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Justification and the Office of the Holy Ministry

The first five articles in this issue were originally papers presented at the 35th Annual Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions held in Fort Wayne on January 18–20, 2012 under the theme “Justification in a Contemporary Context.” The final two articles, by Joel Elowsky and Roland Ziegler, were first delivered as the plenary papers of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Theology Professors Conference that met at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, on May 29 to June 1, 2012, under the theme “To Obtain Such Faith . . . The Ministry of Teaching the Gospel” (AC V). It has been the practice of the two seminary journals to alternate in publishing plenary papers from this bi-annual conference in order that these studies may be shared with the wider church.

The Editors

Walther and AC V

Roland Ziegler

C.F.W. Walther's doctrine of the ministry has received considerable attention over the years. This study will consider only one detail: how does Walther interpret Article Five of the Augsburg Confession (hereafter, AC V) and how does Walther's view compare to his sources and to other interpretations of AC V in his time and later? The central question is the meaning of the words *ministerium* and *Predigtamt*. Do they mean *Pfarramt* and nothing else, or does the *ministerium* go beyond the *Pfarramt*? This question is debated not only in the North American context, but, as the last part of this study will show, continues to enjoy ongoing discussion among Lutherans in general.¹ My goal here is to examine the understanding of AC V as it is presented in Walther's *Kirche und Amt*, and then put it in context: the context of the interpretation of AC V in Lutheran orthodoxy, in which Walther puts himself, as well as the later history of the interpretation of AC V. This study will not engage in a detailed interpretation of AC V in its original historical context.

I. AC V in *Kirche und Amt*

The Differences between First and Later Editions of Kirche und Amt

In the series of theses on the ministry found in the first edition of *Kirche und Amt*, the second thesis reads: "The preaching office or pastoral office is not a human ordinance, but an office established by God himself."² In the chapter "Witnesses of the Church in Her Public Confessions," Walther quotes the first sentence of AC V in German.³ The second edition of *Kirche und Amt* (as well as all subsequent editions),

¹ There is, of course, much more to AC V than this question, such as the rejection of enthusiasm and the binding of the work of the Spirit to the means of grace. For Walther's view on the means of grace, see Franz Pieper, "Walther als Theologe. Die Lehre von den Gnadenmitteln," *Lehre und Wehre* 36 (1890), 113–121.

² "Das Predigtamt oder Pfarramt ist keine menschliche Ordnung, sondern ein von Gott selbst gestiftetes Amt," C.F.W. Walther, *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt*, 3rd ed. (Erlangen: Verlag von Andreas Deichert, 1875), 193. All translations are, if not otherwise marked, my own.

³ "Solchen Glauben zu erlangen, hat Gott das Predigtamt eingesetzt," C.F.W. Walther, *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt* (Erlangen: C. A. Ph. Th. Bläsing, 1852), 215, first edition; 194, third edition.

includes an additional, lengthy annotation in the text. In it, Walther distinguishes between the office *in concreto*, (i.e., the pastoral office), and the office *in abstracto*, pointing the reader to Ludwig Hartmann's *Pastorale evangelicum* for this interpretation.⁴ This distinction is necessary, says Walther, because of those who want to make the pastoral office a means of grace and coordinate it with word and sacraments. To do so would make the pastoral office "absolutely necessary" for salvation, meaning that no one can come to faith or have his sins forgiven without an ordained pastor. Against this, AC V only states that the external or bodily word is necessary for salvation, which argues against an enthusiastic teaching that postulates that God operates immediately.⁵ Nevertheless, Walther holds, even though AC V cannot be restricted to the pastoral office, it also includes the divine institution of the pastoral office.⁶

Walther on the one hand understands *ministerium* here as primarily functional. The systematic concern is the issue of whether or not faith and forgiveness of sins depend solely on God's word and sacrament or also on the ordained person administering them. Thus, word and sacrament are not restricted to the ministration of the pastor; the forgiveness of sins is communicated also through the word spoken by a person not called and ordained to the pastoral office.

Walther's Argument

Walther argues for his position from the Schwabach Articles, which served as a source for the Augsburg Confession, and he quotes the following from Chytraeus's *History of the Augsburg Confession*: "To obtain such faith or to give to us men, God has instituted the preaching office or oral word, namely, the Gospel . . ."⁷ Additionally, for this understanding of *Predigtamt* as synonym for gospel, Walther quotes from the Formula of Concord (SD XII, 30). There, in the German, *Kirchendienst* stands without a conjunction next to "*das gepredigte und gehörte Wort,*" whereas the Latin

⁴ C.F.W. Walther, *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt*, 2nd ed. (Erlangen: Verlag von Andreas Deichert, 1865), 198–199. I will be using subsequently C.F.W. Walther, *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt*, 3. auf Anordnung der Synode aufs neue durchgesehene und vermehrte Auflage. (Erlangen: Verlag von Andreas Deichert, 1875). The section of interest is in this edition on pages 194–195.

⁵ Walther, *Die Stimme unserer Kirche*, 195.

⁶ Walther, *Die Stimme unserer Kirche*, 195

⁷ "Solchen Glauben zu erlangen oder uns Menschen zu geben hat Gott eingeseyt das Predigtamt oder mündlich Wort, nemlich das Evangelium . . ." Walther, *Die Stimme unserer Kirche*, 194.

translation reads: “*Quod ministerium ecclesiasticum, hoc est, verbum Dei praedicatum et auditum.*”⁸ The Latin thus clearly identifies *ministerium ecclesiasticum* with the preached and heard word, not as an estate in the church or as the pastoral office. If this does not prove that AC V is to be understood in Walther’s sense, it at least proves that *ministerium ecclesiasticum* was not always used in the 16th century or in the confessions as synonymous with the pastoral office. Walther quotes another passage from the Formula for this understanding of *ministerium* which reads in the Latin translation: “*Verbum enim illud, quo vocamur, ministerium Spiritus est* (2 Cor 3:8).”⁹ Thus, the ministry of the Spirit is the word, meaning that the ministry is not the pastoral office, but rather the preached word itself.

Ludwig Hartmann’s Pastorale

As already noted, Walther quotes the *Pastorale evangelicum* by Ludwig Hartmann for the distinction between the ministry *in abstracto* and *in concreto* as well as a proof that AC V does not deal with the ministry *in concreto*, (i.e., the pastoral office or *Pfarramt*). Hartmann describes two ways in which one can speak of the ministry:

1. *Abstractly*, the position itself and the same office is, in a Christian way, subject to consideration in which respect the ministry is treated in article AC V.
2. *Concretely*, in regard to the persons, who are engaged in this office, thus treats AC XIV this subject, that namely no one is allowed to preach or administer the sacraments without being lawfully called. Therefore, the ministry or pastoral office is the office/duty to preach in the public meeting the word of God and lawfully to administer the sacraments, instituted by God, entrusted to fit persons through the mediation of a lawful call, so that through the true knowledge of him it kindles faith and

⁸ *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*, 5th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), 1097,17–19. This edition is subsequently abbreviated as “BSLK.” In Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, tr. Charles Arand, et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), this sentence is translated: “That the church’s ministry—the Word as it is proclaimed and heard—is not a means through which God the Holy Spirit teaches human beings...”

