.”¹⁷ If men would realize how seriously God takes their headship, they would not be so lax about attending Voters’ meetings. Maybe they would even volunteer for offices, instead of being happy to let someone else do the work.

The most important aspect of the headship principle is leadership. Men are to guide and lead the church militant as it battles the forces of Satan. Here we must remember the attitude that God desires. God has not appointed men to be heartless dictators in the church. Is Christ a tyrant? Then neither should men be oppressors of those under them. God wills that men lead the church for the benefit of all. For this reason, He charges pastors to “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.”¹⁸ Though God is particularly addressing pastors, there is a broader application to men as leaders of the church. The men are to see to the shepherding and nurturing of the church at large.

Paul uses the illustration of the church being a body made up of many different parts.¹⁹ The head controls everything that happens in the body. When the members of the body need more oxygen, the respiratory rate increases. When the body needs more fuel, it eats. When a foot is sore, the body walks with a limp. The members of the body communicate with the head through the nervous system and the head decides what is best to do. The head can choose to force the body to walk without a limp, to go without food, or continue to breathe slowly, but at a cost to the foot and inevitably the whole body.

How can men care for the needs of women if they never ask what they need? This is an important point. Communication is the key to any successful leadership. Yet how often do we take the time to ask about the concerns of single women in the congregation? How often do we take the time to inform them thoroughly about what happened at the Voters’ meeting? To fail to do so removes the nervous system from the body of Christ, the church. The feeling of being left out and isolated has added much fuel to the fire under this topic. If men would take seriously their responsibility to care for the needs of women, they would go a long way toward putting out the blaze.

My father and mother offer a great example. Before most meetings, Dad would discuss with Mum what was going to be on the agenda,

¹⁷ Hebrews 13:17.

¹⁸ Acts 20:28.

¹⁹ 1 Corinthians 12.

and they would decide in which direction they thought the congregation should go. After each meeting, often on the long drive home, Dad would tell Mum what the Voters' Assembly had decided. After sitting through a long and drawn-out meeting, I'm sure that it was the last thing that Dad wanted to do, but it was part of his responsibility as the head. In love for Christ and Mum, he would make sure that she was informed. The effect was that Mum had no desire whatsoever to be at the meetings. She knew what was going on. She had discussed it with Dad and he knew her opinion. She didn't even care if he voted the way she thought he should. The important thing was that her husband had demonstrated his love for her by taking the time to listen to her needs and concerns. This is what Paul instructed: "If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church."²⁰

Education

The head of an organization should also be concerned about the growth of its members. Education is the center of Christian growth. Peter urges us, "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen."²¹ "Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."²² These are the words that Moses used to implore the Israelites to oversee the education of their children. Similarly, Paul says, "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord."²³ Why is it that men take this responsibility so lightly? How many male Sunday School teachers does your congregation have? How many men are vying for the position of Sunday School Superintendent? Everyone wants the Sunday School to flourish because they recognize the children as the church of the future. When the leaders of the church don't take it seriously, we should not be surprised that our children don't either. Whether we realize it or not, we are teaching the children by our example.

²⁰ 1 Corinthians 14:35.

²¹ 2 Peter 3:18.

²² Deuteronomy 11:18–19.

²³ Ephesians 6:4.

Luther had much to say about education in his explanation of the Fourth Commandment in the Large Catechism. His exhortation is certainly fitting today.

But they should consider that they are under obligations of obedience to God; and that, first of all they should earnestly and faithfully discharge their office, not only to support and provide for the bodily necessities of their children, servants, subjects, etc., but most of all, to train them to the honor and praise of God. Therefore do not think that this is left to your pleasure and arbitrary will, but that it is a strict command and injunction of God, to whom also you must give account for it.

But here again the sad plight arises that no one perceives or heeds this, and all live on as though God gave us children for our pleasure or amusement, and servants that we should employ them like a cow or ass, only for work, or as though we were only to gratify our wantonness with our subjects, ignoring them, as though it were no concern of ours what they learn or how they live; and no one is willing to see that this is the command of the Supreme Majesty, who will most strictly call us to account and punish us for it; nor that there is so great need to be so seriously concerned about the young. For if we wish to have excellent and apt persons both for civil and ecclesiastical government, we must spare no diligence, time or cost in teaching and educating our children, that they may serve God and the world, and we must not think only how we may amass money and possessions for them. For God can indeed without us make them rich, as He daily does. But for this purpose He has given us children, and issued this command that we should train and govern them according to His will, else He would have no need of father and mother. Let every one know, therefore, that it is his duty, on peril of losing the divine favor, to bring up his children above all things in the fear and knowledge of God....

Here consider now what deadly injury you are doing if you be negligent and fail on your part to bring up your child to usefulness and piety, and how you bring upon yourself all sin and wrath, thus earning hell by your own children, even though you be otherwise pious and holy. And because this is disregarded, God so fearfully punishes the world that there is no discipline, government, or peace, of which we all complain, but do not see

that it is our fault; for as we train them, we have spoiled and disobedient children and subjects. Let this be sufficient exhortation; for to draw this out at length belongs to another time.²⁴

Men should be concerned for the growth and development of the whole church. They have the responsibility to see that their wives have opportunity to hear and study God's Word. Family devotions are an excellent opportunity for this. A more personal and maybe more rewarding activity would be a special time each day when husband and wife read God's Word together and bring their prayers and requests before God. A woman recently widowed told me that every night she and her husband would pray the Lord's Prayer together just before they went to sleep. Even while he was sick in the hospital, he would remind her that he had prayed as if she were there with him. In the face of her loss, she finds comfort in the memory of their shared prayers. I doubt he even realized that he was training his wife in the way she should go.

Encouragement

An effective leader is always aware of the morale of his troops. Again we consider Ephesians 6:4: "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord." Paul instructs fathers not to provoke their children to anger or we could say not to *discourage* them. Hypocrisy is the surest way to exasperate your children. "Do as I say, not as I do" is a terrible adage for a child to learn and to which to be subjected. When children see that different standards are applied to them, it can often embitter them against the parents. For example, the child has to go to Sunday School but the father doesn't have to go to church. Or the child gets a spanking for cursing but he hears his father curse all the time. By these double standards, we teach our children that when they are older they can choose their own standard by which to live. Effectively, God's Word loses its place as the absolute truth and the guide for life.

Also related to this point is consistency. Children need to know that the rules hold today and tomorrow in the same way that they held yesterday. They will always be testing to see where the line in the sand is. It is a comfort for them to know that it has not moved. However, if the line keeps moving because mum and dad are inconsistent it is exasperating. Being consistent allows a child to understand how the world in which he lives functions. It instills confidence and security. Consistency

²⁴ *The Large Catechism: The Fourth Commandment, Triglotta, 629–631.*

also teaches that there are absolutes – rules that don't change and that apply to everyone. As an illustration, consider that you are playing a board game with some children. The game is going smoothly. They understand how the game “works.” They are enjoying themselves. Then you start changing the rules. What happens? You bring chaos into the game. The more you change the rules, the less the children trust you and the more tension you have in the game. Quite possibly, the children will rebel and just stop playing because they no longer understand the rules. The game is no longer fair or fun to them. Many parents create this exact situation in their homes by inconsistency. This poor leadership exasperates and discourages the children.

Instead of discouraging and frustrating, God wants us to nurture and admonish. He wants us to encourage. Sometimes that encouragement takes a negative form. When a child does wrong, he needs to be admonished and encouraged to do what is right. In today's society, discipline is looked upon as antiquated and even cruel. Contrary to this, the Bible teaches that “He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.”²⁵ Discipline should not be viewed as punishment, but as encouragement to change one's behavior. It should also involve thought rather than reaction to the situation. When discipline is used as punishment without love, it will eventually drive the child away. However, careful and thoughtful discipline will result in a strong bond between child and parent. Encouragement and discipline are primarily the responsibility of the Father.

Wives also need encouragement. When the children misbehave, wives need to know that their husband is behind their course of discipline. When they feel weak, they need the comfort of the strength of their husband. In times of uncertainty, women need the comfort of their leadership.

Women in the church also require encouragement. There is so much work that they can do that we shouldn't focus on what they can't. If we could inspire them to actively work in the areas that God allows, they would find that they have no time to trespass onto man's territory.

Men should not only be encouraging the children in God's Word and the Christian life, but the whole church. Look at the need for pastors, missionaries, principals, and teachers. What are we doing to encourage young men and women to train for these noble positions? As the leaders, men should be spurring on the future leaders of the church, just as Paul directed Timothy: “And the things you have heard me say in

²⁵ Proverbs 13:24.

the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.”²⁶

Conclusion

Though the world has decided that there is no difference between the sexes, God’s Word clearly teaches distinct roles for men and women. The church is, therefore, going to be against the understanding of the world. This is going to be a continual battle and to fight it the church needs to have a proper and balanced response. Only when we teach both the role of men and the role of women will the church be strengthened and function as God designed it.

God bless His church with faithful pastors who teach the whole counsel of God. God bless our congregations with men motivated with the love of Christ. Christ empower them to care for the whole church and live up to their responsibilities. Then, God’s name will be hallowed among us. LSQ

²⁶ 2 Timothy 2:2.

Venting Out the Smoke: An Analysis of Biblical Passages Concerning Homosexuality Used by Gay “Christian” Organizations Which Attempt to Refute God’s Condemnation

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*The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss. **Revelation 9:1–2 (NIV)***

A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO, a scrap wood recycling plant went up in flames in Cottonwood, Minnesota. After the fire department spent a long night battling the blaze, we thought the fire would extinguish itself in a day or so. Sadly it did not. For nearly a week afterward the remains of the building smoldered and a column of smoke was visible for miles around. For all that time, those who lived near the site of the fire had no choice but to live in a gray haze, unable to see down to the end of their block because of the thick smoke.

The bright sun of the light of the world, Jesus Christ, lights our lives on this earth with the teaching of salvation by grace alone through faith in his saving work. Yet Satan time and again belches smoke from the abyss of hell in order to block out that light. He sends up the smoke of false teachings to get between us and the light of Christ, so that our salvation becomes obscured.

