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Rehabilitating the Doctrine of the Call: Building Strength and Agility for Mission

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Abstract: The great mission that Christ has given to His body, the Church, to proclaim the Gospel to all nations necessitates the strength and agility that only a fully developed understanding of the divine call publicly to preach His Word and administer His Sacraments can provide. Unfortunately aspects of that call have atrophied from disuse in some confessional Lutheran circles, thus hampering the ability to flex and reach as mission contexts require. As rehabilitation restores the body's health by exercising underused muscles, a bit of rehabilitation of the doctrine of the call may be just what the Great Physician has in order.

Physical therapy was listed among the top ten fastest growing career fields in CNN's 2015 list of the best jobs in America. Physicians recognize that before resorting to chronic pain medications or reconstructive surgery, many aches and pains can be taken care of by strengthening the muscles of that area of the body. With lack of use, muscles atrophy. Physical therapy rehabilitates muscles atrophied from underuse.

In Ephesians 4:11–12, the apostle Paul speaks of the ministry as an institution of Christ and sets forth its purpose saying, “he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.” Paul continues in verses 15–16, “speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”¹

In those passages Paul not only describes the Church as a body but describes the work of the ministry as a physical therapy of sorts. When the ministry is in balance and functioning properly, every part of the body is correctly joined and held together. The whole body is built up in love.

Aches and pains have repeatedly surfaced among Lutherans in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries surrounding this topic of the ministry. Arthur Carl Piepkorn

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gives three typical ways that confessional Lutherans have interpreted *The Lutheran Confessions* on this subject. One view holds that “the sacred ministry is only the activity of the universal royal priesthood of believers, the public exercise of which the Christian community has committed to certain persons merely for the sake of good order.”² Another holds, “the sacred ministry is a contemporary form of the primitive apostolate.”³ The third he describes as a mediating position that “incorporates elements of both.”⁴ Piepkorn acknowledges that “the modifications on these views are many,” and “each theologian believes he has the authority of the Symbolical Books for his view.”⁵ Piepkorn had set out in that particular article, first published in the *Concordia Theological Monthly* in 1969, to clarify a correct interpretation of the sacred ministry in the Lutheran Confessions. The aches and pains surfacing in American confessional Lutheranism at the time of its writing were related to a surge in the use of laymen for ministry to carry out functions of preaching and administering Sacraments.⁶

Piepkorn’s explication of the Lutheran Confessions on this matter gave further support to an article published a year prior in the *Concordia Theological Monthly*. That article was a response by the entire systematics faculty at Concordia Seminary, of which he was part, entitled, “Lay Workers in the Church.” It read:

It may be suggested that if the situation in our church is so grave anywhere that it appears necessary to have ‘lay workers’ perform the functions of the sacred ministry, the proper solution would be so to modify the terms of the synodical handbook such that ‘lay workers,’ provided they meet the requirements that the Pastoral Letters set up for bishops, be ordained to the sacred ministry.⁷

While this approach builds strength in a particular expression of ministry, the aches and pains that have grown up around it in the church, such as the contentious back-and-forth synodical resolutions of the last quarter of a century in that very church body on the same topic,⁸ suggest that this may not be a balanced approach for the Body of Christ. While Piepkorn is highly respected, and his article is quite helpful in offering a robust theology of the office of the ministry, it did not eliminate the soreness around the fringes of that doctrine. Piepkorn defends the position that there is a divinely established office of the sacred ministry to which God has given the responsibility of carrying out the dynamic functions of ministry, namely, preaching and administering the Sacraments.⁹ Returning to Paul’s metaphor of the body, these are the primary muscles of ministry. Could it be that there are other legitimate

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expressions of a divine call to publicly preach the Word of God and administer the Sacraments that still respect this confessional theology of the office of the ministry?¹⁰

It is the diagnosis of this article that the answer to that question is, “Yes, there are.” While these other expressions of “call” are not the dominant muscles for ministry, they are supporting muscles, sorely needed, that have unfortunately been allowed to atrophy through years of disuse in the Body of Christ, particularly among confessional Lutherans. This atrophy gives rise to the aches and pains that appear whenever the church is stretched beyond its comfort zone for the sake of the mission of Christ. Without these supporting muscles, we lose our flexibility and agility to meet ever-changing and often challenging contexts for mission and ministry. The urgency of Christ’s call for workers in the harvest fields where “the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few”¹¹ necessitates such agility.

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Rehabilitation Starts with the Core

In order to identify those ancillary ministry muscles and begin to build them up, this article will work with three of the core doctrines behind the divine call to the office of the ministry: the priesthood of all believers, the office of the ministry itself, and the divine partnership and relationship between them.

The Office of the Ministry and the Priesthood of Believers: Mutually Supportive Muscles

All three of these doctrines were introduced already in the words of the apostle from Ephesians 4 above. Scripture witnesses that it was Christ who “gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers.”¹² Thus, the office of the ministry is a divine gift to the Church. Yet, this divine office was not given to procure ministry unto itself, but as follows in Ephesians 4, it exists for the sake of the priesthood of believers to “equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the Body of Christ, until we all reach unity in the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God.”¹³ Johann Gerhard is quoted by C. F. W. Walther in his volume *Church and Ministry*, speaking of Jesus, saying “After His session at the right hand of God, He still grants to His church pastors and teachers in order that His saints may

be perfected for the work of the ministry, by which His mystical body [the church] is edified (Ephesians 4:11–12).”¹⁴ Until Christ returns, the office of the ministry is that divinely established office that God has given His Church to equip and lead through Word and Sacrament the great mission of proclaiming the Gospel so that the Spirit may turn hearts to faith “where and when” it pleases Him.¹⁵

Within the doctrine of vocation, namely, that God calls His people into vocational service for Him, the office of the ministry is a particular vocation and divine calling not common to every believer. Every believer, as an essential participant in the priesthood of believers, is given the privilege and responsibility to proclaim the Gospel in an individualized (as opposed to public) sense within his or her own vocations, such as mother to her children or neighbor to his neighbor. Thus the apostle Peter who affirms our priesthood reminds us that we “proclaim the excellencies of him who called [us] out of darkness”¹⁶ and that we ought to be “prepared to make defense to anyone who asks [us] for a reason for the hope that is in [us].”¹⁷

