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IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF WALTHER: THE DOCTRINE OF THE MINISTRY IN THE  
WRITINGS OF GEORGE STOECKHARDT

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A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty of  
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Historical Theology  
in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

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By  
Joel Loren Pless  
May 2008

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5/27/08

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To all my teachers from whom I have learned in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and the  
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart.

2 Corinthians 4:1

## CONTENTS

PREFACE .....	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	ix
CHRONOLOGY.....	x
GLOSSARY .....	xviii
EDITORIAL METHOD.....	xxi
ABSTRACT .....	xxii

### Chapter

1. HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION AND THE MINISTERIAL INFLUENCES ON STOECKHARDT'S LIFE .....	1
2. STOECKHARDT'S EXEGETICAL METHODOLOGY .....	29
3. THE MAIN LOCI OF STOECKHARDT'S DOCTRINE OF THE MINISTRY .....	62
4. FURTHER ARTICULATIONS OF STOECKHARDT'S DOCTRINE OF THE MINISTRY .....	103
5. A COMPARISON BETWEEN STOECKHARDT AND WALTHER ON THE DOCTRINE OF THE MINISTRY .....	156
6. CONCLUSIONS ABOUT STOECKHARDT'S DOCTRINE OF THE MINISTRY .....	189

### Appendix

1. JEFFREY YOUNG'S STOECKHARDT RESEARCH: AN ACADEMIC REPLY... 201	
2. ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF STOECKHARDT'S "ON THE ESTABLISHMENT AND PRESERVATION OF THE PUBLIC MINISTRY" .....	212
3. WALTHER'S ALTENBURG THESES (GERMAN TEXT AND ENGLISH TRANSLATION) .....	222
4. STOECKHARDT'S CLARIFICATION (ENGLISH TRANSLATION AND GERMAN TEXT).....	225

BIBLIOGRAPHY ..... 227  
VITA ..... 243

## PREFACE

Nearly a century after his death in 1913, George Stoeckhardt remains a fascinating figure in American Lutheranism. Although he did not arrive in America until the Missouri Synod's second generation of existence and played no part in the founding of the synod, he almost overnight became one of the Missouri Synod's theological leaders and, in many respects, its chief exegete. This was due to the outbreak of the Election Controversy that lasted for several years in the late 1870s and early 1880s and that broke out almost simultaneously with Stoeckhardt's immigration to America from Saxony, Germany.

This dissertation is being written to answer this specific question: *How did George Stoeckhardt develop and articulate his understanding of the doctrine of the ministry during his life?* Stoeckhardt had solid reasons to study and conceptualize the doctrine of the ministry. Born and raised in Saxony, the region in Germany that claimed Martin Luther as its own, Stoeckhardt received his theological education at the universities of Erlangen and Leipzig and served in both the Saxon *Landeskirche* and the Saxon *Freikirche* before his call to be the pastor of Holy Cross Ev. Lutheran Church in St. Louis, Missouri.

Almost immediately George Stoeckhardt began teaching Old and New Testament exegesis at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, whose president was one of the founders of the Missouri Synod, Dr. C. F. W. Walther. Stoeckhardt ministered to Walther at his bedside in the final days of Walther's life and participated in his funeral rites. After Walther's death, Stoeckhardt, his colleague Prof. Franz Pieper, and the other St. Louis seminary professors sought to conserve the strong doctrinal position that they had inherited from Walther and the other synodical founders. Until this dissertation, practically no scholarship had been done in highlighting what George Stoeckhardt believed and taught about the ministry. The specific problem that this dissertation is addressing is this: "Was George Stoeckhardt's understanding of the ministry different from C. F. W. Walther's understanding of the ministry?" This question needs to be addressed and answered because a scholarly endeavor to answer this question in the negative has been set forth. Dr. Jeffrey Young, a pastor in the Lutheran Churches of the Reformation, has done some extensive reading and research on this matter and has come to the conclusion that George Stoeckhardt departed from what Walther taught on the doctrine of the ministry.

This dissertation will use the following methodology in addressing the stated problem concerning whether Stoeckhardt *did* depart from Walther on this point of doctrine. The dissertation's first chapter will address the historical context into which George Stoeckhardt was born and examine the influences on his life that shaped his understanding of the ministry. The second chapter will carefully examine his exegetical method which he used to arrive at his understanding of the ministry. The dissertation's third chapter will examine the main *loci* of Stoeckhardt's doctrine of the ministry. What doctrinal points did Stoeckhardt consistently reiterate in his writings as he described what the Bible taught about the ministry? The fourth chapter will present Stoeckhardt's articulations of his understanding of the ministry through the various channels he used to present doctrine—his writings and publications. The fifth chapter will present a thorough review of what C. F. W. Walther wrote and taught about the ministry and then will compare how Stoeckhardt and Walther understood the ministry. The sixth and final chapter of this dissertation will come to some definite conclusions about how George Stoeckhardt described the ministry, particularly during his tenure as a professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.



This dissertation's chief goal is to give Stoeckhardt's doctrine of the ministry some much-needed attention. It will make some solid conclusions about the theological footprint that George Stoeckhardt left the church in regard to his understanding of the ministry and it will address Jeffrey Young's Stoeckhardt research and offer an academic reply. As one reads this dissertation, it is important to keep in mind that if Stoeckhardt was alive today, he would strenuously object to any reference to "his understanding of the ministry." It will be demonstrated that in all of his exegesis, Stoeckhardt presented what he regarded as God's revelation to sinful mankind.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The doctrine of the ministry has been discussed and debated in American Lutheranism almost since Lutherans first immigrated to the North American continent from Europe over 350 years ago. This dissertation expresses the hope that this study of the doctrine of the ministry as understood by George Stoeckhardt will be a source of light and not heat in the continuing discussion in American Lutheranism on the ministry.

This writer would like to acknowledge and thank all those individuals who assisted him in any way in reaching this stage of his Ph.D. program. He wishes to especially honor the memory of the late Dr. Wayne Schmidt, the former director of the Graduate School at Concordia, St. Louis. Dr. Schmidt was an outstanding churchman, in both the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and was instrumental in admitting the researcher into the then Th.D. program at St. Louis back in 1994. Blessed be his memory. The writer also wishes to thank his *Doktorvater* and mentor, Dr. Thomas Manteufel, for his assistance in the preparation of this dissertation and for the loving support of his family on the home front, wife Linda, daughter Monica, and sons John and James. Finally, this writer wishes to acknowledge and thank the students, faculty, and staff of Wisconsin Lutheran College for their support in his effort to earn the Ph.D. degree. It is a privilege to teach, mentor, research, and fellowship at a Christian college community such as Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Joel Loren Pless  
June 2005

## A CHRONOLOGY OF THE LIFE OF GEORGE STOECKHARDT

(1842–1913)

- Karl Georg Stoeckhardt is born in Chemnitz, Saxony, to Julius Adolf Stoeckhardt and Rosalie Liebster Stoeckhardt. February 17, 1842
- Stoeckhardt's family moves to Tharandt, near Dresden, where his father teaches chemistry at the Royal Forest Academy. 1847
- Stoeckhardt attends the city school in Tharandt and is prepared for entrance into a gymnasium by a private tutor. c.1848–1857
- Stoeckhardt enrolls in the gymnasium St. Afra, in Meissen, at the age of fifteen. 1857
- Stoeckhardt enrolls in the University of Erlangen, Bavaria, where he joins a local *Wingolf*, a Christian student fraternity. Spring 1862
- Stoeckhardt transfers to the University of Leipzig in his native Saxony, where he spends five semesters. He is instrumental in founding a Leipzig chapter of the *Wingolf*. Fall 1863
- Stoeckhardt takes his candidate's examination. Winter 1865–1866
- Stoeckhardt travels to Berlin to listen to several lectures by professors at the University of Berlin. He ends his time in Berlin as a result of the imminent outbreak of war between Prussia and Austria. He returns to Saxony and applies for a teaching position at Leipzig. Spring 1866
- As a result of the war between Prussia and Austria, Stoeckhardt and his mother travel to the German Baltic coast. Summer 1866
- Stoeckhardt becomes violently ill after his return from the Baltic coast, but after medical treatment, he quickly recovers. September 1866
- Stoeckhardt travels to Neuendettelsau, Bavaria and meets Wilhelm Loehe. Through Loehe, Stoeckhardt first becomes informed of the founding of confessional Lutheran synods in America, including the Missouri Synod. He later visits Erlangen and Neuendettelsau again before the end of the year. October 1866
- Stoeckhardt visits Marburg, where he hears August Vilmar lecture. Spring 1867

Stoeckhardt serves as a headmaster of the Luise Academy, a girls' academy in Tharandt, where he teaches religion and other subjects. He ends his career at this institution as a result of the school being moved to Niederlössnitz.	1867–1870
Stoeckhardt takes his second examination before the Consistory in Dresden.	May 1868
Director Julius Hardeland of the Leipzig Mission attempts to recruit Stoeckhardt to serve as a missionary to East India. Partially due to the opposition of his parents, Stoeckhardt turns down the offer, seeking instead to pursue an academic career.	Spring 1870
Stoeckhardt travels to Breslau to consider an offer from the Breslau Synod to serve as a tutor at that synod's seminary. Ultimately he declines the offer and instead applies to be a tutor at the University of Erlangen.	May 1870
To prepare for the faculty examination to be a tutor at the university, Stoeckhardt moves to Paris to serve as an assistant pastor to his friend, Pastor Eugene Menezog.	June 1870
The Franco-Prussian War begins with France declaring war on Prussia.	July 19, 1870
Stoeckhardt serves a Lutheran congregation in Paris, France.	June–September 1870
As a result of the Franco-Prussian War, Stoeckhardt departs Paris for Belgium.	September 1870
Stoeckhardt ministers to sick and wounded German soldiers on the Sedan battlefield and serves as a hospital chaplain.	Fall 1870
Stoeckhardt returns to Saxony and resumes his preparation for the faculty examination.	December 1870
Stoeckhardt receives the theme for the written portion of the faculty examination to qualify him to teach at the university.	January 1871
Stoeckhardt begins work as a tutor and as a religion instructor at the gymnasium in Erlangen.	Winter 1871

- Stoeckhardt completes both the oral and written faculty examinations and is recommended by the Bavarian Ministry of Religious Affairs to be a tutor in both the Old and the New Testament. Spring 1871
- Stoeckhardt serves as a tutor and instructor of religion at Erlangen, but has his dissertation on the “Son of Man” rejected by the faculty of Erlangen. He thus is denied the title “Licentiate of Theology” and the opportunity to be an assistant lecturer at the university. 1871–1873
- Stoeckhardt’s mother dies at the age of fifty-four years. March 18, 1872
- The church vestry of the *Landeskirche* Schlosskirche issues a call to Stoeckhardt to serve as the second pastor of the Schlosskirche in Planitz, Saxony. September 17, 1873
- Stoeckhardt is united in marriage to Anna Koenig. The couple has no children of their own, but eventually adopts two boys in America. October 7, 1873
- Stoeckhardt moves to Planitz to begin his new ministry. October 13, 1873
- Stoeckhardt is installed as a deacon at the *Landeskirche* congregation in Planitz, Saxony. October 26, 1873
- Stoeckhardt serves as pastor of the *Landeskirche* congregation in Planitz, Saxony. October 1873–June 1876
- Stoeckhardt publishes his first book, an exposition of Luther’s Small Catechism. Within three years, Stoeckhardt issues a retraction of several doctrinal statements made in this book. 1875
- Stoeckhardt and other *Landeskirche* pastors meet in Zwickau and agree to the Zwickau Theses, which protests the *Landeskirche* policy of permitting members to attend communion who despise church marriages and baptism. September 7, 1875
- Stoeckhardt participates for the first time in a conference of independent Lutheran pastors in Planitz. November 10, 1875
- Stoeckhardt and fourteen other *Landeskirche* pastors petition the Consistory for the right to suspend from communion church members who despise church marriages and baptisms. January 15, 1876

- Four days later their petition is denied.  
Stoeckhardt issues two pamphlets in which he protests  
the unevangelical doctrine and practice of the Saxon  
*Landeskirche*. Spring 1876
- Prof. Gerhard von Zezschwitz of Erlangen asks Stoeckhardt  
to consider joining the Breslau Synod in view of his growing  
dissatisfaction with the Saxon *Landeskirche*. Stoeckhardt  
rejects the offer since the Breslau Synod was in fellowship  
with the Saxon *Landeskirche*. Spring 1876
- As a result of serious disagreements in doctrine and practice  
with the *Landeskirche*, Stoeckhardt declares himself free from  
the Consistory of the *Landeskirche*. He immediately joins the  
*Freikirche* congregation in Niederplanitz. June 6, 1876
- The *Landeskirche* Consistory suspends Stoeckhardt from his  
office. June 10, 1876
- Stoeckhardt replies to the action of the *Landeskirche* Consistory  
by clarifying that he resigned from his office. June 15, 1876
- Stoeckhardt addresses his new congregation, the St. John's  
Separated Evangelical Lutheran Congregation in Planitz for the  
first time, after the sermon by the congregation's pastor, Rev.  
Theodore Ruhland. That afternoon, the congregation calls him to  
be the second pastor. June 18, 1876
- Stoeckhardt preaches his inaugural sermon at St. John's, Planitz. June 25, 1876
- Stoeckhardt vacates the *Landeskirche* deaconage at Planitz and  
moves into a home known as "the Villa," which later becomes  
the parsonage for the St. John's *Freikirche* congregation. June 30, 1876
- Stoeckhardt, Theodore Ruhland and Zwickau printer Johann  
Herrmann publish the first edition of *Die Evangelisch-  
Lutherische Freikirche*, which soon becomes the official  
periodical of the Saxon *Freikirche*. August 1, 1876
- Stoeckhardt is formally installed as the second pastor at St. John's,  
Planitz. At the same service, Stoeckhardt's friend and future  
biographer, Otto Willkomm, is installed as pastor of the Holy Cross  
Separated Lutheran Congregation in Crimmitschau. August 6, 1876

- Stoeckhardt and other confessional Lutheran pastors formally constitute the *Synode der Ev.-Lutherischen Freikirche in Sachsen* in Dresden. August 16–17, 1876
- Stoeckhardt leaves Planitz for six weeks to accompany his seriously-ill wife on a trip to Bad Borkum in East Friesland to restore her health. August 23, 1876
- Stoeckhardt starts a “Latin school,” an informal progymnasium for high school-age boys desiring to enter into the Lutheran ministry. The school meets in Stoeckhardt’s parsonage. October 23, 1876
- Stoeckhardt is formally charged with crimes against officials of the Saxon *Landeskirche* by the Justice Ministry in Saxony. These charges stem from Stoeckhardt’s comments on the condition of the *Landeskirche* which he published in the periodical, *Die Ev.-Luth. Freikirche*. Fall 1877
- Stoeckhardt is charged by Saxon civil officials with alleged slander against the High Consistory and other *Landeskirche* officials. Ludwig Fuerbringer’s reminiscences indicate that one of the reasons for these charges was that Stoeckhardt was accused of illegally dispensing liquor at a meeting of the young men’s society in Planitz. Early 1878
- Stoeckhardt and Herrmann are acquitted of the charges brought by the Justice Ministry in Saxony. The charges brought by the *Landeskirche* remain unresolved. April 11, 1878
- Stoeckhardt’s first students in his Latin school complete their course of instruction. Since no other students come forward for instruction and since Stoeckhardt would soon leave for a new ministry in America, the Planitz Latin school goes out of existence. July 7, 1878
- Stoeckhardt delivers an essay “Theses on Indifferentism” at the annual convention of the Saxon *Freikirche* in Wiesbaden. July 1878
- Stoeckhardt is called to be pastor of Holy Cross Ev. Lutheran Church, St. Louis—via telegram. At the time, he is tending to his sick wife at Bad Elster. August 19, 1878
- Stoeckhardt accepts the call to Holy Cross, St. Louis. Late August 1878

Stoeckhardt's farewell letter is read to the members of St. John's, Planitz.	September 1, 1878
Stoeckhardt and his wife depart Antwerp, Belgium on a ship bound for Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.	September 15, 1878
Stoeckhardt begins to teach Hebrew exegesis at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis on a part-time basis ( <i>professor extraordinarius</i> ).	October 1878
Stoeckhardt is installed as the pastor of Holy Cross Ev. Lutheran Church, with C. F. W. Walther preaching the installation sermon.	December 15, 1878
Stoeckhardt serves as pastor of Holy Cross Ev. Lutheran Church, St. Louis, Missouri. At the beginning of his ministry, Holy Cross has 520 members, with 112 voting members.	1878–1887
Stoeckhardt publishes his first article in <i>Der Lutheraner</i> , on Baptism.	May 15, 1879
Stoeckhardt publishes his first sermon in the <i>Magazin für ev.-luth. Homiletik</i> , on the doctrine of election.	June 1879
Stoeckhardt publishes his first article in <i>Lehre und Wehre</i> , on the doctrine of election.	May 1880
At the height of the Election Controversy ( <i>Gnadenwahlstreit</i> ), Stoeckhardt delivers a lengthy exegetical presentation on election at a general pastoral conference of Missouri Synod pastors in Chicago.	September 29–October 1880
At its annual convention, the Missouri Synod resolved that Concordia Seminary should call a man to serve part-time as a professor of exegesis, giving four lectures weekly, two in Old Testament and two in New Testament, while also serving as a parish pastor. Stoeckhardt is formally called to this position by the synod in convention. His salary for his seminary position is set at \$300 per year.	Summer 1881
On the second day of the dedication of the new Concordia Seminary building, Stoeckhardt delivers a Latin address about the errors of modern Lutheran theology.	September 10, 1883



- C. F. W. Walther dies. Stoeckhardt, as pastor of Holy Cross, in the subsequent days, delivers one of several funeral addresses for Walther. May 7, 1887
- Stoeckhardt begins teaching Old and New Testament exegesis full-time at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. He will hold this position for the rest of his life. Fall 1887–January 1913
- Stoeckhardt publishes a book of Advent sermons, *Adventspredigten: Auslegung vornehmsten Weissagungen des Alten Testaments*. 1887
- Stoeckhardt visits Germany for the first time since his immigration to America. He attends the convention of the Saxon *Freikirche* while in Germany. 1891
- Stoeckhardt publishes an Old Testament history, *Die biblische Geschichte des Alten Testaments*. 1896
- Stoeckhardt's wife, Anna, dies in St. Louis. Her death strikes Stoeckhardt hard. He deals with his loss by immersing himself in his seminary work to the point of nervous exhaustion. September 27, 1898
- Stoeckhardt publishes a New Testament history, *Die biblische Geschichte des Neuen Testaments*. 1899
- Stoeckhardt suffers a nervous disorder and is granted a leave of absence from his seminary teaching to recover. Spring 1900
- Friends and relatives of Stoeckhardt commit him to the Missouri Baptist Sanitarium in order for him to receive treatment for his nervous disorder. Fall 1900–1901
- Stoeckhardt remarries. His second wife is Mary Kohne of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, eighteen years his junior. Due to her care, Stoeckhardt is able to make a complete recovery from his nervous disorder. Fall 1901
- Stoeckhardt publishes a commentary on Isaiah, chapters 1–12, *Commentar über den Propheten Jesaia*. 1902
- Stoeckhardt publishes his *Kommentar über den Brief Pauli an die Römer*. 1907

- Stoeckhardt publishes his *Kommentar über den Brief Pauli an die Epheser*. 1910
- Stoeckhardt publishes his *Kommentar über den Ersten Brief Petri*. 1912
- Stoeckhardt dies from a massive stroke at his home in St. Louis. January 9, 1913
- Funeral services for Stoeckhardt are conducted by his brother-in-law, Rev. C. C. Schmidt, at Holy Cross Ev. Lutheran Church. January 13, 1913  
Stoeckhardt's body is interred at Concordia Cemetery, St. Louis.

## GLOSSARY

[Each term is followed by a brief definition or gloss, followed by additional information.]

*Amt.* Office. Often used to describe the ministry; derived from a Celtic word in the early Middle Ages to designate a man who served at a medieval lord's call and was marked as his servant.

*Beruf.* Call or vocation; used in the Lutheran church to denote a summons by a group of Christians to an individual to conduct ministry in their midst.

*Compendium.* Doctrinal textbook, *Compendium Theologiae Positivae*, written by Johannes Baier (1647–1695) in Latin and first published in 1754. It was used as a dogmatics text at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Walther served as editor of the 1879 edition of Baier's *Compendium*, published by Concordia Publishing House.

*Der Lutheraner.* The Lutheran; a periodical first published in 1844 by Walther for the membership of Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church, St. Louis and confessional Lutherans in America. It became the official periodical of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod at the synod's founding in 1847. Forerunner to *The Lutheran Witness*.

*Dienst.* Service. Stoeckhardt often used *Dienst* to describe the public ministry.

*Evangelisch-Lutherische Freikirche.* The official periodical of the Saxon *Freikirche*. Stoeckhardt was one of a handful of men who founded this periodical in 1876 and served as its first editor.

*Freikirche.* Free church; a church body in Europe that is not under governmental control; used in this dissertation to denote the Saxon Free Church of the nineteenth century in Germany. Stoeckhardt attended this organization's founding convention in 1876 and became one of its early leaders. The Saxon Free Church eventually merged with other independent Lutheran groups in Germany to form the Selbständige Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche (SELK) in 1972.

*Gemeinde.* A local, autonomous congregation.

*Gesamtgemeinde.* Joint congregation; term used to describe the polity of four Missouri Synod congregations in St. Louis, Trinity, Immanuel, Holy Cross and Zion, each with its own pastor, with C. F. W. Walther as the head pastor (*Oberpfarrer*) of the joint congregation. This arrangement ended shortly after the death of Walther.

*Gnadenwahlstreit*. Literally “controversy over election by grace,” usually known as the “Election Controversy,” a half-decade long theological controversy (1879–1884) in the former Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America over the doctrine of election or predestination. The controversy disrupted the unity of the Synodical Conference and resulted in both the Norwegian and Ohio Synods withdrawing from the organization.

*Gymnasium*. A preparatory school for students aspiring to enrollment into the German university system.

*Heilsgeschichte*. Salvation history; the meta-narrative of theologian Johannes von Hofmann (1810–1877), a founder of the Erlangen school and one of Stoeckhardt’s professors.

*Hilfsamt*. Helping or auxiliary office which assists the pastoral ministry; used by Walther in *Kirche und Amt*.

*Helferdienste*. Helping or auxiliary service or ministry which assists the pastoral ministry; used by Stoeckhardt in his article on the divinity of the call of women parochial school teachers; another term for helping or auxiliary offices.

*Kirche*. Church. Used to describe a local congregation, its physical building, a grouping of congregations, or the sum total of all believers in the world.

*Kirche und Amt*. One of the three major works on ecclesiology written by Walther. The book’s full title is *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt* and was written in response to the Buffalo Synod’s position on church and ministry. It was first published in book form in 1852 in Erlangen.

*Kirchenämter*. Church offices; a general term used to denote the various public offices in a congregation or synod.

*Landeskirche*. State church; an established church supported through government revenue; used in this dissertation to describe the Saxon State Church where Stoeckhardt first served.

*Lazarettprediger*. A civilian chaplain who ministered to sick and wounded soldiers; a chaplain serving in a military hospital.

*Lehre und Wehre*. Doctrine and Defense; a theological journal published by the faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, specifically written for the pastors of the Missouri Synod. *Lehre und Wehre* was founded in 1855 with Walther as the first editor.

