

The Lutheran Teacher's Position In The History Of The Congregation

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Preliminaries

You are aware that our parochial school system, a basic factor in building and preserving the kingdom of God, is jeopardized by a disheartening and dangerous shortage of teachers, which in turn is due primarily to a serious underproduction of stable, long-serving men teachers, occasioned by the lack of attraction that the teacher's calling has for boys and for all those responsible in gaining boys for this calling, including the teachers themselves. The difficulty has been attributed to the status of the male teacher. As a result, the teacher's calling is at present receiving more than ordinary attention, not only by individuals and conferences, but also the teachers' colleges, Synod's Board of Parish Education, and lately even by the College of Presidents.

Thank God: this is not a controversy, but an honest and objective exploration of the subject, to determine what might be wrong.

In that sense also the present paper is to be taken. It is meant, not as a dogmatic statement on the subject, but merely as a contribution toward the clarification of our thought in the matter. It will bring up for consideration and correction a number of apparently faulty assumptions, and a good deal of confused thinking regarding the ministry of the Church and the offices of church servants. It will not propose any changes in the offices or the training of the pastors and teachers.

The paper is not for publication at this time, not because the writer is uncertain of his stand, but because the paper treats questions which need further study privately and in smaller groups before any kind of statement is issued in print. I understand that you will receive a copy in the Conference report.

The topic was so worded by the program committee of District Teachers' Conference, and a paper similar to the present has now been delivered at two such District Conferences, each time with pastors present, who were specially requested to criticize anything they considered wrong, but in neither case did the paper meet with any objection or expressed doubt. This is not said to discourage criticism here, but merely to show how similar papers have been received. Rev. A. C. Mueller, who took the initiative in writing on the subject, and whose first mimeographed paper has gone to quite a number of persons, mostly pastors and professors, reports that ninety percent of the replies he received are favorable.

The ultimate objective of this presentation is not the honor and standing of the teacher, but rather the welfare of the Church and the kingdom of God. For the welfare of the Church depends very much on the treatment of teachers. Dr. Martin Schmidt, professor of Church History at the Kirchliche Hochschule, Berlin-Zehlendorf, recently sent to this country by the American Military Government in Germany, gives it as his considered opinion that ill treatment of the teachers by the Church in Germany in the 19th century first alienated the teachers, then deprived the youth of Christian instruction in the schools, and by now has greatly undermined the Church itself, and helped to bring disaster to both the State and the Church. He says "Die Kinder sind die Bezugsquelle und der Eingang des Reiches Gottes. Was an ihnen versehen wird, betrifft das Reich selbst." (Quoted from memory.)

A. The Ministry of the Congregation

1. *Definition of the term "Ministry"*

- a. In the language of the Church, the term "minister" has come to mean a pastor.
- b. Though at present applied to high-standing representatives of State or Church, its basic meaning is "an inferior, a servant." (Webster)
- c. This is also the sense in which Jesus used the term when He said: "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His

life a ransom for many." Mt. 20: 26-26

- d. "Ministry", in the language of the Church a term commonly applied only to the office of a pastor, means a service, or an office or commission to render service.

2. *The Ministry of the Church*

- a. When the term "ministry" is applied only to the pastorate, we use it in a highly restricted sense; for it embraces much more, and is properly applied also to the office or commission of the Church or the congregation.
- b. The ministry of a congregation is the office or commission to teach and preach the Word and to administer the Sacraments publicly.
- c. "Public" means in behalf of all, not necessarily something performed in a public place. F. Pieper
- d. The ministry of a congregation is the most essential part of the ministry of the Christian Church, of which the local congregation (gathering of believers) is a component part.
 - 1) The general public ministry, or the ministry of the Christian Church, does not differ from the ministry of the congregation in essence and purpose, but only in the scope of practical performance.
 - 2) A congregation has the entire public ministry, and the duty to perform it, either alone or in conjunction with other congregations (for example as a synod, or as a participant with other congregations in a locality in missions, in a central school, in a high school).
 - 3) But, outside of synodical joint endeavors, most congregations are restricted to what is locally possible and practicable -- the direct service of souls through the teaching and preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments,
- e. The Lord did not institute two ministries -- one for the congregation and one for the Church as a whole -- but just the one general ministry of the Christian Church.