Sometimes the smoke of false teaching tries to block out Christ by telling us that somehow we contribute to our salvation, that something we do can earn the love of God. Other times the smoke of false

teaching has an effect like carbon monoxide, lulling people into a sense of complacency, convincing them that they have done nothing for which they need to repent, confusing them by telling them that things once thought worthy of condemnation are not really sins.

Such is the case today with the subject of homosexuality. In recent times Satan has belched out a lot of smoke when it comes to the sin of engaging in sexual activity with someone of the same sex. So much smoke has filled the atmosphere in this regard that even Christians can have a hard time seeing the truth of Christ and of His Word. Sadly, some who claim to have faith in Jesus are also among those putting forth the largest black clouds of confusion. Christian organizations that promote the homosexual agenda of tolerance and legal status for gays and lesbians¹ have put forth a lot of “biblical” information to “prove” that “being gay” is not something condemned by God.

Hell’s chimney, the place from where much of this confusing misinformation about homosexuality is coming, is the internet. In a matter of seconds a mom at her kitchen computer can have over a million search engine hits dealing with homosexuality and the Bible. While some of those hits provide good solid information, others do not.

Yet while the debate is played out online and people have their arguments back and forth, it is important to remember how serious this matter is. The survival of human souls is at stake. From an eternal perspective good information—the truth of Scripture—can give life and bad information almost certainly leads to death. Someone who has a son or daughter struggling with homosexual desires can come away from their online research as either an enabler or an intervener. People dealing with these temptations themselves can come away from their online study either with the false comfort that their sin is not really a sin and take the slow boat to hell, or with the true comfort that comes from knowing that their sin has been washed away in the blood of Christ.²

Maintaining the analogy of smoke blocking out the sun, this paper seeks to provide a strong westerly wind to blow the smoke of falsehood away so that the sun can shine clear and bright. Pro-gay Christians use several passages from Scripture to try to refute God’s condemnation of homosexuality. However, by studying these Bible passages in their original language and/or context, it will become plain that the

¹ Like SoulForce, the organization which made an appearance on the campus of Bethany Lutheran College. For the purposes of this paper, such groups, unless specifically named, will be termed as “pro-gay Christians.”

² 1 John 1:7; 1 Corinthians 6:11—the passage from 1 Corinthians we’ll pay special attention to a little later, for obvious reasons if you know the verse.

Bible passages used by the pro-gays are often interpreted according to the historical critical method (higher criticism) or some other kind of “reader-oriented” queer (in the gay sense) hermeneutic.

“The Bible Says Things that You Didn’t Think It Said.”

The scriptural arguments for refuting God’s condemnation of homosexuality typically fall into two categories: 1) positive “pro-gay” examples from Scripture (in other words, “The Bible says things that you didn’t think it said”); and 2) proof that the Bible verses historically thought to condemn homosexuality don’t condemn it at all (in other words, “The Bible doesn’t say what you thought it said”).

Pro-gay Christians recognize that it is not enough to persuade Bible-believing Christians to believe that God does not condemn sexual intercourse with someone of the same sex. In order to achieve victory they have to prove that God quietly endorses the gay lifestyle. Thus the search is on for positive statements in Scripture which on their face appear to affirm homosexual behavior. In an effort to avoid dealing with the ridiculous (Ruth and Naomi as a lesbian couple, for example³), this study will focus on the most common and blatant assertions by the pro-gay Christian movement.

Gay People Are Created in God’s Image – Genesis 1:26–27

In his “Letter to Louise,” Pastor Bruce Lowe writes, “All people are created in the image of God. The homosexuality of gays and lesbians, created by God, is good and not evil.”⁴ Since a person’s sexuality is a part of their nature, i.e. how God made or created them in His image, then homosexuality is a blessing and not a curse.

This is an idea many homosexuals struggle with over the course of their lives. “Aren’t I made in God’s image? Hasn’t God made me who I am? Hasn’t God made me gay? And if so, then, should I try to be something other than what God made me?”

Yet this line of argumentation assumes a lot about what it is to be created in “God’s image.” Chiefly, though, it assumes that human sexual

³ B.A. Robinson, Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance. www.religioustolerance.org, 2009. This website tries to be “unbiased” in its presentation of differing views. So right after declaring that some see Ruth and Naomi as having a sexual relationship because Ruth “cleaves” to Naomi just as the husband “cleaves” to his wife in Genesis 2:24, the author admits that there’s “no proof that it was a sexually active relationship.”

⁴ Bruce Lowe, Page 5 from *A Letter to Louise*. www.GodMadeMeGay.com. A letter from a reformed pastor to his parishioner about homosexuality. .

desires are part of the image of God. Is God a sexual being? Does human sexuality have anything to do with being created in the image of God? It also assumes that God has physical characteristics.

The doctrine of the image of God comes mainly from Genesis 1:26–27. After six days of creating everything else in the world by nothing other than the power of His almighty Word, God sets about the business of creating man.

Genesis 1:26–27 (NIV) Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Genesis 1:26–27

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ
וַיְרִדוּ בְדִגְתַּי הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבַבְּהֵמָה
וּבְכָל־הָאָרֶץ וּבְכָל־הַרְמֵשׁ הַרְמֵשׁ עַל־הָאָרֶץ׃
וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצִלְמֵם
אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם׃²⁷

The key phrase there in Hebrew is **בְּצַלְמֵנוּ** which means “in our image.” Aside from the plural reference to the triune God, the root itself is the word **צַלֵּם**, which means “image.”⁵ Most of the time the word connotes the way art imitates life. In 1 Samuel 6:5 the priests and diviners of the Philistines told them to send back the ark of the covenant, and with it a guilt offering of five gold tumors and five gold rats, models or “images” of the things which the LORD had used to plague the Philistines while they held his stolen property.

The other word of interest in this passage is **כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ** which means “according to our likeness.” The noun at the heart of this compound is **דְּמוּת**, “likeness.” It especially refers to the similarity between God and humanity. While the best art often looks so real and lifelike, in the end,

⁵ F. Brown, S.R. Driver, & C. Briggs, *Hebrew–Aramaic and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (electronic edition, 2001), 854; henceforth referred to as BDB.

it is just an image, a representation of the real thing. In that sense while human beings are not God, they were created to be like God.

Other passages teach what God is like, what His “image” is. According to Moses God has no permanent physical form, at least not one that He has revealed: “You saw no form of any kind the day the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the fire.”⁶ So, people cannot be created in God’s image merely because they literally look like Him or because He shares their visible characteristics. Again Moses the prophet lights the way when he writes down the LORD’s commands for His people in Leviticus: “Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.”⁷ The image of God is a spiritual image, not a physical image. The image of God is holiness—pure holiness.

When God created the first people, He created them in His image—in the image of holiness and perfection. Their wills were perfectly in tune with God’s will. What God commanded the people of Israel in Leviticus 19:2 didn’t need to be said in those early days in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve already *were* holy because the LORD was holy.

Humanity lost the image of God when man fell into sin. Instead of living in perfect knowledge and perfect righteousness, Adam and Eve saw their nakedness and used their now limited intelligence to manufacture some clothes out of fig leaves. In their shame they hid from the holy and perfect God when they heard Him walking in the garden.⁸ While Adam and Eve were created in the image of God, their son Seth was created in the image of sinful man.⁹

Despite the fact that humanity fell into sin, God found a way to restore his image to people. It happens through Jesus Christ and His suffering, death, and resurrection.¹⁰ By his saving work we are declared holy. Through his vicarious atonement his holiness becomes ours and our imperfection becomes his. Thus we have the image of God restored to us once more.

Humanity still holds onto some shadows of God’s image like the little bit of intelligence we human beings still possess which allows for things like manned flight, space travel, and nanotechnology. However, aspects of an individual person’s physical makeup or her personality have nothing to do with the fact that she was created in the image of

⁶ Deuteronomy 4:15 (NIV).

⁷ Leviticus 19:2 (NIV).

⁸ Genesis 3:7,8.

⁹ Genesis 5:1–3.

¹⁰ Hebrews 2:7–11.

God, least of which is a person's sexual orientation. In fact, as we'll see later in Romans 1, sexual orientation has a lot more to do with the fall into sin than many people realize.

The "Friendship" of David and Jonathan

While the previous foray into defining the image of God lent itself to a more doctrinal discussion, the next three examples of so-called neutral—if not positive—statements about homosexuality come more from the narrative of Bible history and will perhaps be a little bit more technical in their explanation and refutation. The first of these examples is the most well-known: David and Jonathan had a homosexual relationship.

While scholars generally agree that the friendship shared by David and Jonathan was close, those promoting the agenda of inclusion and tolerance for homosexuality look at David and Jonathan and say their relationship was more than close; it was sexual in nature. The evidence for this point of view comes from three passages in 1 and 2 Samuel.

1 Samuel 18:1–4

The first passage seen as proof of the "special" nature of the relationship between David and Jonathan comes from 1 Samuel 18:1–4, the main points of contention found in verses one and four. Here it is in the New International Version (italics added):

1 Samuel 18:1–4 After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan *became one in spirit* with David, and he loved him as himself. ² From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return to his father's house. ³ And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. ⁴ Jonathan *took off the robe he was wearing* and gave it to David, *along with his tunic*, and even his sword, his bow and his belt.

For a more literal translation, here is the English Standard Version (italics added):

1 Samuel 18:1–4 As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the *soul* of Jonathan *was knit to* the *soul* of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. ² And Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father's house. ³ Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. ⁴ And Jonathan *stripped himself of the robe that was on him*

and gave it to David, *and his armor*, and even his sword and his bow and his belt.

In verse one Jonathan's soul was "knitted" to David's soul. The stated theory is that in Genesis 2:7 Adam "became a living soul" when God blew the breath of life into his body which He had formed from the earth. Thus, "soul," in the ancient Israelite times, represents a combination of body and spirit. Thus the two men appear to have loved each other both physically and emotionally."¹¹

At issue, first, is the definition of "soul." True, the Hebrew word for soul, נֶפֶשׁ, which at its root means "breath," can often refer to the whole person in body and spirit. However, it can also refer to the inner being of a person (as opposed to his body). But to get at the root of the matter, what does the construction in Hebrew really say? לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה in Genesis 2:7 refers to man, but this same wording also occurs in separate places in both Genesis 1 and Genesis 9 in reference to animals, not so much referring to animals having souls, but that they are alive—living, breathing beings.¹² Animals are such beings even though God did not "breathe the breath of life"¹³ into them (i.e., they are alive even though God did not give them a soul, as he did with human beings).