⁹ FC SD XI, 29 (BSLK 1072, 23–24). Kolb-Wengert has, “For the Word through which we are called is a ministry of the Spirit.” The German follows Luther’s translation of 2 Cor 3:8 and has, for *ministerium* (διακονία), “Amt.”

the virtues resulting thence, and imparts to all believers all the benefits of Christ and eternal salvation.¹⁰

Walther quotes Hartmann only through the first part and omits everything that follows—a decision with consequences, for Hartmann goes on to identify the *ministerium* with the *officium pastorale* and the public preaching and administration of the sacraments.

In my reading, what Hartmann does here is simply distinguish between the abstract noun *ministerium*, which denotes an office, and the *minister*, the person to whom this office is entrusted. This is supported by the fact that the chapter from which this quote is taken is titled “*De Pastoralis officio in abstracto*,” and the following chapter is “*De Pastore*”—or, as it says on the heading on the pages “*de Pastoralis Munere concretive spectato*.”¹¹ The distinction made is therefore between the office and the bearer of the office, but, as can be seen from the continuation of the quote above in Hartmann, he does not envision that the *ministerium* is occupied by anybody but ministers. He discusses, for example, the vocation into the ministry, which is the vocation into the public office.¹² He discusses also the question about who is to be called into the ministry.¹³ There is no indication whatsoever that Hartmann sees the *ministerium* as mere functions that can be exercised by any Christians. This results in a rather puzzling situation: how can it be that Walther has so seriously misread Hartmann?¹⁴

AC V in the Commentaries Referred to by Walther in Kirche und Amt

Walther does concede at the end of his remark on AC V that the article also witnesses, though indirectly, to the divine institution of the pastoral office, and he refers to the commentaries of Mylius, Carpzov, Menzer,

¹⁰ J. Ludovicus Hartmann, *Pastorale Evangelicum* (Norimbergae: Sumptibus Wolfgangi Mauriti Endteri, 1722), 27 (emphasis added).

¹¹ Hartmann, *Pastorale Evangelicum*, 25.40–41. In the table of contents (no page numbering, it would be p. 33), the headings are “*De Pastoralis officio in abstracto considerato*” and “*De Past. concretive spectato*.”

¹² Hartmann, *Pastorale Evangelicum*, 33.

¹³ Hartmann, *Pastorale Evangelicum*, 36.

¹⁴ On Walther’s interpretation of Hartmann, see also Naomichi Masaki, “Augsburg Confession XIV: Does it Answer Current Questions on the Holy Ministry?” *CTQ* 70 (2006), 123–162, 137–140.

Franz and others.¹⁵ Does this reference shed light on the insertion of this comment? How do the authors of these commentaries understand AC V?

The first work mentioned is most likely Georg Mylius's commentary on the Augsburg Confession.¹⁶ The next commentary listed is by Johann Benedict Carpzov (1607-1657), a professor in Leipzig, who wrote the *Introduction to the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church*.¹⁷ Carpzov states that the *ministerium* is established by God and that it is an *ordo* and *status divinitus*. The organs of the ministry are word and sacrament. In the operation of the ministry, God is the principle cause, the ministry is the ministerial cause, word and sacraments are the organs, not ἔργα. Carpzov rejects Enthusiasts, Zwinglians, and Papists who believe that faith is given without the word and that one obtains merit *de congruo* through self-preparation. Carpzov explains the role of the ministry further in a note:

Out of the opinion of the Augsburg Confession therefore, the ministry concurs not only in the production of faith distantly, and in no other way than because it administers and distributes the means, namely, word and sacraments, but also most closely effects faith and concurs

¹⁵ Walther, *Die Stimme unserer Kirche*, 195. None of the authors are mentioned in Walther's series of articles in *Lehre und Wehre*, "Lutherisch-theologische Pfarrers-Bibliothek."

¹⁶ Mylius, Georg (Theologe, 1548-1607). AVGVSTANAE || Confeſionis || QVAE ECCLE- || SIARVM EVANGELICA- || RVM NOVISSIMI TEMPORIS || AVGVSTISSIMVM SYMBOLVM, || & doctrinae Lutheranae lapis || verè Lydius est; || Explicatio: || PVBLICE TRADITA IN || Academia Ienensi || A || GEORGIO MYLIO || Augustano S. Theologiae Doctore || et Professore Primario: || (pars altera. ||) Ausgabebezeichnung: IENAE || TYPIS TOBIAE STEINMANNI; || Sumtibus Salomonis Gruneri, Bibliop. || Ienens. Anno M.D.XCVI. || Impressum: Jena : Gruner, Salomon : Steinmann, Tobias, 1596 (VD16 M 5249), 2 parts in one volume. Unfortunately, I was not able to consult this book, since the only copies in the United States are at Harvard and Duke, and another edition of it is in the process of being digitized. It is strange, though, that in the libraries of the educational institutions of the LCMS, there are no copies, according to OCLC and the online catalogue of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Did Walther have a copy that was later lost? Or might it still be in a private library? Reinhold Pieper (President of Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield) in his *Wegweiser durch die Theologischen Disciplinen und deren Litteratur für Theologische Studenten und Pastoren bei Anschaffung einer Bibliothek*, (Milwaukee, WI: Druck der Germania Publishing Co., 1900), 42, mentions this book by Mylius.

¹⁶ Johann Benedict Carpzov, *Isagoge in libros ecclesiarum Lutheranarum symbolicos*, Editio 2. auctior & correctior (Lipsiae : Typis & impensis Viduae & Haeredum Joh. Wittigau, 1675). The first edition was published 1665.

¹⁷ Johann Benedict Carpzov, *Isagoge in libros ecclesiarum Lutheranarum symbolicos*, Editio 2. auctior & correctior (Lipsiae : Typis & impensis Viduae & Haeredum Joh. Wittigau, 1675). The first edition was published in 1665.

through the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments to accomplish the one result, namely, so to speak the ministerial cause. This is clear partly from the titles by which the ministry of the word is marked when it is called God's co-worker, 1 Cor 3:9; saviours Ob [21], 1 Cor 9:22; 1 Tim 4:16; spiritual parents 1 Cor 4:16; Gal 4:19; partly from the assignment of the spiritual effects, which are salvation, Rom 11:14; conversion, Acts, 14:28; enlightenment, Eph 3:9.¹⁸

Here we have a view that the ministry is not simply distant from its means but that there must be truth in the language of scripture that attributes agency in the coming of faith to the human minister. On the other hand, Carpzov does not want to make the human minister a cause of faith, so that the coming to faith would be the result of a human-divine venture. Therefore, he stresses that, even though 1 Cor 3:9 rightly attributes to the ministry the production of faith, nevertheless, this only happens insofar as they are ministers and handle the instruments, namely word and sacraments, which are appointed to this office. Thus, they produce faith only insofar as they exercise their ministry, which they occupy according to God's will, and handle and distribute word and sacrament, irrespective their own spiritual state.¹⁹ Carpzov thus clearly does not equate ministry with word and sacrament. Rather, word and sacrament create faith and the ministry exists to administer word and sacrament; only insofar as it does this does it become a ministerial cause of faith and salvation. To put in more personal terms: the pastor is God's coworker and a father in the faith when he does what he is appointed to do and because of the means he administers. Outside and beyond that, he has no claim to be God's coworker in the sense of 1 Cor 3:9.