"God has really instituted but one office, namely, the office of gathering, building, governing, providing for, and preserving his Church on earth in His name. The Lord established this office, and gave it to His Church, when He presented the keys of heaven to Peter, and later said to all His disciples: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, ...etc." Walther.

- f. This is "the one divinely instituted office" or ministry.
- g. That one divinely instituted office was given to the Church, that is, to all true disciples of Christ, to all true believers, regardless of age or sex--not to an organization, not to a class of Christians, such as only the men, only the adults, only the clergy.
- h. This office or ministry "is essentially nothing but the general priesthood of believers made to function in behalf of all by divine command....The Church possesses it (the power of the keys) in the spiritual priesthood of its individual members." Walther.

3. *The Church Positions -- or Offices of the Ministry*

- a. The "one divinely instituted office", that is, the general ministry of the Christian Church, requires many and various church positions, commonly called offices. (We must here not think only of the local congregation, which usually also has a number of church positions.) "This office has, therefore, not only such a large sphere of duties, and duties and obligations of such diverse nature, but demands also such a variety of great gifts, that no single man is capable of performing all its works alone, even within a limited sphere. Just as the mediatory office of the Messiah is divided into three separate offices, the prophetic, the high-priestly, and the kingly, so

- the office of the Church is divided into offices requiring, the most divergent and the most manifold gifts of the Spirit." Walther.
- b. The New Testament reveals such a diversity of gifts and church positions. 1 Cor. 12, 4-11. Eph. 4, 11.
 - c. There is no such thing as "only one divinely-instituted church position," as we have commonly claimed for the present-day pastorate. On the contrary, if the positions in the early Christian Church may be said to be divinely instituted, then Scripture teaches that God instituted a number of offices or church positions, none of which can be proved to exist in its original form today.
 - d. Luther calls the "Predigtstuhl" an historical development, unlike any one office in the beginning, but a very desirable development.
 - e. If certain congregations referred to in Revelation already had a chief minister, or pastor, as the term "angel" (Revelation 2, 1ff) seems to indicate (angel meaning messenger or minister), it may already have been a development. The epistles never speak of a single minister or of an "angel" of a congregation. Anyway, Scripture nowhere decrees that a congregation should have a single minister. The term "pastors" (Eph. 4, 11), which means "shepherds", and which Luther translated "Hirten", does not prove anything in this connection, just as little as the term "teachers" could be interpreted to mean "parochial school teachers." Nor does the term "bishop" prove anything, since it means "shepherd", with the connotation of "overseer of the flock".
 - f. While the risen and ascended Lord Jesus gave to the Church certain "gifts" (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers) for the public performance of the ministry which He had instituted, that is, "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph., 4, 11-12), it is certain that their "offices" or positions were not meant to be permanent institutions in the Church, but rather to serve the needs of the Church at that time.
 - g. Nor were these positions the only ones. The same Apostle Paul reports 1 Cor. 12 a great "diversity of gifts," and then, at the end of the chapter, says also to the Corinthians: "And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers" (evangelists and pastors are here omitted), "after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversity of tongues." Stressing the diversity of "gifts" (church positions or offices of the ministry), "but the same Spirit," "the same Lord", he continues: "Are all apostles?" (Answer: No, there are many kinds of servants.) "Are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?" (v. 28-30) Note: Evidently St. Paul also wants to teach by these words that not all church members had been so endowed with special gifts, and "set in the Church." But his theme is: "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." (v. 4-6)
 - h. These "gifts" or church positions, as then constituted, have ceased. But the divinely instituted public ministry of the Church has not ceased, and we still have the "same Spirit, Lord and God," and the same original commission.
It is true, "also today, true shepherds and warriors of Christ come out of His and the Holy Ghost's school; however, it has pleased Christ to bestow the ability to perform the office, given fast, suddenly, and in an extraordinary manner at the time of first establishing His Church, thereafter and also now by means of diligent study with earnest prayer, and under the guidance of faithful teachers." --(Walther, *Brosamen*, p. 349.)
 - i. Since Christ has not instituted any permanent church positions or offices, not even the pastorate, as we know it today, it follows that all our church positions or offices, including the pastorate, have been through all the centuries since the time of the early Christian Church, and are today, established as to scope and form in Christian liberty, as needed or found useful to perform the

divinely instituted office of the public ministry.