Also at issue in verse one is the joining of these two souls. What kind of joining is this? The word in Hebrew is נִקְשְׂרָה, a niphal perfect from the root קָשַׁר which means to "bind, league together, conspire." Along with the sense of binding someone comes the noun form of the root which means "knot." The sense of binding is sometimes literal, as what happened to Zerah, one of the twin boys in Tamar's womb who were fathered by Judah in Genesis 38:28: "As she was giving birth, one of them put out his hand; so the midwife took a scarlet thread and *tied it on his wrist* and said, "This one came out first."¹⁴ The midwife literally tied a knot. More often, though, the binding was not literal, but figurative in reference to the relationships people had with one another.

One cannot forget the significance of the fact that the verb is a niphal passive. This verb does not describe the way Jonathan and David related to each other (by having a physical relationship). It describes the circumstances thrust on them by their lives. The soul of Jonathan was bound up with the soul of David. Their life under erratic King Saul *made* them close to one another.

¹¹ B.A. Robinson, www.religioustolerance.org.

¹² BDB, 661.

¹³ Genesis 2:7.

¹⁴ NIV.

The other unusual item noted in this passage by those who would understand David and Jonathan to be lovers comes from verse four, where Jonathan, as he makes his covenant with David, seems to strip down in front of him. B. A. Robinson writes, “That would be considered extremely unusual behavior (then and now) unless their relationship was sexual in nature.”¹⁵ Of course, Robinson assumes that Jonathan is naked.

Here is the verse in Hebrew:

וַיִּתְפָּשֵׁט יְהוֹנָתָן אֶת־הַמְּעִיל אֲשֶׁר עָלָיו 1 Samuel 18:4
וַיִּתְּנֵהוּ לְדָוִד וּמַדְיָו וְעַרְחֻבּוֹ וְעַרְקֻשָׁתוֹ וְעַרְחֻגָּרוֹ:

The literal translation reads as follows: “And Jonathan stripped off the robe which was on him and gave it to David, and his fighting attire even to his sword and to his bow and to his belt.”

Note especially the word order in that sentence. If Jonathan had stripped naked, most would agree it to be highly unusual behavior. However, judging by the word order in Hebrew, the only thing that was “on” Jonathan was the robe—not the armor or tunic (“fighting attire”), or any of the weapons. While Jonathan may have worn all those things, the probability that he stripped all of them off in front of David is rather low, given the nature of the clothing. Generally, weapons were heavy and cumbersome. Even in modern times, it makes little sense to wear weapons around the house unless one plans to use them. Jonathan gave them to David, but one cannot categorically say that he stripped them off of himself first.

1 Samuel 20:41

The next passage used in defense of Jonathon and David having a homosexual relationship is 1 Samuel 20:41:

1 Samuel 20:41 (NIV) After the boy had gone, David got up from the south side *of the stone* and bowed down before Jonathan three times, with his face to the ground. Then they kissed each other and wept together—but David wept the most.

The same passage in Hebrew:

¹⁵ www.religioustolerance.org.

1 Samuel 20:41 תֵּנַעַר בָּא וְדוֹד קָם מֵאֶצֶל הַנָּגֵב וַיִּפֹּל
 לְאֶפְיוֹ אֲרֻזָּה וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה שְׁלֹשׁ פְּעָמִים וַיִּשְׁקוּ אִישׁ
 אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ וַיִּבְכּוּ אִישׁ אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ עַד־דְּוֹר הַגְּדִיל:

Jonathan had just learned the terrible truth that his father, King Saul, intended to kill David. Meeting at a predetermined location, David and Jonathan commiserated over the situation in which they found themselves. It was a time for sad goodbyes, as David would now flee from Saul while Jonathan remained in his father's house.

No case for homosexuality can be made from the fact that David and Jonathan kissed one another. Many cultures in both past and present endorse greeting someone of the same gender with a kiss.

The word in question in this passage is the last one in the verse, the verb **הִגְדִיל**. This is the hiphil form of the verb **גָּדַל** which means “to be great.” The word itself is not horribly problematic for most interpreters. However, according to B. A. Robinson of religioustolerance.org, “Some theologians interpret ‘*gadal*’ in this verse as indicating that David had an erection.”¹⁶

Some may interpret the word that way, but does that interpretation have any merit at all? The interpretation seems valid enough. After all the verb **גָּדַל**, “to become great,” can refer to physical growth. However, the context weighs heavily against such a biological interpretation. The profound sadness these men felt, as evidenced by their weeping (**וַיִּבְכּוּ**), literally “each man for his friend,” does not lend itself to one of them becoming aroused.

The solution most translators follow involves this type of construction from 2 Samuel 13:36, when Absalom takes vengeance for the rape of his sister by killing his brother. Everyone comes into the room and starts weeping, even the servants, who “wept bitterly.”¹⁷ The Hebrew used there is **בָּכִי גְדוֹל**. In this case the only thing “great” was the amount of crying going on. Among Hebrew speakers applying the verb *gadal* to modify another verb was quite common, even in the case where we might not see it as being “great,” that is, the superlative of “good.”

Both of these words (their roots, not their exact forms) are in 1 Samuel 20:41, but while the verb **וַיִּבְכּוּ** (“they wept”) is plural in

¹⁶ Ibid. We are covering this verse not because it is particularly difficult to deal with, but because it is important for the reader to realize that this kind of interpretation is “out there” in scholarship and in the world at large.

¹⁷ NIV.

reference to both David and Jonathan, הִגְדִּיל (‘‘he made great’’) applies only to David. Yet one can understand that an author might not feel the need to restate the verb he just wrote and leave it understood in the next clause. Then, a good idiomatic translation might be not that David literally ‘‘became great’’ in his body. Instead: ‘‘and they wept, each man for his friend—as far as (עַד) David, he wept bitterly.’’

2 Samuel 1:26

At this point it may seem that the author of this paper pursues this topic of the relationship between David and Jonathan ad nauseam (perhaps even the author is starting to realize it). Yet David and Jonathan are recognizable names to most Christians. As such, when allegations are made about their relationship, they become popularized in Christian culture and in secular society. With that in mind, the final questionable passage (and the one with the most questions) dealing with the friendship of David and Jonathan is 2 Samuel 1:26:

2 Samuel 1:26 (NIV) I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother; you were very dear to me. Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women.

Those who view Jonathan and David as lovers see this verse as the greatest evidence of a homosexual relationship. How can the love of another man be more wonderful than the love of women without some kind of sexual relationship being implied?

The answer is found in a proper understanding of the word ‘‘love’’ as it appears in the Hebrew manuscript. Here is the passage in Hebrew:

2 Samuel 1:26
 צַר־לִי עָלֶיךָ אַחִי יְהוֹנָתָן נִעְמַת לִי
 מֵאֵד נִפְלְאָתָה אֲהַבְתָּךְ לִי מֵאֲהַבַת נָשִׁים:

A literal translation of the verse: ‘‘My distress is for you, my brother Jonathan; you were very delightful to me; your love for me surpassed the love of women.’’

David has just learned of the death of Saul and his sons—including Jonathan—at the hands of the Philistines on Mount Gilboa. (While the Philistines took the lives of Saul’s sons, Saul fell on his own sword.) Overwhelmed with grief, David spoke these words of sorrow over the loss of his friend.

The word for “love” that David uses is אָהֲבָה. It is a word from later Hebrew, used mostly in the wisdom literature of the Old Testament. The word simply means just that, “love.” While occasionally used in reference to sexual desire, most usages of the word are for general love—whether between one man for others, the love of a man for a woman, and the love of God for human beings.¹⁸ In Proverbs 17:9, Solomon writes, “He who covers over an offense promotes *love*, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.”¹⁹ It is also used in Psalm 109:4–5 in reference to the love that the psalmist shows to the wicked around him. (Interestingly, the NIV translates אָהֲבָה as “friendship” instead of “love.”)

Understanding the general nature of אָהֲבָה, then, the real question to ask is why a sexual definition needs to be foisted onto a word or into a situation? Is it all that hard to imagine that a best friend might be closer to a man than a wife or a concubine without it being sexual?

David called Jonathan his “brother” and declared that Jonathan had been “very delightful” to him. Jonathan had been a source of great joy in David’s life, a wonderful blessing. Their close relationship probably did exceed that of David and his wives, in terms of the personal fulfillment that God gave David through their friendship. Yet the evidence given in favor of their relationship being of a sexual nature is thin at best. In David and Jonathan we find a biblical example of friendship, not a closeted homosexual relationship. Such an interpretation of this biblical text—and all the other texts dealing with the friendship of David and Jonathan—does not take into account the context in which the text is written and flows from a desire to read varied meanings into the text that the author never intended (eisegesis).

Daniel and Ashpenaz – Daniel 1:9

Another “positive”—yet brief—example of “homosexuality” in the Bible can be found in the relationship between Daniel and Ashpenaz, the chief of the eunuchs in King Nebuchadnezzar’s court. The nature of their relationship is defined in Daniel 1:9: “Now God had caused the official [Ashpenaz] to show favor and sympathy to Daniel.”²⁰ The key to understanding the homosexual interpretation of their relationship is the Hebrew word translated as “compassion” in the NIV, רַחֲמִים. Recognizing that the root of רַחֲמִים has a variety of meanings from

¹⁸ BDB, 13 (s.v. 171).

¹⁹ NIV, italics added.

²⁰ NIV.

“compassion” to “affection,” some stretch the meaning to include “physical love.” In support of their position, they make the following argument:

It is unreasonable that the original Hebrew would read that Ashpenaz “*showed mercy and mercy.*” A more reasonable translation would thus be that Ashpenaz “*showed mercy and engaged in physical love*” with Daniel.²¹

However, when one sees the passage in its proper context, it becomes immediately apparent that Daniel was not the chief eunuch’s lover.