*Locus*. *Loci* (pl.). Doctrinal point or a particular topic in dogmatics.

*The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*. Theologically conservative Lutheran church body founded in Chicago, Illinois in 1847. Saxon and Franconian Lutherans from Germany were the synod’s founders; now headquartered in suburban St. Louis, Missouri; often referred to as the Missouri Synod and abbreviated LCMS.

*Magazin für ev.-luth. Homiletik.* Magazine for Ev. Luth. Homiletics; a monthly periodical edited by the faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, which contained sermon outlines and entire sermons for use by the ministerium of the Missouri Synod. This periodical was published from 1878–1929, when it was combined with *Lehre und Wehre* to form the *Concordia Theological Monthly*.

*Ministry.* Service to God and to people, employing the means of grace, that is, Word and/or Sacrament. Ministry can be conducted privately, and also publicly, in behalf of others.

*Predigtamt* (wide sense). The ministry of Word and Sacrament, first entrusted to the New Testament apostles and then perpetuated in the church through the universal priesthood of all believers. *Predigtamt* in the wide sense would include the auxiliary offices that Walther and Stoeckhardt wrote about.

*Predigtamt* (narrow sense). The pastoral office, usually understood as the ministry of a local parish pastor.

*Pfarramt.* The office and activity of a local parish pastor; a synonym for *Predigtamt* in the narrow sense.

*Public Ministry.* Service conducted in the name of a calling body and in behalf of that calling body; often a formal summons or divine call is issued to grant authority for an individual to conduct ministry as a representative of others.

*Sedes Doctrinae.* Seat of doctrine; term used to denote a key biblical passage about a point of doctrine; a passage upon which a particular doctrine is dependent.

*Seelsorger.* A caretaker of souls; a pastor.

*Übertragungslehre.* Conferring or transference doctrine; the belief that the ministry of the Word is established locally by the universal priesthood through the process of conferral (*übertragen*) of this ministry by the congregation, as the possessor of the New Testament universal priesthood, upon a qualified and called individual priest, who then publicly performs the duties of the universal priesthood in behalf of the entire congregation.

*Wingolf.* A Christian fraternity of German university students, founded in the nineteenth century as an alternative to secular student fraternities.

*Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.* Theologically conservative Lutheran church body founded in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1850. Representatives of Protestant mission societies from various parts of Germany were the synod's founding members; now headquartered in suburban Milwaukee; often referred to as the Wisconsin Synod and abbreviated WELS.

## EDITORIAL METHOD

In order to present George Stoeckhardt's doctrine of the ministry as accurately and as fairly as possible, what Stoeckhardt wrote on the ministry is copiously cited, with an English translation in the body of the dissertation and his original German text footnoted. Stoeckhardt's articles and writings during his lifetime were printed in German Gothic script. In this dissertation, his cited German is reproduced in modern type. In order to insure precision with the English translations, all translations were proofed by a native German speaker, Prof. Sibylle Krause of the Modern Languages Department of Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. As the reader studies what Stoeckhardt taught about the doctrine of the ministry in his original German, it should be noted that several times Stoeckhardt used older German word forms that have since been changed or updated. Obvious printer errors have been corrected, but in virtually all occasions, Stoeckhardt's older forms have been left as is. The author of this dissertation thanks his faculty colleague for her quality control work, but still assumes all responsibility for any shortcomings in both content and translation.

## ABSTRACT

Pless, Joel L. "In the Footsteps of Walther: The Doctrine of the Ministry in the Writings of George Stoeckhardt." Ph.D. diss., Concordia Seminary, 2008. 243 pp.

This dissertation is an historical study of how George Stoeckhardt, professor of exegetical theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis from 1878–1913, understood the doctrine of the ministry and how he articulated it through his various writings. Chapter 1 of the dissertation examines Stoeckhardt's life and his formative influences. His family background, his education, his *Wingolf* experiences, and his experiences as a chaplain during the Franco-Prussia War are addressed. Chapter 2 examines his exegetical methodology which developed his understanding of the ministry. Stoeckhardt's method of exegesis can be succinctly described as "take the text as it reads." This chapter describes how Stoeckhardt's understanding of Scripture and his exegetical methodology shaped his understanding of the ministry. Chapter 3 delineates three key *loci* of Stoeckhardt's doctrine of the ministry: (1) Called ministers are servants of the Word; (2) The ministry of the Word is perpetuated by the universal priesthood; (3) The ministry of the Word is instituted by God. These are the three recurring themes whenever Stoeckhardt wrote at length about the ministry. Chapter 4 presents excerpts of Stoeckhardt's further articulations of this doctrine. Especially studied are his numerous convention essays, in which he presented several aspects of his understanding of the ministry. Chapter 5 of the dissertation presents C. F. W. Walther's background and highlights the numerous theological struggles he was engaged in—namely against Grabau, Loehe and Lutherans in Germany—as he formulated and articulated his ecclesiology. Walther's experiences at the 1841 Altenburg Debate are especially highlighted. For Walther, soteriology was the starting point in theology, with his ecclesiology flowing out of his understanding of soteriology. This chapter then highlights the areas of agreement between Stoeckhardt and Walther on the ministry. The sixth and final chapter of the dissertation summarizes how Stoeckhardt understood the ministry and the dissertation's major findings, that while Stoeckhardt and Walther may have had some exegetical differences, the dissertation did not find any doctrinal differences between Stoeckhardt and Walther on the ministry.

This dissertation also features four appendices containing two of Stoeckhardt's writings which have never been translated. Appendix One is an academic reply to Dr. Jeffrey Young's scholarship on Stoeckhardt's writings, concerning whether Stoeckhardt departed from Walther on the ministry. This academic reply takes issue with Young's methodology and conclusions about Stoeckhardt's doctrine. Appendix Two is an English translation of Stoeckhardt's major writing on the doctrine of the ministry, the 1895 *Der Lutheraner* article, "On the Establishment and Preservation of the Public Ministry." Appendix Three presents Walther's eight 1841 Altenburg Theses on the doctrine of the church. Each thesis is given in the original German, followed immediately by a contemporary English translation. Appendix Four contains an English translation of a letter of clarification which Stoeckhardt wrote about his doctrinal position for *Der Lutheraner* in 1878 and also the German text of that letter.

## CHAPTER 1

### HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION AND THE MINISTERIAL INFLUENCES ON STOECKHARDT'S LIFE

No definitive biography of George Stoeckhardt has ever been written. There have been a small number of biographical sketches written on Stoeckhardt's life, but each one appears to be largely based on the lengthy outline of his life written by his longtime friend, Otto Willkomm, in 1914, the year after Stoeckhardt's death.<sup>1</sup> Willkomm in his encomium to Stoeckhardt freely admits that chapters 9, 10 and 11 of his book are basically a German translation of the three articles that William H. T. Dau wrote in the *Theological Quarterly*, a forerunner to the *Concordia Theological Monthly* and the *Concordia Journal*, articles that Dau wrote as a memorial to Stoeckhardt, his seminary colleague.<sup>2</sup> Otto Willkomm's memorial book, *D. Th. Georg Stöckhardt: Lebensbild eines deutsch-amerikanischen Theologen*, was translated into English by a Wisconsin Synod seminary student, Thomas R. Ehnert, as a senior-level church history project. Ehnert's translation, completed in 2002 with the title *George Stoeckhardt: A Biography of a German-American Theologian*, is available to be read online.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. E. Biegner, "Karl George Stoeckhardt, D. Theol.," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 21 (January 1949): 154–66; William H. T. Dau, "Dr. George Stoeckhardt," *Theological Quarterly* 17 (1913): 64–75; 136–53; *Theological Quarterly* 18 (1914): 16–23; Dan Woodring, "Karl George Stoeckhardt: His Life and Labor," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 72 (Spring 1999): 46–63.

<sup>2</sup> Otto Willkomm, *D. th. Georg Stöckhardt, Lebensbild eines deutsch-amerikanischen Theologen* (Zwickau: Verlag und Druck von Johannes Herrmann, 1914), 8.

<sup>3</sup> Otto Willkomm, *George Stoeckhardt: A Biography of a German-American Theologian*, trans. Thomas R. Ehnert (unpublished paper in the essay files of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin, 2002), 1–54.



Every writer on Stoeckhardt's life in this country appears to start with Willkomm, and that is where most of them also end. William Goerss's comprehensive Th.D. dissertation on Stoeckhardt's hermeneutical presuppositions and exegetical methodology reveals the important piece of information that many of Stoeckhardt's personal papers ended up in the possession of the archives of the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod. This was by virtue of the fact that August Pieper, a Wisconsin Synod parish pastor and then—for thirty-eight years—a professor at the Wisconsin Synod's Wauwatosa and Thiensville (now Mequon) seminary campuses, was Stoeckhardt's brother-in-law. The sister of Stoeckhardt's first wife married August Pieper in 1881. Although a definitive biography of Stoeckhardt remains unwritten, this dissertation on Stoeckhardt's doctrine of the ministry will begin by examining the ministerial influences on his life, followed by a study of his exegetical methodology and then the major doctrinal points of how he understood the ministry, followed by how he presented his findings and how Stoeckhardt's doctrine of the ministry compares with C. F. W. Walther's understanding of the ministry.

### **The Political Situation in Stoeckhardt's Saxony**

To understand any historical figure, it is important to examine, as much as possible, his upbringing and his education, and at least attempt to sympathetically understand the person in the context of the times in which he lived. To understand the interesting persona of George Stoeckhardt, one must begin to appreciate his thoroughly German roots. This point is made by Dau and several of Stoeckhardt's students in various reminiscences about their student days.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Dau, "Dr. George Stoeckhardt," *Theological Quarterly* 17 (1913): 74; cf. Theodore Buenger, "St. Louis Seminary Reminiscences 1879–1882," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 13 (January 1941): 97–100; Henry A. Grueber, "Guided by God's Counsel," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 30 (Summer 1957): 84–92; Otto Hattstaedt, "Reminiscences of the Seminary at St. Louis 1881–1884," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 14 (January 1941): 8–12; "Personal Reminiscences," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 14 (July 1941): 33–38

Stoeckhardt—unlike most of the other principal leaders in the Missouri Synod in the nineteenth century, came to America a generation after the Missouri Synod was founded, after a varied and often tumultuous ministerial career in Europe.

George Stoeckhardt was born into the world of nineteenth-century Germany. Specifically, Stoeckhardt was born on February 17, 1842 in Chemnitz, in the Kingdom of Saxony, to Julius and Rosalie (Liebster) Stoeckhardt.<sup>5</sup> Saxony was one of the thirty-nine German states that survived the decisions of the 1814 Congress of Vienna, which redrew the map of continental Europe after the fall of Napoleon. The economic, political, and social upheavals brought on by Napoleon's conquests and his final defeat at Waterloo brought both new tensions and new opportunities for the German lands of the early nineteenth century. In the sphere of politics, the most notable political result of the Congress of Vienna for the German lands was the struggle between Prussia and Austria for political dominance and supremacy among the German states. The central issue was how to meld both of these states into a united Germany while robbing neither one of its prestige and influence. This dilemma ended up receiving the nomenclature "the *grossdeutsch* vs. *kleindeutsch* controversy" (greater Germany including Austria versus lesser Germany, minus Austria).<sup>6</sup> Ultimately the controversy was settled by Otto von Bismarck and the Prussians when Austria was defeated by Prussia in the Seven Weeks' War in 1866. This war resulted in Prussia becoming the dominant state in the future united Germany of 1871.

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and Martin S. Sommer, "Reminiscences of My Student Days at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo., from 1889 to 1892," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 12 (April 1939): 14–21; cf. William E. Goerss, "Some of the Hermeneutical Presuppositions and Part of the Exegetical Methodology of Georg Stoeckhardt" (Th.D. diss., Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1964), 9–10; 25; cf. also Ludwig E. Fuerbringer, *Eighty Eventful Years: Reminiscences of Ludwig Ernest Fuerbringer* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1944), 101–14.

<sup>5</sup> Willkomm, 10.

<sup>6</sup> Marshall Dill, Jr., *Germany: A Modern History* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1961), 87.

Concomitant with this political tension between the two largest German states were other political struggles within the German lands. Walter Forster, in his description of the European background of the Saxon immigration to Missouri, notes that Germans were also struggling with the political dynamics of liberalism versus conservatism as well as particularism versus nationalism.<sup>7</sup> The drive for a united Germany failed at the Congress of Vienna and would not be realized until the 1870–1871 Franco-Prussian War. The Austrian statesman Metternich, at Vienna, took the lead in mustering the forces of conservatism in opposing the liberalization of German politics and was largely successful until the 1848 Revolution, which drove Metternich out of power.<sup>8</sup>

In George Stoeckhardt's Saxony, the politics of particularism versus nationalism were especially felt. The Congress of Vienna did not treat the Kingdom of Saxony kindly. Saxony lost half its territory and four-sevenths of its population and was relegated to a secondary position among the German states. The rulers of Saxony were at first reticent to initiate political reform, but in 1830 student riots broke out in both Leipzig and Dresden. After that, political reforms began to take hold, so that by the time of Stoeckhardt's birth in 1842, an "enlightened ruler," Prince Frederick Augustus, had ascended to the Saxon throne. The prince began the process of turning Saxony into a constitutional state.<sup>9</sup>

### **A Lutheran Family Tree in the Midst of Rationalism**

Most important for understanding the world that George Stoeckhardt grew up in is understanding the religious situation of Saxony at the time of his birth and throughout the

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<sup>7</sup> Walter O. Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi: The Settlement of the Saxon Lutherans in Missouri 1839–1841* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), 5.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

nineteenth century. Stoeckhardt felt so strongly about the rationalism that permeated his native Saxony that he wrote a series of articles for the Missouri Synod periodical *Der Lutheraner*, which were later compiled in a booklet entitled *Die kirchlichen Zustände Deutschlands im 19. Jahrhundert: Ein Rückblick auf die Geschichte der protestantischen Kirchen Deutschlands* (The Ecclesiastical Conditions of Germany in the 19th Century: A Review of the History of the Protestant Church of Germany). These writings deal with conditions in the *Landeskirche* during Stoeckhardt's years in Saxony and long after he left Saxony for his ministry in America.

In this booklet, Stoeckhardt describes how rationalism was the chief enemy of confessional Lutheranism, how the theological professors of the German university system were the actual prophets of the religion of reason, and how they consistently interpreted the basic teachings of the Bible as antiquated, untenable doctrinal opinions.<sup>10</sup> Stoeckhardt continues his history of Lutheranism in Germany by describing the confessional awakening, the Prussian Union, the experiences of pastors who were imprisoned because of their confessional Lutheranism, confessional Lutheran mission activities and mission societies, the “new” theology in German universities, and the status of the *Landeskirche*. He finishes with the development of the various confessional Lutheran synods in Germany, especially the Free Church in Saxony, the *Freikirche*, where he had served as a pastor.<sup>11</sup> Clearly Stoeckhardt rejected the religious rationalism of his homeland.

A reading of Willkomm's memorial book to Stoeckhardt in either the original German or Ehnert's English translation reveals, as Ludwig Fuerbringer put it in his reminiscences, that Stoeckhardt “sprang from a notable family” and that “his father belonged to the well-to-do

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<sup>10</sup> George Stoeckhardt, *Die kirchlichen Zustände Deutschlands: Ein Rückblick auf die Geschichte der protestantischen Kirchen Deutschlands im 19. Jahrhundert* (Zwickau: Schriftenverein der sep. ev.-luth. Gemeinden in Sachsen, 1892), 2–3.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 8–137.

middle class.”<sup>12</sup> Couple this information with the fact that Stoeckhardt was the only son of a family that also included three daughters, and one can begin to understand that from his boyhood, Stoeckhardt’s circumstances enabled him to grow up in comfortable surroundings and allowed him to receive an excellent education in the German university system.<sup>13</sup>

Karl Georg Stöckhardt, known in America as George Stoeckhardt, was born into a prominent Saxon family with a lengthy tradition of service in the Lutheran ministry. Willkomm’s first chapter is devoted to describing Stoeckhardt’s ancestry and the stern, educational upbringing that his father received from his father, a descendant of a long line of Lutheran pastors in Saxony.<sup>14</sup> Although his grandfather was a pastor, George Stoeckhardt’s own father, Julius, was a layman.<sup>15</sup> In comprehending the influences on how Stoeckhardt came to understand the doctrine of the ministry, his family history is significant. Stoeckhardt’s published family tree suggests that the progenitor of the family came from the Low Countries and was a participant in the siege of Liege in 1468.<sup>16</sup> Eventually a Gerhardt Stöckhardt, a merchant, moved to Saxony around 1630 and established himself in Dresden. From this Gerhardt Stoeckhardt came a long line of Lutheran pastors in Saxony dating back to the age of Lutheran Orthodoxy. His son, also named Gerhardt Stoeckhardt, became pastor of a Lutheran congregation at Miltitz near Meissen. Both of his sons became pastors in Saxony as well, one at Putzkauer and the other in Lauterbach. George Stoeckhardt is descended from the Lauterbach line of the Stoeckhardt family. His

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<sup>12</sup> Fuerbringer, 101–2.

<sup>13</sup> Willkomm, *George Stoeckhardt*, 10. Unless otherwise noted, citations refer to Ehnert’s English transtion. When material from Willkomm’s original German is cited, the book’s German title, *Georg Stöckhardt*, will be given.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 8–9.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>16</sup> Ernest Theodor Stöckhardt, *Stammtafel der Familie Stockhardt: Putzkauer und Lautenbach Zweig den Verwandten zu Lieb, zusammengestellt und mit Erläuterungen auf Grund handschriftlicher Mittheilungen und sonstiger Quellen-Nachweis, versehen von Ernst Theodor Stöckhardt* (Weimar: R. Wagner, 1883), 1–305.

paternal grandfather was Christian Gottlieb Stoeckhardt, who served a congregation at Röhrsdorf by Meissen. Although George's father was a chemist, George's uncle, his father's older brother, Karl Friederich Gottlob Stoeckhardt, succeeded his own father, Christian Gottlob, as the pastor at Röhrsdorf. Karl Friederich was involved in the Saxon confessional revival movement during his ministry, which was cut short by his early death on April 17, 1834. Around twenty Lutheran pastors from the Stoeckhardt family served in Saxony during the nineteenth century.<sup>17</sup>

Stoeckhardt's contributions in describing the doctrine of the ministry largely stem from his exegetical and linguistic skills. A study of his family tree and ancestry indicates where he inherited some of these aptitudes. In describing some of Stoeckhardt's ancestors, Otto Willkomm highlights the strenuous tutoring George Stoeckhardt's grandfather gave to his four children. Christian Gottlieb Stoeckhardt took it upon himself to personally homeschool his children, not only in history, geography, and science, but especially in the ancient and modern languages. Thus as a child, George Stoeckhardt's father, Julius Adolf, learned to read and recite Virgil, Ovid and Horace in Latin; Xenophon and Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in Greek; the sixteenth century Italian poet Torquato Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered* in Italian (a fictional account of the struggle between the Crusaders and the Saracens for Jerusalem); and finally, the Bible in English translation. The father would further educate the boys by assigning each of them tasks where they were required to use Latin to complete them.<sup>18</sup> Clearly George Stoeckhardt's ancestry featured strong linguistic skills among family members, which set a precedent for Stoeckhardt's

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<sup>17</sup> Gottfried Herrmann, *Lutherische Freikirche in Sachsen: Geschichte und Gegenwart einer lutherischen Bekenntniskirche* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1985), 208–209.

<sup>18</sup> Willkomm, 8. Seven children were born into the family, but three did not survive infancy.

future academic career. Willkomm offers this conclusion, that Stoeckhardt's great faithfulness and perhaps his outstanding gift for languages can be traced back to his upbringing.<sup>19</sup>

### **Wingolf—A Christian Fraternity**

While Stoeckhardt's lineage can account for some of his strong linguistic skills, which he used to study and then articulate the biblical doctrine of the ministry, an even more important dynamic in his formative years was his interactions as a young man in a Christian student fraternity, the *Wingolf*. In order to appreciate the influence of the *Wingolf* on Stoeckhardt's development and his concept of the ministry, a brief review of nineteenth century student life in Germany is in order. Willkomm provides an adequate description of such student life at a German university in his book on Stoeckhardt's life. The history of the *Wingolf* is also well told through a few very detailed histories.<sup>20</sup> The current *Wingolf* organization also has an extensive website.<sup>21</sup>

In the nineteenth century German university system, there existed any number of *Studentenverbindungen*, student unions or fraternities. Each student wore a hat and a sash across his chest which were of the colors of his particular fraternity. These fraternities were where the students in the German university system found their identify and often formed lifelong friendships. Willkomm relates that the students in these fraternities became closely bound together and were subjected to strict rules enforced by the members. Each fraternity conducted its business at regularly scheduled meetings. Customarily twice a week, social gatherings took

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Hans Waitz, *Geschichte des Wingolfsbundes aus den Quellen mitgeteilt und dargestellt* (Darmstadt: Johannes Waitz, 1896), 3–350.

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.wingolf.org>.

place at a local tavern.<sup>22</sup> One of the key characteristics of many of these student fraternities was their practice of academic or *mensur* fencing, intended to produce bragging scars.<sup>23</sup>

Willkomm proceeds to describe how beginning in the 1830s, “organizations arose at the German universities which were directed more toward the Christian students. From these organizations, the Christian fraternities arose over time, which fought to pervade this entrenched, external form of this student life with a Christian spirit.”<sup>24</sup> Willkomm further relates that eventually the majority of these Christian fraternities took the name *Wingolf*. This name is interpreted as meaning temple or bond of friendship. The actual name originates from a poem by Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock, an eighteenth century German poet.<sup>25</sup> The motto of all of the *Wingolf* fraternities in the German university system became “All through One,” with Jesus Christ designated as the one.<sup>26</sup> In addition to its distinctly Christian character and confession, what differentiated the *Wingolf* from secular university fraternities was that it completely renounced academic fencing.

According to Willkomm and Stoeckhardt’s own letters to Willkomm, Stoeckhardt’s membership and experiences during his *Wingolf* years were foundational for his understanding and attitude toward both Christianity and the ministry. Yet Willkomm also points out that Stoeckhardt’s assessment of the value of the *Wingolf* was measured. When Willkomm wrote to

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<sup>22</sup> Willkomm, 18.

<sup>23</sup> Waitz, 11–13: “Im Zusammenhang mit dieser Entwicklung ist das Mensurwesen aufgekommen und hat in dem Corpsleben eine hervorragende Stelle eingenommen” (13).

<sup>24</sup> Willkomm, 19. Ehnert’s translation here is incorrect: “From the 1770s on, organizations arose at the German universities which were directed more toward the Christian students.” Willkomm wrote in the German text: “Von den dreissig Jahren des vorigen Jahrhunderts an entstanden nun auf verschiedenen deutschen Universitäten Vereine christlich gerichteter Studenten, aus denen sich mit der Zeit Verbindungen entwickelten, welche die äusseren Formen dieses studentischen Lebens mit christlichem Geiste zu durchdringen strebten” (41). The translator here forgot that Willkomm’s book was published in 1914. Obviously the 1830s are meant.