- j. Although, however, our present church positions are not prescribed in Scripture, but established by the Church in order to carry out God's command to "teach all nations" and to "preach the Gospel to every creature", these church positions must not be classed as man-made, but as God's institutions through the Church, by virtue of their being established according to God's will and command, or by virtue of their being branches of the one office (the general ministry) which Christ instituted.

For example: Scripture says absolutely nothing about the office of a professor at an institution of the Church. Yet, Walther does not hesitate to say that it is not a "human arrangement", but that such a professorship is " a holy, divine office, a branch of the office once instituted and established by Christ on earth in the presentation of the keys of the kingdom of heaven." -- Brosmen, p. 355.

- k. Any position or office of the Church which participates in "the gathering, building, governing, providing for, and preserving God's Church on earth in His name", is a part or branch of the one office of the public ministry established by Christ.

4. *Differences in Church Positions*

- a. Scripture recognizes a difference between elders in general and elders "who labor in the Word and doctrines." 1 Tim. 5, 17.
- b. St. Paul also writes to Timothy (1 Tim. 3, 1); "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." Likewise (v. 13): "For they that have used the office of a deacon, will purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."
- c. As already stated, Scripture emphasizes the great "diversity of gifts" and thus of church positions.
- d. It aligns the apostles with the prophets of the Old Testament in saying that the believers "are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone." Ephesians 2, 20. This does not refer to the persons or their positions, but to their inspired speaking and writing.
- e. Seven almoners were elected in order that the apostles might give themselves "continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word." Acts 6; 1-6. But the almoners were also active in the Word and doctrine. Stephen, for example, "full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people" (Acts 6,8), and so vigorously taught and defended the doctrine that "they (the disputers) were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake." (v.10) See also his defensive address in Acts 7.
- f. There was a difference in the value of the "gifts." St. Paul urges: "But covet earnestly the best gifts." 1 Cor. 12, 31.
- g. Outside of naming those first who were active in the Word and doctrine (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, Eph. 4, 11; or "first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers," 1 Cor. 12, 28), Scriptures undertake no ranking, and never speaks of a higher or a lower office.
- h. On the contrary, Jesus admonished His very apostles against ranking, Mt. 20: 26-28; 23: 5-8. St. Peter calls himself "also an elder" 1 Pet. 5: 1. St. Paul calls Epaphras "our dear fellow-servant," Col. 1: 7.
- i. Nor does the Bible ever speak of "auxiliary offices," so far as the ministry of the Word is concerned. The seven almoners were "appointed over this business" of "daily ministrations" of material needs of the church members.

5. *"The Highest Office in the Church."*

- a. Not Scripture, but Luther, the Confessional Writings, and we today speak of the "highest office in the Church," and this is justified, when it is a matter of setting forth the primary services of the public ministry.
- b. Although we do not teach or believe in an "apostolic succession," as do the Roman Catholics and others, the Apostles obviously performed the very highest duties of the public ministry in preaching and teaching the Word.
- c. This was, and is, a higher function of the ministry than, for example, baptizing or administering communion, conducting marriage ceremonies or burying the dead.

- 1) Jesus, the great Prophet and Teacher, did not baptize.
- 2) St. Paul, no doubt the greatest of all apostolic preachers and writers, seems to have baptized little. To the Corinthians he writes: "I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius....and I also baptized the household of Stephanus; besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel." 1 Cor. 1: 14, 16-17.

- d. In speaking of the highest "office", Luther and the Confessional Writings do not refer primarily to a church position, but to a ministerial function, or activity. Specifically they mean the preaching and teaching of the Word.