Balthasar Mentzer (1565–1627), professor in Marburg and Giessen, published his *Interpretation of the Augburg Confession* in 1613.²⁰ Mentzer connects AC V and the Schwabach Articles, which he ascribes to Luther.²¹ The principal cause of faith is the Holy Spirit, the instrumental cause are word and sacrament. The ministry of the gospel is instituted by Christ, therefore the apostle and all faithful teachers are called servants of Christ. It is the ministry of the Spirit, not only because the Spirit has instituted it

¹⁸ Carpzov, *Isagoge*, 248.

¹⁹ Carpzov, *Isagoge*, 250.

²⁰ Balthasar Mentzer, *Exegesis Augustanae Confessionis : Cuius Articuli XXI. breviter & succincte explicantur, & subiecta antiithesei tōn heterodoxōn* (Giessae Hassorum: Hampelius, 1613).

²¹ Luther did, though, reject that he was the only author, cf. WA 30 III, 194–197.

with the Father and the Son, but especially because the Spirit works through it. The power (*virtus*) and efficaciousness of the ministry is therefore God the Holy Spirit alone, not some created quality within it. Mentzer can also call the *ministerium* an instrumental cause, but he does not call the minister an instrumental cause. He stresses over and over that God himself is working in word and sacrament and that therefore human agency is not a cause of salvation.²² Nevertheless, there is no indication that he assumes that every Christian has the *ministerium*.

Wolfgang Franz (1564–1628), professor in Wittenberg, published a collection of Disputations on the Augsburg Confession.²³ There is no trace of the distinction between *ministerium in abstracto* and *concreto* in them. Rather, in the section dedicated to AC V, Franz discusses the succession of ministers, from the patriarchs to the Levites to the apostles, who then chose some of the gentiles as doctors.²⁴ It is quite obvious that Franz thinks that the *ministerium* pertains only to those who have been specially appointed to this office, not to every believer.

It seems, therefore, that the commentaries Walther cites do indeed support his claim that they teach that the pastoral office is included in AC V. But they do not give any support to the understanding that the ministry goes beyond the pastoral office—admittedly, not a claim that Walther made. There is, nevertheless, a theological affinity in the strong emphasis on the sole operation of God in the production of faith through the means of grace and thus a subordination of the ministry to the means of grace. None of the three authors investigated simply coordinates ministry, word, and sacrament.

Why the Addition?

Thus, the historical question: why did Walther add that annotation? What happened between 1852 and 1862 that caused him to make this addition?

²² Mentzer, *Exegesis*, 160–161. It is quite interesting that, in a context where Mentzer could speak of ministers as means of God's operation, he does not.

²³ Wolfgang Franz, *Augustanae Confessionis Articuli Fidei XXI, Et Articuli Abusu VII. Disputationibus XXXIII in tres Adversus Pontificios, Calvinianos, ac Antitrinitarios hodiernos, breviter explicati & ex Verbo Divino confirmati* (Wittebergae : Gormanus, 1619). The book is digitized, cf. http://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/dms/werkansicht/?PPN=604023545&PHYSID=PHYS_0005 (accessed May 23, 2012). The section on AC V is P3r til S2v.

²⁴ Franz, *Augustanae Confessionis*, Q1r.

In 1852 and 1853, "supplements" (*Beilagen*) were published in *Der Lutheraner* in addition to the regular issues. Here, among other pieces, an article by Pastor Ottomar Fürbringer (Freistatt and Kirchhain, Wisconsin) was printed on the debate between Missouri and the "Grabauians."²⁵ In it, Fürbringer appeals to Christian Löber for his distinction between *ministerium in abstracto* and *concreto*.²⁶ He sees in this distinction a potential to solve the differences between Grabau and Missouri. "The office *in abstracto*, i.e. insofar as one abstracts it from the administration by a person apt for it, is given to the church; but she has God's command to establish it *in concreto*."²⁷

Fürbringer then references AC V in passing.²⁸ The apostles were the firstfruits not only of the church, but also of the office; through the mediated call "it [the office] comes forward similarly through the operation of the Spirit of Christ as the innermost circle from the womb of the entire congregation, which is the continuation of the operation of the master who is invisibly being present with her."²⁹ With the means of grace the office is instituted, and it is present wherever they are administered and used. This sounds like a purely functionalist understanding, but then Fürbringer states that God wants this office to concentrate itself in a presbyterate worthy of that honor. The church that was the subject in the calling of a man to office is now the object of the office's operation. Pastors

²⁵ O. Fürbringer, "Geschichtlich-theologischer Beitrag zu vollständigerer Beurtheilung der Streitigkeiten zwischen den Grabauianern und den sogenannten Missouriern," *Beilage zu No. 10. Jahrg. 9. des Lutheraners*, 9-11; *Beilage zu No. 12. Jahrg. 9 des Lutheraners*, 17-20; *Beilage zu No. 13. Jahrg. 9. des Lutheraners*, 21. On Fürbringer, see W. G. Polack, "Ottomar Fuerbringer," *Concordia Theological Monthly* V (1934), 211-217, and Ludwig Ernest Fuerbringer, *80 Eventful Years* (St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House 1944), 5-16.

²⁶ Fürbringer, "Geschichtlich-theologischer Beitrag," 20. The reference is to Christian Löber, *Die Lehre der Wahrheit zur Gottseligkeit . . . mit gnugsamen Schrift-Gründen erweist verfasst* (Altenburg: Bey Joh. Ludwig Richtern, 1711), 973. Walther wrote the preface to a new edition: Christian Löber, *Evangelisch-Lutherische Dogmatik*, 2nd ed. (St. Louis, MO; Leipzig: Verlag von F. Dette, 1893 [1st edition, 1872]).

²⁷ Fürbringer, "Geschichtlich-theologischer Beitrag," 20. "Das Amt in abstracto, d.h. insofern von seiner Verwaltung durch eine hierzu tüchtige Person abstrahiert wird, ist der Kirche gegeben; Sie hat aber Gottes Gebot, es in concreto aufzurichten . . ."

²⁸ He also mentions that the Pommeranian and Saxon Catechism agree with this distinction.

²⁹ Fürbringer, "Geschichtlich-theologischer Beitrag," 20.

can only be transferred or removed if God's Word orders and commands it.³⁰

Thus, the pastor is not the creature of the congregation, as Grabau feared would be the consequence of the Missourian doctrine on the ministry. Fürbringer's point seems to be to emphasize that the ministry does not exist only in the person of the minister and, therefore, can only be transferred by a minister, but rather that the ministry is in the church and, therefore, the church calls ministers. What Fürbringer does not say here is that every Christian has the ministry.