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That said, even the public exercise of the Means of Grace is a right and power that God has bestowed upon the priesthood of believers as well. This is the foundational truth expressed by the Lutheran Confessions in *The Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope*, which says, “the keys do not belong to any one particular person but to the church For having spoken of the keys in Matthew 18, Christ goes on to say, ‘where two or three agree on earth’ Thus he grants the power of the keys principally and without mediation to the church.”¹⁸ *The Treatise* is objecting to the claim that the power of the keys was given to Peter alone and subsequently to those who succeeded him as pope. Instead it argues that since this power belongs to the church, it certainly has the right to choose and ordain ministers. The term “power of the keys” is being used here by *The Treatise* in the broad sense to refer to the power to “proclaim the gospel, forgive sins, and administer the sacraments.”¹⁹

That this power of the keys is not only given to the Church as a whole, but that it is given to each individual believer, is seen in writings of Luther already in 1520 in *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*. Here he states, “Let everyone, therefore, who knows himself to be a Christian, be assured of this, that we are all equally priests, that is to say, we have the same power in respect to the Word and the sacraments.”²⁰

Walther in *Church and Ministry* includes several other quotations of Luther on this same point. For example, speaking of the pope, Luther is quoted saying, “A [baptized] child in the cradle has a greater claim to the keys than he, together with all those who have the Holy Spirit,”²¹ and again, “Christ gives to every Christian the power and use of the keys,”²² and again, “He not only grants [to every Christian] the right and power [of the keys], but he orders and commands their use and administration,”²³ and again, “the keys belong to the whole communion of Christians and to everyone who is a member of that communion, and this pertains not only to their possession but also their use and whatever else there may be.”²⁴

It is this power and ability given to the priesthood of believers to use the Word and Sacraments that allow individual believers to exercise them publicly in an assembly of unbelievers. Some are fond of Luther’s statement, “Necessity ignores all laws.” That phrase is true, not because it allows one to step outside of the God-given theology that defines the distinction between the priesthood of believers and the office of the ministry, but rather because God has fundamentally given the ministry of Word and Sacraments to the priesthood of believers. Thus, in the presence of unbelievers, a believer needs no call other than that of necessity, as Walther quotes Luther on this saying,

‘If he has not been called to do so, as you yourself have often taught, he dare not preach.’ To this I reply: Here you must place a Christian in two places. First, if he is where there are no Christians, he needs no other call than that he is a Christian, inwardly called by God and anointed. There he owes it to the erring heathen or non-Christian to preach and teach them the gospel, moved by Christian love, even though no Christian has called him to do so . . . for necessity ignores all laws.²⁵

Indeed, Luther continues in that very quote to address the God-given distinction between the office of the ministry and the priesthood of believers. While every Christian has the right and ability to publicly use the Word and Sacraments, to do so among others who likewise have that same right amounts to one Christian’s esteeming himself above others instead of using the gifts to edify the entire body. Therefore, the quote above from Luther continues, “In the second place, if he [the Christian] is where there are other Christians who have the same power and right as he, he should not put himself forward but let others call and put him forth so that he might preach and teach in the place at the command of others.”²⁶

Likewise, in *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, Luther also completes his comment about the power of the Word and Sacraments given to individual Christians:

Let everyone, therefore, who knows himself to be a Christian, be assured of this, that we are all equally priests, that is to say, we have the same power in respect to the Word and the sacraments. However, no one may make use of

this power except by the consent of the community or by the call of a superior. (For what is the common property of all, no individual may arrogate to himself, unless he is called.)²⁷

Thus, among believers, propriety and humility prevail. So when a Christian is in the presence of other believers, even when as few as “two or three” are gathered, he should not arrogate such a calling to himself; rather, in Christian love, he should wait until he has been called by others to do so.

The Concept of Call in Augsburg XIV

A common interpretive move among confessional Lutherans today is to understand *Augsburg Confession* Article XIV solely in light of subsequent discussion in the *Apology* and the *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope*, such that *rite vocatus* as used in the *Augsburg Confession* is said to entail three aspects: that one is chosen (examined and certified), called, and ordained.²⁸ This view limits all public preaching of God’s Word and administration of the Sacraments to the office of the ministry, that is, the pastoral office, alone.

While the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* follows *The Confutation’s* rebuttal concerning canonical ordination and therefore narrows the discussion at that point specifically to the call and ordination to the office of the ministry, as also does the *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope* when it addresses the Roman bishops who withhold ordination of pastors, the *Augsburg Confession* is written more broadly. In a beautiful stroke of Gospel-inspired wording, it does not limit itself to discussion of the office of the ministry but picks up the broader theology of the relationship between the priesthood of believers and the office of the ministry when it says, “concerning church order . . . no one should publicly preach, teach, or administer the sacraments unless properly called [*rite vocatus*].”²⁹

Augsburg Confession Article XIV is written against those who would use a misguided theology of the priesthood of believers to undermine the office of the ministry. In particular, it distinguishes the Lutherans from Anabaptists, enthusiasts, and other radical reformers, who take the concept of the priesthood of believers too far. These neither respect the office of the ministry nor acknowledge the need for a call to preach. Just a year and a half after the *Augsburg Confession* was first presented, Luther wrote a letter to Eberhard von der Tannen that shows the kinds of mischief this article of the *Augsburg Confession* was written to prevent:

I have learned, my dear lord and friend, how the Anabaptists are seeking to infiltrate also in your vicinity and to infect our people If they came from God and were honest, they would first of all repair to the parish pastor and deal with him, making clear their call and telling what they believed and asking for his permission to preach publicly. If then the parish pastor would not permit it, they would be blameless before God and could then

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wipe the dust off their feet, etc. [cf. Luke 10:11]. For to the pastor is committed the pulpit, baptism, the sacrament [of the altar], and he is charged with the care of souls. But now these want to dislodge the pastor secretly I have been told how these infiltrators worm their way to harvesters and preach to them in the field during their work, as well as to the solitary workers at charcoal kilns or in the woods. Everywhere they sow their seed and spread their poison, turning the people from their parish churches the people must be constantly instructed . . . so that they admit no infiltrators, considering them truly as sent of the devil, and learning to ask of them, whence do you come? Who has sent you? Who has bidden you to preach to me? Where are your seals and letters of authorization from persons who have sent you? . . . If the interloper can prove that he is a prophet or a teacher of the church to which he comes, and can show who has authorized him, then let him be heard as St. Paul prescribes. Failing this let him return to the devil who sent him to steal the preacher's office.³⁰

It is the concept of the proper call, "*rite vocatus*," that protects against these types of "interlopers" who would attempt to infiltrate the church as preachers sent by God when they do not have a call from either God or man to do so. Respecting the office of the ministry and the responsibility given to those who have been legitimately called to that office is a significant aspect of the matters under discussion, but not the only aspect as this article will demonstrate.