Explanation: The Roman Catholic clergy despised this function or "office" of the ministry. Luther condemned them for it in the strongest language, and re-affirmed that the preaching and teaching of the Word is the very primary business, the very highest function of the ministry. He ends one such denunciation by relating that even the civil government in a few instances appointed and salaried preachers for their cities and castles, and nothing was said about it by the bishops and the Pope. Of the government officials he then said. "I fear they did it not because they thought it proper, but because the spiritual tyrants despised and thought so little of the office of preaching, and regarded it as very remote from spiritual government; while the fact is that it is the very highest office (or function) to which all others are attached, and which all others follow. By the same token, where there is no office of preaching, there are no others to follow. For John says, Chap. 4,2: that Christ did not baptize, but only preached. And Paul boasts, 1 Cor. 1, 17, that he had not been sent to baptize, but to preach."

Note: That Luther is not talking strictly about the form of teaching which we know as "preaching", is evident from the fact that he says, "Christ only preached", whereas the fact is that Christ used the most varied forms of teaching. "Preaching" and "preaching office" here simply mean the teaching of the Word in any form. That, Luther says, is "the highest office" or (function). "Hence, whoever is given the office of preaching, to him is given the highest office of Christianity.

He may thereafter also baptize, celebrate Holy Communion, and assume all soul-service; or, if he prefers, he may devote himself solely to preaching and leave baptizing and other lesser offices to others—as Christ did, and Paul, and all Apostles, Acts 6.

"From all this it is evident that our present bishops and clergymen are idols and not bishops, for they give the highest office of the Word, which should be their specialty, over to the very lowest servants, namely to chaplains, monks, begging monks; even the lesser offices (functions) of baptizing and soul-service; but they meanwhile waste their time, and dedicate bells, altars, and churches, none of which are Christian or the works of a bishop, but invented by themselves. They

are wrong, blind larvae, and genuine child bishops." -- St. L. Ed., Vol. X, 1547-49.

6. *The Pastorate--as We Have It Today*

- a. The pastorate, as we know it today, easily classifies as the most important position in the ministry of the congregation.
 - 1) It embraces the highest function of the ministry, namely, the teaching and preaching of the Word, and this is its specialty.
 - 2) It embraces also functions of the ministry which flow out of the highest function, such as baptizing, celebrating Holy Communion, and general soul-service.
 - 3) If a congregation has only a pastor, his office embraces also the functions of the ministry which are otherwise turned over to a teacher or other called servant.
 - 4) In all events his pastoral responsibility extends over the entire congregation.
- b. We dignify the office by the rite of ordination, and restrict ordination to that office.
- c. Because the office deals with all people, the incumbency is restricted to men.
- d. But in the definition of the pastorate we should avoid the following errors:
 - 1) That it is the only divinely instituted church position or office.
 - 2) That this is so because Christ gave the office of the Keys to His Church (all believers), and the pastor performs this office publicly in most of its forms in a congregation.
 - 3) That this is so because Christ commanded preaching (the Great Commission says "teaching", "disciplining"), and the pastor also employs the form of teaching known as preaching.*
 - 4) That all other church positions or offices stem from the pastorate, and are "auxiliary offices" of the pastorate. The fact is that all church offices stem from, and flow out of, the commission of Christ to teach and preach the Word. Because the teacher or a professor also teach and preach the Word, it could be argued that all other offices stem also from their positions. And so it would be with other teachers and preachers of the Word (editors, writers, synodical officials, not having a pastorate).
 - 5) That ordination, which is an adiaphoron and only a solemn confirmation of the call, makes a person a pastor; or that his theological training does it; or the thought, "once a pastor always a pastor," regardless of whether he holds a pastorate.
 - 6) That only an ordained pastor may perform the lesser functions of the ministry, such as baptizing, distributing Communion. Why do we permit students and vicars to preach and teach the Word, that is, to perform the "highest office" (function), but not to perform the lesser functions? (Exceptions occur.)
 - 7) That the pastor's supervision of the teacher is prescribed in Scripture, and is more than a natural (part) of the pastorate or a provision of his and the teacher's call.
 - 8) That a congregation must have one pastor, or one head pastor, according to Scripture.
 - 9) That the pastorate is indivisible and unalterable, according to Scripture.
 - 10) That the term "Predigtamt" (used only Col. 1, 25, German) means only the pastorate, and what Luther and the Confessional Writing say of the "Predigtamt" refers only to the pastorate, instead of the function of teaching and preaching the Word.
 - 11) That only the pastorate is defined or specified in Scripture.
 - 12) That only pastors are meant by the term "elders" in Acts 20 and elsewhere.