Daniel was one of several gifted and talented Israelites taken into the king’s court and educated in the ways of the Babylonians. Nebuchadnezzar gave Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, the responsibility for picking these young men who would serve the kingdom of Babylon. He was the one in authority over these young, gifted Israelites. When Daniel chose not to defile himself with the ceremonially unclean food of the king’s court, he approached his superior, Ashpenaz.

Verse nine of the first chapter of Daniel explains why Ashpenaz responds favorably to Daniel’s request:

Daniel 1:9 וַיִּתֵּן הָאֱלֹהִים אֶת־דָּנִיֵּאל לְחַסֵּד וּלְרַחֲמִים
לְפָנָי שֶׁר הַסָּרִיסִים:

The problem with the theory of Ashpenaz showing physical love to Daniel is that he is not the subject of the sentence. God is. Literally, “God gave Daniel mercy and compassion before the chief of the eunuchs.” God is the source behind the mercy and compassion with which Ashpenaz viewed Daniel; he is the reason Ashpenaz grants Daniel’s request for a special diet.

In addition, regarding the assertion that it would be unreasonable for Hebrew authors to say “mercy and mercy,” such a construction in Hebrew is not unreasonable nor uncommon. Hebrew often uses parallel terms. Parallelism is the core of Hebrew poetry. One can occupy many hours analyzing the Psalms on the basis of the type of parallelism employed alone.

Thus, the case made for a sexual relationship between Daniel and Ashpenaz is a stretch at best.

²¹ Robinson, www.religioustolerance.org.

Jesus Heals a Centurion's "Pais" – Matthew 8:5–14

The final major example of a so-called divine endorsement of homosexuality comes from Matthew's account of Jesus healing a centurion's servant, recorded in Matthew 8:5–14. In verse six the centurion asks Jesus for help, saying, "Lord...my servant lies at home paralyzed and in terrible suffering."²²

At the heart of the argument made by "pro-gay" Christians lies the Greek word for "servant," παῖς. Primarily, παῖς means "child," "boy," or even "girl," depending on the context. Because the centurion used that particular word, some assert that the centurion was a homosexual pederast. It was not uncommon in Greek and Roman culture for a man to take a prepubescent boy as a lover. Why not this Roman centurion in Capernaum? Otherwise, why would he refer to his servant as a παῖς? And not just any παῖς, but ὁ παῖς μου—"my παῖς!"²³

Jesus, knowing all things as the Son of God, must have known this aspect of the centurion's life. Yet he never condemns the centurion. In fact, when it comes to the centurion's faith, Jesus says, "I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith."²⁴ So in the minds of pro-gay Bible interpreters, this amounts to a ringing divine endorsement of homosexuality.

The endorsement rings a bit hollow, though, upon further analysis. First of all, remember that Matthew wrote primarily to a Jewish audience. While use of the word παῖς may have sexual connotations in Greek culture, in Jewish culture—and the rest of Scripture—the word did not necessarily have the same connotations. Nor did παῖς necessarily have those sexual connotations all the time, even in reference to being a servant.²⁵ Even in our own nation's sad history of slavery, a slave could often be referred to as a "boy" or "kid." It has more to do with the station or condition of a person's life than his age.

Yet even if the servant were a young child, that still does not give the reader the right to make assumptions about the nature of the relationship. What about other meanings that would be equally as valid based on the evidence? The centurion obviously cared deeply for his servant. Perhaps παῖς is a term of endearment for a young servant—maybe even a child—that was in many ways like a child to the centurion.

²² NIV.

²³ In Luke 7 we find the parallel account of this event. The centurion in Luke 7:7 uses the same word referring to his servant.

²⁴ Matthew 8:10 (NIV).

²⁵ Liddell-Scott *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. 30029.

Nor does seeing Jesus' reaction to this centurion dictate the way Jesus views same-sex relationships. For a moment, for the sake of the argument, assume that the theory is correct, that this centurion was a pederast. Jesus praised the faith of "sinners" on other occasions too. Once when Jesus was dining at the home of a Pharisee, a "sinful woman" was there, standing behind Jesus and weeping. She wet Jesus' feet with her tears, dried them with her hair, and then poured expensive perfume on them. Jesus proclaims, "Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much."²⁶ In His words Jesus praises the faith and love of sinners. Yet Jesus does not endorse a sinful lifestyle. On the contrary, Jesus forgives sins.

Pastorally, this leads us in a certain direction when we address homosexuality and homosexuals. The public reason for so much of this scholarship is advocacy: trying to gain mainstream acceptance and legitimacy among Christians for homosexuals. However, underlying this quest for acceptance from men is a quest for acceptance from God. Homosexuals still have consciences. As ministers to suffering souls, instead of looking to comfort people by legitimizing their lifestyle and shutting off their consciences (essentially patting them on the head and saying, "You're okay"), we are called to comfort struggling sinners by pointing them to their Savior who forgives their sins freely because He paid for them at the cross.

"The Bible Doesn't Say What You Thought It Said."

Pro-gay Christian groups argue that the Bible gives positive examples of homosexuality. Yet they do not stop there. Groups like SoulForce also debate from a negative perspective, that familiar passages of Scripture which have been used in the past to condemn homosexuality in reality cannot be used for that purpose. In other words, they argue that the Bible does not say what you thought it said.

Here the discussion becomes a bit headier and academic. Included in this line of debate from the pro-gay side are the account of Sodom and Gomorrah's destruction and the specific condemnations of homosexuality in Leviticus, Romans 1, 1 Corinthians 6, and 1 Timothy 1.

Sodom and Gomorrah – Genesis 19:5

The most popular Biblical condemnation of homosexuality is the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, particularly Genesis 19:1–14. The account is strikingly chilling when read for the first time.

²⁶ Luke 7:47 (NIV).

Two angels arrived in Sodom in the evening, met by Lot at the city gate. After strong urging on Lot's part, the angels accompany Lot to his house. Shortly before bedtime every man in Sodom winds up outside Lot's door, demanding that he bring out the "men" visiting him so that they can "know" them.²⁷ Lot does his best to dissuade them, even offering up his daughters to the angry mob to do with as they will, but they will not be dissuaded. Just before the situation turns ugly, the angels pull Lot into the house and strike the crowd with blindness so that they cannot find the door to break in. After trying and failing to persuade his future sons-in-law to leave with him and his family, Lot escapes to Zoar. Sodom and Gomorrah are completely destroyed and Lot's wife is transformed into a pillar of salt because she disobeys the angels' instructions and turns back to view Sodom's end.

In interpreting the destruction of Sodom, the Rev. Dr. Mel White, a gay pastor, writes:

Once again, this story is not primarily about sex. It is primarily about God. Some people say the city of Sodom was destroyed because it was overrun by sexually obsessed homosexuals. In fact, the city of Sodom had been doomed to destruction long before. So what is this passage really about? Jesus and five Old Testament prophets all speak of the sins that led to the destruction of Sodom—and not one of them mentions homosexuality.²⁸

So what is this passage about? Dr. White points his readers to Ezekiel 16:49–50:

Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. They were haughty and did detestable things before me. Therefore I did away with them as you have seen.²⁹

Sodom was destroyed because of arrogance, excess wealth, and a lack of charity and hospitality. Is there a sexual component to the fall of Sodom? Certainly, but not because of homosexuality. Rather God wipes out Sodom because the residents of Sodom instead of being hospitable

²⁷ Genesis 19:5.

²⁸ Mel White, *What the Bible Says—and Doesn't Say—About Homosexuality* (Lynchburg, VA: Soulsource, Inc.), 11.

²⁹ NIV.

to foreigners and aliens, sought to humiliate them by gang-raping them.³⁰

True, Jesus and the five prophets to whom Dr. White refers do not mention “homosexuality” as such. However, one can gain much from looking at what all the Scriptures say about the sin of Sodom, not just one passage from Ezekiel. The prophet Isaiah prophesies judgment on Jerusalem because “they *parade their sin* like Sodom; they *do not hide it*.”³¹ Jeremiah prophesies that the prophets of Jerusalem are “like Sodom” because, as he says it, “They *commit adultery* and live a lie. They *strengthen the hands of evildoers*, so that no one turns from his wickedness.”³² Jesus, when He sends out disciples, says that when a town *refuses to welcome them or listen to their words*, “It will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.”³³ (All italics were added to quotations).

From these other references the Word of God reveals that Sodom’s sin was *public*, it *involved adultery* and *promoted evil*, and involved an *unwillingness to hear God’s Word and repent*. In addition to that, looking back at the Ezekiel passage quoted by Dr. White, Sodom was *arrogant* and *did detestable things* in the sight of God. Still no mention of homosexuality here, but it’s important to remember that these passages are directed to God’s people, that they might learn lessons in the Law from what happened to Sodom. They speak to attitudes in human hearts—attitudes shared by all who have a sinful nature, attitudes that reveal themselves in varied ways, including engaging in sex with people of the same sex.

Yet the Bible is not done speaking. Another passage (which Dr. White neglects to quote) speaks to what happened at Sodom. It is verse seven of the book of Jude: “In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion.”³⁴ The words in Greek that the NIV translates as “perversion” literally read, “going after different/strange flesh” (ἀπελθοῦσαι ὀπίσω σαρκὸς ἑτέρας). The σαρκὸς ἑτέρας (“strange flesh”) has been the subject of debate. Traditionally interpreters of Scripture have seen that phrase in the light of referring to same-sex acts. Pro-gay interpreters of Scripture, however, claim that “strange flesh” refers to the “bestiality” of the men of Sodom trying to have sex with the angels at Lot’s house.

³⁰ White, 12.

³¹ Isaiah 3:9 (NIV).

³² Jeremiah 23:14 (NIV).

³³ Matthew 10:14–15 (NIV).

³⁴ NIV.

In the end, perhaps it is best to look at the passage in question, Genesis 19:5: “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them.”³⁵ The NIV penchant for dynamic equivalency comes through here. Literally, the Hebrew says that the men of Sodom wanted Lot to bring out his guests “that they might know” (וַיִּדְעוּהֶם) them. The verb יָדַע means “to know.” Yet connotatively in ten cases it means more than that—it means to “know carnally,” or in other words “to have sex” with someone. An obvious example is Genesis 4:1 where Adam “knew” his wife Eve and she brought forth a son.