The Mediate versus Immediate Call

While in apostolic times this call from God occasionally came immediately, that is, directly from God to the person, the New Testament also clearly witnesses that God calls people to this public exercise of the Word and Sacraments mediately, that is, through other believers as well. Even in the New Testament church, this mediate call was the norm and the immediate call exceptional. While the possibility of God's calling someone immediately today is not denied, Luther explains in his same letter regarding the infiltrating preachers that if God does call someone immediately it will be exceptional, and God will, as He did in the New Testament, "demonstrate this by signs and deeds."³¹ Thus for the normal order of the church, which *Augsburg Confession* Article XIV addresses, God's people exercise the use of mediate calls. Such mediate calls came in a variety of ways in the pages of the New Testament, yet without explicit directives.³²

Even so, there is in the New Testament clear witness that the divine call sets apart some from the priesthood of believers to exercise publicly Word and Sacrament ministry on behalf of others. This principle is exemplified in the words of Paul, "How are they to preach unless they are sent?"³³ and in his direction to Titus "I

left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town.”³⁴ The variety of ways in which such calls occurred in the New Testament witness is reflected in the writings of the ancient Church Fathers and of the Lutheran church fathers, where different types of legitimate mediate calls into the public ministry of Word and Sacrament may be discerned.

The Call to the Office of the Ministry

First and foremost among these legitimate types of mediate calls to public Word and Sacrament ministry is the formal call into the office of the ministry. Not all are qualified to hold this office, and the qualifications are outlined in scriptures in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. The priesthood of believers confers the authority of the keys upon a man when it chooses (examines or certifies) him, calls him, and places him into this office. These acts are what are addressed and enumerated in the *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope*. This office is referred to in various ways in the Scriptures: pastor/shepherd, overseer/bishop, or presbyter/elder. In some scriptures, such as 1 Peter 5, all of these terms are used in that one passage to refer to the same office. Ordination is the customary means of placing one into this office. Walther’s Thesis IV on the Ministry clarifies what ordination is and the purpose it serves: “[It] is not a divine institution but merely an ecclesiastical rite established by the apostles; it is no more than a solemn public confirmation of the call.”³⁵ Likewise in this section of his volume *Church and Ministry*, Walther quotes Johann Gerhard’s affirmation that ordination is an “adiaphoron.”³⁶

This affirmation also reflects the confessional witness, such as these words in the *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope*: “In times past the people chose pastors and bishops. Then the bishop of either that church or a neighboring one came and confirmed the candidate by laying on of hands. Ordination was nothing other than such confirmation.”³⁷ Because Roman ecclesiology argued for a dispensation of grace and an indelible character imputed through ordination that gave members of the office of the ministry the power of the Means of Grace apart from the laity, this clarification of the nature of ordination was significant to the Reformers’ presentation of the Gospel. A decade before the first official Lutheran confession, Luther addressed the matter in his treatise on *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*: “The sacrament of ordination can be nothing else than a certain rite by which the church chooses its preachers.”³⁸

Confessional Lutherans have agreed that ordination should be retained, used, and reserved for the placement of pastors into the office of the ministry. Gerhard makes the argument in his *loci* on the ministry:

We say that the rite of ordination should by no means be omitted; rather outside a case of necessity it should always be used in establishing the ecclesiastical ministry. This we say because of the ancient custom of the

apostolic church and of the church nearest to the time of the apostles, in which the presbytery would, through prayer and imposition of hands, ordain ministers selected by the church.³⁹

This practice of choosing (by examination or certification), call, and ordination was the primary means for placing men into Word and Sacrament ministry as pastors among the churches that first confessed the *Augsburg Confession*. Piepkorn witnesses to this as he recalls the ordination register of St. Mary's Church in Wittenberg, in which more than one thousand men were recruited from other professions, even uneducated laborers, and were ordained into the ministry with minimal theological education between 1537 and 1560. Lutherans in the sixteenth century exercised this doctrine of the divine call to the office of the ministry in order to bring the Word of God and Sacraments to the Body of Christ across Reformation lands.⁴⁰ This is the call that still does the heavy lifting among confessional Lutherans and which was considered by Piepkorn and many others to be the only valid call to public Word and Sacrament ministry.⁴¹ Yet God has not left it to such called men to carry out these functions alone.

The Call to Subordinate Offices of Ministry

A second type of mediate call from God, which places some from the priesthood of believers into a public office to assist in Word and Sacrament ministry, is the call to what Walther in *Church and Ministry* referred to as “subordinate” or “auxiliary” offices. These are offices that take part, and assist, in the functions of the office of the ministry. Walther writes, “Every other public office in the church is part of the ministry of the Word or an auxiliary office that supports the ministry. . . . For they take over a part of the ministry of the Word and support the pastoral office.”⁴² Again Walther writes, “Therefore, in scripture the incumbents of the ministerial office are called elders, bishops, rulers [Vorsteher], stewards, and the like, and the incumbents of subordinate offices are called deacons, that is, servants, not only of God but of the congregation and the bishop.”⁴³ In support of such offices, Walther quotes Luther:

John 4:2 tells us that Christ did not baptize but that he only preached and Paul boasts that he was not sent to baptize but to preach the Gospel (1 Cor. 1:17). Therefore, the one to whom the ministry is entrusted is entrusted with the highest office in Christendom. After that he may also baptize, administer the sacrament, and minister to souls. Or if he does not desire these duties, he may adhere to preaching, letting others baptize and administer the minor offices as did Christ and all his apostles.⁴⁴