* The term "Predigtamt", which is also called "Lehramt", is a good term, but has caused much confusion. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, the Prophets, Jesus, and the Apostles all had the "Predigtamt"; but who would say that they had a pastorate?

- 13) That the pastor holds the whole office of the congregation's public ministry, and that all other offices created by the congregation are "only auxiliary offices of the pastorate." Note: "Auxiliary" is an incorrect term. "Branch office" would be better. But the expression above would still be wrong. All offices created by the congregation, including the pastorate, are branches or integral parts of the congregation's public ministry. The pastor holds the whole office only when he is the only public servant of the congregation, and does all the work himself.

B. The Position of the Teacher

1. *The Scriptural Basis*

- a. Like the pastorate, the teacher's position or office is not defined in Scripture.
- b. But, again as in the case of the pastorate, the essentials of his office are included in the one office which Christ instituted when He gave to His disciples (all believers) the office of the keys and commanded a public ministry.
- c. The teacher has a part of what Luther and the Confessional Writings call "the highest office of Christianity"--the teaching and preaching of the Word, the "Predigtamt".
- d. He is given part of the congregation's public ministry, and is a true minister or servant of the Word. To speak in the language of the New Testament, he is also, like the pastor, a "bishop", "elder", "shepherd", "overseer", "ruler" (by the power of the Word), "apostle", "angel", "prophet", "evangelist", "pastor", and "teacher". This is to be understood in the sense in which a teacher participates in the properties or functions of the Biblical church servants named.
- e. Like the pastorate, the teacher's position is divinely instituted by virtue of the divine institution of the office of the public ministry, of which his office is a part, just like other church positions, although Scripture does not say a word about a parochial school teacher. His office is not a man-made affair, although created by Christians as to its scope and function.
- f. The teacher, therefore, has (as Walther says of the professor) "a holy, divine office, a branch of the office which Christ instituted."

2. *The Teacher's Office Defined*

- a. As we know it today, the teacher's office is not the pastorate of a congregation, or any duplication of it.
- b. Again, as we know his office today, the teacher commonly performs one or more of the following duties:
 - 1) His primary task: The performance of the public ministry among the children, by teaching a parochial school and by activity in or through other agencies of Christian training for children.
 - 2) The teaching and training also of older youths and adults. For example: Young People's Work, Sunday School Teacher Training, Bible Classes, educational or lecture work in Men's Societies, Ladies' Aids, Parent-teachers Associations, and Choirs.
 - 3) Educational work and other services at Circuit Meetings, Teachers' Conferences, Mixed Conferences, District Conferences, or on any of their boards and committees. (Incidentally, here the teacher should not only be the inevitable secretary.)
 - 4) The playing of the organ or other instruments in public worship, and thus actively participate in the highest religious exercise of the congregation as a whole.
 - 5) The directing of choirs, for the enhancement of public worship, and the edification of the congregation.