<sup>25</sup> [www.wingolf.de](http://www.wingolf.de); Willkomm, 19.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.



his friend asking for his advice on whether he should continue his membership in the *Wingolf*, Stoeckhardt wrote back and explained that while the *Wingolf* had its limits, its importance centered on the fact that it was a Christ-focused institution:

I do not actually know what kind of justification should be further given for our *Wingolf*, other than the one which is already so often given: ‘Whoever wants to undertake his studies with blessing, needs fellowship; and both study and fellowship need Christianity and Christ, through whom everything happens.’ Now this justification is a foregone and natural conclusion (natural for those who know something about Christianity), and the *Wingolf* desires nothing more than to unite these three inseparable things. Thank God we can testify before God with a good conscience, that the *Wingolf* essentially fulfills these assignments. Because this principle of the *Wingolf* is really too simple and self-understood, some people do not pay attention to it at all if they are not pleased with something in the *Wingolf*, or if they have some justified objections to the life and operation of the fraternity. It was during those three semesters at Leipzig, in which I did not have the *Wingolf*, when the great value of that plain, often taken for granted truth, became obvious to me. By nature, I am no idealist, and you know that I hate the exaggerated phrases about the *Wingolf*, ‘out to be some type of bulwark of the Church against unbelief and so on.’ The more one is disillusioned by the fraternity if one has made it into some kind of saving institution, nevertheless, it is still no exaggeration or mere fantasy that the *Wingolf* is a real blessing, must give blessing, and has been a blessing for many because it is based on Christ and bears his name among the students. It also provides the opportunities to take some blessings from it according to each individual’s needs.<sup>27</sup>

From Stoeckhardt’s letter to Willkomm, what can be safely concluded on how the *Wingolf* influenced Stoeckhardt and his understanding of the ministry? From his *Wingolf* experiences,

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<sup>27</sup> Willkomm, 19–20; Willkomm, *Georg Stöckhardt*, 43–44: “Ich weiss wirklich nicht, welche Rechtfertigung ich weiter unserem, ‘Wingolf’ geben soll, als die eine, die ihm oft schon gegeben ist, dass es eben ein zu einfacher und natürlicher Schluss ist—natürlich nur für die, die vom Christentum etwas wissen wollen—: ‘wer überhaupt mit Segen sein Studium verrichten will, bedarf der Gemeinschaft, und beide, Studium und Gemeinschaft, bedürfen des Christentums und Christi, in dem alles geschehen soll—und der ‘Wingolf’ will weiter nichts als diese drei unzertrennlichen Dinge vereinen, und wir können doch, Gottlob! auch mit gutem Gewissen und vor Gott ihm das Zeugnis geben, dass er diese Aufgaben im wesentlichen erfüllt. Weil dies Wingolfsprinzip eben zu einfach und selbstverständlich ist, setzt man diesen selbstverständlichen Grundsatz immer voraus und achtet nicht sehr darauf, wenn einem hie und da im ‘Wingolf’ etwas nicht behagt oder wenn man auch begründete Einwürfe gegen das Leben und Treiben desselben hat. Die drei Semester, wo ich in Leipzig den ‘Wingolf’ nicht hatte, wurde ich mir selbst auch erst bewusst, was jene einfache, selbstverständliche Wahrheit für Wert hat, wenn man ausserhalb derselben steht. Ich bin gewiss meiner Natur nach kein Idealist, und du weisst, wie verhasst mir die himmelstürmenden Phrasen sind, dass der ‘Wingolf’ wer weiss was für ein Bollwerk der Kirche gegen Unglauben usw. sei. Aber je mehr man von ihm enttäuscht wird, wenn man ihn sich zu so einer Art Heilsanstalt machen will, so bleibt das doch keine Uebertreibung und Phantasie, dass er, weil er sich auf Christum gründet and Seinen Namen in die Studentenwelt trägt, Segen geben muss und vielen von Segen gewesen ist und jedem auch Gelegenheit genug gibt, nach seinem Mass und Bedürfnis sich den Segen daraus zu erholen, den er wünscht und nötig hat.”

Stoeckhardt learned that focusing on Christ was the most important activity in one's life. Although Stoeckhardt was careful not to make the *Wingolf* into a form of the public ministry and realized that this Christian student fraternity had its limits in stemming the influence of the predominantly rationalistic German university system of the nineteenth century, he saw the *Wingolf* as an opportunity for Christian students to express their faith in a hostile, rationalistic environment with other like-minded students. Stoeckhardt's own *Wingolf* experiences enabled him to study at the university level while at the same time giving him Christian fellowship and a means of expressing his faith in Christ. From his student fraternity experiences, Stoeckhardt learned, or at the very least experienced a strengthening of the idea that Jesus Christ was the one "through whom everything happens." This idea became further developed in Stoeckhardt's understanding of the ministry. He eventually came to understand the office of the ministry as a continuation of the ministry of Jesus Christ. According to Stoeckhardt, the ministry of Jesus Christ, culminating in his death and resurrection, initiated the Christian faith. To then perpetuate the Christian faith, Stoeckhardt taught that Christ instituted a public ministry of the Word. Stoeckhardt eventually became part of this ministry and dedicated the latter part of his life to training future pastors for this ministry.

#### **A Ministry Model—Rev. Ernst Siedel**

While the *Wingolf* must be considered as one of the more important influences of how George Stoeckhardt developed his understanding of the ministry, more noteworthy is the influence of Stoeckhardt's own pastor while he was growing up in Tharandt, Saxony, the Rev. Ernst Siedel. Willkomm relates in his biography of Stoeckhardt that the Stoeckhardt family was very close to Siedel, who began his ministry in Tharandt in the late summer of 1851. Willkomm

describes Siedel as a faithful friend of the Stoeckhardt family, a family who was regular in church attendance in Siedel's congregation.<sup>28</sup>

Perhaps what Ernst Siedel is most remembered for is his homiletical skill. Siedel's sermons are described as sermons which "made a powerful impression, and his exhortations to practice sacramental piety led people to hope that he would be a leader in the fight against the unbelief and immorality so rampant at that time."<sup>29</sup> Willkomm further reported that there must have been a falling out between young George Stoeckhardt and the pastor that confirmed him in the Lutheran faith, for he relates that "it was the greatest disappointment Stoeckhardt ever experienced," when Ernst Siedel refused to take a leadership role in challenging the rationalism and immorality that was tolerated in the Saxon *Landeskirche*.<sup>30</sup>

According to his reminiscences, Ernst Siedel served the Tharandt *Landeskirche* congregation from 1851–1891. He was installed on August 24, 1851, when George Stoeckhardt was nine years old, having come to Tharandt after serving as a pastor and teacher in Leipzig.<sup>31</sup> In describing his installation day at Tharandt, Siedel related that it was the most blessed and glorious day which he had lived, since he was consecrated on that day to be a servant of God, to preach the Gospel and to be for his members a helper as they conducted their journey of faith toward eternal blessedness.<sup>32</sup> Siedel relates that he later learned that one of the reasons he

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<sup>28</sup> Willkomm, 18.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ernst Siedel, *Wie einer jung war und jung blieb: Lebenserinnerungen eines alten Seelsorgers* (Dresden: Verlag von C. Ludwig Ungelenk, 1908), 108–114.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 114.

received the call to Tharandt was that the *Landeskirche* officials wanted an orthodox churchman to awaken new life in the Tharandt congregation which Siedel described as dying.<sup>33</sup>

How did Siedel influence young George Stoeckhardt's view of the ministry? If Ernst Siedel's reminiscences are to any degree accurate, his sermons must have made an impression on the young Stoeckhardt. Siedel describes how he preached to his Tharandt congregation by writing that he took great pains to preach "simply" (*einfach*) and "clearly," (*klar*), "so that Hans and Grete could understand it," employing animating examples and stories to explain Christian doctrine.<sup>34</sup> One "Hans" who heard Ernst Siedel preach was young George Stoeckhardt. In his future ministry, Stoeckhardt won renown for his preaching as did Siedel during his years in Tharandt. What is interesting to note is that in direct contrast to Siedel, the pastor who confirmed him, Stoeckhardt almost never used sermon illustrations in his preaching, but instead focused on strong doctrinal content in his sermons.<sup>35</sup>

By reading through Ernst Siedel's reminiscences, it is possible to trace some other ways he influenced Stoeckhardt. As he grew up in Tharandt, Saxony, Stoeckhardt watched as his pastor was the object of vicious attacks by self-righteous and unbelieving worldlings because he preached the truth of the Bible.<sup>36</sup> According to his own recollections, Siedel soon began to be publicly attacked as "the grumbler" (*Mucker*) and the "sinister character" (*Finsterling*) in the

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<sup>33</sup> Siedel, 115: "Später habe ich erst erfahren, dass der Minister von Beruf die Absicht hatte, durch mich als einen orthodoxen Geistlichen neues Leben in der kirchlich erstorbenen Tharandter Gemeinde zu wecken."

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 116: "'Ich bemühte mich einfach und klar zu predigen,' schreibt er, 'so dass Hans und Grete es verstehen konnten; und immer anregend durch Einstreuung von Beispielen und Geschichten, welche die Lehrsätze erklärten und anschaulich machten.'"

<sup>35</sup> Dau, "Dr. George Stoeckhardt," *Theological Quarterly* 17 (July 1913): 140, 142; "The secret of Stoeckhardt's power as a preacher lay in *the contents of his sermons* . . . In Stoeckhardt's sermons there is nothing trivial. The great truths of sin and grace, the *via salutis* with its well-marked stages, contrition, faith, love, hope,—new birth, new life, eternal life,—these are the materials with which he fills the cup of every sermon to the brim. Illustrative matter he introduces rarely, an anecdote never."

<sup>36</sup> Siedel, 117–118: "Die selbstgerechten und ungläubigen Weltkinder ärgerten sich an solch' harter Rede, und als sie vollends hörten, dass es nach der klaren Lehre der Schrift einen Teufel gibt, der die Menschen ansich und ins Verderben zu reißen sucht, da brach der Unwille in hellen Flammen aus."

parsonage in Tharandt. Soon he was the most ill-reputed pastor in all of Saxony.<sup>37</sup> He was shunned by the people of the area on railroad cars and was once even physically accosted.<sup>38</sup> Siedel's bitter experiences with hostile Saxons due to his desire to be an orthodox Lutheran pastor must have served as a measure of inspiration to Stoeckhardt during his difficult years in the Saxon *Landeskirche*.

Although Willkomm does not elaborate, he mentions in his book that Stoeckhardt's first wife, Anna Koenig, was a relative of "the well-known Pastor Siedel in Tharandt."<sup>39</sup> What perhaps is more informative is that Ernst Siedel had a role in the founding of the girls' academy where Stoeckhardt began his teaching career. This girls' academy, named after its founder, a Fräulein Luise of Mangoldt, was established in 1851, the year that Siedel began his ministry in Tharandt.<sup>40</sup> Like the Stoeckhardt family, it appears that Siedel was one in spirit with Fräulein Luise, for he reminisces: "She belonged to the few in the congregation, who understood Siedel, and whose concern just like his it was, that the pure doctrine and the unvarnished Word of God would be spread more and more in Tharandt."<sup>41</sup> It appears that Ernst Siedel, Stoeckhardt's pastor while growing up, may have had a hand in Stoeckhardt securing the position as the headmaster (*Oberlehrer*) of the Luisen Academy. Siedel relates that the continuing instruction in this institution was one of his most beloved duties and that eventually

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 118: "Alles, was ich auf der Kanzel sagte, wurde zu meinen Ungunsten ausgebeutet, und fast jede Woche erschienen Angriffe in den öffentlichen Blättern auf den 'Mucker' and 'Finstlerling' in der Pfarre zu Tharandt. Bald war ich der verschrienste Pastor in ganz Sachsen."

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Willkomm, 13.

<sup>40</sup> Siedel, 126.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.: "Sie gehörte zu den Wenigen in der Gemeinde, die Siedel verstanden, der es wie ihm ein Anliegen war, dass die reine Lehre und das lautere Gotteswort in Tharandt immer mehr Ausbreitung fänden."

his book of reminiscences, *Der Weg zur ewigen Jugend*, grew out of his instruction to the students at the Luisen Academy.<sup>42</sup>

In addition to his reminiscences, Ernst Siedel also published some of his confirmation sermons, written during the years of his ministry in Tharandt. These sermons appeared in two small books. In one book, which contains English translations of eight of Siedel's sermons, no dates are provided for when these sermons were delivered. The other book contains thirteen confirmation sermons, the first delivered in 1878 and the last delivered in 1891. These sermons provide a representation of Siedel's preaching style and temperament which George Stoeckhardt heard weekly as he was growing up in Tharandt and occasionally give glimpses to how Siedel understood the ministry and how he shared his understanding with his parishioners. In an undated sermon preached on Ecclesiastes 11:9, Siedel briefly describes one aspect of his understanding of the ministry by exhorting the newly confirmed to remember those who labored in their behalf:

How many hands have labored with touching affection at your bringing-up. Think of your dear father; how he has provided for you. Think of your dear mother, how she has nursed and cared for you by day and night. Think of your faithful teachers, who for eight years have instructed you with inexpressible labor. Think also of me, for in the catechetical instruction I have devoted myself to you with all my love and strength. O, you do not know how dear children become to parents, teachers, and pastors.<sup>43</sup>

In another sermon preached in 1887, long after Stoeckhardt had immigrated to America, Siedel exhorts his confirmation class: "And also in your farewell, do not forget your old pastor,

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 127–128: "Der Unterricht in der Fortbildungsschule gehörte zu Siedels liebsten Pflichten. . . . Aus dem Leitfaden, den ich im Jahre 1893 als Frucht dieses Unterrichts auf mehrfachen Wunsch herausgab, ist späterhin mein Buch 'Der Weg zur ewigen Jugend' entstanden."

<sup>43</sup> Ernst Siedel, "Youthful Holiness," in *Be Thou Faithful Unto Death: Confirmation Sermons and Addresses by Lutheran Pastors in Germany and America*, Second Revised and Enlarged Edition, ed. Roger Neumann (Burlington, Iowa: The Germany Literary Board, 1917), 48–49.

who carries you all as his dear children in his heart.”<sup>44</sup> In view of the fact that the writings of George Stoeckhardt demonstrate a strong tendency to view the ministry of the Word as that of a personal *Seelsorger*, these sermon excerpts from Ernst Siedel reveal that Stoeckhardt grew up having a pastor who sought to model this concept.

One of the most far-reaching consequences of Ernst Siedel’s influence in Stoeckhardt’s life is Siedel’s possible role in securing a position for Stoeckhardt at the Luisen Academy. At the age of twenty-five, Stoeckhardt became headmaster of the school, teaching religion and other subjects. As a very young man, Stoeckhardt experienced ministry in an academic setting. After serving as a parish pastor for a number of years, Stoeckhardt returned to minister in the classroom as a professor of exegesis at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Serving as the headmaster of the Luisen Academy contributed to germinating in Stoeckhardt the idea of the ministry being an office of service in which one represents, proclaims, and models Christ to fellow believers.

### **Johann von Hofmann—An Influential Teacher**

While Ernst Siedel and his ministry to the Stoeckhardt family was unquestionably a noteworthy influence on young George Stoeckhardt’s understanding of the ministry, several of Stoeckhardt’s university professors also had some significant ministerial influences on his life. Stoeckhardt attended two German universities, Erlangen and Leipzig, and spent a number of weeks at the University of Berlin attending the lectures of several prominent professors. He spent his first year in the German university system at Erlangen, where he was a student of Gottfried

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<sup>44</sup> Ernst Siedel, *Confirmationsreden* (Leipzig: Friedrich Jansa, 1905), 70: “Vergesst auch bei eurem Abschied eruierten alten Pastor nicht, der euch alle wie seine lieben Kinder auf dem Herzen trägt.”

Thomasius, August Koehler, Gerhard von Zezschwitz and Johann von Hofmann.<sup>45</sup> William Goerss reports in his 1964 dissertation of his Stoeckhardt research done in the archives of the Wisconsin Synod in Milwaukee that Hofmann was Stoeckhardt's professor for three courses: New Testament introduction, ethics, and dogmatics. He further reports that Stoeckhardt's handwriting in his class notes is difficult to read and includes many personal abbreviations.<sup>46</sup>

Stoeckhardt's colleague on the St. Louis faculty, Ludwig E. Fuerbringer, and Stoeckhardt himself reveal that Johann von Hofmann was the professor that made the most profound influence on him as a theologian and an exegete. Fuerbringer asserts in his reminiscences that Hofmann had been "the advisor and reader of Stoeckhardt's thesis when he was to become *Licentiatu Theologiae*, the first step in an academic career, and Stoeckhardt himself told me in later years that Hofmann was not quite satisfied that he showed such a practical aim in his theological writing."<sup>47</sup> Despite this criticism and Hofmann's objections to Stoeckhardt's "orthodox leanings," Fuerbringer, on the basis of conversations with Dr. George Fritchel of the Iowa Synod, reports that Hofmann hoped that one day Stoeckhardt would become a member of Erlangen's theological faculty.<sup>48</sup>

According to Fuerbringer, Stoeckhardt was thoroughly versed in Hofmann's *Commentary on the New Testament* and "to some extent learned from him the exegetical method apparent in

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<sup>45</sup> Fuerbringer, 104; Gottfried Thomasius (1802–1875) taught dogmatics and served as university preacher at Erlangen; father of modern kenosis theology; August Koehler (1835–1897) taught Old Testament at Erlangen and was the successor of Franz Delitzsch; Gerhard von Zezschwitz (1825–1886) taught practical theology at Erlangen; Johann von Hofmann (1810–1877) taught primarily exegesis at Erlangen and is considered to be the father of the Erlangen school of theology.

<sup>46</sup> Goerss, 9–10; Stoeckhardt's papers in the Wisconsin Synod archives eventually found their way into the possession of Northwestern Publishing House, the publishing arm of the Wisconsin Synod, located in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin. They largely consist of his notebooks from his school days and some notes from his teaching years at Concordia, St. Louis. These papers were turned over to the Concordia Historical Institute on May 31, 2007.

<sup>47</sup> Fuerbringer, 104.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.



his own commentaries, . . .”<sup>49</sup> Stoeckhardt himself wrote in the foreword to his 1907 Romans commentary that his exegetical method followed that of his teacher Hofmann: “The method used in the commentary before us, that is continuous, coherent exegesis and development, as it is found also in Hofmann, Godet, and essentially also in Philippi, appears the best to me to answer the just-mentioned purpose of exegesis.”<sup>50</sup>

The key contribution that Johann von Hofmann made to George Stoeckhardt’s understanding of the office of the ministry is the exegetical method that he taught Stoeckhardt. This method is characterized by a thorough understanding of the grammar and syntax of the original languages of the Bible, followed by a careful exegesis and then exposition/application of the biblical text (what it meant and what it means): “The biblical text here is still the given measure and it has to always remain the focal point of any treatment. It is the function of the exegesis, to elicit sense and content from the written word.”<sup>51</sup> While Stoeckhardt and Hofmann shared a basic exegetical approach to the Bible, a debt which Stoeckhardt readily acknowledged to Hofmann, Stoeckhardt was much more theologically conservative and practical in his exegetical conclusions than was Hofmann. Fuerbringer points out that Stoeckhardt learned his exegetical method from Hofmann, “but he carefully avoided the pitfalls of Hofmann, who, instead of reproducing the exact thoughts of the Biblical writer, sometimes inserted his own opinions.”<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> George Stoeckhardt, *Commentar über den Brief Pauli an die Römer* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1907), iii: “Die im vorliegenden Commentar befolgte Methode, fortlaufende, zusammenhängende Erklärung und Entwicklung, wie sie sich z. B. auch bei Hofmann, Godet und wesentlich auch bei Philippi findet, schien mir dem eben genannten Zweck der Auslegung am besten zu entsprechen.”

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., iii–iv; “Der biblische Text ist hier doch die gegebene Grösse und muss allewege im Mittelpunkt der Betrachtung bleiben. Es ist Aufgabe der Auslegung, aus den Worten, die da geschrieben stehen, Sinn und Inhalt zu eruieren.”

<sup>52</sup> Fuerbringer, 104.

The most complete writing to date concerning the relationship between Johann von Hofmann and his student George Stoeckhardt is Richard Baepler's 1954 Bachelor of Divinity thesis entitled: "The Hermeneutics of Johannes Christian Konrad von Hofmann with Special Reference to His Influence on Georg Stoeckhardt." In his introduction, Baepler stated that he chose to write on this topic not only because these two men had a teacher-student relationship, "but also because both men were giants of conservative confessional Lutheran scholarship and both have exerted an enduring influence, the former on Lutheranism in Germany, the latter on the theology of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod."<sup>53</sup> Baepler first outlines the major theological emphases of Hofmann and the Erlangen School in general, then he presents Hofmann's hermeneutical principles, followed by Stoeckhardt's chief theological concerns and his hermeneutical principles.

After comparing the theological orientations of Hofmann and Stoeckhardt, it is accurate to conclude that Hofmann was an influential contributor to Stoeckhardt's development as an exegete, despite the fact that Stoeckhardt only studied under Hofmann for one year. Baepler points out that Stoeckhardt used Hofmann's works in his private study, that he employed Hofmann's exegetical techniques in his commentaries, and that it appears that Stoeckhardt in his Ephesians commentary cites Hofmann as an authority more than any other author.<sup>54</sup> However, a study of the theological orientations of these two exegetes often reveal more differences than similarities. Johann von Hofmann was a founder of the Erlangen school of theology, a theological school which George Stoeckhardt eventually publicly repudiated. While Stoeckhardt's exegesis centered on "taking the text as it reads," with Christ as the center of the

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<sup>53</sup> Richard Baepler, "The Hermeneutics of Johannes Christian Konrad von Hofmann with Special Reference to His Influence on Georg Stoeckhardt" (B.D. thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1954), 1.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

Scriptures, Hofmann's interpretative method focused on the exegete's ego. To Hofmann, theology was autobiography. The Erlangen theology, like its contemporary "restitution theology" and "Neo-Lutheranism," was rooted in the nineteenth century German Awakening (*Erweckung*). It was a synthesis between the old learning of the Lutheran Reformation and the new learning of the Enlightenment and Romanticism with the mantra: *eine alte Weise, neue Wahrheit zu lehren* (an old way to teach new truth).<sup>55</sup> Hofmann was the guiding genius of the Erlangen school of theology, despite the fact that Adolf Harless is often credited with being its founder.<sup>56</sup> It established itself and evaluated all theology according to three principles: the Scriptures, the Confessions and religious experience.<sup>57</sup> Hofmann evaluated a theological system especially using a scriptural/historical test: "He originated the idea of the *heilsgeschichtliche Theologie* (theology of redemption)."<sup>58</sup> When a man encounters the experience of regeneration, according to Hofmann, the individual is made conscious of being a member of the church by his faith, which is a personal communion with God mediated through Jesus Christ. He goes on to distinguish between faith and theology. Theology, according to Hofmann, is the scientific interpretation of Christianity, and a man's theology is conditioned by his own individual personality.<sup>59</sup> In writing a book on theology, a theologian must write a kind of autobiography—a position which Hofmann summed up with his famous expression: "I as a Christian am the

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<sup>55</sup> O. W. Heick and J. L. Neve, *A History of Christian Thought*, vol. 2, *History of Protestant Theology* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1946), 131.

<sup>56</sup> Bengt Häggglund, *History of Theology*, trans. Gene Lund (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), 368.