These offices are not equated to the office of the ministry, itself. Rather, they carry out their ministry under the “oversight” of one in the office of the ministry.⁴⁵ This practice is acknowledged in Walther's *Church and Ministry* by Luther, who said of bishops (pastors), “They are the ones who are placed over every office . . . that

should be the business of the bishops; for this reason they are called overseers or *antistites* (as St. Paul here designates them), that is, presiders and rulers.”⁴⁶

The use of subordinate or auxiliary offices is first evidenced in the Scriptures. Seven men known to be “full of the spirit and wisdom” were chosen by the church and then placed into such offices in Acts 6:1–6. In other scriptures, such as 1 Timothy 3:1–12 and Philippians 1:1, the subordinate office of deacon is clearly differentiated from that of overseer or bishop. While the Scriptures do not enumerate lists of such subordinate offices, the Lutheran church fathers have understood from the Scriptures and the witness of the church through the centuries that the church is free to establish them according to need and context for the sake of the Gospel. These offices support the office of the ministry and provide agility for mission. In support of this practice, Martin Chemnitz is quoted in *Church and Ministry* in regard to the New Testament witness:

Because many offices pertain to the ministry in the church that in a large assembly of believers cannot be well attended to in whole and in part by one person or a few, the church, as it began to increase, began to distribute these ministerial offices among certain grades of servants in order that all things might be done orderly, decently, and in an edifying way. . . . When the number of disciples increased, they entrusted the part of their ministry dealing with alms to others, whom they called deacons or servants This origin of ministerial grades and orders in the apostolic church shows the cause, reason, purpose and use of these grades and orders. According to the size of the congregation, the various ministerial functions thereby were to be performed more readily, more rightly, more diligently, and with greater order and becoming dignity to the edification of the church.⁴⁷

Again, Walther supports this idea of subordinate offices by quoting Chemnitz: “Those grades and orders of which we have spoken above were not above and outside of the ministry of Word and sacraments; the very functions of the ministry itself were divided into these grades.”⁴⁸

It has been the practice among some confessional Lutherans to define limits on the extent and functions of such subordinate offices, while others even question whether it may be said that those who serve in such offices are divinely called.⁴⁹

Yet these limitations are not inherent in the offices themselves. The principle prevailing in the Early Church concerning these subordinate offices is evidenced in this quote from Ignatius in his *Letter to the Smyrneans*:

See that ye all follow the bishop, even as Christ Jesus does the Father, and the presbytery as ye would the apostles. Do ye also reverence the deacons, as those that carry out [through their office] the appointment of God. Let no man do anything connected with the Church without the bishop. Let that be deemed a proper Eucharist, which is [administered] either by the bishop, or

by one to whom he has entrusted it. . . . It is not lawful without the bishop either to baptize, or to offer, or to present sacrifice, or to celebrate a love-feast. But that which seems good to him, is also well-pleasing to God, that everything ye do may be secure and valid.⁵⁰

Ignatius is clear that even the subordinate role of deacon is an office to which men are appointed by God. The principle regarding the particular functions of the office of the ministry in which the subordinate offices participate and administer appears to be established by the delegation of the one who has oversight of such offices through his call to the office of the ministry in that place, here the bishop. The same principle is seen in the following quote from Tertullian, who said in his treatise *On the Power of Conferring Baptism*:

Of giving it, the chief priest (who is the bishop) has the right: in the next place, the presbyters and deacons, yet not without the bishop's authority, on account of the honour of the Church, which being preserved, peace is preserved. Beside these, even laymen have the right; for what is equally received can be equally given. Unless bishops, or priests, or deacons, be on the spot But how much more is the rule of reverence and modesty incumbent on laymen—seeing that these *powers* belong to their superiors—lest they assume to themselves the *specific* function of the bishop!⁵¹

Both of these quotations are used by Walther in *Church and Ministry*, although not in support of his thesis discussing auxiliary offices.⁵² Instead, it's apparent from the list of auxiliary offices that Walther describes in *Church and Ministry* that he does not have in mind these offices' carrying out the functions of preaching or public administration of the sacraments. He describes Christian day school teachers, almoners (persons who distribute alms), sextons (persons who look after the church grounds), and precentors at public worship (people who assist in singing and prayers).⁵³ Yet the New Testament shows that some of the first holders of such a subordinate office, Phillip and Stephen, participated in both public preaching and administration of Baptism in Acts 7 and 8. So also Johann Gerhard, as he carefully enumerated the confessional Lutheran perspective on the ministry, noted the following in regard to the subordinate office of deacons:

Those deacons were commissioned also with the ordinary duty of teaching (from which also those whom Acts 6 mentions were not simply excluded, though they were chiefly in charge of the tables), so that they, joined to the presbyters, preached the Word together with them, administered the Sacraments, visited the sick, etc. In this way, they were made teachers of a lower order in the church. Accordingly, in Phil. 1:1 deacons are joined with bishops or presbyters; and in 1 Tim. 3:8, after the apostle had described the virtues of a bishop, he adds the things that are required of deacons, that is, in ministers of a lower order.⁵⁴

Later in his same treatment of the office of the ministry, he writes again of those in the office of deacon that “some had been joined to the bishops or presbyters in the office of teaching and of administering the Sacraments in order to take their place and alleviate their labors.”⁵⁵

Informal Yet Legitimate Calls to Public Use of Word and Sacrament

Just as this formal call to a subordinate office supports the office of the ministry, there are informal calls to publicly exercise Word and Sacrament ministry that do not place one into an office of the church, but rather support and strengthen its ministry muscles. This is a call that comes from a fellow Christian in a time of need for temporary public exercise of the Word and administration of the Sacraments. Here temporary means not “one time,” but as long as the need persists. This is the case that is often referred to as an emergency situation. *The Lutheran Confessions* quote one such example from Augustine about two men stranded in a boat: one baptizes the other and then the latter absolves the former. By this simple request and act, according to *The Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope*, “one becomes the minister or pastor of another.”⁵⁶ This does not mean that such an act placed these two men into the office of the ministry with tenured calls that should be confirmed by the church at large with ordination in the event that they be rescued. No, the point *The Treatise* is driving at is laid out before the story, “wherever the church exists, there also is the right to administer the gospel.”⁵⁷