In 1855, the first volume of the new theological journal of the Missouri Synod, *Lehre und Wehre* (Doctrine and Defence), opened with an article by Fürbringer, "On the Doctrine of the Holy Preaching Office,"³¹ in which he engaged a recently published book on the ministry by Johann Friedrich Wucherer.³² Fürbringer states: "As the Gospel is given to all who believe, even so the office, which cannot be separated from the former, for through it comes preaching, as it brings with it the necessity, that it, received through *akoe*, spreads itself into wider circles, Rom 10:17. 15; Lk 2:10.17."³³ In a footnote to this sentence, *Predigtamt* is explained as synonymous with gospel and the sacraments, because otherwise it should read "*Evangelium und Sakrament gegeben und das Predigtamt.*" Additionally, Fürbringer quotes the Formula of Concord for this understanding, "For the Word, by which we are called, is an office of the Spirit" (FC XI, 28).³⁴ Fürbringer repeats: the office of the gospel is "a common good," which, according to divine order, is to be exercised in the community by those whom God has given gifts

³⁰ Fürbringer, "Geschichtlich-theologischer Beitrag," 20. This remark by Fürbringer might be interesting: "Nothing is more removed from the true church than to suggest unlimited arbitrariness and independence of the individual congregations in church polity, ordination, liturgy, discipline, and similar forms for the freedom which the gospel teaches, as long as through them grace and salvation are not simultaneously supposed to be obtained." The early Missouri Synod was neither fiercely independent-minded nor anarchic.

³¹ Fürbringer, "Zur Lehre vom heiligen *Predigtamt*," *Lehre und Wehre* 1 (1855), 1-13, 33-57.

³² Johann Friedrich Wucherer, *Ausführlicher Nachweis aus Schrift und Symbolen, daß das evangelisch-lutherische Pfarramt das apostolische Hirten- und Lehramt, und darum göttliche Stiftung sei* (Nördlingen: C.H. Beck, 1853).

³³ Fürbringer, "vom heiligen *Predigtamt*," 5.

³⁴ "Denn das Wort, dadurch wir berufen werden, ist ein Amt des Geistes," BSLK 1072,22-23. This is the same passage that Walther will quote in the second edition of *Kirche und Amt*.

and called through the congregation.³⁵ There is no detailed discussion of AC V, since Wucherer does not build his argumentation on this article.

We see in these two articles by Fürbringer a foreshadowing of Walther's annotation in *Kirche und Amt*. Does that mean that Walther got the distinction between *ministerium in abstracto* and *in concreto* from Fürbringer, or is Fürbringer here the mouthpiece of Walther?³⁶

In 1856, there was a free conference in Columbus, Ohio, that examined the articles of the Augsburg Confession.³⁷ Already at AC V, though, there were differences in understanding. The question was the relationship between AC V and AC XIV. One side (it is not identified who said what) identified the ministry in AC V with the pastoral office in AC XIV; the other side claimed that AC V only speaks about the administration (*Verwaltung*) of word and sacrament, but not who is to do it, not about the administrator (*Verwalter*). The pastoral office is included, insofar as it administers, but it does not exhaust AC V.³⁸ When no agreement could be

³⁵ Fürbringer, "vom heiligen *Predigtamt*," 11. Fürbringer strongly opposes, with Wucherer, Höfling's thesis that the office of *presbyteros* or *episkopos* is not divinely instituted and that the office in the Lutheran church is a different office than the apostolate or the presbyterate in the New Testament. See Fürbringer, "vom heiligen *Predigtamt*," 37–43.

³⁶ Walther and Fürbringer were part of the original Saxon emigration party of 1839. In 1842, Fürbringer had married the widow of Otto Hermann Walther, C.F.W. Walther's brother. Thus, there were rather close bonds. Perhaps Walther's correspondence gives some information about the intellectual conversation between the two.

³⁷ "Auszug aus den Verhandlungen der freien, evang.-lutherischen Konferenz, versammelt zu Columbus, Ohio, vom 1. bis 7. Oktober 1856," *Der Lutheraner* 13 (1856–57), 49–54. The president was Wm. F. Lehmann, professor at Capital University; cf. J. C. Jenson, *Americal Lutheran Biographies* (Milwaukee, WI: Press of A. Houtkamp & Son, 1890), 459–462. The secretaries were H. C. Schwan and M. Loy. Walther was present at the conference, as were W. Sihler and O. Fürbringer.

³⁸ "Es folgte die Verlesung des *fünften Artikels*. Hier wurde von einer Seite behaupten, das Wort 'Predigtamt' in diesem Artikel sei völlig gleichbedeutend mit dem Presbyteriat oder Pfarramt, wovon der 14. Art. handelt. Dagegen wurde von anderer Seite geltend gemacht, 1. Der Gegenstand dieses 5. Art. sei, die Mittel anzugeben, durch welche wir den rechtfertigenden Glauben, von welchem im vorigen Artikel die Rede war, erlangen sollen. Das erhelle unzweifelhaft aus dem Titel und der Antithesis (dem verworfenen Gegensatz.) 2. Diese Mittel seien, wie der lateinische Text noch deutlicher zeige, *einzig und allein* das Wort Gottes und die heil. Sacramente. Die ihre Kraft in ihnen selber haben, nicht in den Personen, welche dieselben verwalten. 3. Weil diese Mittel eine Verwaltung erfordern, so habe Gott Fürsorge getroffen und befohlen, daß sie verwaltet und ausgetheilt werden. 4. Der 14. Artikel gebe an, wie Gott wolle, daß diese Mittel öffentlich verwaltet werden; der gegenwärtige 5. Artikel aber enthalte nur die göttliche Anordnung, *daß* sie überhaupt verwaltet werden sollen. 5. Natürlich schliesse der 5. Artikel das Pfarramt mit ein, als die *ordentliche Weise*, ihrer öffentlichen

reached on this point, the participants agreed to postpone further discussion until they took up AC XIV.³⁹ Lack of time ultimately prevented this from happening.

Three years later, at the free conference in Fort Wayne, the topic was taken up again. This time, there was agreement that AC V does talk about the ministry *in abstracto*, not *in concreto*. Here we find both the terminology and a similar line of argumentation that was used by Walther in the second edition of *Kirche und Amt*. The seventh of the Schwabach Articles is quoted as a source, so that *Predigtamt* is to be understood as synonymous with bodily word. The distinction between administration, talked about in AC V, and administrator, talked about in AC XIV, is repeated from the conference three years before in Columbus. The conclusion of the participants stated:

The conference recognizes from a comparison of the super-scription of the 14th article, in the German as well as in the Latin, with the fifth article, that article five deals concerning the administration of the means of grace in general (though certainly with the institution of the Gospel as oral word at the same time the preaching office in the narrow sense is included); but that in the 14th article speaks of the preaching office in the narrow sense, or the *pastoral office*.⁴⁰

Here we have the same interpretation as in the second edition of *Kirche und Amt*, and it was not even proposed by Walther, since he was not present at the conference! It is, of course, a good guess that Walther had already proposed his understanding of AC V at the conference in 1856. At the later conference, it was probably Sihler and Craemer who proposed this understanding.

Verwaltung nach Artikel 14; ja das Pfarramt sei der Centralpunkt dieser Verwaltung. Doch befasse sich der 5. Art. nicht damit, irgend welche besondere Verwalter zu bezeichnen, sondern rede eigentlich nur von der Verwaltung.“ “Auszug, 1-7 Oktober 1856,” 50-51.

³⁹ The conference did agree that the article speaks about “church ministry or the administration of the means of grace.” “Auszug, 1-7 Oktober 1856,” 51.