Some try to take יָדַע in Genesis 19:5 as meaning that the men of Sodom wanted to “get to know” Lot’s guests—find out what their business was in town. They point to the ten times in Scripture where “know” means “have sex with” as proof that in this context the meaning has to be the more common “to know.” Yet when a common word is taken the same way ten times in Scripture, that is a pattern not to be ignored.

In summary, the Bible tells us that the men of Sodom wanted to know (carnally) the “men” in Lot’s house (Genesis 19:5). Their sin—not just in this case, but the sin for which they were destroyed—involved sexual immorality and “going after strange flesh” (Jude 7). While it involved sinful attitudes of the heart, these sinful attitudes manifested themselves in an acceptance of same-sex sexual contact. If “homosexuality” means people who are born with a certain predilection for members of the same sex, then Dr. White and those who advocate his point of view are technically correct. However, if the term “homosexuality” means “same-sex sexual contact,” then Sodom’s destruction is about “homosexuality.”

“Abomination?!” – Leviticus 18:22 and Leviticus 20:13

While Sodom and Gomorrah represent a more indirect condemnation of homosexuality, the same cannot be said of some other portions of Scripture. In the book of Leviticus the reader finds two direct statements condemning men having sex with other men:

Leviticus 18:22 (NIV) Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable.

Leviticus 20:13 (NIV) If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.

³⁵ NIV.

While these passages seem pretty straightforward in their interpretation, pro-gay Christians take issue with them as condemnations of homosexuality as such.

The first item of contention is the fact that these verses appear in the book of Leviticus. Dr. White and others refer to Leviticus as being merely a 3,000 year-old “holiness code” for the children of Israel, to distinguish them from the unbelieving Canaanites living around them. While it prohibits behaviors which were offensive in a particular time and place, it has no moral bearing on us today.³⁶

Such an assertion is problematic for the simple fact that the moral law as summarized by the Ten Commandments is present in the book of Leviticus. In Leviticus 19, for instance, we find the Decalogue restated and annotated in the first eighteen verses. The “holiness code” assertion also, while recognizing the “hedge” aspect of Old Testament ceremonial law, neglects the fact that the Old Testament covenant in its regulations regarding lifestyle, diet, and worship also served as a curb against evil behavior and as a beacon to point the people of Israel ahead to the coming Messiah and his saving work.

The other central item of dispute centers around the word which the NIV translates as “detestable,” תועבה. This is the same word which the King James Version of the Bible translates as “abomination.” Pro-gay Christians like to point to the fact that included among the “abominations” in the Old Testament are eating shellfish (Lev. 11:10), eating reptiles (Lev. 11:41), sacrificing blemished animals (Deut. 17:1), wearing clothes that belong to the opposite gender (Deut. 22:5), and divorced wives going back to their first husbands after being married again (Deut. 24:4).³⁷ These abominations are more like practices that are ritually improper—not moral absolutes.

While תועבה does have a ritual sense attached to it, it also possesses a moral dimension that some would rather overlook. It condemns some pretty serious things. Moses uses it in connection with idolatry (Deut. 7:25), human sacrifices (Deut. 12:31), engaging in the occult (Deut. 18:9–14), and conducting business dishonestly (Deut. 25:13–16).

One determines the shade of meaning for “abomination” or “detestable” based on the context. Leviticus 18 mostly deals with not following the sexual sins of the Canaanites, including incest and bestiality. The punishment threatened in Leviticus 18 is to be vomited out of the land

³⁶ White, 12–13; Lowe, 29.

³⁷ Robinson, http://www.religioustolerance.org/hom_bibh2.htm.

for violating the Lord's commands in this regard (in other words, losing their inheritance of the Promised Land).³⁸ The same prohibitions exist in Leviticus 20. There the Lord explains that it was for committing these kinds of sins that the Lord abhorred the Canaanite peoples.³⁹

A word needs to be said about the last half of Leviticus 20:13, which says that men who lie with other men as with a woman “must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.” The Old Testament covenant also instituted civil ordinances for the people of Israel to follow. Christians interpret the Old Testament through the lens of Christ and the New Testament. In so doing they submit to the governing authorities (Romans 13), not taking the law into their own hands. Those who violate the Fifth Commandment and abuse or murder people because they are gay cannot find justification for doing so in these words from Leviticus and deserve the penalty for their crime.

“Romans 1:26–27 is not about homosexuality”

As stated before, Christians read the Old Testament in light of the New Testament. Christ is the fulfillment of the Old Testament. In the Gospel of Matthew our Lord Jesus Christ says, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.”⁴⁰ So, we interpret Moses through Christ and His inspired apostles and evangelists. In that vein, things said in the following New Testament passages are probably the most pertinent to the debate concerning homosexuality.

Perhaps the most insightful of the New Testament passages on homosexuality is this text from Romans 1:

Romans 1:26–27 (NIV) Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones.²⁷ In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

Rev. Mel White limits this passage to those who engaged in temple prostitution in the worship of “Aphrodite, Diana and other fertility gods and goddesses” Paul came into contact with throughout his journeys.⁴¹

³⁸ Leviticus 18:28 (NIV).

³⁹ Leviticus 20:23.

⁴⁰ Matthew 5:17 (NIV).

⁴¹ White, 15.

When it comes to the sins committed by these people, Rev. Lowe in his “Letter to Louise” declares that “Paul is not listing sins for which God will condemn anyone, he is listing sins that occur because people have forsaken Him.”⁴² In other words, these verses have nothing to do with homosexuality but are all about idolatry.

The pro-gay Christian movement distinguishes between homosexuality—being born with attraction to members of the same sex and living in committed same sex relationships—and heterosexuals who in forsaking the true God direct their sexual lusts toward members of the same sex contrary to their nature. According to this line of reasoning, Romans 1:26–27 does not apply to homosexuals.

Yet a closer reading of Paul’s words here yields a far different conclusion. Starting in verse eighteen of this chapter the apostle Paul speaks of those who “suppress the truth by their wickedness.”⁴³ He points out how in denying the natural knowledge of God their minds were darkened, exchanging the truth of God for the worship of created things. He does not distinguish between cultures or time periods, laying out a process that takes place every time people forsake the Word of God. It is in this context that Paul writes Romans 1:26,27:

Διὰ τοῦτο παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας, αἵ τε γὰρ θήλειαι αὐτῶν μετήλλαξαν τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν εἰς τὴν παρὰ Φύσιν, ²⁷ ὁμοίως τε καὶ οἱ ἄρσενες ἀφέντες τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν τῆς θηλείας ἐξεκαύθησαν ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει αὐτῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους, ἄρσενες ἐν ἄρσεσιν τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι καὶ τὴν ἀντιμισθίαν ἣν ἕδει τῆς πλάνης αὐτῶν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἀπολαμβάνοντες.

A literal translation of these words reads as follows:

On account of this God gave them over into passions of dishonor, for even their women exchanged the natural relations for the ones contrary to nature,²⁷ and in the same way the men also after giving up the natural relations of the women were inflamed in their desire for one another, men in connection with men the shameless deed committing and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was necessary.

⁴² Lowe, 30.

⁴³ NIV.

Two of the most important words in these verses are the first two, Διὰ τοῦτο, “on account of this.” These words point back to everything Paul said before about unbelievers and their rejection of God—and the salvation He has to offer in Christ. Remember, Paul is not just talking about coarse idolatry and temple prostitution. He speaks about unbelievers of all times and places. He is explaining how homosexual behavior—even for one who may be born with the inclination toward it—is unnatural and against God.

As a result of this rejection of God, God hands them over to dishonorable passions (πάθη ἀτιμίας). Women make a complete and thorough exchange (μετήλλαξαν) of their natural sexual relations (τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν) for what is against nature (τὴν παρὰ Φύσιν). Men give up (ἀφέντες) their natural sexual relations with women. They let their relations with women go as something not worth having. In Genesis 2 the Lord lays out the natural order for men and women: that a man leave his parents and be joined to a woman that the two become one flesh. Male and female, two halves, find a whole in each other that is greater than the sum of their parts. That’s what God intended. Yet this nature is denied. Interestingly, the same phrase for “unnatural” in other Greek literature is used to describe the “unnatural pleasure” that a lover of boys pursues.⁴⁴

Such an offense is serious in the eyes of God. Those who give up the natural order of things—having sexual relations with one spouse of the opposite sex—for the sake of their own desires flaunt their disobedience of God’s Word (whether they claim to believe in him or not). As a result, the shameless deed (τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην) of “men in connection with men” yields a necessary penalty in themselves (ἐν ἑαυτοῖς), a horribly personal penalty. One could point to all sorts of “personal penalties” (i.e., having continued homosexual desires, the shortened lifespan that goes with a gay lifestyle, eternal punishment in hell). Such punishment is necessary, though, as a curb to limit such behavior.

In light of Romans 1 one can see a sad bit of irony, that those gay Christians who say, “These words don’t apply to me,” are doing exactly what Paul is talking about. They exchange the truth of God’s Word for the lie of carnal security, closing themselves off from receiving forgiveness in Christ.

⁴⁴ Frederick W. Danker, et al., ed. *A Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, Third Edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 1089 (hereafter referred to as BDAG).

“Who knows what that means?” – 1 Corinthians 6:9,10 (and 1 Timothy 1:9–10)

These last two passages that pro-gay Christian activists reinterpret are closely related in terms of what they try to reinterpret. The first is 1 Corinthians 6:9–10:

Ἦ οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι ἄδικοι θεοῦ βασιλείαν οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν; μὴ πλανᾶσθε· οὔτε πόρνοι οὔτε εἰδωλόατραι οὔτε μοιχοὶ οὔτε μαλακοὶ οὔτε ἀρσενοκοῖται ¹⁰οὔτε κλέπται οὔτε πλεονέκται, οὐ μέθυσοι, οὐ λοιδοροί, οὐχ ἄρπαγες βασιλείαν θεοῦ κληρονομήσουσιν.