- 6) The work of an evangelist or missionary, not only in the winning of children, but also in the winning of parents and other adults.
 - 7) Educational and. promotional work of various types, which affects the entire congregation and even the community.
 - 8) A degree of oversight over the entire flock, together with the pastor, as the latter's chief advisor and assistant.
 - 9) By special request and call of the congregation, the assistance of the pastor in his particular functions, such as helping in the distribution of Communion; or even in emergencies performing any of the other pastoral duties, including preaching, if he can do it and has the congregation's call.
- c. As in the case of any church position, including the pastorate, the Church, here the congregation, defines a teacher's position. Its definition is laid down in the call.
- d. The call, however, defines the scope and nature of the position ordinarily only in bold outline, and leaves sufficient flexibility for additions or deductions in the matter of details. Like that of the pastor, the teacher's position is not indivisible or unalterable. If important changes are made by the congregation, the law of love and common justice demands that such changes are made by mutual agreement.
- e. Included in the teacher's call, and in that of the pastor who is to teach school, is the obligation to give the children a Christian general education. This does not make the teacher's or teaching pastor's call in part something that does not belong to the public ministry of the congregation or the Church as a whole.
- 1) It has been erroneously claimed, and vigorously argued, by leading men and officials of our Synod that a teacher and a teaching pastor have a twofold call: Divine, insofar as they teach the Word of God; civic, insofar as they teach the common school branches.
 - 2) This is based on another erroneous claim, namely, that the Church has only the duty to teach and preach the Word of God, and not to provide a Christian general education.
 - 3) That is the principle of the Christian Reformed and other Reformed bodies, who maintain Christian schools which are not connected with any congregation, but conducted by societies of parents and other individuals, and not called parochial schools but parental schools.
 - 4) There is no Biblical basis for that principle, for Scripture does not enter directly anywhere upon the question of a general education, and nowhere makes it the obligation of the parents, the Church or the State.
 - 5) Indirectly and by implication, however, Scripture reveals throughout that a general education is the will of God, and that it is to be a Christian general education, which can only be provided by Christians and the Christian Church.
 - 6) Indirectly and by implication, also, Scripture reveals throughout that the Church can not carry on its primary mission and highest office of saving souls without a general education. We Prove this sufficiently at our institutions for training pastors and teachers. But it is likewise true of congregations, where neither pastor nor teacher would get anywhere without a general education of hearers and learners.
 - 7) Moreover, a Christian general education is necessary for the Christians to fulfill their God-given purpose in this world, which is twice stated in the creation account. Hence, Luther used such strong language on the subject of education as an obligation of the Christians. Hence, also Walther and our other forefathers laid such stress on elementary and higher schools of the Church, in order, as Walther says, that the Christians, according to the will of God, might become "a blessing to the Church and the world."

- f. Such a Christian general education is an implied part of the Church's and the congregation's public ministry, and in no wise merely a parental obligation. Walther makes this very clear in the case of a professor at one of our institutions. Op. cit.
- g. The work with the children is so basic, so vital, so effective, and an far-reaching in building the kingdom of God, that Luther, who generally rated the office of public preaching first, and the teacher's office next to it as "the greatest and best", was not sure which of the two was the more effective, for reasons he then gave, and said he would like nothing better than to be a teacher, if he could leave off from his duties. Hence, the teacher is performing a very great and vital part of the public ministry.
- h. The teacher's office, as already stated, is not another pastorate, also not a part of the pastorate, but a part of the public ministry which is in the possession of the congregation. It is an office in its own right, not independent of the pastorate, but also not primarily responsible to the pastor, but primarily responsible, as the pastorate itself, to the congregation and to God.

Note: The same principles apply to the woman teacher, except that her service in the ministry of the congregation and the church generally are greatly limited by her sex. According to Scripture her service should be restricted to children and women, so far as teaching and training are concerned.

3. *Dignifying the Teacher's Position*

- a. Our Synod has, from the very beginning, held the teacher's position in higher esteem than any other Lutheran body in America.
 - 1) The first diploma of vocation ever issued by our founding fathers went to a teacher (Carl Ludwig Geyer, 1840), before his own pastor (Otto Herman Walther) was voted such a call.
 - 2) Teachers at first received the same training as pastors, and have always been counted among the clergy.
 - 3) When Synod was organized, the teachers were classed with professors and all others who held no pastorates, or whose congregations had not yet joined Synod, as advisory members, and expected to attend all synodical sessions.
 - 4) The teachers were given a formal written call, and the procedure in calling a teacher or dismissing him, was made the same as in calling or dismissing of pastors.
 - 5) Teachers were also formally installed, and for all practical purposes "ordained" or set apart for a life of service as ministers of the Church.
- b. But the formal rite of ordination was not accorded the teacher and is not accorded today. The Church has a perfect right to restrict formal ordination to its pastors; but it certainly would not be wrong to ordain also its male teachers. However, that is here neither suggested nor requested.
- c. There are principally two persons who can establish and uphold, or harm and destroy, the dignity of the teacher's office. The first is the teacher himself, and the second is the pastor. We can not here enter upon the complexities of this proposition.
- d. But, as someone has pointed out, the teacher must not seek his station in academic standing, which in itself is good, but rather in the type of service he renders, especially as a minister of religion, and in a high Christian character.
- e. And the pastor, to name only one chief thing, must not despise or minimize the importance of the teacher's calling, or allow others to do it, for the selfish purpose of magnifying his own importance or financial advantages, but rather magnify the teacher's position, and not only let the teacher live justly with him, but regard him as his best friend, brother, and co-worker. He will do this to his own advantage.