<sup>57</sup> Heick and Neve, 131.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

primary object of my scientific investigation as a theologian.”<sup>60</sup> Hofmann ultimately went on to deny the vicarious atonement of Jesus Christ, substituting a new redemption theory: The death of Christ was only the demonstration of an obedience and love which conquers sin and death. An atonement in the true sense was out of the question.<sup>61</sup> This resulted in Hofmann receiving vitriolic attacks from other conservative Lutherans in both Europe and in America, from Friedrich Philippi to Franz Pieper.<sup>62</sup>

In drawing conclusions about the relationship between von Hofmann and Stoeckhardt, Richard Baepler concludes

There are many remarkable parallels between the theologies of von Hofmann and Stoeckhardt. Not all of the parallelism should be interpreted as the result of a direct influence of one upon the other. Obviously there are many factors which contribute to the final construction of one’s thinking. But especially in view of the close and admitted relationship between the two men it is not surprising to find this similarity, and not inaccurate to find many areas of direct influence of von Hofmann upon Stoeckhardt.<sup>63</sup>

Baepler overstates his case. In view of the fact that Hofmann eventually denied some major tenets of the Christian faith—namely the vicarious atonement of Christ and belonged to the extreme kenoticist camp<sup>64</sup>—one is hard pressed to promote the idea that a theologian of the stripe of George Stoeckhardt was influenced by Hofmann in “many areas.” What can be legitimately

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid: “Ich der Christ bin mir dem Theologen eigenster Stoff meiner Wissenschaft.” This quotation from Hofmann is found in his *Weissagung und Erfüllung im Alten und im Neuen Testament* (Part I, 10) and is quoted by Heick and Neve, 133.

<sup>61</sup> Hägglund, 369.

<sup>62</sup> Heick and Neve, 130; Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, vol. I (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), 6: “Furthermore, the results show that the theology which has moved away from Scripture into the domain of the ‘pious faith-consciousness’ is in a bad way. One of the deplorable products of this theology is its denial of the *satisfactio Christi vicaria*. Hofmann, for instance, who has been called the father of subjective theology (*Ichtheologie*) among the conservative Lutheran theologians of the nineteenth century, has very definitely denied the substitutional atonement of Christ.”

<sup>63</sup> Baepler, 46.

<sup>64</sup> Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, vol. II (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951), 292.

stated is that Stoeckhardt learned much of his exegetical outlook and procedures from Hofmann.

Baepler points out some of Hofmann's contributions to Stoeckhardt in his thesis conclusion:

Stoeckhardt clearly has developed a sense of history and of historical development which one would expect from a student of von Hofmann. There is in his approach a passion for letting Scripture speak precisely what it intends to speak and a consciousness of the high demands of such an execution, another major accent of von Hofmann. In addition we have indicated the central place of the Bible, and of faith in von Hofmann's theology, emphasis which Stoeckhardt shared and developed to a noteworthy extent [*sic*] [extent].<sup>65</sup>

Baepler concludes his thesis with no mention of Hofmann's denial of the vicarious atonement or his promotion of extreme kenoticism. He states that Stoeckhardt and Hofmann "seem to disagree on the nature of revelation and, perhaps, on the purpose of the Scriptures. They are most sharply divided on the place of the subject in theology. The Holy Spirit occupies a much less significant role in Stoeckhardt's thinking than it does in von Hofmann's."<sup>66</sup> In Baepler's final sentence in his thesis, he refers to both Stoeckhardt and Hofmann as "two great men who had so much in common."<sup>67</sup>

The most significant contribution of Richard Baepler's thesis is that it highlights Stoeckhardt's passion for "letting Scripture speak precisely what it intends to speak and a consciousness of the high demands of such an execution." While it must be acknowledged that Stoeckhardt was to some degree indebted to Hofmann for his exegetical method, this is also where the two parted company. While Hofmann may have allowed the Bible to speak what it intended to speak in regard to Scripture and faith, he did not follow through in allowing Scripture to speak on the *loci* of the vicarious atonement and the biblical kenoticism of Philippians 2. In contrast, Stoeckhardt's passion for "letting the Scriptures speak exactly what it intends to speak,"

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<sup>65</sup> Baepler, 46–47.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

drove him to embrace the vicarious atonement and the biblical Christology which Hofmann denied. It also had a direct bearing on how Stoeckhardt wrote about the doctrine of the ministry. As it will be seen in the succeeding chapters, this exegetical procedure of Stoeckhardt resulted in his coming to some fresh conclusions about the doctrine of the ministry as it was understood in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although George Stoeckhardt came to refute much of what his teacher Johann von Hofmann stood for, he consciously remained a debtor to Hofmann for the rest of his career.

### **Franco-Prussian War Ministry**

One of the most eloquent ways in which George Stoeckhardt refuted Hofmann's emphasis in theology on the theoretical instead of the practical is what he did starting in the summer of 1870. In June 1870, Stoeckhardt moved to Paris to serve as an assistant pastor to one of his longtime friends from his university and *Wingolf* days, Eugene Menezog.<sup>68</sup> Stoeckhardt hoped that this part-time position in the French capital would allow for "sufficient time to prepare for the faculty examination—that is, if everything would go as planned."<sup>69</sup>

But things did not go as planned. A month after Stoeckhardt began his parish ministry in Paris, war broke out between France and Prussia. France was invaded and within two months Paris was under siege by the Prussian army. Willkomm relates that during the summer of 1870, Stoeckhardt was twice arrested for being a German spy, but was soon released both times. He was permitted by the local governor to remain in Paris until September. His presence in Paris became untenable, however, after Emperor Napoleon III and a large part of his army was

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<sup>68</sup> Willkomm, 12.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

captured at the Battle of Sedan. Stoeckhardt soon left Paris and headed toward the relative safety of Belgium.<sup>70</sup>

George Stoeckhardt soon began to demonstrate that for him, in marked contrast to his teacher, Johann von Hofmann, theology was truly a *habitus practicus*. His pastoral heart compelled him to make his way to the Sedan battlefield when his train made a stop at the city of Bouillon. “There God kept him in that one place because of the crying need and he worked for three months as a military hospital pastor (*Lazarettprediger*).”<sup>71</sup>

Stoeckhardt personally describes his brief ministry in Paris and his ministrations on the Sedan battlefield in a booklet entitled *Das Schlachtfeld von Sedan: Erinnerungen aus dem Kriegsjahr*. These accounts were printed in two publications in Germany and eventually were published in the St. Louis German paper *Abendschule*.<sup>72</sup> Already in his brief Parisian ministry, the *seelsorgerisch* nature of the ministry proved to be a compelling influence on Stoeckhardt. In the first serial article, Stoeckhardt relates how he ministered in Paris to an elderly German woman (*eine alte Grossmutter aus Hessen*) who had a terrifying vision (*ein erschreckendes ‘Gesicht’*) of a large evacuation of Paris right before the start of the Franco-Prussian War, a premonition that proved to be true.<sup>73</sup> Shortly after the war began, the elderly woman died. Under trying conditions, Stoeckhardt escorted the body of the deceased to a large church cemetery

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 12, 22.

<sup>71</sup> Willkomm, *Georg Stöckhardt*, 22: “Da hielt ihn Gott durch die schreiende Not fest und er arbeitete drei Monate lang als Lazarettprediger.”

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> George Stoeckhardt, *Das Schlachtfeld von Sedan: Erinnerungen aus dem Kriegsjahr* (Zwickau: Johannes Herrmann, 1914), 4–6.

outside of Paris and conducted a Christian burial service for her as Paris was being readied for siege.<sup>74</sup>

Stoeckhardt continued to demonstrate that he had a pastoral and practical concept of the ministry when he and other German citizens were expelled from Paris as the Franco-Prussian War went on. Upon arriving on the Sedan battlefield, Stoeckhardt immediately began to minister to the wounded soldiers of the Prussian army, many of whom were in the process of being sent back to Germany by railroad. He describes in his reminiscences the account of how in his visitations, he came across an old acquaintance who had been his schoolmate back at the gymnasium. The severely wounded man was now an officer in the Prussian army and was dying. They both immediately recognized each other and Stoeckhardt was able to minister to the dying man: "I spoke with him now about repentance before God and about faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. He was open to it. Coming from Sedan I visited him a few days later one more time. There he asked for the comfort of the Gospel on his own accord. Soon afterwards he died."<sup>75</sup>

Stories like these fill the middle sections of Stoeckhardt's reminiscences of his service on the Sedan battlefield. He gives a vivid description of the bombardment of Sedan in northeastern France which led to the surrender of Emperor Napoleon and his army.<sup>76</sup> He described conditions on the battlefield as frightful (*Schreckenszustände*) and reported that there was no time to think about conducting divine services in the usual sense, since all the churches in the area were filled with wounded and dying men. Stoeckhardt concluded that the best way to serve God was to seek

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 5: "Während die Deutschen ihre Sachen packten und durch die Strassen nach den Bahnhöfen wanderten und fuhren, begleitete ich die Gestorbene in anderer Richtung zu den Toren von Paris hinaus und hielt ihr noch auf einem der Pariser Riesenkirchhöfe, mitten unter dem Geräusch und Getümmel der Maurer und Soldaten, die da draussen die Stadt zur Belagerung fertig machten, ein christliches Begräbnis."

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 15: "Ich redete nun mit ihm von der Busse zu Gott und von dem Glauben an den Herrn Jesum Christum. Er liess mit sich reden. Etliche Tage später habe ich ihn von Sedan aus noch einmal besucht. Da verlangte er aus freien Stücken nach dem Trost des Evangeliums. Bald darauf ist er gestorben."

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 20.



out and minister to the wounded and the dying.<sup>77</sup> That he did, tirelessly, until his ministrations were no longer needed. In one horrendous scene, Stoeckhardt describes being escorted by a one-armed artilleryman, who took him to a nearby chateau full of misery. Behind a locked door, after climbing through a window, Stoeckhardt came upon several halls full of about seventy wounded Bavarian and Prussian soldiers, lying there helpless, “swimming in their own blood and pus.”<sup>78</sup> With steady compassion, George Stoeckhardt made the most of this trying situation by pulling out a small New Testament from his pocket and proceeding to prepare many of these soldiers for their impending deaths.<sup>79</sup> He remarked that he was welcomed because he was a fellow countryman from Germany.<sup>80</sup> In another vignette, Stoeckhardt ministered to yet another Bavarian artilleryman that had had a leg amputated and was delirious from a serious head wound. After receiving wild cries and a blank stare for his address to him, Stoeckhardt finally prayed the Lord’s Prayer with the soldiers who were standing around the artilleryman’s bedside. During the prayer, the wounded soldier attempted to fold his hands. The following night he died.<sup>81</sup>

Stoeckhardt estimated that the total number of sick and wounded German soldiers in the military hospitals on the Sedan battlefield and in the surrounding towns was 16,000 men. Stoeckhardt reported in his reminiscences that he was not the only military hospital pastor serving the casualties of the Franco-Prussian War, that ten such pastors had their hands full to do

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 21: “Er begleitete mich dorthin, und da ich die Tür verschlossen fand, stieg ich durch ein Fenster in das Parterre ein und fand in mehreren grossen Sälen gegen 70 Verwundete, Bayern und Preussen, hilflos daliegen und, wörtlich zu verstehen, in ihrem Blut und Eiter schwimmen.”

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.: “Als deutschen Landesgenossen hiess man mich willkommen.”

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 27–28: “Dort lag ein bayrischer Artillerist, mit Stricken an das Bett gebunden. Nach Amputation des einen Beines und einer Operation im Kopft war er tobsüchtig geworden. Ratlos stand ich ihm gegenüber; wildes Geschrei und ein stierer Blick war die einzige Antwort auf meine Anrede. Ich betete schliesslich mit den umstehenden Soldaten über ihm ein Vaterunser. Er suchte dabei die Hände zu falten. In der folgenden Nacht wurde er von seinen Qualen erlöst.”

the work, and (as he freely admitted) that an orderly personal care of souls was impossible, that he stopped by and ministered to only the very sick and the dying.<sup>82</sup> What consistently comes out in all of the anecdotes and vignettes that Stoeckhardt shares in his reminiscences from the Franco-Prussian War is that he fully realized the import of his ministrations. Not yet thirty years old, George Stoeckhardt's earnestness as a *Seelsorger* is readily apparent in his service as a *Lazarettprediger*: "Seldom have I seen such joy in faces, as with these casualties, as I held before them the main part of the Gospel. Several were mortally ill and died soon after that."<sup>83</sup>

Stoeckhardt's last section of his Franco-Prussian War reminiscences describes the dedicated services of an African American doctor, a Dr. Davis, on the Sedan battlefield until his untimely death from smallpox at the age of twenty-eight. Dr. Davis assisted Stoeckhardt in his hospital ministry and Stoeckhardt himself ministered to this doctor on his deathbed.<sup>84</sup>

How did serving as a military hospital chaplain further conceptualize a doctrine of the ministry in Stoeckhardt? The experiences on the Sedan battlefield during the Franco-Prussia War constantly brought him face to face with dying men. Stoeckhardt's hospital ministrations solidified what would become the first *locus* of his doctrine of the ministry, that called ministers are servants of the Word. From reading Stoeckhardt's reminiscences from this period of his life, he repeatedly related how he came as a servant of the Word to the wounded and sick soldiers on the Sedan battlefield. His experience as a hospital chaplain made him realize that the ministry was an office in which one was called to deliver and apply the Word of God to blood-bought

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 44: "Selten habe ich solche Freude auf den Gesichtern gesehen, als bei diesen Kranken, wie ich ihnen die Hauptstücke des Evangeliums vorhielt. Etliche waren zum Tode krank und starben bald darauf."

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 45–56, e.g. 54: "Er sah im Tode aus, wie im Leben—sein dunkles Gesicht leuchtete, erst vor Freude im Dienste des Herrn an seinen Kranken und Elenden, jetzt im Tod, als sehe er etwas von der Freude und dem Sieg der Gerechten, die überwunden haben durch das Blut des Lammes."

souls. It was during this time that Stoeckhardt crystallized the idea that the ministry was serving as a *Seelsorger*, a caretaker of souls.

In summarizing the ministerial influences on the formative years of George Stoeckhardt, one can see several converging factors which shaped his understanding of the Lutheran ministry. He was part of a long line of Lutheran pastors dating back several generations and he had an influential pastor growing up with whom—for doctrinal reasons—he ultimately parted company. His plans for pursuing the ministry as a vocation developed in the German gymnasium and the university system, where the Christian student fraternity, the *Wingolf*, brought him companionship and fellowship. Influential teachers along many steps of the way further developed Stoeckhardt's ideas about the Bible and the ministry of the Word in a century, continent, and culture that was largely hostile to a conservative view of the Bible and Christianity. Once Stoeckhardt entered into adulthood, his views of the ministry were also influenced by some practical experiences, as a headmaster of a girls' school in his native Saxony, and as a military hospital chaplain who brought the Gospel to wounded and dying men in the wake of the Franco-Prussian War. This wartime experience solidified Stoeckhardt's belief that the primary objective of the ministry of the Word is connecting people who were dying, both spiritually and physically, with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

## CHAPTER 2

### STOECKHARDT'S EXEGETICAL METHODOLOGY

George Stoeckhardt will be remembered in American Lutheranism first and foremost as an exegete. Accolades concerning his exegetical skills are legion and range across a wide spectrum of theologians: “The greatest exegete in American Lutheranism” is how O. P. Kretzmann, president of Valparaiso University, described Stoeckhardt in 1946.<sup>1</sup> “The present writer has met no theologian who possessed such a knowledge of Scripture as did Stöckhardt, especially in the New Testament, of course in the original,” so wrote a former student of his, August Pieper, a longtime seminary professor for the Wisconsin Synod.<sup>2</sup> Pieper went on to describe how Stoeckhardt had the ability to quote any section of the New Testament by heart in Greek, along with the section’s parallel passages.<sup>3</sup> “In a certain sense Stoeckhardt was the sharpest theologian in our midst. In fact, because of his complete Gospel attitude no one put the edge to the Law sharper than he,” so wrote another former student, John Philipp Koehler, a seminary colleague of August Pieper.<sup>4</sup> “The first exegete of the Missouri Synod,” so wrote Leigh D. Jordahl, a Lutheran

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<sup>1</sup> O. P. Kretzmann, Foreword to George Stoeckhardt, “Law and Gospel According to Their Several Effects,” trans. Walter H. Bouman, Valparaiso University Pamphlet Series – no. 9 (Valparaiso, Indiana: Valparaiso University Association, 1946), 3.

<sup>2</sup> August Pieper, “Stöckhardt’s Significance in the Lutheran Church of America,” trans. James Langebartels, *Wauwatosa Theology*, vol. 3, ed. Curtis A. Jahn (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1997), 422.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> John Philipp Koehler, “Dr. G. Stoeckhardt,” *Theologische Quartalschrift* 10 (January 1913), 1; trans. Alex Hillmer, cited in *Faith-Life* 35 (September 1962): 8.

church historian, who served in more than one synod during his lifetime.<sup>5</sup> “Stoeckhardt was a scholar of the first rank. . . . gifted with a deep insight into the revealed truths of the Word, and he had a remarkable ability to preach and write in clear, simple language,” so memorialized Wilbert Gawrisch of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary on the occasion of the sesquicentennial of Stoeckhardt’s birth in 1992.<sup>6</sup> “He was a master of exegesis,” is the way church historian J. L. Neve of the former United Lutheran Church described Stoeckhardt in his American Lutheran history.<sup>7</sup> The accolades could be extended much further. Clearly George Stoeckhardt has left an indelible mark on the history and practice of biblical exegesis in American Lutheranism.

This chapter will address how George Stoeckhardt regarded the Bible and examine his exegetical methodology, which enabled him to arrive at his understanding of the doctrine of the ministry. Stoeckhardt’s understanding of Scripture and how he went about the exegetical task has been thoroughly studied. The most comprehensive study is the 1964 dissertation by William E. Goerss, “Some of the Hermeneutical Presuppositions and Part of the Exegetical Methodology of Georg Stoeckhardt.” William J. Hassold’s 1971 dissertation, “A Case Study in Exegetical Methodology: Georg Stoeckhardt and Johann Philip [*sic*] Koehler on Ephesians,” compares how Stoeckhardt and Koehler differed in their understanding of the interpretation of Ephesians by examining their underlying exegetical methodologies. Richard Baepler’s 1954 thesis, “The Hermeneutics of Johannes Christian Konrad von Hofmann with Special Reference to His Influence on Georg Stoeckhardt,” cited in the previous chapter, provides insight into how

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<sup>5</sup> Leigh D. Jordahl, “The Wauwatosia Theology, John Philip [*sic*], Koehler and the Theological Tradition of Midwestern Lutheranism, 1900–1930” (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 1964), 94.

<sup>6</sup> Wilbert R. Gawrisch, “150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Birth of Karl Georg Stoeckhardt,” *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 89 (Fall 1992): 303–04.

<sup>7</sup> J. L. Neve, *History of the Lutheran Church in America*, 3<sup>rd</sup> rev. ed., ed. Willard D. Allbeck (Burlington, Iowa: Lutheran Literary Board, 1934), 197.

Stoeckhardt developed his exegetical method from his most influential teacher, while avoiding Hofmann's theological pitfalls.

George Stoeckhardt's view of the Bible and his exegetical method can be thoroughly documented by his multifarious writings. His key writings on the doctrine of Scripture in *Lehre und Wehre* would include "Weissagung und Erfüllung" (Prophecy and Fulfillment),<sup>8</sup> "Vom Schriftstudium der Theologen" (On the Scriptural Study of Theology),<sup>9</sup> "Was sagt die Schrift von sich selbst?" (What Does Scripture Say about Itself?),<sup>10</sup> "Was lehrt St. Paulus 2 Tim. 3, 15–17. von der Inspiration?" (What Does St. Paul Teach in 2 Tim. 3:15–17 on Inspiration?),<sup>11</sup> "Angebliche Widersprüche in der Bibel" (Alleged Contradictions in the Bible),<sup>12</sup> "Zur Inspirationslehre und zum ersten Capitel der Bibel" (On the Doctrine of Inspiration and the First Chapter of the Bible),<sup>13</sup> and "Etliche typische Züge aus der Geschichte Israels" (Several Typical Features from the History of Israel).<sup>14</sup> There are also two popularly written articles on the Bible which Stoeckhardt wrote for *Der Lutheraner*.<sup>15</sup> George Stoeckhardt's view and understanding of the Holy Scriptures can be readily understood as orthodox Lutheran. His most complete set of

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<sup>8</sup> "Weissagung und Erfüllung," *Lehre und Wehre* 30 (February 1884): 42–9; (April 1884): 121–28; (February 1884): 161–70; (June 1884): 193–200; (July and August 1884): 252–9; (October 1884): 335–44; (November 1884): 375–80; 31 (July and August 1885): 220–32; (September 1885): 265–75.

<sup>9</sup> "Vom Schriftstudium der Theologen," *Lehre und Wehre* 31 (December 1885): 361–7.

<sup>10</sup> "Was sagt die Schrift von sich selbst?" *Lehre und Wehre* 32 (June 1886): 161–8; (July and August 1886): 205–15; (September 1886): 249–57; (October 1886): 281–8; (November 1886): 313–23; (December 1886): 345–55.

<sup>11</sup> "Was lehrt St. Paulus II Tim. 3, 15–17. von der Inspiration?" *Lehre und Wehre* 38 (October 1892): 289–94; (November 1892): 321–31; (December 1892): 353–65.

<sup>12</sup> "Angebliche Widersprüche in der Bibel," *Lehre und Wehre* 39 (February 1893): 33–41; (March 1893): 65–74; (April 1893): 97–106; (May 1893): 134–7; (July and August 1893): 198–206; (September 1893): 265–73.

<sup>13</sup> "Zur Inspirationslehre und zum ersten Capitel der Bibel," *Lehre und Wehre* 39 (November and December 1893): 325–33.

<sup>14</sup> "Etliche typische Züge aus der Geschichte Israels," *Lehre und Wehre* 45 (June 1899): 161–72; (October 1899): 289–98; (November 1899): 321–29; (December 1899): 353–61.

<sup>15</sup> "Von dem rechten Gebrauch des göttlichen Worts," *Der Lutheraner* 45 (January 1, 1889): 2–4; (January 29, 1889): 18–9; (February 12, 1889): 27–8; (February 26, 1889): 34–5; "Die Bibel das unfehlbare Gotteswort," *Der Lutheraner* 48 (August 16, 1892): 133–4; (August 30, 1892): 141–3; 19 (September 13, 1892): 157–9; (October 11, 1892): 166–7.

writings on his view of the Bible is the serial set of articles he authored in *Lehre und Wehre*, “Was sagt die Schrift von sich selbst?” These articles form Stoeckhardt’s main polemic against the modernists of his day who denied the verbal inspiration of the Bible. He presents his doctrine of Scripture in three major antitheses with numerous subordinate points in his lengthy journal article which was published serially over the space of a half a year in *Lehre und Wehre*.