⁴⁰ “Auszug aus den Verhandlungen der freien, evang.-lutherischen Conferenz in Fort Wayne, Ind., vom 14. bis 20. Juli 1859,” *Der Lutheraner* 16 (1859-60), 10-12, 19-20, 27-30, 35-37. The conference was presided over by J.A. Ottesen and Wilhelm Sihler. Walther was not present, nor were Wm. F. Lehmann or M. Loy from the Ohio-Synod. The only professors present were A. Crämer and W. Sihler from the Fort Wayne Seminary.

In 1857, an article that was sent to *Lehre und Wehre* titled "From a Letter of a preacher of the Missouri-Synod to a brother in the ministry in the Prussian-Lutheran Church" in which the author gave an interpretation of *Predigtamt* as actions, referring to the German text of Apol. VII/VIII, 22.

We can see, therefore, in *Der Lutheraner* and *Lehre und Wehre*, that the position that Walther takes in 1865 dates back at least to Fürbringer in early 1853, which puts it quite close to the date of the first edition of *Kirche und Amt*. By 1856, it had become the position of the Missourians.

AC V in Walther's Essay at the Northern District 1873

At the 19th convention of the Northern District, Walther gave the doctrinal essay on conversion. In it he makes a passing remark on the meaning of AC V in his discussion of the word of God as the means by which man is converted. Thesis II reads, "The means by which man is converted is the Word of God, heard or read." Point two reads: "Ordinarily through called preachers, extraordinarily also through laypeople who are not called."⁴¹ Walther refers then to experience, which has shown that not only pastors but also laypeople can be instruments through which people are converted, and rejects the claim that AC V teaches that a person can only be completely converted through a pastor. Rather, AC V refers not simply to the pastoral office: "The ministry is the institution of God that a man should be converted by the Word of God. Of this ministry *in abstracto* (cf. Torgau Article No. 7), Art. V of the Augsburg Confession treats; however, it is Art. XIV of the Augsburg Confession that treats of the office of the ministry [*Pfarramt*, R.Z.] or of church government." Walther's interest here is to maintain that it is God's word that converts and that it does not derive its power from the ministry or is less effective when spoken by a lay person. At this time, the distinction between *in concreto* and *in abstracto* seems to be so common that the allusion suffices.⁴²

⁴¹ C.F.W. Walther, *Essays for the Church*, vol. 1, 1857-1879 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), 248.

⁴² Cf. the remark in the second convention of the Synodical Conference in 1873: "The word 'preaching office' is understood here in the narrow sense and therefore synonymous with 'pastoral office.'" "Verhandlungen der zweiten Versammlung der Evang.-Luth. Synodal-Conferenz von Nord-Amerika, zu Fort Wayne, Ind., vom 16 bis zum 22. Juli 1873" (Columbus, OH: Druck von John J. Gaßmann, 1873), 24. "Verhandlungen der zweiten Versammlung der Evang.-Luth. Synodal-Conferenz von Nord-Amerika, zu Fort Wayne, Ind., vom 16 bis zum 22. Juli 1873" (Columbus, Ohio: Druck von John J. Gaßmann, 1873), 24. "Verhandlungen der zweiten Versammlung der Evang.-Luth. Synodal-Conferenz von Nord-Amerika, zu Fort Wayne, Ind., vom 16 bis zum 22. Juli 1873" (Columbus, Ohio: Druck von John J. Gaßmann, 1873), 24. "Das Wort

II. Walther's Interpretation in the Context of Commentaries on the Confessions in the 19th Century

Gustav Plitt

The lively discussion on the meaning of *Predigtamt* finds no consideration in the scholarly commentary on the Augsburg Confession of the 19th century by Gustav Plitt (1836–1880), professor in Erlangen. In a footnote at the beginning of his comment on AC V, he remarks that the lack of the heading (On the Preaching Office) in the manuscripts and oldest printings must be considered in understanding this article, and then dedicates the rest of the article to the history of the understanding of word and sacrament as means of grace in the time of the Reformation.⁴³ Admittedly, Plitt's aim was not to write a "dogmatic commentary," but his choice of material seems to indicate that he understands *ministerium* as primarily (or perhaps exclusively?) functional.⁴⁴

A.F.C. Vilmar

A.F.C. Vilmar (1800–1868), professor in Marburg, lectured five times on the Augsburg Confession. Posthumously, these lectures were edited by his student K.W. Piderit.⁴⁵ Vilmar distinguishes the *ministerium ecclesiasticum* (a term not used in AC V) from the priesthood of all believers; the source of the *ministerium ecclesiasticum* is not the congregation. Faith and salvation is therefore bound up with the *ministerium ecclesiasticum*, and a congregation cannot lack the specific preaching office without losing its faith.⁴⁶ Presence and operation of the Holy Spirit is mediately bound to the *ministerium ecclesiasticum*.⁴⁷ Vilmar does not argue for his position or

'Predigtamt' ist hier im engeren Sinne genommen und also gleichbedeutend mit 'Pfarramt'." The overall topic was church fellowship; no author is given.

⁴³ Gustav Plitt, *Einleitung in die Augustana. Entstehungsgeschichte des Evangelischen Lehrbegriffes bis zum Augsburger Bekenntnis* (Erlangen: Verlag von Andreas Deichert, 1868), 160–184.

⁴⁴ Plitt seems nevertheless to see some kind of relationship between the pastoral office and AC V. Plitt, *Einleitung in die Augustana*, 380

⁴⁵ A.F.C. Vilmar, *Die Augsburgische Confession* (Gütersloh: Druck und Verlag von C. Bertelsmann, 1870). His treatment of AC V is found on pp. 72–78.

⁴⁶ Vilmar, *Die Augsburgische Confession*, 75. It is interesting that the phrase "*besondern Predigtamt*" ("special preaching office") appears here. Is this simply pleonastic or is there also a "general preaching office," at least in the discussion in the lecture?

⁴⁷ Vilmar, *Die Augsburgische Confession*, 75, "Ebenso ist das Vorhandensein und die Wirksamkeit des h. Geistes mittelbar an das *ministerium ecclesiasticum* gebunden." Vilmar quotes Luther for his view, Jena edition 7,120 (= WA 45:617,13–35; AE 24,171).

engage any differing interpretations. This omission might be due to the state of the class notes available. In Vilmar we find, so to speak, the contrary position to Walther's exegesis, in which *Predigtamt* and *Pfarramt* are straightforwardly identified; also the operation of the Holy Spirit is bound to the pastoral office.

Otto Zöckler

Otto Zöckler (1833–1906), professor in Giessen and Greifswald, has a quite different take on AC V than his teacher Vilmar. In his book, *The Augsburg Confession as Confessional Doctrinal Platform of the German Reformation Church*, he sees on the one hand that AC V does not simply talk about the office in the same way that AC XIV does.⁴⁸ The heading of his chapter on this article reads: "The Preached Word (or Grace Calling through the Word) as Foundation of Justification."⁴⁹ He explains the heading of AC V "on the preaching office/ecclesiastical ministry" as an expression of the "conservative attitude of the confession, intended on greatest consideration of the hierarchical views and interest of Catholicism."⁵⁰

Zöckler interprets the ordering of the articles as a sequence that goes from justification (AC IV) back to the means of justification, then to the apex and crown of the individual application of salvation, sanctification or the new obedience. This outline is, nevertheless, muddled by the fact that Melancthon mentions not only the word which creates faith, but also the sacraments—which can "only in a very indirect way be figured among the aspects that prepare and mediate justification"⁵¹—and the office or ministry. The reason, again, is the irenical or "if one may say so, romanizing attitude of the article."⁵² Additionally, there is an apologetic interest. In order to reject the charge that Lutherans are associated with enthusiastic Anabaptists, the article is formulated as it is so that instead of grace

Reading the quote in context does not show that Vilmar is here in agreement with Luther.