4. *The Relationship between Pastor and Teacher*

- a. We must speak of an official and a personal relationship between pastor and teacher.
- b. To understand the official relationship properly, the scope and responsibility of each office must be defined.
 - 1) The pastorate embraces the entire congregation in its pastoral responsibility and function, including the children and other members over which the teacher has charge, including also the teacher and his family.
 - 2) But the pastor has this all-embracing responsibility and care as a minister or servant of the congregation, and is not an independent lord, who may do as he pleases, and who makes all decisions, or pressures other to make them; he has this responsibility as a pastor, not as a boss or ruler, and is confined to the power and rule of the Word of God, and to the means and procedures of an evangelical shepherd.

Note: We servants of the Church are inclined to forget sometimes that we are servants, not rulers; inferiors, not superiors; fellow-Christians of our church members, not in a class by ourselves; that we hold a position in the Church only by the grace of God and the trusting request of our fellow-believers, who want us to serve them. We should, therefore, in a particular sense and with double keenness remain aware of the Word of God, spoken even to lords and masters who have legal power:

"Know that your master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him." Eph. 6, 9. The temptation to rule occurs, of course, in matters on which Scripture is silent, or possibly where Scripture is misinterpreted.

- 3) The teacher's office is not another pastorate. Its scope does not extend over the entire congregation, so far as its functions are concerned.
- 4) Yet, it is an office of the entire congregation, a service to the entire congregation, and, therefore, the teacher shares with the pastor a degree of responsibility for the entire congregation.
- 5) Like the pastor, he has this responsibility as a servant, not as a lord, or as a second lord, probably at variance with the first one; he has it as a teacher, not as a pastor, and, therefore, does not have the same responsibility as a pastor.

Note: It is obviously an error, and something not founded in Scripture, to assume that only a pastor is responsible for a congregation, and that a teacher is, therefore, responsible only to the pastor.

On the contrary, in Ephesus, where there were various kinds of elders, as must be concluded from Eph. 4:11, St. Paul speaks to all the elders, when he says: "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves (plural), and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers (bishops, shepherds, church servants), to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood." Acts 20:28. This famous passage, commonly applied only to pastors, applies very definitely to all elders, called or appointed "to feed the Church of God." And, incidentally, this passage, commonly used to prove that the pastor has the supervision over the teacher, does not say a word about the supervision that one elder is to exercise over another.

- 6) This means great care, wisdom, and tact on the part of the teacher not to assume the responsibility and official prerogatives of the pastor. It calls for very close brotherly cooperation between the two, one "in honor preferring the other," and each respecting the official position of the other.
- 7) It also means great care, wisdom, and tact on the part of the pastor not to assume the primary responsibilities of the teacher or his prerogatives, and to advise or direct the congregation in such matters without the knowledge or an understanding with the

