

## VI. Office of the Holy Ministry

- Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions declare in **Augsburg Confession, Article XIV**: “Our churches teach that no one should publicly teach in the Church, or administer the Sacraments, without a rightly ordered call.” At the Synodical convention in Wichita, Kansas (1989), the unbiblical category of “lay ministers” was established. This has resulted in laymen, neither ordained nor rightly called, errantly serving Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) congregations. Even now some Lay Ministers continue to serve in Word and Sacrament ministry to the congregations of Synod. We reject this error.
- While there may be different routes to prepare a man to serve in the pastoral office, this violation of Augustana XIV was furthered by the establishment of Distance Education Leading to Ordination (DELTO) in which laymen not properly called and ordained continue to provide Word and Sacrament Ministry to LCMS congregations. ... Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions teach in Article XIV that the administration of the Sacraments be retained only by those properly called to administer them. The only means for “licensing” a man to serve as minister of Word and Sacrament is the divine call to the Office of the Holy Ministry and nothing else. ... Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, as well as Dr. C.F.W. Walther, clearly teach that the Office of the Holy Ministry and the royal priesthood of the baptized are distinct from one another. ... We reject these errors.



### 1. **Passages from Scripture** that testify about the Office of the Holy Ministry. [\* Pages 5-6]

Malachi 2:7  
 Luke 1:70  
 Acts 14:21-23  
 Acts 20:28  
 Romans 10:14-15  
 I Corinthians 3:5-9  
 I Corinthians 12:28  
 II Corinthians 5:20

Galatians 1:8-9  
 Ephesians 4:11-14  
 I Timothy 4:12-16  
 II Timothy 1:6-11  
 II Timothy 1:13-14  
 Titus 1:5  
 Hebrews 1:1  
 Hebrews 5:4

### 2. **The Lutheran Confessions and the Church Fathers.** [\* Pages 7-9]

#### **Augsburg Confession, Article XIV (Order in the Church)**

Our churches teach that no one should publicly teach in the Church, or administer the Sacraments, without a rightly ordered call.

#### **Augsburg Confession, Article XXVIII (Church Authority) 5-8**

<sup>5</sup> Our teachers' position is this: the authority of the Keys [Matthew 16:19], or the authority of the bishops—according to the Gospel—is a power or commandment of God, to preach the Gospel, to forgive and retain sins, and to administer Sacraments. <sup>6</sup> Christ sends out His apostles with this command, “As the Father has sent Me, even so I am sending you ... Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven; if you withhold forgiveness from anyone, it is withheld” (John 20:21–22). <sup>7</sup> And in Mark 16:15, Christ says, “Go ... proclaim the Gospel to the whole creation.”



<sup>8</sup> This authority is exercised only by teaching or preaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments, either to many or to individuals, according to their calling. In this way are given not only bodily, but also eternal things: eternal righteousness, the Holy Spirit, and eternal life.

#### **Power and Primacy of the Pope (The Power and Jurisdiction of Bishops) 60-61**

<sup>60</sup> The Gospel assigns those who preside over Churches the command to teach the Gospel [Matthew 28:19], to forgive sins [John 20:23], to administer the Sacraments, and also to exercise jurisdiction (i.e., the command to excommunicate those whose crimes are known and to absolve those who repent). <sup>61</sup> Everyone confesses, even our adversaries, that this power is common to all who preside over churches by divine right, whether they are called pastors, elders, or bishops.

### Power and Primacy of the Pope (The Power and Jurisdiction of Bishops) 67

<sup>67</sup> Wherever the Church is, there is the authority to administer the Gospel. Therefore, it is necessary for the Church to retain the authority to call, elect, and ordain ministers. This authority is a gift that in reality is given to the Church. No human power can take this gift away from the Church. As Paul testifies to the Ephesians, when “He ascended ... He gave gifts to men” (Ephesians [4:8]). He lists among the gifts specifically belonging to the Church “pastors and teachers” [4:11], and adds that they are given for the ministry, “for building up the body of Christ” [4:12]. So wherever there is a True Church, the right to elect and ordain ministers necessarily exists.

**Martin Chemnitz** (16<sup>th</sup> Century Lutheran Reformer and Theologian): “But not every Christian may take on and arrogate to himself the public ministry of the Word and the Sacraments. For not all are apostles; nor all are teachers (I Cor. 12:29), but only those who by a special and legitimate call have been set apart for the ministry (Acts 13:2-3; Jer. 23:4; Rom. 10:15).” [*Examen concilii Tridentini* 2.1]



**Johann Gerhard** (17<sup>th</sup> Century Lutheran Theologian and Lecturer): “...we do not tolerate disorder in the church and that we accord to no one the authority to administer the Holy Supper, not even in an emergency situation, except to those who are legitimately called into the office...” [*Loci theologici, “De min. eccl.,” par. 67*]

#### 4. Evidence for the Existence of this Error. [\* Pages 9-10]

- a. Layman Preaches, Epiphany Lutheran Church, Chandler, Arizona. From the worship bulletin, February 24, 2010, 7:00 PM Service, p. 5: Sermon “LIFE TOGETHER: I’m Being True to Myself,” Deacon Bill Buerger.
- b. Lay Pastors Ministry, Inc., 2010 International Conference, Christ Memorial Lutheran Church, St. Louis, MO, April 23-24, 2010. Lay Pastors Ministry, Inc., is a non-denominational organization whose founder is a Presbyterian pastor. The roster for this event included clergy from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, the United Church of Christ, the United Methodist Church, the Evangelical Free Church, the Church of the Brethren and the Anglican church. Administrative Pastor Bill Simmons, Christ Memorial Lutheran Church (LCMS) wrote:

“Certainly the need for pastoral care continues and expands. And the challenge remains to equip God’s people for works of service so that *‘the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work’* (2 Tim. 3:17). If you agree, I heartily encourage you to come to St. Louis and find out what good things God is doing through the lay pastoring movement...”

#### 5. The ACELC Concerns. [\* Pages 10-11]

The language of Article XIV of the Augsburg Confession is precise and clear. Those who are not in possession of a rightly ordered call should not be publicly teaching or administering the Sacraments in the Church. While it is true that ordination is a solemn confirmation of the call, it is very clear that a “rightly ordered call” means a call that is extended by the congregation to a qualified candidate for the Pastoral Office who has been confirmed by the Church at large through such ordination. This is a tradition established by the Apostles. ...

Some in the LCMS have put forward the idea that for purposes of serving churches in remote places such a “rightly ordered call” may be issued to a layman who has not received thorough theological training or the apostolic observance of ordination. ... It then became popular to use such non-ordained laymen in congregations already being served by an ordained pastor as a less expensive way of providing an assistant to the pastor. In addition, they have also been used to form or serve mission congregations at satellite campuses of existing congregations. Such practices are not that of a “rightly ordered call,” but a clear violation of Article XIV of the Augsburg Confession. It is why 1989 Synodical Res. 3-05B – “To Adopt Recommendations of Lay Worker Study Committee Report as Amended” has become widely known as the “Wichita Rescission of Augsburg XIV.”

\* Asterisks refer to page numbers in the ACELC **Evidence of Errors in the LCMS: VI. Office of the Holy Ministry** document. You are encouraged to download the entire document from <http://www.acelc.net/> → Key Documents → ACELC Admonition and Error Documents. The online version contains the full text of all Bible passages, Lutheran Confession citations, examples, quotations and sources for all the citations and quotes.