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders ¹⁰ nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.⁴⁵

Most of the terms in this catalogue of sinners who will not inherit the kingdom of God are not problematic in their interpretation. However, the pro-gay side of the scriptural debate raises issues with the terms translated here as “male prostitutes” (μαλακοί) and “homosexual offenders” (ἀρσενοκοῖται).

The word μαλακοί literally means “soft,” specifically “being yielding to touch.”⁴⁶ In two places it refers to soft, luxurious clothing.⁴⁷ Yet it also refers to being effeminate, “pertaining to being passive in a same sex relationship.”⁴⁸ Rev. White refers to μαλακοί as being “effeminate call boys”⁴⁹ or male prostitutes. He believes that Paul is referring to a narrow group of people: those boys and young men who would sell themselves for sex with older men.

This leads right into the next word, ἀρσενοκοῖται, which literally means “male-bedder.” (Just split the word in two: ἀρσενο “male” + κοῖται “bed.”) This word also appears in 1 Timothy 1:9–10 (the other passage mentioning homosexual behavior in the New Testament). Here

⁴⁵ NIV.

⁴⁶ BDAG, 613.

⁴⁷ Luke 7:25 and Matthew 11:8.

⁴⁸ BDAG, 613.

⁴⁹ White, 17.

is 1 Timothy 1:9–10 in the NIV (with ἀρσενοκοῖται inserted into the context):

We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers,⁵⁰ for adulterers and perverts (ἀρσενοκοῖται), for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine....

In the context of 1 Corinthians 6 and 1 Timothy 1, those who interpret Scripture from a pro-gay point of view first of all say that determining a meaning for ἀρσενοκοῖται is next to impossible. Paul is coining a new term, one that does not take off in Greek language until the second century. Making use of the higher critical method, which dictates that Paul can only be writing for his own present circumstances and not for all people of all time, they take ἀρσενοκοῖται narrowly as those “johns” who hire the male prostitutes.⁵⁰ In this way homosexuals living in committed relationships may exclude themselves from Paul’s condemnation.

However, there seems to be nothing in the context that should limit the definitions of μαλακοί and ἀρσενοκοῖται so narrowly. Paul it seems coined ἀρσενοκοῖται with his knowledge of the Torah, speaking of men who “lie with a man as with a woman.”⁵¹ With the juxtaposition of these two words, their meaning becomes plain: the “passive” (μαλακοί) and “active” (ἀρσενοκοῖται) partners in a same-sex sexual relationship.

Conclusion

During the course of this study it became clear to this author the sort of battle being fought. It is not just about homosexuality, but about the nature of biblical interpretation. This debate throws into sharp relief the differences between the higher critical method and the historical grammatical method, as well as the differences between confessional Lutherans and the Reformed church bodies in terms of the role of human reason in biblical interpretation. Much of the exegesis done in the name of promoting tolerance and acceptance of homosexuals is really eisegesis, reading different meanings into the clear words of Scripture, letting reason rule over what the text of the Bible says instead

⁵⁰ Ibid., 18.

⁵¹ Leviticus 18:22.

of putting human reason in service to the text in order to draw out the Spirit-intended meaning.

Yet in these kinds of apologetical/exegetical discussions, one must remember the ultimate goal: to clear the air of obstacles so that the Gospel may predominate. With the current coarsening of the culture faithful ministers of the Word will encounter more and more souls struggling with the sin of homosexuality, either in themselves or as they watch family members give in to the temptations of their desires.

The real danger of the pro-gay interpretation of the Scripture passages discussed in this paper is that it leads to the hardening of people's hearts to the will and Word of God. When sin ceases to be sin, when people take the clear passages of Scripture and say, "That does not apply to me," then they also no longer see their need to repent, their need for a Savior. They no longer need Christ because they have justified themselves in their own minds. Faith is destroyed; eternal life is lost.

Yet it does not have to be that way. God "wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."⁵² There is hope even for people who find themselves struggling with serious sins like homosexuality—hope for forgiveness, hope for strength in dealing with the temptations of the sinful flesh, hope for an eternity spent in the kingdom of God. Condemnation is not the end of the story. Speaking to the Christians of Corinth who were struggling with living in a sinful world with a sinful flesh, the apostle Paul warned them about all kinds of sinful lifestyles, including homosexuality. But then the apostle Paul gave this Word of hope to God's people: "And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."⁵³

Therefore the pastor's mission is to always speak the truth in love.⁵⁴ Never compromise on the truth. Never condone the sin. Yet, by the grace shown to us in Christ we speak gently; we teach; we pray. We do so striving to become all things to all people so that by all possible means some might be saved.⁵⁵

⁵² 1 Timothy 2:4 (NIV).

⁵³ 1 Corinthians 6:11 (NIV).

⁵⁴ Ephesians 4:15.

⁵⁵ 1 Corinthians 9:22.

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The Christian Home

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ONE OF THE DEAREST WORDS in our vocabulary is “home.” The young man and woman anticipating marriage anxiously look forward to the day when they can establish their own home. Home is a place where children feel secure and wanted. Those away from home harbor pleasant thoughts and fond memories of the place where they were born and reared. The soldier on the battlefield longs for the day when he can come home and be restored to the family circle. Little children barge excitedly into the home at the end of the school day to make known their requests and to tell of their experiences.

The famous preacher Spurgeon has given this description of the home: “The word ‘home’ always sounds like poetry to me. It rings like a peal of bells at a wedding, only more soft and sweet, and it chimes deeper into the ears of my heart. It does not matter whether it means thatched cottage or manor house, home is home, be it ever so homely, and there’s no place on earth like it.”

Much has been said and written about the home! Famous people, poets and statesmen, have written and uttered striking statements about the home and its importance to society. Imagine a world without homes! But as Bible-believing Christians, we know that the home is a divine institution created by God Himself in the garden of Eden when He brought Adam and Eve together. It is His will that homes be established also today. His Son Jesus revealed Himself to be a Friend of the home by gracing the wedding at Cana with His presence, and by

choosing this place to perform His first miracle. And during His earthly sojourn He was often a guest in the homes of His followers.

It is Christ's presence that makes the Christian home. He is the Head of the Christian home, the unseen guest, the wise counselor, the silent listener. In the Christian home His Gospel is heard and followed, loved and respected. The Christian home is really a miniature church. It is also in such a home that Christ dwells with His blessings.

God's providence and mercy rise with every morning sun upon the homes of His people. True, the Christian home also has its trials and sorrows. Sin finds its way into every home, including the Christian home. Satan, the enemy of the home, is hard at work to destroy the Christian home. But the Gospel of Jesus Christ brings help and deliverance when it is given a place in the home.

Let us maintain the Christian home among us by a simple trust in the Savior, and then it will be a peaceful haven of hope and happiness!

O Lord, we come before Thy face;
In every home, bestow Thy grace
On children, father, mother;
Relieve their wants, their burdens ease,
Let them together dwell in peace
And love to one another! (ELH 189:4)

Parents in the Home

The Bible has much to say to the parents in the home. And parents who are truly concerned about establishing and maintaining a Christian home will heed the wise counsel of their Lord.

According to God's order, the father is to be the head of the house. As such, he has the responsibility of making the important decisions in the home, of providing for the needs of the family, and of carrying out much of the discipline. Where the father shirks these God-given responsibilities, the consequences can most certainly be tragic.

Judge Samuel Leibowitz, senior judge of Brooklyn's highest criminal court, recently wrote an article entitled, "Nine Words That Can Stop Juvenile Delinquency." Drawing upon his long experience as a judge, he stated that those nine words are: Put father back at the head of the house. God in His wisdom knows what He is talking about when He says that the father is to be the head of the house.

The wife and mother, on the other hand, are to occupy a subordinate position in the home. We realize that this is not always so popular in

our day, but God's word has not changed. And His word says: "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord." (Ephesians 5:22). In this regard Sarah, Abraham's wife, is held up as a model example for all wives to follow. We read that "Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord" (1 Peter 3:6). We can well imagine that it was not easy for Sarah to leave her friends and relatives (perhaps never to see them again) and to go with her husband to a strange land, but, realizing her subordinate position and trusting in the Lord's promise, she obeyed.

However, when God says that a woman is to be in subjection to her husband, that certainly does not mean that the husband is to make impossible demands on his wife and treat her like a slave. No, husbands are to dwell with their wives with understanding, giving honor as to the weaker vessel, remembering always that she is a joint heir of grace (cf. 1 Peter 3:7).

While Christian parents always seek to do the will of their heavenly Father, they will at times not live up to God's requirements. For Christian parents, too, have sinful flesh which, at times gives way to temper, impatience, and harsh words. But they will confess their faults to one another and will always ask God's forgiveness. And, after all, seeking and receiving Christ's forgiveness makes a Christian home.

In Christian home where man and wife
Together lead a godly life,
By deeds their faith confessing,
There many a happy day is spent;
There Jesus gladly will consent
To tarry with His blessing. (ELH 189:1)

Children in the Home

One of the reasons God has established marriage is to bring children into the world. We read in the book of Genesis: "Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth" (Genesis 1:28). Christian parents, then, will regard their children as gifts of God, and will consider them as being an heritage of the Lord.

In the previous section we were shown from the Scriptures what God would have us know about the parents in the home. In this section we shall see what God has to say to children. St. Paul, writing by divine inspiration, says to children: "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth" (Ephesians 6:2-3). Again: "Let them first

learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God" (1 Timothy 5:4). The honor which children owe their parents is that they recognize them as God's representatives, and that they gladly submit themselves to the will of their parents, and hold them in love and esteem. This is well-pleasing unto the Lord, and has His promise of blessing.

Jesus grew up and developed like any normal child. And while the Bible is silent about much of His childhood, we do know that He "was subject" unto His parents (cf. Luke 2:51). He submitted to their will. And later, on the cross, He showed His concern for aged Mary when He gave instructions to John to care for her. John took her into his home and provided her with a living. Yes, He who has kept the Fourth Commandment for us has also left us an example to follow in this regard!