Stoeckhardt’s first antithesis deals with the divine origin of the Scriptures:

As far as the essence and origin of Scripture is concerned, so deny the modernists, what the church has at all times believed, that the Scripture in the proper sense, is God’s Word, inspired by God. Instead they call Scripture a report by revelation, which was produced through the collaboration of God and the human authors together.<sup>16</sup>

Stoeckhardt then presents subordinate points to his antithesis, stating that both the Old and the New Testament testify to the fact that the Scriptures are the Word of God and offering numerous biblical references in support. His last point under Antithesis I is that the Bible testifies that “the Holy Spirit inspired not only the thoughts of the holy men of God, but also the words, that the entire Scripture and every individual part are inspired, and that accordingly not a tittle of Scripture is allowed to be broken or altered.”<sup>17</sup>

Stoeckhardt’s second antithesis in “What Does the Scripture Say About Itself?” directly addresses the assertions of the modernists who denied the inspiration of Scripture on the basis of the existing state and condition of the Bible:

The modernists, by way of proof for their viewpoint and against the church’s doctrine of inspiration, cite the present form and condition of Scripture. However the aforesaid nowhere contradicts what Scripture testifies about itself. That testimony

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<sup>16</sup> Stoeckhardt, “Was sagt die Schrift von sich selbst,” 161: “Was das Wesen und den Ursprung der Schrift betrifft, so leugnen die Neueren, was die Kirche von jeher geglaubt hat, dass die Schrift im eigentlichen Sinn Gottes Wort sei, von Gott eingegeben, und nennen die Schrift einen Bericht von der Offenbarung, bei dessen Herstellung Gott und die menschlichen Verfasser zusammengewirkt haben.”

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 162: “Die Schrift bezeugt, dass der Heilige Geist den heiligen Menschen Gottes nicht nur die Gedanken, sondern auch die Worte eingegeben hat, dass die ganze Schrift und alle einzelnen Theile Inspirirt sind, und dass daher kein Tüttel der Schrift gebrochen oder geändert werden darf.”

about itself is not set aside or diminished: (1) by the particular research and endeavors of the authors of individual books, Luke 1:1–4; (2) by the different individuality of the prophets and apostles, 1 Cor. 12:6; (3) by insignificant details, which find mention in Scripture, 2 Tim. 4:13; (4) by supposed occasional inaccuracies in natural history, chronology and history, Acts 7:16; (5) by the supposed contradictions contained in Scripture, Numbers 25:9 and 1 Cor. 10:8; (6) by the variant readings of the Hebrew and Greek texts.<sup>18</sup>

Stoeckhardt in this antithesis demonstrates his adherence to not only the verbal inspiration of the Bible but also its inerrancy, even in matters of nature and history. He regarded the variant readings in both the original Hebrew and Greek to be irrelevant in regard to the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture.

Stoeckhardt's final antithesis regarding his doctrine of Holy Scripture demonstrates that he regarded the Bible as the source and norm for all Christian doctrine, including the doctrine of the ministry. In this third antithesis, Stoeckhardt demonstrates an understanding of how the modernists of his day differentiated the written Word from the spoken Word and he refuted them accordingly:

In regard to the purpose and meaning of Scripture, the modernists take Scripture, the record of the history of salvation, as the canon, which the church needs in its entirety for its historical development, and they accept the oral sermon, contrary to what Scripture says, as the only means of grace, that leads to faith and is useful for going to heaven. In contrast, according to its own testimony, Scripture is the highest and ultimate authority in faith and matters of conscience, namely: (1) The source and norm of all saving doctrine: 2 Tim. 3:16; Romans 15:4; John 5:39; 1 Peter 1:10–11; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; Romans 16:25; Acts 17:2, 26:22, 18:24, 28, 17:11; (2) The basis of faith, rule and guiding principle of faith and life: 2 Tim. 3:15; John 20:30–31; 1 John 5:13; Romans 10:17; 2 Peter 1:19; Eph. 2:19–20; John 1:7; Isaiah 8:20; Psalm

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.: "Zum Beweis für ihre Anschauung und gegen das kirchliche Inspirationsdogma berufen sich die Neueren auf die vor Augen liegende Gestalt und Beschaffenheit der Schrift. Doch dieselbe widerspricht nirgends dem, was die Schrift von sich selbst bezeugt. Jenes Selbstzeugniss der Schrift wird nicht aufgehoben noch geschmälert: (1) weder durch die eigenen Forschungen und Bemühungen der Verfasser der einzelnen Bücher, Luc. 1, 1–4., (2) noch durch die verschiedene Individualität der Propheten und Apostel, 1 Cor. 12, 6., (3) noch durch 'gar zu unbedeutende Einzelheiten,' die in der Schrift Erwähnung finden, 2 Tim. 4, 13., (4) noch durch angebliche, in die Schrift eingestreute naturgeschichtliche, chronologische, historische Unrichtigkeiten, Apost. 7, 16., (5) noch durch vermeintliche, in der Schrift enthaltene Widersprüche, 4 Mos. 25, 9. und 1 Cor. 10, 8., (6) noch durch die verschiedenen Lesarten des hebräischen und griechischen Textes."



119:105; Gal. 6:16; (3) The guidebook and means to eternal bliss: John 5:39; 2 Tim. 3:15; John 20:30–31; Luke 10:25–26.<sup>19</sup>

Under this last section, Stoeckhardt specifically names some German theologians whom he regarded as having a spurious doctrine of Scripture, including Adolf von Harnack, his former mentor Johann von Hofmann, and Franz von Frank. After presenting their various arguments, Stoeckhardt concludes that the consequences of their arguments, and the ultimate consequence of this way of thinking, just like the papacy is doing, would then mean the complete abolishment of the written Word.<sup>20</sup>

One of the major accents of Stoeckhardt's doctrine of Scripture is his emphasis on the Bible being the inspired Word of God. In an 1892 *Lehre und Wehre* article, he provides a detailed exegesis of 2 Timothy 3:15–17 and again engages in a sharp polemic with the modernists of his day. He comes to the conclusion that the Greek word θεόπνευστος (God-breathed) is not just one attribute of the Bible, but it is the very foundation of everything the apostle Paul teaches and extols concerning Scripture: “Everything depends on this one word, θεόπνευστος, which itself is inspired by God. By it Scripture stands and falls, by it our faith and salvation stands and falls.”<sup>21</sup> He also asserts in this journal article that believers cannot and should not explain the “how” of verbal inspiration: “The θεόπνευστος is a unique,

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 163: “Was Zweck und Bedeutung der Schrift anlangt, so fassen die Neueren die Schrift, die Urkunde der Heilsgeschichte, als Canon, dessen die Kirche als Ganzes für ihre geschichtliche Entwicklung bedarf, und lassen allein die mündliche Predigt, im Unterschied von der Schrift, als Gnadenmittel gelten, das zum Glauben und Seligwerden nütze and nöthig ist. Nach ihrem eigenen Zeugniß ist die Schrift dagegen die oberste und letzte Autorität in Glaubens—und Gewissenssachen, und zwar: (1) Quelle und Norm aller heilsamen Lehre. 2 Tim. 3, 16. Röm. 15, 4. Joh. 5, 39. 1 Petr. 1, 10. 11. 1 Cor. 15, 3. 4. Röm. 16, 25. Apost. 17, 2. 26, 22. 18, 24. 28. 17, 11. (2) Grund des Glaubens, Regel und Richtschnur des Glaubens und Lebens. 2 Tim. 3, 15. Joh. 20, 30. 31. 1 Joh. 5, 13. Röm. 10, 17. 2 Pet. 1, 19. Eph. 2, 19. 20. Jos. 1, 7. Jes. 8, 20. Ps. 119, 105. Gal. 6, 16. (3) Wegweiser und Mittel zur Seligkeit. Joh. 5, 39. 2 Tim. 3, 15. Joh. 20, 30. 31. Luc. 10, 25. 26.”

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., *Lehre und Wehre* 32 (December 1886): 347: “Die Konsequenz des Systems fordert eigentlich, wie der Papismus, gänzliche Beseitigung des geschriebenen Worts.”

<sup>21</sup> George Stoeckhardt, “Was lehrt St. Paulus 2 Tim. 3:15–17. von der Inspiration?” *Lehre und Wehre* 38 (October 1892): 294: “An diesem Einen Wort, das selber von Gott eingegeben ist, θεόπνευστος ist Alles gelegen. Damit steht und fällt die Schrift, damit steht und fällt unser Glaube und unsere Seligkeit.”

incomprehensible and miraculous work of grace of the Spirit of God. We accept also this mystery of faith in simple faith and rejoice that we have a holy Scripture, inspired by God.”<sup>22</sup> Stoeckhardt wrote a similar article about how the doctrine of inspiration contributed to the church’s knowledge of creation and the beginning of time in another *Lehre und Wehre* article, “On the Doctrine of Inspiration and in the First Chapter of the Bible.” In this article, Stoeckhardt’s polemical tone is most strident against contemporary theologians who expounded a modern theory of inspiration. He comes to the conclusion that if even one single part of Scripture is taken out of the authenticated Scripture of God, then the entire foundation of Scripture is abrogated. Stoeckhardt concludes this article by labeling the modern theory of inspiration to be a trick of Satan which leads Christians away from the true Christ—the sure, prophetic Word—and the true, living God, and into doubt, unbelief and damnation.<sup>23</sup>

As referenced before, Stoeckhardt authored in 1892 a series of popularly written articles in *Der Lutheraner* which contain basically the same content of his earlier articles in *Lehre und Wehre* on the doctrine of Scripture. The general title in English for these articles is “The Bible, the infallible Word of God.” The articles are polemical in tone and thoroughly cover the doctrine of Scripture.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, Stoeckhardt’s commentaries provide a rich resource for how he

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., *Lehre und Wehre* 38 (November 1892): 331: “Schliesslich versteht sich von selbst, dass mit der rechten Deutung und Ausdeutung der schwerwiegenden Worte γραφή θεόπνευστος das eigentliche Wie? der Inspiration nicht erklärt werden kann und soll. Die Theopneustie ist eine einzigartige, unbegreifliche Gnaden—und Wunderwirkung des Geistes Gottes. Wir nehmen auch dieses Mysterium des Glaubens in einfältigem Glauben hin und freuen uns, dass wir eine von Gott eingegebene heilige Schrift haben.” (*Nota Bene*: The actual Greek word θεόπνευστος is substituted for the translation *Theopneustie* in this citation).

<sup>23</sup> George Stoeckhardt, “Zur Inspirationslehre und zum ersten Capitel der Bibel,” *Lehre und Wehre* 39 (November and December 1893): 333: “Und wird nicht, wenn man einzelne Theile der Schrift aus der von Gott beglaubigten Schrift herausnimmt, der ganze Schriftgrund umgestossen? Fürwahr, die moderne Theologie mit ihrer modernen Inspirationstheorie ist nichts Anderes, als ein Betrug Satans, durch welchen die Christen von dem festen, prophetischen Wort, von dem rechten Christus, von dem wahren, lebendigen Gott abgeführt und in Zweifel, Unglaube, Verdammnis hineingestürzt werden sollen.”

<sup>24</sup> George Stoeckhardt, “Die Bibel das unfehlbare Gotteswort,” *Der Lutheraner* 38 (August 16, 1892): 133–4; (August 30, 1892): 141–3; (September 13, 1892): 149–51; (September 27, 1892): 157–9; (October 1892): 166–7.

understood Holy Scripture and how he went about interpreting it. Central to his attitude toward Scripture and its proper interpretation is that the Bible is God's written revelation to sinful mankind: "The prophet Isaiah received at various times revelation from God, and then, either immediately or also later, wrote down what God gave him to see."<sup>25</sup> In the introduction to his Isaiah commentary, Stoeckhardt further described how he believed the Holy Spirit inspired Isaiah to write his lengthy book:

The Spirit of prophecy, who gave to the prophet this vision, also developed the form, the words and language. He accommodated himself to the natural aptitudes, characteristics, and the natural disposition (*indoles*) of the prophet, while at the same time enhanced and sanctified these natural gifts and abilities, and when the prophet preached and wrote, the Holy Spirit provided him with the proper and adequate expression, for the high, divine things, which he should make known to his people.<sup>26</sup>

Stoeckhardt's other full-length commentaries reveal similar views toward Scripture. In his lengthy Romans commentary, Stoeckhardt takes the position that Paul was one of the holy men of God who was "driven" by the Holy Spirit and that the doctrine of the verbal inspiration of the Bible means that every word in the Bible has been provided by God and does not allow for even small linguistic incorrectness.<sup>27</sup> In his commentary on 1 Peter 1:10–11, Stoeckhardt described the

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<sup>25</sup> George Stoeckhardt, *Commentar über den Propheten Jesaia* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1902), x: "Der Prophet Jesaia hat zu verschiedenen Zeiten von Gott Offenbarung empfangen und dann das, was Gott ihm zu schauen gab, entweder alsbald oder auch später niedergeschrieben."

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*: "Der Geist der Weissagung, welcher dem Propheten diese Gesichte zu schauen gegeben, hat auch die Form, Worte und Sprache gebildet. Er hat sich, wie sonst, an die natürliche Begabung und Eigenthümlichkeit, an die *indoles* des Propheten accommodirt, hat aber zugleich diese natürlichen Gaben und Fähigkeiten geheiligt, gesteigert und dem Propheten, da er predigte und schrieb, für die hohen, göttlichen Dinge, die er seinem Volk kundthun sollte, den rechten, adäquaten Ausdruck suggerirt."

<sup>27</sup> George Stoeckhardt, *Römer*, 192: "Gewiss, Paulus war auch ein Mensch, hat aber den Römerbrief geschrieben als einer der heiligen Menschen Gottes, die getrieben waren von dem Heiligen Geist. Doch nicht nur weil wir an der Verbalinspiration festhalten, auch vom Standpunkt der Grammatik aus wagen wir es, mit Fitzsche, Godet und Andern, Paulus gegen den scheinbar so geringen Vorwurf einer kleinen sprachlichen Incorrectheit in Schutz zu nehmen."

Old Testament prophets as men who saw their prophecies as a strange, objective “greatness,” a blessed mystery, which they themselves did not always understand.<sup>28</sup>

Stoeckhardt’s view of Scripture ultimately and not surprisingly culminates with a strong soteriological and pastoral emphasis. In his Romans commentary, his remarks on Romans 15:4 demonstrate that he regarded the ultimate purpose of the Bible to be one of bringing “perfected salvation” (*vollendetes Heil*) to mankind. In describing the endurance that the Scriptures provide, Stoeckhardt concludes:

This persistent labor of love, this daily splinter and thorn extraction, is also a pain, a toil, a burden, which we often would like to throw off us. But if we diligently look into Scripture, then we draw from the same, day to day new strength, comfort and exhortation, courage and confidence and while keeping always the blessed goal before our eyes, when we will rejoice with our brothers, free from all infirmities and burdens, in our salvation, our perfected salvation.<sup>29</sup>

In his commentary on 1 Peter 1:23, Stoeckhardt describes how he understood the Word of God works in a human heart, that it effects a change which brings a person into eternal life and causes a true spiritual regeneration, because it is living as God is:

God’s Word is, since it is the very Word of God, like God himself, is in itself living. The words of Christ are spirit and life, indeed they are life in the original and full sense of the Word. Since it is living, God’s Word is also of perpetual endurance. It always remains fresh and green, it is at all times, under all conditions powerful and effective. . . . And like the Word, in the same way, it is also the new life which has been formed through the Word. This spiritual seed has changed us in its manner. The

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<sup>28</sup> George Stoeckhardt, *Kommentar über den Ersten Brief Petri* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1912), 47: “Die Propheten haben in ihrer eigenen Weissagung geforscht, die als Produkt des Geistes Christi wie eine fremde, objektive Grösse ihnen gegenüberstand, wie ein seliges Mysterium, das sie selbst noch nicht völlig verstanden.”

<sup>29</sup> Stoeckhardt, *Römer*, 618: “Diese stete Liebesarbeit, dieses tägliche Splitter—und Dornenausziehen ist auch eine Mühsal, eine Last, die wir oft von uns abschütteln möchten. Wenn wir aber fleissig in die Schrift hineinsehen, dann schöpfen wir aus derselben von Tag zu Tag neue Kraft, Trost und Zuspruch, Muth und Zuversicht und behalten unverrückt das selige Ziel vor Augen, da wir dann mit unsern Brüdern frei von allen Gebrechen und Beschwerden unsers Heils, des vollendetes Heils uns freuen werden.”

life of regeneration is a real, divine and therefore imperishable life. The life of regeneration eventually flows into eternal life.<sup>30</sup>

In summary, George Stoeckhardt's view of Scripture is readily recognizable as confessional and orthodox Lutheran. Through his periodical articles and his commentaries, he consistently demonstrated a high view of the Bible and regarded it as the inspired, inerrant and infallible Word of God. This fact also is thoroughly displayed in his pastoral ministrations and in his homiletics.

Stoeckhardt's high regard for the Bible led him to have a very definite hermeneutic and exegetical method. Central to comprehending Stoeckhardt's exegetical methodology—and how he used it to develop his understanding of the ministry—is his insistence that one cannot understand individual doctrines in the Bible unless one is acquainted with the totality of Scripture. This methodology was championed by Johann von Hofmann, who taught Stoeckhardt for a time at Erlangen. In his 2004 monograph, Matthew Becker observes this about Hofmann's exegetical method: "For Hofmann one cannot properly understand the particular and the individual in the Bible unless one first has rough understanding of the totality or the whole of the Bible."<sup>31</sup> In this regard, Becker convincingly makes his case that articulating an understanding of world or universal history (*Weltgeschichte*) by relating the individual to the whole was a trademark of nineteenth-century German idealism. Important to note in Hofmann's own formative years is his time spent as an auditor of the seminars of the renowned historian Leopold

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<sup>30</sup> Stoeckhardt, 1 *Petri*, 72: "Gottes Wort ist, weil es eben das Wort Gottes ist, wie Gott selbst, in sich selbst lebendig. Die Worte Christi sind Geist und Leben, und zwar Leben im ursprünglichen und vollen Sinn des Worts. Weil lebendig, ist Gottes Wort auch von bleibender Dauer. Es bleibt immer frisch und grün, ist zu allen Zeiten, unter allen Verhältnissen kräftig und wirksam. . . . Und wie das Wort, so ist auch das durch das Wort gewirkte neue Leben. Dieser geistliche Same hat uns in seine Art verwandelt. Das Leben der Wiedergeburt ist wahrhaftiges, göttliches und darum unvergängliches Leben. Das Leben der Wiedergeburt fließt schliesslich aus in das ewige Leben."

<sup>31</sup> Matthew L. Becker, *The Self-Giving God and Salvation History: The Trinitarian Theology of Johannes von Hofmann*, (New York: T & T International, 2004), 68.

von Ranke at the University of Berlin. Becker provides this quotation of von Ranke's influence on the nineteenth century: "In Ranke all the forces of the nineteenth century come alive."<sup>32</sup>

Hofmann's concern for relating the individual to the whole can be traced back to one of von Ranke's axioms: "Detail never seems better than when it is seen in relation to the whole."<sup>33</sup> What von Ranke passed down to von Hofmann eventually was what Hofmann passed down to Stoeckhardt.

Another important influence on Stoeckhardt is that of another Hofmann, Carl Gottlob Hofmann, who authored a hermeneutics text in 1754, *Institutiones Theologiae Exegeticae* (*Institutes of Exegetical Theology*). This book, written entirely in Latin, was reprinted by the Missouri Synod for use at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis in 1876, two years before Stoeckhardt came to America. Stoeckhardt used Carl Hofmann's textbook on hermeneutics and exegesis in his seminary lectures. This information is revealed in William Hassold's 1971 dissertation in footnote #59:

The textbook which Stoeckhardt used for his classes in biblical hermeneutics was that by Carl Gottlob Hofmann, *Institutiones Theologicae exegeticae in usum academicarum praelectionem adornata* (St. Louis: Officia Synodi Missouriensis Lutheranae, 1876), which presents a systematic survey of the principles of biblical hermeneutics from a confessional Lutheran viewpoint.<sup>34</sup>

Carl Hofmann's text has never been completely translated into English, but there are both German and English seminary notes extant which are largely based on the Hofmann text.<sup>35</sup> It

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<sup>32</sup> Wilhelm Dilthey, "Erinnerungen an deutsche Geschichtsschreiber," in *Vom Aufgang des geschichtlichen Bewusstseins Jugendaufsätze und Erinnerungen: Gesammelte Schriften*, 12 vols., ed. Erich Weniger (Leipzig: Teubner, 1914–1958), 9: 216; quoted in Becker, 92.

<sup>33</sup> Leopold von Ranke, *Zur eigenen Lebensgeschichte* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1890), 164; quoted in Becker, 93.

<sup>34</sup> William J. Hassold, "A Case Study in Exegetical Methodology: George Stoeckhardt and Johann Philip [*sic*] Koehler on Ephesians" (Th.D. diss., Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1971), 15.

<sup>35</sup> cf. Ludwig E. Fuerbringer, *Theologische Hermeneutik: Leitfaden für Vorlesungen* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1912); *Theological Hermeneutics: An Outline for the Classroom* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1924); Frederick S. Wenger, ed., *Biblical Hermeneutics* (Springfield, Illinois: Concordia

appears that this textbook on exegetical theology was ground zero for much of the confessional Lutheran hermeneutical principles which were taught to pastors of the former Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference.

What were George Stoeckhardt's chief hermeneutical principles, which he employed to formulate his doctrine of the ministry? His chief hermeneutical principle was to take the biblical text literally, unless there was a compelling reason not to take it literally: "One must take the text as it reads."<sup>36</sup> This position is one that Stoeckhardt consistently follows throughout his exegetical work. In his Isaiah commentary, he further explains his position regarding the portions of Scripture that use figurative language:

No reasonable person can deny that in Scripture, and especially in the prophets, one finds much figurative speech. This figurative language is either so clear and evident, that the communicating is obvious to every impartial reader. Or among the figurative expressions are found also statements, which themselves describe this same case in sparse and abstract words.<sup>37</sup>

In addition, William Goerss in his dissertation points out that "Stoeckhardt can claim to interpret the words of Scripture in their simple sense, holding to the Word as it stands and the obvious meaning of the words as they read."<sup>38</sup> In commenting on Isaiah 9:5–6, Stoeckhardt states unequivocally: "We stay with the simple word and word sense."

Besides taking the biblical text "as it is," Stoeckhardt also makes it clear in his writings that he believed that the best interpreter of Scripture is Scripture itself and its author, the Holy Spirit.

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Seminary Print Shop, 1967). Wengert also reports that *Institutiones Theologicae Exegeticae* was used as a textbook at the St. Louis seminary, 56; cf. George O. Lillegard, ed., *Biblical Hermeneutics or Principles of Bible Hermeneutics*, (Mankato, Minnesota, 1957).

<sup>36</sup> Stoeckhardt, *Jesaia*, 22: "Man muss den Text nehmen, wie er lautet."

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.: "Kein vernünftiger Mensch kann leugnen, dass sich in der Schrift, und gerade bei den Propheten viel bildliche Rede findet. Diese Bildersprache ist entweder so klar und deutlich, dass der rechte Sinn jedem unbefangenen Leser von selbst in die Augen springt. Oder es finden sich unter den bildlichen Ausdrücken auch Aussagen, welche dieselbe Sache mit dürren, eigentlichen Worten beschreiben."

<sup>38</sup> Goerss, 45; Stoeckhardt, *Jesaia*, 121: "Wir bleiben einfältig bei dem Wort und Wortsinn."