At times, Luther speaks so strongly of this right to preach the Gospel that he says in such emergency situations a Christian might rightly use his power to publicly exercise the Means of Grace even without a mediate call. Walther quotes Luther in *Church and Ministry*: “There is a difference between administering a common right by the command of the congregation and using that right in an emergency. In a congregation, in which everyone has the right, none should use that right without the will and appointment of the congregation. But in an emergency anyone may use it who so desires.”⁵⁸

So also Walther quotes Polycarp Leyser, a professor of theology at Wittenberg in the sixteenth century: “Although the public ministry ordinarily belongs only to those who have been duly called by the church and who in the name of God and the power of the church exercise the power to loose and bind, nevertheless, in an emergency this power reverts to the next best Christian.”⁵⁹

It might be argued that while necessity does sometimes require an exceptional approach, it does not make such an informal request a proper or legitimate call. However, Luther at times still speaks of the propriety of an informal call in such circumstances. Thus, Walther also quotes Luther: “He should not put himself forward but let others call and put him forth so that he might preach and teach in the place at the command of others.”⁶⁰ In keeping with this principle, Walther also

quotes Johann Gallus, professor of the *Augsburg Confession* and pastor at Erfurt during the days of the Reformation: “Therefore, not only ministers but, in most urgent and extreme emergency (that is, when no pastor can be obtained and a Christian is asked by a fellow believer), laymen are also permitted to administer Holy Communion, to baptize, and to pronounce absolution.”⁶¹ Tilemann Hershuisius, a professor of theology at Rostock and Heidelberg in the time of the Reformation, is quoted by Walther as affirming the propriety of this practice. He writes, “In such emergencies a Christian should not be troubled about being a busybody in another’s business, but he should know that he is performing a true and due call of God and that his ministry is as efficacious as if it were ratified by the laying on of hands for the office of the ministry in the whole church.”⁶²

Thus, there is a “true and due” call that is informal and is simply the request of a fellow Christian; yet it, too, is at the same time divine in nature. The question, however, remains: What type of necessity, or emergency, makes such a call legitimate? At times some speak of life or death situations as being such emergency needs, and they most certainly are! Yet, hear how broadly such emergency situations are defined by Tilemann Hershuisius, as Walther cites him in *Church and Ministry*.

There can be no doubt that in an emergency, when no duly called pastor can be obtained, every Christian has the power and is permitted, according to God’s Word and out of Christian love, to attend to the ministry of the Word by preaching the divine word and administering the sacraments. . . . But here we speak of what a Christian may do in an emergency when no godly and sincere minister of the church may be obtained, for example, when some Christians are in a place where no appointed pastor is to be had . . . or when some Christians are among Calvinists, Schwenckfelders, Adiaphorists, or Majorists, whom they must avoid as false teachers.⁶³

The very circumstance referred to in this example is a geographic issue, not a life or death issue, and it is a common experience of many small gatherings of confessional Lutherans across America and around the world.

It may be this type of informal and yet mediate call of necessity that Luther is advocating for in his letter to George Spalatin regarding Philip Melancthon. Melancthon was not ordained to the office of the ministry, nor does Luther argue in his letter that he ought to be; nevertheless, Luther writes,

I really wish Philip would also preach to the people somewhere in the city on festival days after dinner to provide a substitute for the drinking and gambling. This could become a custom which would introduce freedom and restore the form and manners of the early church. For if we have broken all laws of men and cast off their yokes, what difference would it make to us that Philip is not anointed or tonsured but married? Nevertheless he is truly a priest and actually does the work of a priest, unless it is not the office of a

priest to teach the Word of God. In that case Christ himself would not be a priest, for he taught now in synagogues, then in ships, now at the shoreline, then in the mountains. In a word, [Christ] was always and everywhere all things to all people at all times. Since, therefore, Philip is called by God and performs the ministry of the Word, as no one can deny Therefore he has to be called and driven [to preaching] by the order and pressure of the whole congregation. For if the congregation demands and requests it, he ought not and cannot say no.⁶⁴

One might view this as an expression of this mediate call of necessity. On the other hand, since Luther actually appeals to this in another letter dated the same day to the nobleman, Nicholas von Amsdorf, encouraging him to push Melancthon to do the same,⁶⁵ it may instead be an example of the call of a superior with the consent of the community, as Luther wrote in *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*: “Let everyone, therefore, who knows himself to be a Christian, be assured of this . . . we have the same power in respect to the Word and the sacraments. However, no one may make use of this power except by the consent of the community or by the call of a superior.”⁶⁶

In that case, one might view this as another type of informal but legitimate mediate call to public Word and Sacrament ministry. This type of call doesn’t depend simply on necessity, but rather on the call of one in an office of God-given authority; and yet, as with the call of necessity, it also does not place one into an ongoing office of the church. Walther cites another such example in *Church and Ministry* where he is discussing the doctrine of ordination. He writes:

In place of dogmatic statements from the writings of the ancient church teachers we here repeat what Dannhauer reports of the ancient church: ‘Origen was not ordained, but when persecution set in, he went to Jerusalem, where he was permitted to preach and administer the sacraments. But Demetrius, the bishop of Alexandria disliked this, because thereby the canons of the church were not observed. However, Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem, answered him very aptly that nothing is done against custom if anyone teaches and administers the sacraments without ordination, as long as he has been called.’⁶⁷

The situation that Walther references is discussed in more depth by Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History*. Eusebius describes how this instance occurred while Origen was just a young layman. The bishop of Jerusalem, Alexander, and the bishop of Caesarea, Theoctistus, were in agreement on inviting Origen to preach in Jerusalem without ordaining him to an office in the church. Eusebius tells us that they together wrote back to Demetrius replying to this matter concerning Demetrius’s complaint:

He has stated in his letter that such a thing was never heard of before, neither has hitherto taken place, that laymen should preach in the presence of bishops. I know not how he comes to say what is plainly untrue. For whenever persons able to instruct the brethren are found, they are exhorted by the holy bishops to preach to the people. Thus in Laranda, Euelpis by Neon; and in Iconium, Paulinus by Celsus; and in Synada, Theodorus by Atticus, our blessed brethren. And probably this has been done in other places unknown to us.⁶⁸