⁴⁸ O. Zöckler, *Die Augsburgische Confession als symbolische Lehrgrundlage der deutschen Reformationskirche historisch und exegetisch untersucht* (Frankfurt a. M.: Heyder & Zimmer, 1870).

⁴⁹ Zöckler, *Die Augsburgische Confession*, 186: "Das gepredigte Wort (oder die durch das Wort berufene Gnade) als Grund der Rechtfertigung."

⁵⁰ Zöckler, *Die Augsburgische Confession*, 188

⁵¹ Zöckler, *Die Augsburgische Confession*, 189.

⁵² Zöckler, *Die Augsburgische Confession*, 189: "Der Grund für beide Anomalien des Ausdrucks liegt, wie oben angegeben, in der irenischen, oder wenn man so sagen darf, katholisierenden Haltung des Artikels . . ."

operating through the gospel, the office is, rather, the subject of the article.⁵³

Zöckler's interpretation is quite interesting because he takes up some of the difficulties of the simple equation of *ministerium* and pastoral office. His solution, though, that the terms *Predigtamt* and *ministerium* are simply accommodations to the Roman Catholic dialogue partner is quite unconvincing and has found no followers.

Matthias Loy

Matthias Loy (1828–1915), professor at Capital University, was present at the free conference in Columbus, Ohio, in 1856, where the dissent on AC V broke out. In his massive commentary on the Augsburg Confession, he emphasizes that AC V speaks of functions about the ministration of word and sacraments, not primarily about the minister.⁵⁴ Even though it would not be “necessarily” a false doctrine to identify AC V with the pastoral office, Loy, as did Walther, wants to avoid the impression that the operation of the Spirit giving faith is limited to the “special ministerial order in the Church.”⁵⁵

The point which we desire to impress upon the reader is that our Confession speaks of the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments as the means by which God works and maintains the faith through which sinners are justified, not of the order in the Church by which this ministration is committed for public use to special ministry publicly called for the purpose. The validity of Word and Sacrament is not dependent on the ministers, but on the divine institution, and they effect that where-

⁵³ Zöckler, *Die Augsburgische Confession*, 189. This is not a convincing argument. The Lutherans could have simply stated that faith comes by word and sacrament, as the Schwabach Articles did, and been done with it. If *Predigtamt* refers to the office, as Zöckler assumes, then it is used deliberately and not only as an accommodation. Zöckler, in a footnote to the quote above, also points to the fact that the heading of the article only comes later. While this is certainly true, it does not explain the use of *Predigtamt/ministerium* as the subject of the article. If one wants to go Zöckler's route, one has to understand *Predigtamt* as the action of preaching, as Walther and others did.

⁵⁴ “For the clear understanding of our article it seems necessary to point out that its purpose is not to elucidate the law of order in the Church which limits the public ministration of the means of grace to the pastoral office, or to those who are called by the Church to the performance of such public functions. M. Loy, *The Augsburg Confession: An Introduction to Its Study and an Exposition of Its Content* (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1908), 503.

⁵⁵ Loy, *The Augsburg Confession*, 503

unto God has instituted them, independently of the fidelity or infidelity of the persons administering them. That this is the meaning of our article is rendered incontrovertible by the antithesis stated. . . .⁵⁶

Though Loy does not use the same terminology as Walther, he nevertheless has the same understanding of AC V.

III. Walther's Interpretation as Standard View in the LCMS and Synodical Conference

The identification of preaching office and means of grace in AC V became widely accepted in the synodical conference. Franz Pieper wrote in his popular book on the occasion of the 350th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession: "Our article tells us *how a person obtains faith*, namely, through the preaching office, that is, through the means of grace, ordered by God, the gospel and the sacraments."⁵⁷

Without a reference to AC V, we find the same view in Pieper's *Christian Dogmatics*:

The term 'preaching office' is used both in Scripture and in ecclesiastical usage in a general and in a special or narrow sense. In the general sense, it means any mode of proclamation of the gospel or application of the means of grace, without distinction if this is done by all Christians, to whom the gospel or the means of grace are given and commanded originally and immediately, or by the chosen public servants (*ministry ecclesiae*), commissioned by the Christians.⁵⁸

The same view is also found in the Wisconsin Synod. Hoenecke writes: "One can speak of the preaching office in the abstract way, i.e., understand it as the means of grace. Scripture itself does it, e.g., 2 Cor 3:4-8, where the

⁵⁶ Loy, *The Augsburg Confession*, 504.

⁵⁷ "Wie ein Mensch den Glaubenerlange, sagt unser Artikel, nämlich: durch das Predigtamt, das heißt durch die von Gott geordneten Gnadenmittel, das Evangelium und die Sacramente." Franz Pieper, *Das Grundbekenntniß der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*, 2nd Part (St. Louis: Druckerei des "Luth. Concordia-Verlags," 1880), 16 (emphasis in original).

⁵⁸ Franz Pieper, *Christliche Dogmatik*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1920), 3:501-502, my translation. Cf. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 3 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950-1953), 3:439. The allusion here is to *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope*, 24.

apostle Paul calls the law the office of the letter, the gospel the office of the Spirit. The Augsburg Confession talks also in this abstract way about the preaching office, which teaches in article V. . . .”⁵⁹

If we continue forward in time, similar views were expressed by James H. Pragman, then professor at Concordia College Seward in 1983, and John F. Brug, Professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.⁶⁰ Historically, there have been, of course, differences on the doctrine of the ministry between Missouri and Wisconsin, but they have not been on the interpretation of AC V. A more critical view of the traditional interpretation has, though, emerged in the Missouri Synod.⁶¹

⁵⁹ This is my translation of: “Man kann vom *Predigtamt* abstractive reden, d.h. darunter die *Gnadenmittel* verstehen. Die Schrift selbst tut es, z.B. 2. Kor. 3,4–8, wo der Apostel Paulus das Gesetz als das Amt des Buchstabens, das Evangelium aber als das Amt des Geistes bezeichnet. So abstracte redet vom *Predigtamt* auch die *Augustana*, die Art. V so lehrt ...” Adolf Hoenecke, *Ev.-Luth. Dogmatik* (Milwaukee, Wis.: Northwestern Publishing House, 1909), 4:175. See also Adolf Hoenecke, *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics*, vol. 4, trans. Joel Fredrich, Paul Prange, and Paul Tackmier (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 1999) 187.