He consistently maintains that the Bible itself is the sole source of its interpretation principles. He explains this position at length in his introduction to his New Testament history text. In explaining his various applications to the readers of the New Testament of his day (the beginning of the twentieth century), Stoeckhardt reiterates that his applications are all “in keeping with the established canon of interpretation of the Scriptures themselves, Romans 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:6; 2 Tim. 3:16.”<sup>39</sup>

Goerss points out that three passages and an allusion to a fourth passage form the basis of Stoeckhardt’s understanding of the principles the Bible itself supplies for its own interpretation. In reference to the 1 Corinthians 10:6 passage, however, Goerss is misled by a typographical error in Stoeckhardt’s 1906 New Testament history. This publication lists 1 Corinthians 10:16 as one of the passages which form the basis of Stoeckhardt’s canon of interpretation, whereas his 1896 Old Testament history lists 1 Corinthians 10:6 as the correct passage. Undoubtedly, the context of Stoeckhardt’s foreword indicates that 1 Corinthians 10:6 is the passage which he meant. Romans 15:4 reads: “For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.” The second passage that Stoeckhardt cites is 1 Corinthians 10:6: “Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.” The third passage referred to in Stoeckhardt’s New Testament history is 2 Tim. 3:16: “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.” The passage which Stoeckhardt alludes to and quotes without providing the Bible reference is Hebrews 13:8: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.”

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<sup>39</sup> George Stoeckhardt, *Die biblische Geschichte des Neuen Testaments* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1906), vii: “Schliesslich sei bemerkt, dass die in die vorliegende Geschichtsdarstellung eingeflochtene Anwendung auf das gegenwärtige Christengeschlecht, auf die gegenwärtigen Umstände und Verhältnisse kein *accidens* ist, sondern nur dem von der Schrift selbst aufgestellten Canon der Auslegung, Röm. 15, 4. 1 Cor. 10, 16. [*sic*] 2 Tim. 3, 16., angemessen.”



These passages provide another interesting window to Stoeckhardt's own hermeneutics. From the Romans passage, Stoeckhardt sees the Old Testament Scriptures as a record of God's revelation for people of every age, holding out hope through its promises. In the 1 Corinthians passage, he understands the apostle Paul explaining how some Old Testament events happened to serve as examples and warnings for New Testament believers. Regarding the 2 Timothy 3:16 passage, Stoeckhardt interprets the expression, *πᾶσα γραφή θεόπνευστος*, as the starting point for the doctrine of Scripture and for interpreting the Bible. "The expression designates the origin and also the essence of Scripture. It is, as Lutheran dogmaticians say, the *forma interna* of Scripture that is, *scriptura divinitus inspirata*."<sup>40</sup> The fact that the Scriptures were of divine origin and were given to sinful mankind through the direct efforts of the Holy Spirit animated all of Stoeckhardt's hermeneutics. If one is to engage in the exegetical task of interpreting the Scriptures, the interpretation must be consistent with the use intended by the Holy Spirit. "This use is to build people up in the faith through the lessons of Holy Scripture and the fellowship of the Sacraments. Whoever does not interpret the Scripture in keeping with these propositions is controverting the expressed intention of the Holy Ghost."<sup>41</sup>

Stoeckhardt's quoting of Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" in regard to his hermeneutical principles dare not be overlooked. George Stoeckhardt regarded Jesus Christ as the center of the Holy Scriptures and the key to its interpretation. William Goerss begins the third chapter of his dissertation on Stoeckhardt's exegetical principles with this sentence: "The purpose of all exegesis is to present the clear and simple truth of God's

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<sup>40</sup> Stoeckhardt, "Was lehrt St. Paulus 2 Tim. 3, 15–17. von der Inspiration?" *Lehre und Wehre* 38 (November 1892): 321: "Der vom Heiligen Geist selbst geprägte Ausdruck *γραφή θεόπνευστος* ist grundlegend für die Lehre von der heiligen Schrift. Er kennzeichnet den Ursprung und damit auch das Wesen der Schrift. Es ist dies, wie die lutherischen Dogmatiker sagen, die *forma interna* der Schrift, dass sie *scriptura divinitus inspirata* ist."

<sup>41</sup> Goerss, 47.

grace in Christ.”<sup>42</sup> The Christo-centricity of the Scriptures is so consistently followed in Stoeckhardt’s hermeneutics that only a small sampling of the possible examples can be cited in his writings.

Beginning in the Old Testament, Stoeckhardt sees Christ and his saving work as the chief theme and message of the Bible. In his two major writings on Old Testament prophecy, “Weissaung und Erfüllung” (Prophecy and Fulfillment) and “Christus in der alttestamentlichen Weissagung” (Christ in Old Testament Prophecy), he consistently demonstrates that the promise of the Messiah was the focal point of the Old Testament and found its fulfillment in the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ in the New Testament:

Christ is the sum total of prophecy. It pleased the Holy Spirit already in the prophecy of the prophets, to portray before our eyes, Christ, the Christ which we confess in the Second Article. The double witness of Christ, which is the concurrence of prophecy and fulfillment, makes our faith all the more joyous and certain. However the one witness also complements the other. The Holy Spirit has in prophecy a special way to speak of Christ. It is one Christ, one truth in the Old and New Testament.<sup>43</sup>

Stoeckhardt’s commentaries also reveal that he regarded the centrality of Christ as his compelling, major hermeneutical key. In commenting on the book of Isaiah, he regarded the prophet Isaiah as a prototype apostle and evangelist:

Above all, he prophesies about messianic salvation. Christ and his salvation, Christ and his redemption, this is the chief content of his prophecy. He describes with clear,

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Stoeckhardt, “Christus in der alttestamentlichen Weissagung,” *Lehre und Wehre* 36 (July 1890): 210: “Christus ist die Summa der Weissagung. Es hat dem Heiligen Geist gefallen, schon in der Weissagung der Propheten Christum, den Christus, welchen wir im zweiten Artikel bekennen, uns vor Augen zu malen. Das doppelte Zeugnis von Christo, die Uebereinstimmung von Weissagung und Erfüllung, macht uns unseres Glaubens nur um so froher und gewisser. Aber das eine Zeugnis erganzte auch das andere. Der Heilige Geist hat in der Weissagung eine besondere Weise, von Christo zu reden. Es ist Ein Christus, Eine Wahrheit im Alten und Neuen Testament.”; George Stoeckhardt, *Christ in Old Testament Prophecy*, trans. Erwin W. Koehlinger (Fort Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 1984).

meaningful words the God-man person of Christ, his humiliation and exaltation, his suffering, death and resurrection.<sup>44</sup>

In his commentary on selected Psalms and in his 1 Peter commentary, Stoeckhardt uses the same German figure of speech, “Kern und Stern,” (heart and star) to describe the preeminent place of Christ in the Bible. In his commentary, Stoeckhardt calls Christ “indeed the heart and star of the Old Testament Scripture and also of the Psalms.”<sup>45</sup> In his 1 Peter commentary, he writes that Christ is the “heart and star of prophecy,” “[he is] the Lord Jehovah, who comes to his people and makes his dwelling with them.”<sup>46</sup>

Closely associated with Stoeckhardt’s hermeneutical principle of Christ being the center of both the Old and New Testaments is his understanding that there is unity and continuity between the testaments. Not only is this thoroughly demonstrated by his writings on the Bible’s messianic prophecies, but especially in his comments on Romans 15:4: “For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”

Stoeckhardt sees both the Old and New Testaments as contributing to the instruction of God’s people, regardless of where and when they lived: “For everything that was written before in the Scriptures of the old covenant, is written for our instruction, those living in the present.”<sup>47</sup>

When Moses and the prophets wrote their books, not only did they write for their own

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<sup>44</sup> Stoeckhardt, *Jesaja*, viii: “Doch vor Allem weissagt er von dem messianischen Heil. Christus und sein Heil, Christus und seine Erlösung, das ist der vornehmste Inhalt seiner Prophetie. Er beschreibt mit klaren, deutlichen Worten die gottmenschliche Person Christi, seine Erniedrigung und Erhöhung, sein Leiden, Sterben, Auferstehen.”

<sup>45</sup> George Stoeckhardt, *Ausgewählte Psalmen* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1915), 19: “Christus ist ja Kern und Stern auch der alttestamentlichen Schrift und so auch des Psalters.”

<sup>46</sup> Stoeckhardt, *1 Petri*, 45: “Kern und Stern der Weissagung ist Christus, Christus einerseits des Weibes Same, Abrahams Same, Davids Sohn, andererseits der Herr Jehovah, der zu seinem Volk kommen und bei ihm Wohnung machen will.”

<sup>47</sup> Stoeckhardt, *Römer*, 616: “Alles, was zuvor, in der Schrift des Alten Bundes, geschrieben ist, das ist zu unserer, der Jetztlebenden, Belehrung geschrieben.”

contemporaries, serving their own people, they also wrote for the people of the new covenant. God the Holy Spirit, the first and proper author of Scripture, also intended the Old Testament for God's people today. Scripture, and that holds true also of the New Testament Scriptures, is the master teacher of the church of all time.<sup>48</sup> Earlier in his Romans commentary, Stoeckhardt explains that the difference in the proclamation of the Gospel in the testaments was one of chronology and not essential content: "Accordingly, overall the distinction between the Old and New Testament is this: The Old Testament pious believed in the future Christ, the New Testament pious believe in the Christ who has now come and appeared in the flesh."<sup>49</sup> Goerss includes several other examples of Stoeckhardt's emphasis on Christ being the center of the Scriptures, making this summary statement "In Stoeckhardt's opinion, both the Old and New Testament proclaim clearly the Gospel of God in Jesus Christ."<sup>50</sup>

Stoeckhardt also wrote a *Lehre und Wehre* article on biblical prophecy and fulfillment. He reiterated his belief in both inspiration and revelation and testified that he did not believe that the inspiration of the Scriptures was merely a gracious assistance of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit rather inspired the prophets to not only write the exact words, but inspired the men to write in figurative, future language so that New Testament matters were understandable and vivid to God's Old Testament people.<sup>51</sup> Most important to Stoeckhardt in regard to prophecy is the concept of a singular meaning and fulfillment. Regarding this position, Stoeckhardt provides a

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.: "Moses und die Propheten haben mit dem, was sie geschrieben haben, nicht nur ihren Zeitgenossen, ihrem Volk gedient, sondern die Heilige Geist, der oberste und eigentliche Autor der Schrift, hat es damit auch auf uns, die Kinder des Neuen Bundes, abgesehen. Die Schrift, und das gilt dann auch von der neutestamentlichen Schrift, ist die Lehrmeistererin der Kirche aller Zeiten."

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 213: "Das entspricht überhaupt dem Unterschied zwischen dem Alten und Neuen Testament: die alttestamentlichen Frommen glaubten an den zukünftigen Christus, die neutestamentlichen glauben an den Christus, der nun gekommen und im Fleisch erschienen ist."

<sup>50</sup> Goerss, 51.

<sup>51</sup> Stoeckhardt, "Weissagung und Erfüllung," *Lehre und Wehre* 30 (February 1884): 48–49.

quote from Martin Luther, indicating that he and Luther both believed “that every single prophecy has a simple, honest and solid meaning, and therefore has only one fulfillment.”<sup>52</sup>

Stoeckhardt thus concludes that when there is an Old Testament prophecy quoted in the New Testament, the New Testament itself makes clear what the inherent single meaning is whenever it refers back to the Old Testament prophecy.<sup>53</sup>

Stoeckhardt’s insistence on the hermeneutical principle that a text has one and just one intended sense led him to reject the typical exposition school of biblical prophecy. He instead definitely belonged to the rectilinear school of interpretation in regard to messianic prophecy. Goerss in his dissertation makes the point that while Stoeckhardt certainly believed in biblical types and anti-types and the use of figurative language, he denied the typological understanding of messianic prophecies in the sense in which Johann von Hofmann, C. F. Keil, Heinrich Meyer, and Franz Delitzsch used it. Stoeckhardt does not appear to espouse the belief that an Old Testament prophecy could have multiple fulfillments, arguing that such a position would violate the principle that a text has one and only one intended sense. Various studies concerning the interpretation of Old Testament prophecies in the history of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod consistently cite George Stoeckhardt as a leading example of an exegete who espoused the position that all messianic prophecies in the Bible are rectilinear and who consistently rejected the typical school of interpretation.<sup>54</sup>

George Stoeckhardt’s doctrine of Scripture and his hermeneutical principles can be legitimately described as thoroughly Lutheran. A complete study of his life reveals that he never

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.: “Wir glauben, dass die inspirirte Schrift und auch die Weissagung, trotz aller Tropen, klar, deutlich und durchsichtig ist und dass daher auch jede einzelne Weissagung, wie Luther sagt, 'einen einfältigen, rechtschaffenen und gewissen Verstand' und darum auch nur eine Erfüllung hat.”

<sup>53</sup> Goerss, 55.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 53; cf. William J. Hassold, “Rectilinear or Typological Interpretation of Messianic Prophecy?” *Concordia Theological Monthly* 38 (March 1967): 155–67.

wanted to be anything but a confessional Lutheran. Since Stoeckhardt was the first prominent exegete in the history of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, how exactly did he implement his view of Scripture and his hermeneutics by doing exegesis? What precisely was his exegetical method?

Stoeckhardt's exegetical method, at least while a professor of Old and New Testament exegesis at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, can be understood with the paradigm of having had three periods, beginning (1878–1887), middle (1887–1900) and late (1901–1913). His beginning period coincides with the Election Controversy that embroiled the Synodical Conference well into the 1880s and ends with the death of Walther. The middle period is when Stoeckhardt and the other St. Louis faculty members took up the mantle to preserve the doctrinal heritage bestowed to them by Walther and the other synodical founders. During these years Stoeckhardt served numerous times as a convention essayist. After Stoeckhardt's hospitalization at the turn of the century for his nervous disorder, he entered his final period of exegesis, 1901–1913, when he wrote his biblical commentaries until his death in early 1913.

A brief excursus on the *Gnadenwahlstreit*, the Election Controversy, is in order. This was a theological controversy that racked the nascent Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America shortly after its founding in 1872. The controversy raged between the years 1879–1884 and its beginning coincided with Stoeckhardt's arrival in America. This "election by grace" controversy can be distilled into what is the correct biblical answer to these two questions: "Did God's grace before time elect a person to come to faith in time through the means of grace?" or "Is a person's faith in time the cause of his/her election before time?" The Latin expression *intuitu fidei* "in view of faith," came to describe the belief of those in the Ohio

Synod and some in the Norwegian Synod who maintained that one's faith was the cause of one's election.

Led by C. F. W. Walther, the Missouri Synod championed the position that a person was elected to faith. The Wisconsin Synod sided with the Missouri Synod on this position, while Prof. F. A. Schmidt of the Norwegian Synod and several Ohio Synod pastors served as the chief defenders of the *intuitu fidei* position. The end result of this bitter controversy was that there was a major schism within the Synodical Conference. Both the Norwegian and Ohio Synods withdrew from its membership. Through both periodical articles and essays, George Stoeckhardt served as the Missouri Synod's chief exegete during the controversy and performed yeoman work in explaining the biblical doctrine of election by grace, implemented in time through the means of grace.

In 1885, after the Election Controversy had died down somewhat, Stoeckhardt published his article regarding the study of theology, "Vom Schriftstudium der Theologen" (On the Scriptural Study of Theology). In the opening paragraph, he reminds his readers: "Bible reading, the study of Scripture is also a special and sacred duty precisely of the preacher and theologian."<sup>55</sup> He then confesses that one of the positive results of the tumultuous Election Controversy was a renewed interest in serious Bible study:

Especially in these days God has pointed us toward Scripture, as with an outstretched finger. The doctrinal strife of the last years has directed us once more into Scripture. We have become aware anew of the proper principle of Lutheran theology, and that is the scriptural principle. That is the position, which we take and hold onto against old and new adversaries: We let the Word remain, as it reads, and we renounce on principle all rational harmonizing.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Stoeckhardt, "Vom Schriftstudium der Theologen," 361: "Bibellesen, Schriftstudium ist also eine besondere und heilige Pflicht gerade der Prediger, Theologen."

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.: "Gerade in diesen Tagen hat uns Gott wie mit ausgerecktem Finger auf die Schrift hingewiesen. Der Lehrstreit der letzten Jahre hat uns von Neuem in die Schrift geführt. Wir sind uns des eigentlichen Principis lutherischer Theologie neu bewusst geworden, und das ist das Schriftprincip. Das ist die Position, die wir alten und

Stoeckhardt then attempts to prick the consciences of the readers of *Lehre und Wehre* by asking this searching question about the priority that the earnest study of Scripture receives in the economy of time for a pastor: “Which preacher has not reproached himself, that he, because of other unimportant things, has neglected Scripture and the study of Scripture in the press of official business, and has not given proper justice to the Word, which God spoke?”<sup>57</sup> He then proceeds in this journal article to review how and why a theologian should study Scripture. His first point is to quote from the apostle Paul’s first letter to Timothy, 1 Timothy 4:13: “Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.” As the church father Augustine was urged to do, according to Stoeckhardt, a pastor is to “take up and read” the Word of God. Stoeckhardt is quick to point out that it is not enough for a pastor to be the “house father” and edify himself only by the morning and evening devotions with his family. Reflecting on his own practice to take his New Testament with him wherever he went on trip, Stoeckhardt declares that if a Roman Catholic priest can take his breviary on a trip, then an evangelical preacher can take his New Testament on a trip as well.<sup>58</sup> His first major point in teaching the why and how of the study of Scripture is that “every theologian should be thoroughly acquainted with the Scriptures and overall be at home with them.”<sup>59</sup>

Stoeckhardt’s second exhortation to pastors in “On the Scriptural Study of Theology” is that a theologian should meditate on Scripture day and night. A pastor should not spin threads of thought from his own wisdom, which will only produce theological hay, straw and stubble.

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neuen Widersachern gegenüber einnehmen und festhalten: Wir lassen die Worte der Schrift stehen, wie sie lauten, und verzichten grundsätzlich auf alles vernunftgemässe Zusammenreimen.”

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 362: “Welcher Prediger hätte sich selbst etwa noch nicht den Vorwurf gemacht, dass er über anderen unwichtigeren Dingen, im Gedränge der Amtsgeschäfte, die Schrift und das Schriftstudium vernachlässigt und dem Wort, das Gott geredet, nicht das gebührende Recht gegeben habe?”

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.: “Ein jeder Theologe sollte in der Schrift bewandert und überall heimisch sein.”



Instead one takes out godly thoughts, which God himself lays down in the Scriptures, from Scripture and in Scripture one establishes his own thoughts. When this is done, then one is able to perceive correctly the sense and meaning of the Holy Spirit, so one certainly has to give attention to the connected thoughts. One easily gets into distorted ways, when anyone rashly, as it appears, takes out intended thoughts from Scripture and then the interpreter himself disengages from Scripture, following up with his own thoughts. To the inner cohesiveness of Scripture belongs, strictly speaking, all of Scripture. Every doctrine of the divine Word has its own particular seat, and appears only then in the proper light, when one places and contemplates their particular place of discovery. Error originates most often, therefore, when one introduces positions of Scripture which do not belong to the subject.<sup>60</sup> Stoeckhardt continues by reiterating the principles that Scripture must be interpreted with other Scripture:

So one must compare Scripture with Scripture, apostles with apostles, the apostles with the prophets. And continuous reading, continuous contemplation of Scripture, namely the complete Holy Scriptures, leads here to the earliest and best success. Our knowledge and perception is and remains mere patchwork. So no theologian should multiply the gaps excessively, in that he neglects parts of books, or whole books of the Scriptures.<sup>61</sup>

Stoeckhardt's last word regarding the importance of meditation is meant to serve as a warning to pastors and theologians: "Diligent, continuous meditation brings also *tentatio* (temptation) with it, for the devil is in all respects obstructive to the Word, and propels one into prayer. And so scriptural study makes proper theologians."<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 362–363.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 363: "So muss man Schrift mit Schrift vergleichen, die Apostel mit Aposteln, die Apostel mit den Propheten vergleichen. Und anhaltendes Lesen, anhaltende Betrachtung der Schrift, und zwar sämtlicher heiliger Schriften, führt hier am ehesten und besten zum Ziele. Unser Wissen und Erkennen ist und bleibt ohnehin Stückwerk. So sollte kein Theologe die Lücken über Gebühr vermehren, indem er ganze Theile, ganze Bücher der Schrift unbeachtet liegen lässt."

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.: "Fleissige, anhaltende Meditation bringt auch Tentation mit sich, denn der Teufel ist allenthalben dem Wort hinderlich, und treibt also in's Gebet hinein. Und so macht das Schriftstudium rechte Theologen."

Stoeckhardt saw the importance of using the right tools to draw out the meaning of the sacred text. He also stressed to his readers the importance of understanding the grammar and syntax in the task of biblical exegesis:

It should never be forgotten, that the divine thoughts are contained and concealed now in the Word, which lies written before our eyes, like the sword in the sheath. On that account proper study of Scripture, proper meditation of manifold divine truth, is not possible, without turning one's attention also to the individual words, sentences and sentence structure. Whoever is aware that the Holy Spirit himself has taught, placed and arranged these, the words, will consider it worth the trouble to be continuously occupied with vocables, lexicon and grammar. Whoever has not learned to read the Bible in the original text, has sufficient means of help, to investigate the precise literal sense of the word.<sup>63</sup>

Stoeckhardt concludes his article on the importance of the continuous study of the Scriptures by assuring his readers that when a pastor continuously draws from the source and norm of theology, the Scriptures, then and only then will the doctrine of Scripture be a living thing to him. He then will be a man who is instructed, capable and qualified to teach others. The remaining portion of the article deals with how a pastor puts the continuous study of Scripture into practical use in his parish ministry and calls for the pastor to be a daily reader and meditator of Scripture, calling the study of Scripture “inseminating” for the parish ministry.<sup>64</sup>

George Stoeckhardt taught at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis for nearly thirty-five years. At the time the teaching method at Concordia was almost entirely limited to lectures, often before large classes. Several years after his death, some of Stoeckhardt's classroom lectures on various biblical books began to be translated into English by a handful of his former students who were

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 363–364: “Es darf aber nimmer vergessen werden, dass die göttlichen Gedanken eben in dem Wort, das geschrieben vor unseren Augen liegt, so wie das Schwert in der Scheide, enthalten und verborgen sind. Drum ist rechtes Schriftstudium, rechte Betrachtung der mannigfaltigen göttlichen Weisheit nicht möglich, ohne dass man auch den einzelnen Worten, Sätzen, dem Satzbau seine Aufmerksamkeit zuwendet. Wer sich allezeit dessen bewusst ist, dass der Heilige Geist auch die Wortegelehrt, gesetzt und geordnet hat, wird es auch der Mühe werth achten, sich anhaltend mit Vokabeln, Lexikon und Grammatik zu befassen. Wer es nicht gelernt hat, die Bibel im Urtext zu lesen, hat Hilfsmittel genug, den genauen Wortverstand zu erkunden.”