These bishops from the church in Caesarea and Jerusalem at the turn of the third century are pointing to a practice that has, so far as they know, been longstanding in the church prior to them. It's a practice that bishops, under the authority of their own call to the office of the ministry, invite capable laypersons to preach on occasion, even in the presence of other bishops, without ordaining them into the office of the ministry. They cite examples from places beyond Jerusalem and Caesarea for further support. It appears to be another example of the Early Church principle cited above from Ignatius, "Let no man do anything without the bishop . . . but that which seems good to him is pleasing to God as well."⁶⁹ Walther uses this example to demonstrate that ordination is not absolutely necessary, and in so doing he quotes from a seventeenth-century confessional Lutheran scholar who views this as an example of a legitimate and proper mediate call.⁷⁰

It may be argued that Walther does not intend to draw from this example a practice of informally inviting laymen to preach in public assemblies.⁷¹ Yet his citation of this situation and Dannhauer's reference to it as a legitimate call demonstrate that within confessional Lutheran theology there is recognition that a divine call to preach God's Word publicly, even among believers, may legitimately take place without placing a man into an office of the church.

Returning to *Augsburg Confession XIV*

Even if the reader chooses not to acknowledge that last example (of laymen's occasionally preaching at the request of a superior or with the consent of the congregation) to be a legitimate expression of the call to publicly exercise the Means of Grace, the previous examples demonstrate that the concept of call in *Augsburg Confession* Article XIV has not always been so narrowly defined among confessional Lutherans. The formal call to the office of the ministry was by far the one most commonly put into practice among the Confessors and has continued to be so such that, as stated when this article began, the others have even been allowed to atrophy over the centuries.

However, these broader understandings of the word "call" (that validate a person's public practice of Word and Sacrament ministry, whether in the office of the ministry, in a subordinate or auxiliary office, in situations of necessity, or

possibly even in the informal or occasional request of a competent layman to preach) are in view in the Confessors' choice of words in *Augsburg XIV*: "*rite vocatus*." Even if never placed into regular practice, the Lutheran Reformers and those first adhering to the Lutheran Confessions after them saw situations that required a response outside of the norm of ordaining men to be pastors. In their theological reflections on this matter, they recognized these additional valid understandings of a proper call, "*rite vocatus*."⁷²

The Mission of Christ Drives toward a Fully Developed Understanding of Call

Limiting the concept of the mediate call to Word and Sacrament ministry to the office of the pastor weakens the church at a time when it needs strength and agility to carry out the mission of Christ. Lutherans recognized that in this country already 150 years ago.

All this theology was hotly debated in the early days of confessional Lutheranism's arrival in America and in the early 1850s, when Walther's *Church and Ministry* was accepted as the statement of the Lutherans in Missouri on such matters. Yet the ongoing struggle over the free course of Gospel proclamation continued. Within ten years, it cropped up again, brought to the fore by mission efforts farther to the west. Central to the discussion were the unordained traveling Lutheran preachers being used for mission work, the *Reiseprediger*. These men were used by that same synod of Lutherans to bring the Gospel to people on the frontier where there were few churches and even fewer pastors. Walther himself participated in helping the Western District of his synod produce twenty-eight additional theses to address the *Reiseprediger* that were subsequently adopted for use.⁷³ Instead of mandating that these men be certified, called, and ordained into the office of the ministry in order to continue what they were doing, the theses made provision for their continued ministry specifically under the concept of necessity, similar to that outlined above.⁷⁴ Then, when enough people were gathered to become a congregation, the theses encouraged that these traveling preachers be called, ordained, and thus become pastors of these new congregations.

Limiting the concept of the mediate call to Word and Sacrament ministry to the office of the pastor weakens the church at a time when it needs strength and agility to carry out the mission of Christ. Lutherans recognized that in this country already 150 years ago.

The use of the *Reiseprediger* is an example of the mission of Christ's causing the church to have a healthy understanding of the call of necessity. The mission of Christ also stretches the church toward a healthy concept of subordinate offices of Word and Sacrament ministry, as well. It is for this reason that churches in blossoming mission fields, such as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya and the Gutni Lutheran Church in New Guinea, make use of such subordinate offices in this way. Both of these confessional Lutheran church bodies make significant use of evangelists for preaching and sacramental ministry, in addition to ordained pastors. The historic Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia, which traces its founding back more than four hundred years to 1611, has now found itself in a new and expanding mission field since the fall of the Soviet Union and makes significant use of deacons to meet its ministry needs. Likewise, the relatively new Evangelical Lutheran Church of Siberia does the same.

Conclusion

The Body of Christ is in dire need of a fully developed concept of the divine call to public ministry of Word and Sacrament. Only with the full strength and agility of what God has given to His people in the blessed partnership between the priesthood of believers and the office of the public ministry can we meet the challenges of the mission He has given to us all. It's time to start exercising some of these underused muscles for ministry that have been allowed to atrophy over time. The church situated in our rapidly changing culture desperately needs to recover this God-given flexibility. Rehabilitation is sure to come with some challenges of its own, but the restored ability to reach farther and accomplish more is always worth it, not only in regard to our physical bodies, but to the Body of Christ as well.

Endnotes

¹ All Scripture quotations in this article not contained within other quotes are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), © 2001. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

² Arthur Carl Piepkorn, "The Sacred Ministry and Holy Ordination in the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church" in *The Church: Selected Writings of Arthur Carl Piepkorn*, ed. Michael P. Plekon and William S. Wiecher (Dehli: ALPB, 1993), 53.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ August R. Suelflow cites a variety of articles that indicate the increased use of laymen in Word and Sacrament ministry in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in the latter half of the twentieth century. He cites: Robert Just, "Laymen Can Preach—If," *Advance* (November, 1954): 6–7; Henry G. Hartner, "District Experiments with Full-Time Lay Workers," *Advance* (March, 1956): 18–19; and Eldor Bruss, "Laymen Conducts Services during Pastoral Vacancy," *Advance* (October, 1958): 17–18. August R. Suelflow, ed., *Heritage in Motion*:

Readings in the History of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod 1962–1995 (St. Louis: CPH, 1998), 78, endnote 33.