⁶⁰ James H. Pragman, *Traditions of Ministry: A History of the Doctrine of the Ministry in Lutheran Theology* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1983), 42–43. “This ministry [in AC V] is further identified as the teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments. Through these, as through means, the saving faith is engendered among the people of God. Thus, the ministry is a divine institution and has a functional character; the activity of the ministry is preaching, teaching, and administering. . . . These first references to the doctrine of the ministry in the Augsburg Confession do not include any mention of the pastor, the one who is to do the preaching, the teaching, and the administering. But in Article XIV, Melancthon very succinctly noted that ‘... nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call.’ The call to the public exercise of the office of the ministry is an absolute necessity. The need for order in the establishment and exercise of the ministry is assumed and understood throughout the Augsburg Confession.” John F. Brug, *The Ministry of the Word* (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 2009), 350: “We have presented the evidence that *Predigtamt* is not used in the sense of *Pfarramt* in AC V. Rather, AC V teaches us that God chooses to give faith through the Holy Spirit, who works through the gospel and the sacraments. Therefore, the gospel and the sacraments must be diligently used and administered. AC V does not specify through whom this is done. No, it leaves open the question of who should administer the sacrament and proclaim the gospel. That this is to be done publicly only by those rightly called (that is, as representatives of the church) is first made explicit in AC XIV.”

⁶¹For example, David P. Scaer, “Augustana V and the Doctrine of the Ministry” *Lutheran Quarterly* 6 (1992), 403–42; Kurt Marquart, *The Gospel Ministry: Distinctions Within & Without* (Fort Wayne, IN: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 2000); Mark

IV. The Discussion on CA V in the 20th Century

Wilhelm Maurer proposed an interpretation of AC V similar to that of Walther. In 1957, he published *The Law Concerning the Pastor and Confession: On the Confessional Basis of a Law Concerning Pastors in the Evangelical-Lutheran Church*.⁶² In it, he distinguishes between the pastoral office and the general “ministerial office.” He explicitly denies the identification of the two.⁶³ He argues for this interpretation first from the usage of *ministerium* in the confessions. Melancthon uses *ministerium* in the Treatise in a way that is not restricted to a certain person entrusted with an office. The *ministerium professionis* in Tract. 25–26 is not limited to office bearers. The connection between *ministerium* and *sacerdotium* in Tract. 69 leads to the conclusion: “The *ministerium* is a special form of the *sacerdotium*. It can exist in a specific, legally ordered form only because and insofar as it is owned in the whole of Christianity by every Christian as a gift and a responsibility at the same time.”⁶⁴ Because there is this universal connotation of the term “*ministerium*,” Melancthon was able to identify the *sacerdotium* with the *ministerium verbi et sacramentorum aliis porrigendorum* in Apol. XIII, 7–13.⁶⁵ *Ministerium* is, therefore, “materially identical with the operating power of the Holy Spirit, who has created instruments for himself from the days of the apostles, to witness to itself in

P. Surburg, “‘That is’? A Look at the Translation and Interpretation of AC V”, <http://www.logia.org/features/Surburg-That-Is-ACV.pdf> (accessed May, 25 2012).

⁶² Wilhelm Maurer, *Pfarrerrecht und Bekenntnis. Über die bekenntnismäßige Grundlage eines Pfarrerrechtes in der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche* (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1957). This book grew out of an opinion Maurer wrote for the Vereinigte Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche Deutschlands. Concerning the term “law,” it might not be superfluous to remark that churches in Germany that are corporations of public law (i.e., not just private associations, or, as in the United States, corporations) have the authority to pass laws for their internal governance laws. These are the equivalent of a constitution and by-laws in denominations in the United States. “Pfarrerrecht” are all the regulations concerning the service of a pastor, summed up in one corpus of law.

⁶³ Maurer, *Pfarrerrecht und Bekenntnis*, 67–68: “Was ist es um das ‘*ministerium docendi evangelii et porrigendi sacramenta*’ in CA V? Keineswegs ist es schlechthin gleichzusetzen mit dem rechtlich geordneten u. d. h. begründeten, lehrgesetzlich normierten und mit rechtlicher Autorität ausgestatteten Pfarramt. Eine solche Annahme ist zwar sehr verbreitet, aber dennoch kurzschlüssig und mit Recht zu verwerfen.”

⁶⁴ “Das *ministerium* ist eine Sonderform des *sacerdotium*. Es vermag in einer bestimmten, rechtlich geordneten Form nur zu existieren, weil und soweit es in der gesamten Christenheit jedem Christen—als geistliche Gabe und Aufgabe zugleich—zu eigen ist.” Maurer, *Pfarrerrecht und Bekenntnis*, 69 (emphasis in original).

⁶⁵ Maurer, *Pfarrerrecht und Bekenntnis*, 69.

the church in a salvific manner."⁶⁶ Maurer sees here Melancthon taking up Luther's thoughts that the priestly office of the believers includes teaching and administration of the sacraments.⁶⁷ Thus, according to Maurer, AC V simply states that there must be preaching and administration of the sacraments; while it does not state that there has to be a specific office, neither does it deny it.⁶⁸ Since, however, this operation includes also the ordered office, therefore one is justified in thinking of the pastoral office whenever "minister" is used.⁶⁹ Maurer does not believe that the gospel alone is instituted and that the pastoral office is only of human right. Rather, the pastoral office is by divine right.⁷⁰

In his magisterial commentary on the Augsburg Confession, Maurer reiterates his position.⁷¹ He begins with the thesis that Luther's understanding of "to minister" leads to the correct understanding of *ministerium verbi*. Maurer develops Luther's view that every servant of God is a minister of the word. Then he adds to this the service of prayer, which includes all Christians, and reaches this conclusion:

The preaching office does not exclude the general priesthood. Article 5 does not intend to establish the institutional means by which one comes to faith; that is based on the individual responsibility of every Christian. Even the emergency baptism administered by women provides the preaching authority for every Christian—man, woman, and child—who has the opportunity.⁷²

⁶⁶ Maurer, *Pfarrerrecht und Bekenntnis*, 69: "Es ist sachlich identisch mit der wirkenden Kraft des Heiligen Geistes, der von den Tagen der Apostel an sich Werkzeuge geschaffen hat, um sich in der Kirche heilsam zu bezeugen."

⁶⁷ Maurer, *Pfarrerrecht und Bekenntnis*, 70, reference to WA 12:180,1-9.

⁶⁸ Maurer, *Pfarrerrecht und Bekenntnis*, 72.

⁶⁹ Maurer, *Pfarrerrecht und Bekenntnis*, 70

⁷⁰ Maurer, *Pfarrerrecht und Bekenntnis*, 119. Maurer does not agree with Höfling and explicitly rejects the thesis that the pastoral office is derived from the priesthood of all believers; Maurer, *Pfarrerrecht und Bekenntnis*, 73.

⁷¹ Maurer, *Historischer Kommentar zur Confession Augustana*. Band 2: Theologische Probleme (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1978), 139-145; English translation: Wilhelm Maurer, *Historical Commentary on the Augsburg Confession* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 354-360.

⁷² Maurer, *Historical Commentary*, 355-356. Cf. also Maurer, *Historical Commentary* 357: "The universal nature of the preaching office, which not only addresses all people but also is laid upon all groups and ranks of the congregation by virtue of the general priesthood, is based on the all-encompassing claim of God's word." Maurer, *Historical Commentary*, 191: "In CA 5 they [Melancthon and Brueck] reworked Schwab. 7 so that it was limited exclusively to the sphere of salvation without reference to the institutional office, which was along the lines of Bucer's critique."