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 364–367; cf. 364: “Gewiss, anhaltende Lection und Betrachtung der Schrift ist befruchtend für das amtliche Lehren, für die Predigt.”

nearing the end of their own ministries. Rev. H. W. Degner was responsible for all of these translations. In some of the prefaces of these translations, mostly on New Testament books, Degner described how Stoeckhardt approached the exegetical task in both the middle part and the latter part of his career at St. Louis. In the 1894–1895 school year, Stoeckhardt lectured on the epistle to the Philippians. Using Gabelsberg stenography, one of the students in the class, H. E. Meyer, recorded the lectures. Degner translated these lecture notes into a running commentary on Philippians.<sup>65</sup>

According to Degner and other Stoeckhardt students at the time, Stoeckhardt performed the exegetical task in class often without notes, just the original Hebrew and Greek text in front of him. At least in class, his exegetical work seemed to be extemporaneous, and often his lectures differed in detail but remained the same in substance. Degner relates his own classroom experience with Stoeckhardt as his professor of exegesis in the prefaces of two translations of Stoeckhardt's lectures:

Dr. Stoeckhardt never lectured with a fixed manuscript in hand. All that we students saw was the sacred text in the original before him and at times a little piece of paper with a scribbled note in his right. And we have long looked in vain for the manuscripts of his classroom lectures. All we found was a drawer filled with brief handwritten notes, rather harder for us to decipher than our shorthand records. But these notes seem to cover practically every book in the Bible. We have also discovered, when the venerable Doctor from year to year lectured to different classes on the same subject, his lectures differed widely both in diction and detail, while the substance proved to be the same.<sup>66</sup>

He did not read these lectures from carefully prepared manuscripts, but he delivered them *extempore*, with only the original text before him. Some of his students carefully took down in shorthand every word he said. Today only these

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<sup>65</sup> George Stoeckhardt, *Lectures on The Epistle to the Philippians*, trans. H. W. Degner (Lake Mills, Iowa: Graphic Publishing, 1967), preface.

<sup>66</sup> George Stoeckhardt, *Exegetical Lectures on The Revelation of Saint John*, trans. H. W. Degner (Lake Mills, Iowa: Graphic Publishing, 1964), preface.

records of these lectures remain. And it is to these that this writer has decided to confine his efforts for reproducing Dr. Stoeckhardt's exegesis.<sup>67</sup>

Translated notes of Stoeckhardt's exegetical lectures were eventually published for eighteen selected psalms and the book of Micah in the Old Testament and for the New Testament books of 1 Corinthians, Philippians, Titus, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2 and 3 John and Revelation.

The format of these lecture booklets is consistently the same. Stoeckhardt performed the exegetical task in the St. Louis classroom by reading a verse and then offering extemporaneous comments on the vocables and grammar. Stoeckhardt's comments on Philippians 2:9 would be typical of these lecture transcripts:

V. 9: 'Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name.' (KJV)

'Therefore (*dio*),' because of His humble mind and willing obedience, 'God has exalted Him,' so that that [*sic*] which God did for Christ corresponds to that which Christ did for God. And so God exalted Christ as He well deserved. Meyer thinks Christ merited His exaltation. However, that is not necessarily expressed in our text. God was pleased with the mind he saw in Christ, and that good pleasure He revealed by exalting Christ.<sup>68</sup>

Stoeckhardt's exegesis of this single verse continues for five additional paragraphs. The main focus of his exegetical method is commenting on the doctrinal content of the verses, with often brief references to what other commentators have remarked on the meaning of the verse being studied, followed by Stoeckhardt's often polemical rejoinders. Stoeckhardt then often supplied a brief application of the verse at hand. His comments on 1 John 5:4 would be typical of the applications found in the translations of these seminary lectures:

'For whatever is born of God overcometh the world.' Whoever is born of God has God dwelling in his heart, and God is stronger than the world. In the world sin and unrighteousness hold their sway. That men hate and hurt each other, as much as

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<sup>67</sup> George Stoeckhardt, *Lectures on The Second Epistle of St. Peter*, trans. H. W. Degner (Lake Mills, Iowa: Graphic Publishing, 1967), preface.

<sup>68</sup> Stoeckhardt, *Lectures on The Epistle To the Philippians*, 39.

they can, that belongs to the way of the world. The world does not know love. And Christians, living in this evil world, are exposed to all its evils and even find in their natural heart an innate propensity towards bitterness and hatred. But then they remember that a divine germ has been implanted in their heart. They believe in Jesus Christ, and so they know that they are born of God. And the new life in them overcomes the old man. And so a Christian can suppress and overcome the old man. And so a Christian can suppress and overcome the evil that springs from his own flesh and blood. The good in Christians is stronger than the evil.<sup>69</sup>

This procedure and format appears to have been the way Stoeckhardt publicly taught exegesis in the seminary classroom throughout his teaching career. Some of these published transcripts came from lectures done in 1898 and some from the last exegetical classes Stoeckhardt taught before his sudden death in January 1913.<sup>70</sup>

In Goerss' Appendix B, he provides the information that "during the academic year of 1901–1902, Stoeckhardt was unable to teach his classes because of his severe illness."<sup>71</sup> The severe illness was his nervous disorder which struck him shortly after the death of his first wife. After his recovery and his remarriage (not necessarily in that order), Stoeckhardt resumed teaching exegesis at Concordia and began immediately writing biblical commentaries. After completing a commentary on the first twelve chapters of Isaiah in 1902, Stoeckhardt completed a 600+ page commentary on Romans. As already noted in chapter 1, Stoeckhardt provided an analysis of how he went about the exegetical task in this commentary's preface (p. 18 of chapter 1).

The influence of Johann von Hofmann upon Stoeckhardt's exegetical method has already been presented (pp. 16–23 of chapter 1). In this Romans preface, Stoeckhardt describes how his

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<sup>69</sup> George Stoeckhardt, *Lectures on The Three Letters of John*, trans. H. W. Degner (Aitkin, Minnesota: Hope Press, 1963), 114.

<sup>70</sup> Goerss, Appendix B.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

exegetical conclusions were reached about why this epistle is so important to understanding the doctrine of the Bible:

The epistle to the Romans is admittedly the foremost doctrinal writing of the New Testament. And therefore it is surely the main duty of the exegete, to expound the doctrinal contents. This is indeed not possible without a thorough investigation of the biblical text and context. The undersigned has endeavored with the work at hand, first to do justice to the linguistic aspect of the epistle and then, above all, to correctly bring to the full consciousness, to the readers and himself, the eternal, divine thoughts which have been expressed in the apostolic circular. The pure historical interest with which many modern exegetes treat biblical books and especially the epistles of the apostles, does not make it more scholarly. Every writing has to be judged according to its own individuality and according to its own tendency. And the tendency of the Holy Scriptures is plainly obvious by itself and is testified clearly by Paul in 2 Tim. 3:16.

The method followed in the commentary before us, continuous, coherent interpretation and development, just like it is found in Hofmann, Godet, and essentially also in Philippi, seems to me to best correspond to the above-mentioned aim of exegesis. When using the so-called glossatory method, which ties to the individual text components to linguistic and technical observations, one easily loses the train of thought and the different connections. When on the other hand, as happens in many modern commentaries, the grammatical, lexical, historical, archaeological material is treated in footnotes and the actual exegetical explanation is limited to the free reproduction of the content of the letter, then materials which belong close together, the language and the sentence structure, the form and the content, are torn apart. The biblical text is here still the most important point and has to remain the central point of the discussion. It is the job of the interpretation, to elicit sense and content from the words, which are written down. In this way the interpretation is not allowed to hover over the text as an independent product of a person's intellect. No interpreter has to our knowledge, up to this point succeeded in completely separating linguistic discussion from the coherent development of the thoughts. The exegete must meticulously weigh out in this case, how much of the linguistic material he wants to record in the text of the exposition and how much he wants to relegate in the footnotes. And the reader is importunately continually forced to look up and down.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Stoeckhardt, *Römer*, iii–iv: “Der Römerbrief ist anerkanntermassen die vornehmste Lehrschrift des Neuen Testaments. Und so ist es bei Auslegung desselben sicher die Hauptaufgabe des Exegeten, den Lehrgehalt herauszustellen. Das ist freilich nicht möglich ohne genaue Untersuchung des biblischen Textes und Contextes. Der Unterzeichnete war bei der vorliegenden Arbeit bemüht, zunächst der sprachlichen Seite des Briefs gerecht zu werden, dann aber vor Allem, die ewigen, göttlichen Gedanken, die in dem apostolischen Sendschreiben zum Ausdruck gekommen sind, sich selbst und den Lesern recht zum Bewusstsein zu bringen. Das rein historische Interesse, in welchem manche neuere Exegeten biblische Bücher und gerade auch die Briefe der Apostel bearbeiten, darf nicht auf den Ruhm besonderer Wissenschaftlichkeit Anspruch machen. Jede Schrift will nach ihrer Eigenart

Stoeckhardt's Romans commentary, followed by two other New Testament commentaries on Ephesians (1910) and 1 Peter (1912), reveal a consistent, mature exegetical method. As noted in the Romans preface, Stoeckhardt's exegetical methodology began by citing the text in the vernacular, followed by explanatory comments, often extended comments and analysis of the Greek vocabulary and grammar, followed by a running commentary of the text and then often applications for the reader. Stoeckhardt's Ephesians commentary contains no lengthy discussion of his exegetical method, while his introduction to 1 Peter deals strictly with isagogical matters pertaining to the letter itself.<sup>73</sup> Stoeckhardt's exegetical method in his commentaries is far more comprehensive and complete than his recorded exegetical lectures, many of which were recorded a decade earlier. The dominating trait regarding how George Stoeckhardt proceeded to accomplish the exegetical task was to deliver the divinely intended meaning from the text and then elaborate on that meaning with doctrinal appropriations, followed up by practical applications. Coupled with drawing the meaning from the text and context of the passage, Stoeckhardt stressed the importance of a continuous and a cohesive reading by the exegete of all

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und nach ihrer Tendenz beurtheilt sein. Und welches die Tendenz der heiligen Schriften ist, leuchtet von selbst ein und ist von Paulus 2 Tim. 3, 16 deutlich bezeugt.

Die im vorliegenden Commentar befolgte Methode, fortlaufende, zusammenhängende Erklärung und Entwicklung, wie sie sich z. B. auch bei Hofmann, Godet und wesentlich auch bei Philippi findet, schien mir dem eben genannten Zweck der Auslegung am besten zu entsprechen. Bei der sogenannten glossatorischen Methode, welche an einzelne Textesbestandtheile sprachliche und fachliche Bemerkungen anknüpft, verliert man leicht den Gedankengang und Gedankenzusammenhang. Wenn man hingegen, wie dies in manchen neuen Commentaren geschieht, das grammatische, lexicalische, historische, archaologische Material in Anmerkungen behandelt und die eigentliche exegetische Darlegung auf freie Reproduktion des Briefinhalts beschränkt, wird eng Zusammengehöriges, Sprache und Sache, Form und Inhalt, auseinandergerissen. Der biblische Text ist hier doch die gegebene Grösse und muss allewege im Mittelpunkt der Betrachtung bleiben. Es ist Aufgabe der Auslegung, aus den Worten, die da geschrieben stehen, Sinn und Inhalt zu eruieren. So darf die Auslegung nicht wie ein selbstständiges Geistesproduct über dem Texte schweben. Es ist auch unseres Wissens noch keinem Ausleger gelungen, sprachliche Erörterungen aus der zusammenhängenden Gedankenentwicklung gänzlich auszuscheiden. Der Exeget muss in diesem Fall ängstlich abwägen, wie viel von der sprachlichen Materie er in den Text der Auslegung aufnehmen, wie viel er in Anmerkungen verweisen will. Und der Leser ist genöthigt, fortwährend auf- und niederzublicken."

<sup>73</sup> George Stoeckhardt, *Kommentar über den Brief Pauli an die Epheser* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1910); *1 Petri*, 1–17.

of the Bible. This he believed was necessary to keep the major soteriological and Christological themes before the eyes of the exegete as he performed the exegetical task on a particular portion of Scripture.

William Dau summarizes Stoeckhardt's skills as a biblical exegete in the encomium he wrote after Stoeckhardt's death. Dau, who knew Stoeckhardt personally as a colleague on the St. Louis faculty, attributed part of Stoeckhardt's exegetical genius to his ability to concentrate: "Stoeckhardt's power of concentration accounts for much of his unquestioned success as a teacher of exegesis."<sup>74</sup> Dau does not attribute a laborious treatment of the text, going through the text slowly and surely, word for word, to George Stoeckhardt. Instead, Dau describes Stoeckhardt's exegetical method after presenting the courses he taught and the years he taught them:

This conspectus of the academic work of Stoeckhardt shows a centripetal tendency. He follows the sound method of leading the Bible student into a comprehensive and penetrating knowledge of the principal writings of the divine revelation, and making them thoroughly familiar with those books of the Bible which embody in the most striking form the marrow and the essence of the saving doctrine. It is like taking the classes to the great mountain ranges of God's Book, and leading them to the lofty summits, whence commanding views can be had of all the surrounding plains and valleys, rivers and rivulets of the prophetic and apostolic records. Thorough mastery of even one book of the Bible means very much for the general understanding of the entire Bible. How much more a good exposition of the principal portions, or writings, of both Testaments!<sup>75</sup>

Dau continues his description of Stoeckhardt's exegetical method by describing how Stoeckhardt understood and wrote about biblical history. Dau again stresses Stoeckhardt's methodology of doing justice to the main features of each story in the Old and New Testament,

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<sup>74</sup> Dau, "Dr. George Stoeckhardt, III," 19.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 17–18.



while all the while working to preserve the connection with the whole, showing how each story relates to the course of salvation history.<sup>76</sup>

Dau continues his description of Stoeckhardt's exegetical skills by pointing out that while there is an element of charm for the method of exegesis which minutely dissects every aspect of the biblical text, Stoeckhardt's method is much to be preferred:

But we believe that the short and direct method of going at the great matters in the text benefits the exegetical tiro more. It goes without saying that the application of this method not only presupposes, on the part of the instructor, a comprehensive grasp of the entire contents of his text, but it also imposes great self-restraint on him. But it is self-restraint that reveals the master in any pursuit.<sup>77</sup>

In further describing why Stoeckhardt succeeded as a biblical exegete, William Dau points out that Stoeckhardt's method was continually guided by a burning desire to make the text of Scripture plain:

Those who have read his late commentaries know that with his method he succeeds, not only to make the text of Scripture plain, even to men who are not extraordinarily proficient in the mastery of the original languages of the Bible text, but also in laying hold with a powerful grasp on the conscience and heart of his readers by his eminent ability to exhibit the practical bearing of Scripture on all sorts and conditions of men and affairs. His commentaries can be read with relish. . . .

Stoeckhardt's commentaries were all written with an eye to their immediate use by pastors and theologians in the work of the Church. His summing up of the contents of a division or subdivision of the text he has expounded is always a valuable hint to the homilist or preacher how to present the contents properly and effectually in a discourse before the congregation. Frequently there comes into the current of his expository remarks, a pious reflection, a devotional thought, that cools and refreshes, and relieves the mental tension created by the intricate argument which had preceded it, and makes the student see and feel the point of an *excursus* by direct application to his own spiritual life.<sup>78</sup>

Dau concludes his comments on Stoeckhardt's exegetical skills by declaring that Stoeckhardt was an old-school theologian, "to whom theology in all its manifestations is 'habitus

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 18–19.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 22.

*practicus* theosdotos.”<sup>79</sup> He promised to any unbiased reader, that a reader of Stoeckhardt’s writings would find in these writings “one of the most earnest efforts put forth in modern times to allow the Spirit to speak His real thought to the reader of God’s Book.”<sup>80</sup>

In summary, the overarching idea of George Stoeckhardt’s exegetical methodology was this principle: “Derive the meaning from the words of the text.” This is how he came to formulate his understanding of the doctrine of the ministry. The nomenclature for this could be termed the historical-grammatical-exegetical method of biblical interpretation. What Stoeckhardt specifically did in arriving at the meaning of a text was to first carefully consider the historical and literary context, then do complete justice to the vocabulary, grammar and syntax of the text at hand, followed by drawing out the meaning through the use of regenerated reason and proper logic. All the while these methods were being employed, the exegete was to keep in the mind’s eye a clear understanding of how the biblical writer progressed in his thought and how the writer approached the concepts he was writing by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

The hermeneutical principles which Stoeckhardt brought to the text as he did his exegesis and came to his conclusions about the ministry and other biblical doctrines are not original to Stoeckhardt. He learned them from his various teachers in the German gymnasium and the university system, especially from Johann von Hofmann. These interpretation principles are also the principles used in the Lutheran Confessions to interpret Scripture.<sup>81</sup> Collated and summarized from his various writings, these are Stoeckhardt’s hermeneutical principles:

(1) *Take the text literally as it reads, unless there is a compelling literary reason not to do so;*

(2) *Derive the meaning from the words of the text;*

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ralph A. Bohlmann, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation in the Lutheran Confessions*, rev. ed. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1983), 77–94.

- (3) *A text has only one correct interpretation or sense, but it may have multiple applications;*
- (4) *Scripture itself and its author, the Holy Spirit, are the best interpreters of Scripture;*
- (5) *Use the tools of historical context, vocabulary, grammar and syntax to find the meaning;*
- (6) *Compare one scriptural text with other texts of Scripture to help determine the meaning (1 Corinthians 10:6);*
- (7) *Understand that Jesus Christ is the central figure in both the Old and New Testaments;*
- (8) *Recognize the unity of Scripture and the continuity of the two Testaments;*
- (9) *Recognize that Scripture uses figures of speech and figurative language, especially in regard to prophecies;*
- (10) *Employ the rectilinear approach in interpreting Old Testament prophecies, especially messianic prophecies, that prophecies had one meaning in the Old Testament and one fulfillment in the New Testament;*
- (11) *Use Scripture to receive comfort and hope in living the Christian life (Romans 15:4);*
- (12) *Use Scripture to teach the whole will of God (2 Timothy 3:16; Acts 20:27);*
- (13) *Meditate on the Word and allow it to develop one's own thoughts.*

Stoekhardt was singularly guided by the “derive the meaning from the text” method. He always considered the ultimate goal of exegesis to make the Word of God *full of meaning* to the individual reader. Important to him also was the process of an exegete continuously reading and meditating on the entire Bible, for only then could a Bible interpreter develop a comprehensive and cohesive understanding of the soteriological themes of Scripture.

Whom did Stoekhardt see as the central figure of both the Old and the New Testament? He saw Jesus Christ as the center of the Scriptures, the heart and soul of the Bible. Take away Jesus Christ and one takes away the sum and substance of the Bible was his position. Stoekhardt's view of the Bible gave him a high Christology, which was evident in all of his exegesis and also in his personal life. He saw the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the

central events in human history. His high Christology led him to find a pronounced soteriology in Scripture. It was with this soteriological theme in mind that Stoeckhardt proceeded with his exegetical method to do exegesis. His exegesis gave rise to his understanding of the ministry, which to him was God's way of delivering the message of salvation to redeemed souls.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE MAIN LOCI OF STOECKHARDT'S DOCTRINE OF THE MINISTRY

George Stoeckhardt immigrated to the United States after several years of extensive ministerial experience in Europe. By the time he became an important leader in the faith life of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod a full generation had passed since the synod's founding. As a second-generation member of the Missouri Synod, Stoeckhardt played no original role in articulating the synod's position on church and ministry, which was established doctrine by the time Stoeckhardt arrived in St. Louis in the fall of 1878. In order to establish the major *loci* of Stoeckhardt's understanding of the doctrine of the ministry, it is necessary to follow a developmental approach. His earliest writings will first be examined for comments on the ministry in conjunction with a thorough study of complete articles and essays in which he addressed the ministry.

The earliest extant writing of Stoeckhardt which sheds light on how he understood the ministry is his exposition of Luther's Small Catechism (*Die Heilsame Lehre oder Erklärung des Kleinen Catechismus Luthers*). Stoeckhardt wrote this short exposition in 1875, when he was still a pastor in the Saxon *Landeskirche*. He later lived to regret some of the statements he made in this book, and felt compelled to write a retraction in *Der Lutheraner*, which was published on July 15, 1878. In this retraction, Stoeckhardt confesses to the readers of *Der Lutheraner* that his book:

. . . contains part misleading, part downright false statements about church and ministry, about justification, about the doctrine of Sunday, concerning marriage, and

several other points, which the dear brothers in America, like generally every orthodox Lutheran, must rightly take offense.<sup>1</sup>

Stoeckhardt then explains in his retraction that at the time he wrote the book, he was serving in the ministry of the *Landeskirche* and had entirely no contact with the Saxon separation. Only about a year later then did he begin a heavy struggle, which ended with his resignation from the ministry of the *Landeskirche* and his union with the Saxon separation group. Stoeckhardt also declares in this retraction notice that he now recognized and championed the Missouri Synod as holding a doctrinal position that was nothing more and nothing less than purely Lutheran and declared the same in the first issue of the periodical *Die Freikirche*. After stating his efforts since to set his theology straight and his allegiance to Missouri Synod doctrine, Stoeckhardt formally retracted (*formelle Zurücknahme*) the doctrinal errors in his catechism exposition.<sup>2</sup>

Stoeckhardt's published retraction is problematic, for while he lists the affected doctrines, he does not elaborate any further. An examination of his catechism exposition reveals no obvious doctrinal errors, certainly not in regard to the ministry. At the very least, soon after its publication, his conscientiousness compelled him to make a public retraction to the whole Missouri Synod. The complete retraction, translated into English, along with the entire German text, is printed as an appendix.

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<sup>1</sup> George Stoeckhardt, "Erklärung," *Der Lutheraner* 34 (July 15, 1878): 110: "Dasselbe enthält über Kirche und Amt, über Rechtfertigung, über die Lehre vom Sonntag, von der Ehe und noch mehrere andere Punkte theils missverständliche, theils geradezu falsche Sätze, an welchen die lieben Brüder in Amerika, wie überhaupt jeder rechtgläubige Lutheraner, mit Recht Anstoss nehmen mussten." Both an English translation of this letter and the German original is Appendix Four.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

## Locus I: Called Ministers are Servants of the Word

What did George Stoeckhardt teach about the ministry in his first published book? He presents the ministry of the Word first in his catechism exposition in connection with the Third Commandment: “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.” Stoeckhardt presents members of the ministry of the Word as servants of the Word:

The celebration of Sunday and festival days has its central point in the divine service. Every divine service is a holy, good gift of God. When we earnestly pray: ‘I have come to you, Lord, come now also to me!’—and when we bring God in song and prayer our offerings from our hearts, then God comes also to us and brings us his blessings: his Word, (Epistle, Gospel, sermon), which the servants of God proclaim in his name, his Sacrament, in which Jesus himself invisibly feeds and supplies drink to his guests, and his blessing which the clergymen impart in God’s place to the congregation.<sup>3</sup>

In his exposition’s section on the Office of the Keys and Confession, Stoeckhardt continued with his theme of describing the ministry as composed of individuals who were called to serve God. After describing the word of absolution as a means of grace, and the office of the ministry as a divine institution, passed down from the apostles, Stoeckhardt describes the sacred trust given to certain men because they are members of the ministry: “A special proclamation of the Word by the grace of God in Jesus Christ is absolution. A part of the entrusted office of the servants of Christ is the Office of the Keys.”<sup>4</sup>

A year after his catechism exposition, Stoeckhardt published *Zustand und Zukunft der Sächsischen Landeskirche*, which described the religious conditions in his native Germany

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<sup>3</sup> George Stoeckhardt, *Die heilsame Lehre oder Erklärung des kleinen Catechismus Luther* (Zwickau: Julius Dohner, 1875), 26: “Die Feier der Sonn- und Festtage hat ihren Mittelpunkt im Gottesdienst. Jeder Gottesdienst ist eine heilige, gute Gottesgabe. Wenn wir ernstlich bitten: ‘Ich bin, Herr, zu dir gekommen, komme du nun auch zu mir!’—und wenn wir Gott im Gesang und Gebet von Herzen unsere Opfer bringen, dann kommt Gott auch zu uns und bringt uns seine Güter mit: sein Wort (Epistel, Evangelium, Predigt), welches die Diener Gottes in seinem Namen verkündigen, sein Sacrament, in dem Jesus selbst unsichtbar seine Gäste speist und trinkt, seinen Segen, den die Geistlichen an Gottes Stelle der Gemeinde zusprechen.”