⁷ “Lay Workers in the Church,” *Concordia Theological Monthly*, 39 (December, 1968): 772–75, in *Heritage in Motion: Readings in the History of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod 1962–1995*, ed. August R. Suelflow (St. Louis: CPH, 1998), 68–70.

⁸ The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod 1989 Convention Resolution 3-05B made provisions under certain conditions of need for laymen to be trained, licensed, and supervised at the District level for Word and Sacrament ministry. 1992 Convention Resolution 3-08 recommended the ordination of certain lay workers performing such ministry. 1995 Convention Resolution 3-07A required the laymen performing such ministry to apply for admission into the pastoral ministry of the Synod.

⁹ Piepkorn writes, “The Symbolical Books see the sacred ministry chiefly but not exclusively in dynamic and functional terms . . . proclaiming the gospel and administering the sacraments.” Later he adds, “God gave to the church the concrete persons who discharge these functions, the ‘pastors and doctors.’” Further, he writes, “The Symbolical Books, however, see the sacred ministry both as an office (*ministerium; Amt*) and as an order or estate (*ordo; Stand*) within the church.” Piepkorn, *The Church: Selected Writings of Arthur Carl Piepkorn*, 55–56.

¹⁰ The term “office of the ministry” will be used here forward in this article to refer to that same office in the church, otherwise known as the “predigtamt,” “the pastoral office,” “the office of the pastoral ministry,” “office of the public ministry,” “office of the holy ministry,” or “office of the sacred ministry.”

¹¹ Lk 10:2 and Mt 9:37.

¹² Eph 4:11.

¹³ Eph 4:12–13.

¹⁴ C. F. W. Walther, *Church and Ministry*, trans. J. T. Mueller (St. Louis: CPH, 1987), 185.

¹⁵ The full expression of this quotation is familiar from the *Lutheran Confessions, Augsburg Confession* Article V: “So that we may obtain this faith, the ministry 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 effects faith where and when it pleases God in those who hear the gospel.” Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, ed., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 41.

¹⁶ 1 Pt 2:9.

¹⁷ 1 Pt 3:15.

¹⁸ Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, ed., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 334.

¹⁹ *The Treatise* in this section on “The Power and Jurisdiction of Bishops” explicitly references the *Augsburg Confession* and *Apology* to define what it means by this power. See Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 340. Often in the *Augsburg Confession* the term, “power of the keys,” narrowly refers to absolution or retention of sin in the context of confession and absolution. *Augsburg Confession* Article XXVIII, however, which corresponds to this particular topic, defines the term more broadly as the public use of the means of grace (God’s Word and Sacraments) saying, “Our people teach as follows. According to the gospel the power of the keys or of the bishops is a power and command of God to preach the gospel, to forgive or retain sin, and to administer and distribute the sacraments.” Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 92.

- ²⁰ Martin Luther, “The Babylonian Captivity of the Church,” in *Luther’s Works*, vol. 36, ed. J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald, and H. T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 116.
- ²¹ Walther, *Church and Ministry*, 56.
- ²² *Ibid.*
- ²³ *Ibid.*, 57.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, 163–164.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 164.
- ²⁷ Luther, *Luther’s Works*, vol. 36, 116.
- ²⁸ This is the view of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod’s study, *Theology and Practice of “The Divine Call,”* which says of the *Treatise*, “After addressing the unitary character of the office and the equality in authority of pastors with bishops (Tr 60-65), Melancthon turns to the issue of obtaining pastors for the churches (Tr 66-78). Repeatedly he uses several terms in order to describe the process: the right of calling (*ius vocandi*), the right of choosing (*ius eligendi*), and the right of ordaining (*ius ordinandi*) . . . taken together, the terms used by the *Treatise* constitute and explain the “rightly called” (*rite vocatus*) of AC XIV.” CTCR, *Theology and Practice of “The Divine Call”* (St. Louis: LCMS, 2003), 13.
- ²⁹ Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 47.
- ³⁰ Martin Luther, *Letter to Eberhard von der Tannen, Infiltrating and Clandestine Preachers*, in *Luther’s Works*, vol. 40, ed. J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald and H. T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958), 383–385, 388.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, 391.
- ³² A recent study within The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod acknowledges that “the biblical writers give us several pictures of how the church actually went about selecting pastors in ‘normal,’ settled situations. . . . In any case, however, they do not provide any explicit directives regarding the practice of the call. Any guidance drawn from these examples, therefore, will have to be inferential.” CTCR, *Theology and Practice of “The Divine Call,”* 10.
- ³³ Rom 10:15.
- ³⁴ Ti 1:5.
- ³⁵ Walther, *Church and Ministry*, 219.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, 262.
- ³⁷ Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 341.
- ³⁸ Luther, *Luther’s Works*, vol. 36, 113.
- ³⁹ Johann Gerhard, *On the Ministry: Part I*, in *Theological Commonplaces: XXVI/2*, ed. Benjamin T. G. Mayes (St. Louis: CPH, 2012), 209.
- ⁴⁰ Piepkorn, *The Church: Selected Writings of Arthur Carl Piepkorn*, 61.
- ⁴¹ Piepkorn writes of *Augsburg Confession* Article XIV, “Only persons who are duly chosen, called, and ordained (*rite vocatus, odentlicher Beruf*) are competent publicly and responsibly to proclaim the Gospel and to administer the sacraments (AC 14).” Piepkorn, *The Church: Selected Writings of Arthur Carl Piepkorn*, 63.
- ⁴² Walther, *Church and Ministry*, 289–290.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, 289.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 292.
- ⁴⁵ For this reason, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has chosen to reserve the nomenclature of “ordination” for confirmation of the call to the office of the ministry itself,

not to the auxiliary offices. Thus the CTCR study *The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature* states, “As a matter of uniform nomenclature and in accordance with common understanding, the term ‘ordination’ should be reserved for a man’s entry into the office of the public ministry. The initial acceptance by the church of the gift also of those who are to serve in the vital auxiliary offices should be carried out with solemnity befitting the office. Tradition, common expectations, and the uniqueness of the pastoral office speak against using the term ‘ordination’ for other than the office of the public ministry.” CTCR, *The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature* (St. Louis: LCMS, 1981), 22.