- teacher. Again this calls for close brotherly co-operation.
- 8) We should probably add here that, in music, the organist or choir director, like the pastor, serves the entire congregation direct.
 - 9) And this leads us to repeat that the teacher's position is a public office (performed in behalf of all), although the teacher carries on his activities mostly outside of the public church service (probably the pastor, too). This also applies to the woman teacher.
- c. The pastor, because of his pastoral responsibility, is naturally and officially interested in all the functions of the congregation's ministry, and hence also in all the functions of the teacher, not merely in the school, but in all his activities.
 - d. This does not yet mean that, therefore, the pastor should "supervise" the teacher of the school. For the teacher, because of his own responsibility, which in the final analysis is a responsibility for the congregation, is naturally and officially interested in all the functions of the congregation's ministry, and hence also in all the functions of the pastor, even as every member of the Church should be interested. Yet, this does not mean that the teacher should "supervise" the pastor and his activities.
 - e. Informally, pastor and teacher are supervising each other all the time, and the congregation is supervising both of them; and when they have found something in this informal supervision which needs correction or improvement, they speak to one another, and if they find everything fine, they praise each other (only that the "pat on the back" or the "bouquets" may not be as frequent as they should be for mutual encouragement).
 - f. No more can be done in any formal supervision without transgressing the law of love, assuming legalistic powers (which are absent in the Church), and creating discord.
 - g. What, then about the provision in the printed diploma of vocation for a teacher that he is "to work under the supervision of the pastor and the board of education"? It should probably be dropped, for the following reasons:
 - 1) Practically no pastor exercises any kind of formal supervision of the teacher and his activities. If he does, it is probably not different from the informal supervision exercised by all pastors, or he gets into trouble. The latter is what most pastors fear, and so it is difficult to induce them, as I found by experience as a superintendent, to visit even the school, either occasionally or regularly, to say nothing of the teacher's other activities. Why keep a provision in the teacher's call which the average pastor does not carry out in practice?
 - 2) Formal supervision assumes from the start a necessity for it, a degree of distrust of the person to be supervised, a degree of superiority on the part of the supervisor—all of which rankles in the heart of an approved servant of the Word. For the supervision, if it may be so called of pastors, teachers, and congregations, the Synod wisely chose the term "Visitor" (Visitor), which is a much better term than supervisor.
 - 3) Although teachers accept a call with this provision in it, willing to submit to supervision, and knowing what is commonly implied, a number of them object to it in principle.
 - 4) Formal supervision of one church servant by another is neither commanded nor indicated in the New Testament.
 - h. Should the idea of supervision be discarded? Formal supervision, yes. Informal supervision, or visitation, or observation, no.
 - 1) Pastor and board of education ought to visit and observe at least the parochial school.
 - 2) The reason or motive should not be that the teacher needs watching, even if he should need it, but rather that the work of the school goes on more or less in seclusion, not in the

public eye, as, for instance, the teacher's organ playing or the pastor's preaching, and that the congregation has every right to inform itself through the pastor and board of education, as well as by direct visits of the members.

- 3) While on such a visit, they should not be mere passive observers, but frankly and openly ask about this or that, criticise in a brotherly manner what needs to be criticised, and in every positive way help to improve the school and to encourage and improve the teacher.
 - 4) They should also report back to the congregation, and speak about the school from personal observation otherwise, not hanging out the dirty linens or revealing matters that are private, or private for the time being, but here also, according to the Eighth Commandment, "defend" the teacher, "speak well of him, and put the best construction on everything."
 - 5) The teacher, on the other hand, should welcome such visitations and arrange for them. If all is well with him and the school, the visitors will sing his praises. If all is not well, and he can be improved, he is the better for it. In either case he will benefit.
 - 6) Nor should the teacher ever resent the suggestions, advice, or admonition of his visitors, and that includes the board members, even in matters that are purely pedagogical. If he disagrees, he should certainly say so in all politeness, and give his reasons; but he should never pose as a know-all in his field, and regard his visitors as incompetent advisors. That, if anything, will lower his standing.
- i. Also informal supervision in general should not be discarded, but rather welcomed and invited by the teacher. This refers to all the other activities of the teacher.
 - j. It is best effected by constant close co-operation between pastor and teacher, or between the board and the teacher (the pastor as an advisory member of the board).
 - k. Instead of asking in the diploma of vocation that the teacher "work under the supervision of the pastor and board of education" we could say. "We expect or obligate our teacher-elect to work in brotherly harmony and close co-operation with the pastor and board of education." That would "sit" a whole lot better with teacher, and the same thing would be achieved.
 - l. As to the personal relationship, where most of the blessings flow, and where any trouble usually starts, pastor and teacher should completely forget their official relationship, and live together, and deal with each other as Christian to Christian, man to man, brother to brother, and friend to friend, one "in honor preferring the other."
 - m. Without entering into an intimacy that breeds contempt, and never losing their respect for one another, they should become "one heart and one soul."
 - n. "Love is the fulfillment of the Law." If pastor and teacher can learn to love each other as they love themselves, and unselfishly do unto the other as they would like the other to do unto them, their personal relationship problems are solved.
In order to do this, they must take the Second Table of the Law seriously, and really practice on each other what they teach and preach.
It can be done, even with all the imperfections that remain and must be forgiven.