Joseph, the son of Jacob, is another who has left for us an example in the matter of obeying and honoring parents. He provided for his father by giving him the best of the land in Egypt. "Then Joseph provided his father" (Genesis 47:11). Joseph certainly experienced the promise of blessing from the Lord.

Just as the Lord promises to bless those who honor their parents, so He also speaks words of warning to those who despise their parents. To such He says: "The eye that mocks his father, and scorns obedience to his mother, the ravens of the valley will pick it out, and the young eagles will eat it" (Proverbs 30:17). Harsh words, yes, but who of us dare say they are too harsh when spoken by the mouth of God Himself?

Children, realize that it is your duty to help make the kind of home in which the presence of Jesus is always welcome, and where the blessings of His mercy can be richly enjoyed!

Blest such a home, it prospers well,
In peace and joy the parents dwell,
And in their children's lot is shown
How richly God will bless His own. (ELH 190:4)

Instruction in the Home

Parents have no greater responsibility in the rearing of children than that they instruct them in the One Thing Needful. To fathers St. Paul writes: "Do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Stating it negatively, the same apostle says: "But if anyone does not provide for his

own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Timothy 5:8). Martin Luther once said that "parents cannot earn hell more easily than by neglecting to give their children a Christian training."

Christian parents are often tempted to think that if they send their children to Sunday School, then they have fulfilled their duty with regard to the instruction of their children. Surely, a Christian parent will want to make use of these agencies which the church offers for the feeding of its lambs, but what God told Moses to tell the parents of his day applies to parents also today: "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, *and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up*" (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). From this we learn that the religious instruction of our children is not to be a hit-or-miss affair, but a constant and daily thing *in the home*.

In a truly Christian home it will not be uncommon to see the family gathered around the table after a meal, with the father, or another member of the family, reading a section from the Bible or a devotional book. In such homes mother will be seen reading a Bible story to her little ones at bedtime, and teaching them to pray. Fortunate are those children that are brought up in such an atmosphere! To be pitied, truly pitied, are those children who never hear God's name mentioned in the home, except perhaps in cursing.

Parents should also remember that a very important part of instruction in the home is the setting of a good Christian example. For this is after all the most effective teacher of all. Someone has said that "example is the school of mankind, and they will learn at none other." Children are very sensitive and can easily discern the sincerity, or insincerity, of the parent. A parent can preach to his child until he is blue in the face, but if this is not backed up with a proper example, the preaching will be of little value.

When parents train up their children in the way they should go, both by word and deed, they have God's promise: "And when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). Only eternity will reveal the many souls that have entered the joy of heaven because of the Christian instruction they received in the home.

Let Thy holy word instruct us;
Guide us daily by its light;
Let Thy love and grace constrain us
To approve whate'er is right,
Take Thine easy yoke, and wear it,
Strengthened with Thy heavenly might. (LHy 575:4)

Sorrow in the Home

While a Christian home is a happy one, even such a home will have its sorrows and hardships. Christians are not exempt from trials and tribulations. Even the godly must bear the consequences of sin. When our first parents fell into sin God said to Eve: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow... in pain you shall bring forth children." And to Adam the Lord said: "Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life" (Genesis 3:16-17).

So we must not think it is strange when Christian homes today, too, experience bitter disappointments such as sickness, crop failures, unfaithfulness on the part of husband or wife, the waywardness of a son or daughter, loss of job, destruction of property, and death snatching a loved one from the family circle. Jesus has forewarned His followers: "In the world you will have tribulation" (John 16:33). St. Peter writes: "Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you" (1 Peter 4:12).

We should recognize these afflictions as coming from the Lord, and in faith believe that He has good reasons for permitting them to come into our lives. "For whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives" (Hebrews 12:6). He sends these sorrows into Christian lives not to punish, but to correct. God uses afflictions to strengthen Christians in their faith, and to draw them closer to Him. Luther says that "all trials have this purpose, that although they seem to tear us away from Christ, they unite us more intimately with Him." Again Peter writes: "That the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:7).

The sorrows that God sends into our lives are often blessings in disguise. Sorrows often work to bring a family closer together; husband and wife may learn to appreciate each other more, and children learn to assume responsibilities. We are not going too far when we say that if it were not for the sorrows which God sends into His homes, there would

be much more ingratitude and unhappiness. It has been said that “the crushing sorrow is often the key that opens the door of God’s treasure-house.”

Some day we will also thank God for the sorrows which He permitted to come into our homes. Though sorrow in the home appears to us to be grievous now, “nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it” (Hebrews 12:11). In our heavenly home we shall understand God’s purposes in afflicting the Christian home on earth, and we shall thank Him for it!

All trials are then like a dream that is past,
Forgotten all trouble and sorrow;
All questions and doubts have been answered at last;
Then dawneth eternity’s morrow.
Have mercy upon us, O Jesus! (ELH 200:6)

The Christian Home – A Prelude to the Heavenly Home

A truth that the Bible seeks to impress upon us throughout is that we are only pilgrims and strangers in this world. Our life here is only a temporary arrangement. When Jacob was asked by King Pharaoh how old he was, Jacob answered: “The days of the years of my pilgrimage are one hundred and thirty years” (Genesis 47:9). St. Peter writes: “Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul” (1 Peter 2:11). And the writer of the book of Hebrews says: “For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come” (Hebrews 13:14).

The members of a Christian family are guided by this truth. They know that even though their earthly house shall some day be dissolved, yet they have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. A Christian family can therefore face the fact of earthly separation, knowing that there shall be a glorious reunion in the heavenly home, a reunion that will be permanent, free from sorrow, sickness, and hardship, the things which so often characterized life here on earth. The Christian family believes this because Christ our Savior has promised: “In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you...that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:2-3). Thus with Luther we can pray: “O heavenly Father, if I let this body depart, I am certain that I shall be with Thee forever.”

The writer of these lines on the Christian home will never forget a hymn which was sung in his home every Sunday evening:

Jesus, still lead on,
Till our rest be won!
And although the way be cheerless,
We will follow, calm and fearless;
Guide us by Thy hand
To our fatherland!

Jesus, still lead on,
Till our rest be won!
Heavenly Leader, still direct us,
Still support, console, protect us,
Till we safely stand
In our fatherland! (ELH 587:1,4)

May that hymn be the simple prayer of all our Christian homes! Then, when the time comes to leave our earthly home, we shall be gathered in our heavenly home, where faith shall give way to sight, and prayers to eternal songs and praise. [LSQ](#)

A Sermon on Genesis 41:39–44: The Greater Joseph Typology

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Prayer: O Dearest Jesus, we thank You that You took the form of a servant for our salvation and were then exalted to the right hand where you are controlling all in the universe for our good. In our burdens and problems cause us to realize that You are turning evil into good in our lives as You did for Joseph and give us His patient obedience under trial. Amen.

Text: *Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you.” So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt.” Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his finger and put it on Joseph’s finger. He dressed him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. He had him ride in a chariot as his second-in-command, and men shouted before him, “Make way!” Thus he put him in charge of the whole land of Egypt. Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I am Pharaoh, but without your word no one will lift a hand or foot in all Egypt.” (Genesis 41: 39–44; NIV)*

PROBABLY THE MOST FAMILIAR archaeological remains of any bygone era are the pyramids and sphinx of Egypt. These great monuments amazingly were not built as castles for the enjoyment of the living but to house the dead. We hardly know how an Egyptian dwelling was constructed but we know every minute

detail about their tombs. This is but one of the fascinating features of that civilization far different from our own. Into this mystical world a Bedouin's son was dragged in about 1897 BC. He seemed no different from the many other Asian slaves sold in Egypt. But in actuality he was very different. He was Joseph, a great-grandson of Abraham, to whom the Almighty appeared and said that from his seed the Savior would come (Genesis 12:3). His life God used to picture Abraham's far greater descendant Jesus Christ our Lord. We then consider **Joseph, a type of Christ, both in His humiliation and exaltation.**¹

I. First we view the humiliation. Joseph was the son of the Bedouin Jacob, whose main encampment was in Hebron in southern Canaan. While they were tent people living mainly by sheep grazing, here they lived long enough each year to have a barley harvest. Joseph was a child of Jacob by his favorite wife Rachel. Rachel died in childbirth near Bethlehem. After this tragedy Jacob focused all his love for his lost wife on Joseph. Thus Joseph became the most beloved son of his father.

Parental partiality is always dangerous. But Jacob did not just have these thoughts in his heart; he expressed them in open deeds. He gave Joseph a multi-colored coat which in their culture showed that he would be the head of the clan even though he had ten older brothers. Added to this, Joseph had dreams that implied that he would rule over his brothers. It is no wonder then that the other brothers became jealous of Joseph and there was no love lost between them. This reminds us of the importance of treating all our children and grandchildren fairly, and of giving each the love needed.

Now Jacob unintentionally committed another parental blunder. He sent Joseph to his brothers who were grazing the sheep a considerable distance from home to see if they needed anything. The brothers, however, saw only maliciousness in his coming. They thought he had come to spy on them and would run back to tell Daddy. Thus the

¹ The purpose of this sermon is to give a summary of the Greater Joseph theme of Scripture. In many ways, the life of Joseph is a foreshadowing of Christ. The fathers often refer to Christ as the Heavenly Joseph or the Greater Joseph. Luther writes, "Joseph was sold into Egypt and became a ruler over the country after his imprisonment. This happened and was written that he might prefigure Christ, who became through his passion Lord of all the world" (LW 52:126). The Joseph typology prefigures Christ's humiliation and exaltation. For further study of the Joseph typology, see *Luther's Works*, 8:15-45; Johann Gerhard, *Postilla*, vol. 2, p. 85; Johann Gerhard, *An Explanation of the History of the Suffering and Death of our Lord Jesus Christ*, pp. 30, 95, 102, 153, 223, 312; Johann Arndt, *Evangelism-Predigten*, pp. 120, 371, 398, 669, 721; and M.A. Zimmerman, *Studies in Genesis*, pp. 315-317 (printed in Addendum I).

brothers' jealousy turned into action. They threw their brother into an open pit used as a cistern and while some of them were planning to leave him there to die, a caravan of traders passed, heading for Egypt. To these traders Joseph was sold for twenty pieces of silver into a life of slavery which in many cases amounted to a life of slow death.