⁴⁶ Walther, *Church and Ministry*, 293.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 296–297.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 299.

⁴⁹ The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has limited “auxiliary” or “subordinate” offices in this way as indicated in this statement: “Reference to auxiliary offices in the New Testament indicates that some of the actual functions of the office of the public ministry may be performed by others under his guidance and direction . . . Functions that are essential exercises of the ministry of Word and sacrament should be performed by those who hold the office of the public ministry. Thus preaching in the worship service, leading the public prayer, celebration of the Sacrament of the Altar, baptisms, wedding and funeral services should be carried out by those who hold the office of the public ministry.” CTCR, *The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature*, 35. Even beyond this statement, Robert Preus argues that “Walther does not say that those who held any of these positions were ‘called’ to their position, and it is my understanding that they were not . . . Luther and the Confessions and the dogmaticians . . . do not envisage ‘auxiliary’ offices in the sense in which this type of thing has been multiplied.” Robert David Preus, *The Doctrine of the Call in the Confessions and in Lutheran Orthodoxy* (Fort Wayne: Luther Academy, 1991), 25.

⁵⁰ Ignatius, *Epistle to the Smyrneans*, in *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, vol. 1 of *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library) 232, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.pdf>.

⁵¹ Tertullian, *Of the Power of Conferring Baptism*, in *Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian*, ed. Allan Menzies, vol. 3 of *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library), 1510–1511, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf03.pdf>.

⁵² The citation of Ignatius may be found under Part II, Thesis III, in Walther, *Church and Ministry*, 196–197 and the citation of Tertullian under Part II, Thesis VII, in Walther, *Church and Ministry*, 288. Walther deals with auxiliary offices under Part II, Thesis VIII, which states that “the pastoral ministry [Predigtamt] is the highest office in the church, and from it stem all other offices in the church.” Walther, *Church and Ministry*, 289.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 290.

⁵⁴ Johann Gerhard, *On the Ministry: Part 1*, 40.

⁵⁵ Johann Gerhard, *On the Ministry: Part 2*, in *Theological Commonplaces: XXVI/2*, ed. Benjamin T.G. Mayes (St. Louis: CPH, 2012), 47.

⁵⁶ Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 341.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Walther, *Church and Ministry*, 162.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 282.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 164.

⁶¹ Ibid., 280–281.

⁶² Ibid., 281.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Martin Luther, “Letter to George Spalatin, September 9, 1521,” in *Luther’s Works*, vol. 48, ed. J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald, & H. T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), 308.

⁶⁵ In his letter to von Amsdorf, Luther suggests that if people do complain, Melancthon could always do this under the auspices of the university by inviting people to a lecture hall. *Luther’s Works*, vol. 48, 311.

⁶⁶ Luther, *Luther’s Works*, vol. 36, 116.

⁶⁷ Walther, *Church and Ministry*, 267.

⁶⁸ Eusebius Pamphilius, *Church History*, in *Eusebius Pamphilius: Church History, Life of Constantine, Oration in Praise of Constantine*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wade, series 2, vol. 1 of *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff, (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library), 667–668. <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf201.pdf>.

⁶⁹ Ignatius, *Epistle to the Smyrneans*, 232.

⁷⁰ Johann Dannhauer is less known for his theology than for his student, Phillip Spener, who became the father of Lutheran Pietism. Perhaps that caused Dannhauer’s voice to hold less weight in confessional circles; yet Walther appreciates his scholarship, at least in regard to this situation.

⁷¹ Ken Schurb argues that, despite his high regard for the priesthood of believers, to say that Walther would have supported occasional lay preachers is an inaccurate caricature of Walther. In support, he shares quotes from Walther such as, “Moreover, no one dare think, ‘I am a spiritual priest, therefore I am also a public preacher.’ Not at all! For that you have to have a specific, regular call.” Ken Schurb, “Was Walther Waltherian?” *Concordia Journal*, 37:3 (Summer, 2011): 189–200.

⁷² Piepkorn, in *The Church: Selected Writings of Arthur Carl Piepkorn*, 62–64, offers convincing evidence that “*rite vocatus*” in the writings of the reformers most often referred to call and ordination. Yet, he does not consider these outlying examples, which give evidence of a broader view in use among the Reformers as well.

⁷³ John C. Wohlrabe, Jr. discusses these theses in a conference presentation quoting them from Karl Wyneken, “Missouri Molds a Ministry for Mission,” *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 45 (May 1972): 69–88. Among them, he cites these: “9. Love is the queen of all laws, more so than all regulations, i.e., in cases of necessity it knows no commandment. 10. There are cases of necessity in which also the regulation of the public office of the ministry cannot and should not be observed. Exodus 4:24–26. 11. A case of necessity occurs when, by legalistic observance of the regulation, souls would be lost instead of saved and love would thereby be violated.” John C. Wohlrabe, Jr. “Practical Implication of the Relationship between Theology and Polity in the Missouri Synod” (paper presented during the Texas Confessional Lutheran Free Conference XX, Brenham, TX, September 12, 2009), 21, <http://concordtx.org/tcl/conference/2009/>. Even with this concession for preaching and administration of Baptism by the *Reisepediger*, it was determined that they should not administer the Lord’s Supper. William C. Weinrich cites the reasoning from Thesis 23, “the traveling preacher does not possess the required knowledge of those who come to the Lord’s Supper (*Abendmahlsgäste*), and since on account of the press of time he cannot prepare them

for the Holy Supper.” William C. Weinrich, “Should a Laymen Discharge the Duties of the Holy Ministry?” *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, 68:3/4 (July/October 2004): 225–229.

⁷⁴ While the *Reiseprediger* Theses themselves rely on this concept of necessity, Wohlrabe suggests this fits into the concept of auxiliary offices. See Wohlrabe, “Practical Implications of the Relationship between Theology and Polity in the Missouri Synod,” 22. Whether an example of the call of necessity or the call to an auxiliary office, in both cases the use of *Reiseprediger* for mission supports the conclusions of this article.