Gunter Wenz, *Theologie der Bekenntnisschriften*

Gunter Wenz, professor of systematic theology in Munich, published his *Theology of the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*⁷³ in two volumes in 1996 and 1997. In the second volume, he provides a lengthy overview of the discussion on the meaning of AC V.⁷⁴ He is quite critical of Maurer's interpretation. On the other hand, neither does he agree with the interpretation of Dulles and Lindbeck who say that the word of God is only life-giving when it is proclaimed by the office standing opposite to the congregation.⁷⁵ Such an understanding, making the *ministerium verbi divini* an exclusive property of the ordained office, contradicts, says Wenz, the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers.⁷⁶ Against Höfling, Wenz maintains that the pastoral office is divinely established. He interprets Ap. VII, 28 to mean that the office bearers are *vice et loco Christi*, not in the sense of an exclusive representation of Christ by the office bearer, but rather, as the comparison with AC XXVIII, 22–23 shows, as an assurance that the office bearer is in the stead of Christ when he does what is mandated. Those who are in the office but teach against the gospel are to be avoided and are not in the stead and command of Christ, so that the *vice et loco Christi* is not merely formally defined, but rather through a faithful communication of the gospel.⁷⁷ The relation of office and priesthood of all believers cannot be identified with the relationship of Christ and his church. "Therefore it cannot be simply wrong systematically to say that the *ministerium docendi evangelium et porrigendi sacramenta* is 'given to the entire church,' notwithstanding the mentioned historical reasons, which make it probable to understand the initial sentence of AC V in regard to the office treated in AC XIV."⁷⁸ That does not mean that every baptized Christian has

⁷³ Gunther Wenz, *Theologie der Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche*, 2 vols. (New York: de Gruyter, 1996–1997).

⁷⁴ Wenz, *Theologie der Bekenntnisschriften*, 2:318–336.

⁷⁵ Avery Dulles, George A. Lindbeck, "Bishops and the Ministry of the Gospel" in *Confessing One Faith. A Joint Commentary on the Augsburg Confession by Lutheran and Catholic Theologians*, ed. by George Wolfgang Forell and James F. McCue, (Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg Publishing House, 1982), 148–172.

⁷⁶ Wenz, *Theologie der Bekenntnisschriften*, 326.

⁷⁷ Wenz, *Theologie der Bekenntnisschriften*, 331–332.

⁷⁸ Wenz, *Theologie der Bekenntnisschriften*, 334: "Von daher kann es trotz und unbeschadet der vorgetragenen historischen Gründe, die es nahelegen, den Eingangssatz von CA V von dem in CA XIV thematisierten Amt her zu verstehen, systematisch nicht einfachhin falsch sein zu sagen, das *ministerium docendi evangelium et porrigendi sacramenta* sei 'der Kirche als ganzer gegeben.'" The quotation is from L. Goppelt, "Das kirchliche Amt nach den lutherischen Bekenntnisschriften und nach dem Neuen Testament" in *Zur Aufererbaunng des Leibes Christ. Festsschrift für Peter Brunner* ed. E. Schlink and A. Peters (Kassel: Johannes Stauda Verlag, 1965), 99.

the right of public teaching and proclamation, or that the office is derived from the priesthood of all believers.

For as much as commission and authority for proclamation of the word and administration of the sacraments are given to all Christians, as little may an individual make use of it publicly, because commissioning and authorization is given to all in common. The commonality of the priesthood of all demands the special office, whose specific commission is in the service of the common priesthood and its realization.⁷⁹

V. Concluding Thoughts

Our survey of the history of the interpretation of AC V has shown us that there is less than unanimity. Regarding Walther, if the distinction between *ministerium in abstracto* and *in concreto* is something more than the distinction between *ministerium* and *minister* (i.e., pastor), then neither Hartmann nor the interpreters of Lutheran orthodoxy are really Walther's precursors. Walther has a stronger argument with his analysis of *Predigtamt* and *ministerium*—which in the 16th century certainly can mean preaching, as the Schwabach Articles show—and also the German translation of the Apology.⁸⁰ There is therefore a certain linguistic ambiguity in the text, which is increased by the fact that the condemnation supports a functionalist understanding of the text. Walther, Zöckler, and Maurer—and, to some extent, Wenz—have a similar understanding of AC V. If one goes with the identification of *Predigtamt* and *ministerium*, one has to take into account that word and sacrament are not the property of the pastoral office. The gospel can be spoken by laypeople and the sacraments can

⁷⁹ Wenz, *Theologie der Bekenntnisschriften*, 335: "Denn sosehr Auftrag und Vollmacht zur Wortverkündigung und Sakramentsverwaltung allen Christen gegeben sind, sowenig darf ein einzelner ohne ordentliche Berufung von ihnen öffentlichen Gebrauch machen, eben weil Beauftragung und Bevollmächtigung allen gemeinsam gegeben sind. Die Allgemeinheit des Priestertums aller erfordert das besondere Amt, dessen spezifischer Auftrag gerade im Dienst des allgemeinen Priestertums und seiner Realisierung steht."

⁸⁰ Cf. Apol. VII,19. The Latin is: "Et addimus notas: puram doctrinam evangelii et sacramenta" (BSLK 238,22f), which is translated thus: "und sagen, dieselbige Kirche habe diese äußerlichen Zeichen: das Predigtamt oder Evangelium und die Sakramente." (i.e. the church has these external signs: the preaching office or gospel and sacraments) (BSLK 238,50-52). Cf. also the usage by Melancthon: "zum andern irren sie sehr vom Predigtamt oder Wort und vom Brauch der Sakramente." Melancthon, *Opera Omnia*, *Corpus Reformatorum* 1, 1099, quoted in Plitt, *Einleitung in die Augustana*, 184.

likewise be administered, in certain situations, by laypeople.⁸¹ Thus, in my opinion, if one identifies *Predigtamt* and *Pfarramt*, one has to maintain that of course word and sacrament come to us through the *Pfarramt*, but that there is also communication of the gospel outside of the *Pfarramt*. I think that Walther and others were incorrect when they thought that the identification of *Predigtamt* and *Pfarramt* has to lead to an exclusive mediation of salvation through the pastor. Their emphasis, however, that the office is not coordinated, but subordinated, to word and sacrament—that the pastor is not a means of grace but merely the administrator of the means of grace, and that the gospel comes to men not only through the pastor—seems to me dogmatically correct and also in harmony with the history of interpretation of the AC V in Lutheran orthodoxy.

⁸¹ Cf. Treat. 67 on emergency absolution and baptism. Luther goes further in his *Brief Exhortation to Confession*, 13–14 (BSLK 728, 27–44, not a part of the Book of Concord of 1580): “Besides such a public, daily and necessary confession there is this secret confession, that takes place before a single brother. This serves us when there is a special concern or affliction that eats at us so that we cannot be at peace, nor be strong enough in the faith. Thus, we speak our trouble to a brother to receive counsel, comfort, and strength, when and as often as we want to . . . Christ himself has put the absolution in the mouth of his Christendom and has commanded us to absolve each other of our sin.” See also SA III, IV, where one form of the gospel is *per mutuum colloquium et consolationem fratrum* (BSLK 449,13f).