The scene shifts to the mystical kingdom of Egypt. The pyramids are already weathered by time. It is a land far more civilized than the plains of Canaan yet it is a land dominated by dog-faced gods and alligator deities. Pharaoh's slave markets are open for business. Here are slaves white, black, and brown. Potiphar, Pharaoh's captain of the guard, is looking for a household slave. His attention is drawn to a handsome young slave, a Hebrew sold by his own brothers. He feels his muscles, pulls down his lips to look at his teeth and checks his eyes. Satisfied as to his physical condition, Joseph is bought by Potiphar.

The Bible tells us that Joseph was very good looking, but he also had a brain, for he soon became the head steward in Potiphar's house. Potiphar's wife, however, was more interested in Joseph's body. She continued to seduce him and he resisted the temptation until she in anger accused him of raping her and had him thrown in prison. Here Joseph kept the sixth commandment (Genesis 39:9) which is so often trampled under foot in our society. Notice he obeyed the commandment even when it harmed his own personal future.

This is a picture of our Lord's life in the state of humiliation. The humiliation means that Jesus did not always make full and complete use of His divine powers and attributes communicated to His human nature, so He could be our Savior. As Joseph, Jesus was the beloved Son of His Father. Yet, as St. Paul says, He took upon Himself the form of a servant and endured great suffering like Joseph being sold into Egypt (Philippians 2:7). Joseph's own brothers rejected him, and concerning Jesus St. John says, "He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him" (John 1:11). Joseph was sold for twenty pieces of silver by one of his brothers and Jesus was sold for thirty by one of His own twelve disciples.

Joseph endured this slavery so that through him God would provide food for His people in the years of famine. He suffered for his people. In the same way, Jesus took the form of a servant suffering in our place all that we deserve for sin so that He might save us from the famine of this world and give us the Bread of Life. By nature we were lost and starving in sin. We were emaciated, helpless and hopeless. Yet the Greater Joseph, Jesus Christ, came, who provides new life for his brothers. He lived a

holy life in our place, which the Father counts as the holy life of all. Then on the cross He suffered all that we deserve for sin. In this way, He prepared the true bread from heaven which a man may eat and not die.²

II. Now we see that Joseph is a type of Christ also in the exaltation. Joseph found himself probably at the great prison at Thebes which was particularly prominent in the Middle Kingdom. Here again the Lord was with Joseph and he arose to an important position in the prison. After interpreting the dreams of two leading officers, Joseph's fame reached even the palace of Pharaoh, for the Great One himself had dreams which were filling him with dismay. Thus Joseph was called from the prison into the presence of Pharaoh who was the greatest ruler on earth at the time, probably Sesostri II (1897–1878, Dynasty 12), who was worshipped as a god—son of Amon Re. There is an interesting note here in the biblical text. When Joseph was called it says he first washed and shaved before he went to court. Now this wasn't like our quick shave in the morning with the Norelco. The Hebrews wore long hair and beards while the Egyptians kept their faces shaved clean and not just the face but the entire skull. They wore black wigs, much like the powdered wigs of Washington and Jefferson. Here then Joseph dresses in Egyptian costume to meet the Pharaoh.

Through the help of the Lord, Joseph correctly interpreted Pharaoh's dreams. The seven fatted cows and the seven good heads of grain represented seven good and bountiful years. The seven thin cows and poor heads of grain which devoured the good were seven famine years. There would be seven good years followed by seven terrible years of famine.

The Pharaoh, overwhelmed by the revelation of that future event given by Joseph, immediately selects Joseph as his right hand man in preparing for the years of scarcity. He raised Joseph to a position second only to Pharaoh himself. He took a ring from his own hand and put it on Joseph's finger, put a gold chain around his neck, and arrayed him in fine linen. Then in a triumphant parade he was led through the streets of the capital so all would know Joseph's power and authority. In this position he gathered up grain during the bountiful years so that there would be food during the famine. Thus through Joseph's exaltation God provided bread and life for His people.

Now the exaltation of Joseph was wonderful. The beauty and wealth of the Egyptian tombs alone fill us with amazement. Joseph possibly didn't use a utensil in his home that was not gold or silver. Yet the

² See Addendum I.

exaltation of our Lord was far more wonderful. Here He made full and complete use of His divine attributes and majesty, communicated to His human nature, which He did not always use in His humiliation. He wasn't only freed from a human prison; He broke down the prison house of death, freeing us from its terrible grasp. He wasn't merely given a parade through an earthly capital; He descended into hell and in a triumphant procession proclaimed His victory over the power of evil. He ascended not to the right hand position of an earthly king but He ascended far above all heavens and sat down at the right hand of the Father (Ephesians 1:20–21, 4:10). He stored food by his own sweat and labor for the hungry and starving, for the sick and the dying. In fact He Himself is the Bread of Life in this land of death. His storehouses are open to all. He says, "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost" (Isaiah 55:1). This wonderful feast is offered to you today in the Word and the Holy Supper.

Since He has ascended to the position of power and authority at the right hand, we know that He will provide for us in every need as He did for Joseph. There are many periods of dark clouds in our lives. It seems like everything is wrong and the evil is triumphant just like it must have seemed to Joseph. There are financial problems, conflicts in our homes, attacks from those around us, failures, sickness, and even the death of those we love. The way at times appears very dark and difficult to bear, and we can easily fall under the load. Yet in those times we find comfort in Joseph's life. Even through the terrible things that happened to him, slavery and prison, God was working for His benefit, turning evil into good (Genesis 50:20). Through these things He was put into a situation where he was exalted to the second position in all Egypt and was able to provide for his family saving the messianic line. In the same way we can be sure that Jesus who has already given His life for us on the cross will also turn evil into good in our lives for it is written, "In all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

The life of Joseph indeed pictures to us the wonderful salvation of our Lord who took the form of a servant for our redemption. Also there is comfort here in the conflicts of life for He will turn evil into good in our life, working all for our good, as He did for Joseph and at last give us life without end in heaven. Finally here is an example of patience under trial. May we accept God's will for our lives as Joseph did, knowing that

He will be with us all the way in life, strengthening us by His means of grace so that we can do all things through Him. LSQ

Addendum I: Joseph, A Type of Christ (Genesis 37-50)

1. “*Conformed to the Image of His Son?*”

Beginning with Abel God raised up heroes of faith throughout the Old Testament era (cf. Hebrews 11), who in their faith-life faced situations and revealed characteristics which foreshadowed the perfections that would be found in the Promised Messiah.

The Lord’s revealed purpose for us is that He may wholly restore the image of His Son in us. This was His purpose in creation itself when He first made man. And this is His purpose for us in our redemption. “For whom God did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” And we look to the Lord that He alone can and will finish that which He has begun in us.

The analogies with the Saviour’s characteristics found in Joseph’s entire life, both in His humiliation and in His exaltation, are so numerous and so striking that especially in the light of the New Testament they project a clear image of the Saviour’s person and of the deliverance He has wrought. Apparently this is also the reason why Joseph’s life was recorded in such detail.

The following is a catalog of some of the most outstanding analogies. There are many others. With each analogy is a listing of the Genesis passage referring to Joseph and a New Testament passage pertaining to the Saviour.

1. The beloved son of the father. Gen. 37:3—Matth. 3:17.
2. Sent by the father as a go-between. See whether it be well with thy brethren. Gen. 37:14—John 6:39.
3. He followed after and sought his brethren. Gen. 37:14ff—Luke 19:10.
4. The brethren scoffed at his vision of the future: The dreamer. Gen. 37:19—John 10:20.
5. His brethren envied and hated him without just cause. Gen. 37:4—Matth. 27:18.
6. They conspired to slay him. Gen. 37:20—Matth. 26:3-4.
7. He was rejected by his brethren, because they were evil. Gen. 37:20—Matth. 27:20-25 and John 1:11.
8. His own sold him for twenty (30) pieces of silver. Gen. 37:28—Matth. 26:15.
9. In youth he lost his identity by his sojourn in Egypt. Gen. 37:36—Matth. 2:15.

10. A free son, humiliated to be a servant and slave. Gen. 37:36—Phil.2:5-8.
11. Sorely tempted by Satan in his lowly estate, he remained steadfast. Gen. 39:12—Matth. 4:1-11.
12. Falsely accused and condemned by the Gentiles, as also by his own brethren. Gen. 29:16-20—Matth. 27:26.
13. Associated in his suffering with two malefactors. Gen. 49:1-3—Luke 23:32.
14. One of the malefactors was saved, the other was condemned. Gen. 40:21-22—Luke 23:39-43.
15. He was cast into a pit (grave). Gen. 37:24—Matth. 27:58-60.
16. Drawn out of the pit he went to the Gentiles. Gen. 37:28—Matth. 28:19.
17. In his third year in prison he was released (third day in grave He arose). Gen. 41:1—Matth. 20:19.
18. Exalted from the dungeon to the right hand of the king. Gen. 41:40-43—Mark 16:19.
19. The king committed all rule into his hand. Gen. 41:44—Phil. 2:9-11.
20. He found great glory among the Gentiles, while his own brethren rejected him. Gen. 41:43—2 Cor. 3:14-15.
21. He was thirty years of age when he came out of obscurity to begin his public ministry. Gen. 41 :46—Luke 3 :23.
22. Rejected by His brethren he took a Gentile bride (church). Gen. 41:45—John 19:15 and Matth. 28:19.
23. Refusing to embrace him and his God, his coming signifies judgment upon the Gentiles. Gen. 47:13-26—Mark 16:16 & 2 Thess. 2:3-12.
24. He finally revealed himself to his penitent brethren, not as judge, but as Saviour. Gen. 45:1-15—Rom. 11:25-27.
25. He was sent into suffering to save much people alive. Gen. 42:57—Col. 1:13-14.
26. His coffin (grave) stood as a witness of the promise of eventual liberation. Gen. 50:24-26—1 Cor. 15.

Chapter 38 of *Studies in Genesis* by M.A. Zimmerman, pp. 315-317



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