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 159: “Eine besondere Verkündigung des Wortes von der Gnade Gottes in Jesu Christo ist die Absolution. Ein Theil des den Dienern Christi anvertrauten Amtes ist das **Amt der Schlüssel**.”

during the nineteenth century and his experiences serving in the Saxon *Landeskirche*. Moreover, after his resignation from the *Landeskirche*, Stoeckhardt became editor of *Die Evangelisch-Lutherische Freikirche*, the periodical for the newly founded *Freikirche* in Saxony. In the first edition of the newspaper, Stoeckhardt explained the reason for the existence of the *Freikirche*. He and other like-minded Lutherans in Saxony could no longer with a good conscience belong to the Saxon *Landeskirche*. According to him, the *Landeskirche* was decaying and was under a state of judgment and now the Saxon *Freikirche* was the proper form of Christ's church at that time.<sup>5</sup> In this foreword, Stoeckhardt makes it clear that for him, being in the ministry meant being a servant of God. This then was a major reason for his resignation from the spurious *Landeskirche*. Stoeckhardt asserts that since the *Landeskirche* represents crafty lies and errors, there must be a separation for all those who wanted to remain faithful to the truth of the Scriptures and Luther's teaching. Stoeckhardt did not believe that the ministry of the Word could alone safeguard fidelity to the Word of God and pure Lutheran doctrine. Instead this task was entrusted to the entire congregation that has faithfully gathered around Word and Sacrament and thus the focus of the ministry was to be the well-being of the community of believers:

Lutheran pastors alone and the so-called Lutheran consistory could and cannot guarantee the preservation of pure doctrine and of life. Lutheran community building—this is the work of the Holy Spirit at the present time. The community of believers, God's glory and the bride of Christ, is the appointed guardian of the heavenly blessings. It and its members are being built up by making the most of its entrusted opportunities, by being enlightened and refined from God's truth. In this way it grows and develops to its full potential in Christ. To this goal, to this mission, we dedicate our abilities. And we are assured, that such kind of labor guarantees, by thus remaining in the words of Christ, the confidence of faith, the furtherance and the preservation of the purity of the truth, is guaranteed. Individual office holders and governing bodies can and do fall away. When the church, the congregation, watches over the pure Word and Sacrament, then the visible guarantee for the continuation of genuine faith and divine service is given. Wherever God's Word is preached clearly and purely, there several of the most important things are awakened for the faith and

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<sup>5</sup> George Stoeckhardt, "Vorwort," *Die Ev.-Luth. Freikirche* 1 (July and August 1876): 1.



to make genuine disciples. God's Word shall not return back again empty. This is God's never failing promise.<sup>6</sup>

Thus in his first published writing after his resignation from the *Landeskirche* and at the commencement of his brief ministry in the Saxon *Freikirche*, George Stoeckhardt made it clear he understood the office of the public ministry to be a means to an end, not an end in itself. He understood the ministry to be the vehicle through which the Word of God was proclaimed and the Sacraments rightly administered, so that the communion of saints might be built up in the truth of God's Word. Here he exhibits his exegetical methodology of focusing on the particular, the need to conduct a pious ministry, in light of the totality of God's revelation, God's love for human souls.

In October 1876, Stoeckhardt began a minuscule German gymnasium or preparatory school for young men desiring to enter the Lutheran ministry.<sup>7</sup> The idea was to begin teaching boys the ancient languages so that they would be prepared to enter the Missouri Synod college at Fort Wayne, Indiana.<sup>8</sup> Eighteen months after beginning this preparatory school, Stoeckhardt and the school experienced a tragedy. Ernst Gläss, a fourteen-year-old student at the Planitz gymnasium,

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 4–5: “Lutherische Pastoren allein und die sog. lutherischen Consistorien konnten und können für Reinerhaltung der Lehre und des Lebens nicht garantiren. Lutherische Gemeindebildung—das ist die Arbeit des Geistes Gottes in der Gegenwart. Die Gemeinde der Gläubigen, Gottes Hausehre und Christi Braut, ist die vom Herrn bestellte Hüterin der himmlischen Güter. Sie erbaut sich und ihre Glieder, indem sie mit dem anvertrauten Pfund wuchert, von Gottes Wahrheit sich erleuchten und durchläutern lässt, sie wächst so heran zum vollkommenen Mannesalter in Christo. Diesem Ziel, dieser Aufgabe weihen wir unsere Kräfte. Und wir sind gewiss, dass unter solcher Arbeit, bei diesem Fortschritt das Bleiben in der Rede Christi, die Beständigkeit des Glaubens, die Fort— und Reinerhaltung der Wahrheit garantirt ist. Einzelne Amtsträger und Behörden können fallen und abfallen. Wenn die Kirche, die Gemeinde über das reine Wort und Sacrament wacht, dann ist die sicherste Gewähr für den Fortbestand des rechten Glaubens und Gottesdienstes gegeben. Wo immer Gottes Wort lauter und rein gepredigt wird, da werden wenigstens Etliche zum Glauben erweckt und zu rechten Jüngern gemacht. Gottes Wort soll nicht leer wieder zurückkommen. Das ist Gottes untrügliche Verheissung.”

<sup>7</sup> George Stoeckhardt, “Die Lateinschule in Planitz,” *Die Ev.-Luth. Freikirche 2* (February 15, 1877): 32: “Im October 1876 hat der Unterzeichnete mit etlichen Schülern und Pensionären im Alter von 12–15 Jahren einen Gymnasialcursus begonnen.”; “Die Lateinschule in Planitz,” *Die Ev.-Luth. Freikirche 2* (March 1, 1877): 40.

<sup>8</sup> Fuerbringer, *Eighty Eventful Years*, 107.

the son of a miner and a gifted student among the small student body of the *Lateinschule*, died of diphtheria.<sup>9</sup>

Stoeckhardt wrote a memorial for this young man in the pages of *Die Freikirche*, whose heart's desire was to study theology in America and be a preacher of the Gospel. In this tribute, Stoeckhardt spoke about how the Holy Spirit had blessed this young man and how Ernst Gläss proved to be the Lord's servant "in a little ministry" even while he was undergoing training for the public ministry:

And also outwardly, little things and works of love were very dear to him and a matter of conscience. He already had become a little servant in the Lord's house; Ever since the church bells of St. John-Planitz had been installed, he pulled and sounded these bells at evening vespers and Sundays for divine services, and punctually discharged this little ministry. Even during his last illness he set up in bed at the time of the evening ringing to check whether the right time and way was followed. For a long time, along with his mother and sister, when his father was gone to work, he used to season the evening hours with many kinds of lovely songs and hymns, and it was always he who requested the singing and praising.<sup>10</sup>

Stoeckhardt saw in this young man a servant-like desire to be a minister of the Gospel and he held up Ernst Gläss as a shining example to follow, even as he and the Saxon *Freikirche* laid the youth to rest in the hope of the resurrection.

Twelve years after this account was written, Stoeckhardt published "Die pastoralen Anweisungen im Titusbrief," written over the course of 1887. These lengthy expositions were published serially in *Lehre und Wehre*. These articles are a doctrinal exposition of the content of Titus, with a special emphasis on the timeless principles of pastoral theology which are

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<sup>9</sup> George Stoeckhardt, "Vom Leben und Sterben eines Planitzer Lateinschülers," *Die Ev.-Luth. Freikirche* 3 (March 15, 1878): 44–45.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 45: "Und auch äussere, kleine Dinge und Dienste der Liebe waren ihm Herzenssache und Gewissenssache. Er war schon ein kleiner Diener am Heiligthum geworden; seit die Planitzer St. Johanniskirche Glocken besitzt, hat er diese Glocken zur Abendvesper, Sonntags zum Gottesdienst gezogen, angeschlagen und pünktlich dieses kleinen Amtes gewartet. Noch in seiner letzten Krankheit richtete er sich um die Zeit des Abendläutens im Bette auf und prüfte, ob auch genau die rechte Zeit und Weise eingehalten würde. Seit lange war er gewohnt, mit seiner Mutter und Schwester, wenn der Vater der Arbeit nachging, durch allerlei liebliche Lieder und Gesänge die Abendstunden zu würzen, und er war es immer, der zu solchem Lob und Lied aufforderte."

contained in the letter. One of the prevailing themes of these articles is that those who are members of the office of the ministry are servants of the Word and servants of Christ. This article was translated by Rev. Erwin W. Koehlinger with the English title “The Pastoral Theology in Titus.”

The concept of service (*Dienst*) and servant (*Diener*) occurs repeatedly in this article. In the first chapter, Stoeckhardt points out that the office of the ministry places one into the state of being a servant: “Paul calls himself a ‘servant of God’ and an ‘apostle’ of Jesus Christ, and thereby identifies his office. It is a service into which God has placed him, and this service is the apostolate, into which Christ has called him.”<sup>11</sup> Stoeckhardt further explains that in the epistle to Titus, Paul refers to the apostolic office as “a service in the Word, as a preaching of the Word.”<sup>12</sup> Moreover, Stoeckhardt then applies what he wrote about the apostolic ministry to contemporary times. The pastors who are called to serve Christian congregations today are the successors of the apostolic ministry:

We are justified in applying what the apostle says here about his office to the service of the Word, which called pastors now provide Christian congregations. The apostles possessed a unique call of the church, yet Paul took on other men, who were not apostles, to assist in his work. Finally, in the introduction of his letters he includes himself with his coworkers, as with Sosthenes in 1. Cor. 1:1; with Timothy in 2 Cor. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:1. What he writes to these congregations he writes in their names as well. Yes, in 1 Cor. 4:1ff. he links himself with Apollos, who was not even an apostle’s assistant, and who had preached and worked independently. ‘Such things I have signified to myself and Apollos.’ 1 Cor. 4:6. When Paul, as in the letters to the Corinthians boasts of the glory of the New Testament office, he means the office that remains in force and effect throughout the entire New Testament era. He is not simply thinking of himself, and of his fellow apostles, but of all incumbents of the

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<sup>11</sup> George Stoeckhardt, “Die pastoralen Anweisungen im Titusbrieff,” *Lehre und Wehre* 35 (January 1889): 7: “Paulus nennt sich selbst einen ‘Knecht Gottes’ und ‘Apostel Jesu Christi’ und bezeichnet damit sein Amt. Das ist ein Dienst, zu dem Gott ihn bestellt hat, und dieser Dienst ist das Apostolat, in welches Christus ihn berufen hat.”; English translation by Erwin W. Koehlinger, “The Pastoral Theology in Titus,” available in *Potpourri, Book 2* (Fort Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 1985), 246–87.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 9: “Von dem apostolischen Amt als einem Dienst am Wortes, als einer Predigt des Wort sagt der letzte Satz: ‘hat aber geoffenbaret zu seiner Zeit sein Wort durch die Predigt, die mir vertrauet ist nach dem Befehl Gottes, unsres Heilandes.’”

office, all preachers of the Gospel. It is a service in the Word which the apostles provided and which now the called servants in the Word provide. What the apostles spoke and wrote was the inspired Word of God, and in and with this same Word, the word of the apostle, the preachers of the Word now are busying themselves and occupying the office of the same. Thus when the apostle describes his office in the introduction to Titus as a service of the Word, Titus was meant to see, and so we can and should learn from this, what altogether, the service, the ministry in the Word, has for importance.<sup>13</sup>

Exactly what did George Stoeckhardt mean when he described the called ministry as a service? He describes pastors as servants of the Word, [who labor] in the Word of God.<sup>14</sup> Stoeckhardt consistently understands the ministry as a means through which a holy God reveals his will through sinful men to sinful mankind: “Preachers are channels of the divine Word.”<sup>15</sup> Stoeckhardt quotes as a proof passage Romans 10:15: “How can they preach unless they are sent?” He maintains in this journal article that a pastor is sent when he receives a mediate call from a congregation to serve the people with Word and Sacrament. Stoeckhardt declares that if a congregation issues a divine call in accordance with God’s will and command, and a pastor then answers that summons and preaches the Word of God to the congregation, “that is just as

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 9–10: “Wir haben gutes Recht, das, was der Apostel hier von seinem Amt sagt, auf den Dienst am Wort, den jetzt die berufenen Prediger christlicher Gemeinden versehen, anzuwenden. Die Apostel hatten einen einzigartigen Beruf für die Kirche, aber doch nahm Paulus andere Männer, die nicht Apostel waren, als Gehülfen in seiner Arbeit an, schliesst sich im Eingang seiner Briefe mit diesen seinen Mitarbeitern zusammen, wie mit Sosthenes 1 Cor. 1, 1., mit Timotheus 2 Cor. 1, 1. Phil. 1, 1. Col. 1, 1., schreibt das, was er jenen Gemeinden schreibt, zugleich in ihrem Namen. Ja, er fasst sich 1 Cor. 4, 1. ff. mit Apollos, der nicht einmal Apostelgehülfe war, welcher selbständig für sich predigte und arbeitete, zusammen. ‘Solches habe ich auf mich und Apollo gedeutet.’ 1 Cor. 4, 7. Wenn Paulus, wie in den Corintherbriefen, die Herrlichkeit des Amtes des Neuen Testaments rühmt, so meint er das Amt, das durch die ganze Zeit des Neuen Testaments in Kraft und Geltung bleibt, denkt nicht nur an sich und seine Mitapostel, sondern an alle Träger des Amtes, alle Prediger des Evangeliums. Es ist ein Dienst am Wort, den die Apostel versahen und den jetzt die berufenen Diener am Wort versehen. Was die Apostel redeten und schrieben, war inspirirtes Wort Gottes, und an und mit eben diesem Wort, dem Wort der Apostel, hantiren und amtiren jetzt die Prediger des Worts. Wenn der Apostel also im Eingang des Titusbriefes sein Amt als einen Dienst am Wort beschreibt, so sollte Titus daraus ersehen, so können und sollen wir daraus lernen, was überhaupt der Dienst, das Amt am Wort für Bedeutung hat.”

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 10: “Die Prediger sind Diener am Wort, am Wort Gottes.”

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.: “Die Prediger sind Canäle des göttlichen Worts.”

efficacious and valid as the command which Paul received from God at his immediate call.”<sup>16</sup>

Stoeckhardt has no use for anyone who takes it upon himself to publicly preach the Word of God without the expressed command of God to do so. Only when a pastor knows from his possession of a divine call, that he is serving where God wants him, is he given the strength to fulfill his task, “this awareness gives the pastor the courage, the confidence and joy in the middle of all the unpleasantness, disappointments, temptations which his call brings to him.”<sup>17</sup>

To George Stoeckhardt being a called minister and a servant of the Word meant the task of preaching. The content of the preaching was both Law and Gospel:

It is by the command of God, the Savior, a pastor performs the duties of his office, that with his preaching, with his office he stands completely in the service of God the Savior, who through his preaching desires to deliver and save the lost souls of men. A preacher also serves God the Savior when he preaches Law and rebukes sin. For in so doing his only intention, and it must be his only intention, is to prepare sinners for the Word of salvation, that they are put into the position of taking hold of the comfort of the Gospel.<sup>18</sup>

In describing called workers as servants of the Word and servants of Christ, in describing them as channels through which God proclaims both his condemning Law and saving Gospel, Stoeckhardt also brings home the point that neither the ministry of the Word nor the preaching of Law and Gospel are ends unto themselves. The ultimate goal of both the ministry and the proclamation of the Word of God is eternal life for the hearers: “Eternal life is the ultimate goal of preaching, of the ministry of the Word.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.: “der ebenso kräftig und gültig ist, wie der Befehl Gottes, den Paulus bei seiner unmittelbaren Berufung von Gott empfing.”

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.: “dieses Bewusstsein erhält dem Prediger den Muth, die Zuversicht und Freudigkeit mitten in allen Widerwärtigkeiten, Enttäuschungen, Anfechtungen, welche sein Beruf ihm einbringt.”

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 10–11: “Aber auf Befehl Gottes, des Heilandes, richtet ein christlicher Prediger sein Amt aus. Er steht mit seiner Predigt, mit seinem Amt ganz im Dienst Gottes, des Heilandes, welcher durch seine Predigt verlorne Menschenseelen retten und selig machen will. Gott, dem Heiland, dient ein Prediger auch dann, wenn er das Gesetz predigt, die Sünde straft. Denn er hat dabei nur darauf sein Absehen, und soll es nur darauf absehen, dass die Sünder für das Wort des Heils bereitet, dass sie in den Stand gesetzt werden, den Trost des Evangeliums zu fassen.”

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 11: “Das ewige Leben ist der letzte Endzweck der Predigt, des Predigtamts.”

Important to Stoeckhardt's *locus* on the ministry that called ministers are servants of the Word and servants of Christ is their personal Christian character: "We understand from this that a servant of the Word must also precisely have the testimony, that he is a sincere, upright Christian, that he manifests a genuine, unadulterated faith."<sup>20</sup> Stoeckhardt then writes at length in his article on Titus of the various qualifications for the ministry. In carrying out the Lord's work in a local congregation, he makes the point that both the congregation and the pastor must submit to the Word and will of God: "For God's Word and will have greatest importance in the congregation of God. The result is that a preacher does not insist on his own will, but submits his mind and will to the Word and will of God, whom he serves."<sup>21</sup> "Instead he is called to serve God the Lord, in his house, in the congregation, and the congregation of God."<sup>22</sup>

After Stoeckhardt thoroughly covers the qualifications of a pastor as the apostle Paul listed them in the epistle to Titus, he then spends the remaining portion of his article on the basic task of the public ministry, and that is teaching the Word of God: "In this way the apostle opened up to the following exhortation, the teaching which is the actual work of the bishops."<sup>23</sup> To be a member of the office of the ministry meant being a servant of the Word to Stoeckhardt, and that meant being a pastor who was constantly in the Word:

A bishop, a preacher, who takes earnestly his Christianity, his faith, (v. 4), who trains himself daily in godliness, (vs. 5–8), is an apt tool and agent for God, the Lord over

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<sup>20</sup> George Stoeckhardt, "Die pastoralen Anweisungen im Titusbrieft," *Lehre und Wehre* 35 (February 1889): 37: "Wir ersehen daraus, dass auch ein Diener am Wort gerade das Zeugnis haben muss, dass er ein aufrichtiger, rechtschaffener Christi sei, dass er echten, unverfälschten Glauben an den Tage lege."

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 41: "Denn Gottes Wort und Wille soll in der Gemeinde Gottes zur Geltung kommen. Aber dann besteht ein Prediger eben nicht auf seinem eigenen Willen, sondern ordnet seinen Sinn und Willen dem Wort und Willen des Gottes unter, dem er dient."

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 42: "Er ist vielmehr berufen, Gott, dem Herrn, in seinem Haus, an der Gemeinde, der Gemeinde Gottes, zu dienen."

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 45: "So hat sich der Apostel zu der folgenden Vermahnung, welche nun das eigentliche Werk eines Bischofs, die Lehre, betrifft, Bahn gemacht."

all, who just precisely through men, through the preacher, wants to reveal his will to his congregation on earth.<sup>24</sup>

Stoeckhardt repeatedly in this article stresses that a servant of the Word has to be a servant in the Word: “Therefore, the apostle makes diligent, continuous study, study of doctrine, study of the Scriptures, a duty of conscience to preachers.”<sup>25</sup> “Continuous, zealous study of the divine Word and its teaching alone, makes the preacher qualified and capable, to preach God’s Word clearly and purely.”<sup>26</sup> When a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures is acquired, a pastor is ready to fulfill the duties of his office, much of which involves speaking:

St. Paul says, the bishop should, ‘also’ be qualified and capable, to exhort with sound doctrine. Exhortation therefore comes in second to what comes first. The first and most important obligation and work of a preacher is exactly this: to speak, to teach, to preach to the congregation the Word of God, to make known the sound doctrine. Secondly he should exhort with the sound doctrine, and thirdly rebuke those who oppose him. Zealous striving for the doctrine of Scripture makes the preacher capable and qualified to this three-fold kind of speaking and teaching, to these three functions of the teaching office.<sup>27</sup>

Stoeckhardt consistently taught in his career at Concordia Seminary that the ministry was an office marked by service *of* the Word and *in* the Word of God. In his recorded seminary lectures and full-length commentaries, this *locus* also is consistently followed. In his transcribed lectures on 1 Corinthians, his comments repeatedly refer to the ministry as being a servant of

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 45: “Ein Bischof, ein Prediger, welcher es mit seinem Christenthum, mit seinem Glauben ernst meint, V. 4., welcher sich selbst täglich in der Gottseligkeit übt, V. 5–8., ist ein geschicktes Werkzeug und Organ für Gott, den obersten Herrn, welcher eben gerade durch Menschen, durch die Prediger seiner Gemeinde auf Erden seinen Willen kundthun will.”

<sup>25</sup> George Stoeckhardt, “Die Pastoralen Anweisungen im Titusbrief,” *Lehre und Wehre* 35 (April 1889): 113: “Also fleissiges, anhaltendes Studium, Studium der Lehre, Studium der Schrift, macht der Apostel den Predigern zur Gewissenspflicht.”

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 114: “Anhaltendes, eifriges Studium des göttlichen Worts und der Lehre des göttlichen Worts macht aber allein den Prediger fähig und tüchtig, in diesem Sinn Gottes Wort lauter und rein zu predigen.”

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 115: “St. Paulus sagt, der Bischof solle ‘auch’ dazu fähig und tüchtig sein, mit der heilsamen Lehre zu ermahnen. Das Ermahnen ist demnach erst das Zweite, welches zu einem Ersten hinzutritt. Die erste und nächste Obliegenheit und Arbeit des Predigers ist eben die, zu reden, zu lehren, zu predigen, der Gemeinde Gottes Wort, die heilsame Lehre zu verkündigen. Er soll aber dann auch zum Andern mit der heilsamen Lehre ermahnen, und soll zum Dritten die Widersprechenden strafen. Eifriges Bemühen um die Lehre der Schrift macht den Prediger zu dieser dreifachen Art des Redens und Lehrens, zu diesen drei Functionen des Lehramts tüchtig und geschickt.”

Christ: “The Apostle emphasizes once more that a true Christian preacher in a congregation is not a master, but a servant. . . . Since Christian teachers are servants of Christ, they are responsible to Him alone.”<sup>28</sup> In his Isaiah commentary, once again, Stoeckhardt uses *Dienst* to describe the ministry to which Isaiah was called by Yahweh, a “holy service” (*heiligen Dienstes*): “After Isaiah has expressed his willingness to be sent, God gives him further information about the significance of this holy service, concerning the efficacy of the preaching ordained by God.”<sup>29</sup>

In his New Testament commentaries, Stoeckhardt hews a consistent line as well. In all three of his full-length commentaries on Romans, Ephesians and 1 Peter, he follows the service/servant motif in describing the ministry. In his comments on Romans 12:7–8, he in a general sense equates *Amt* and *Dienst* when defining the Greek vocable διακονία: We translate: ‘let it be, that we have a ministry’ and take also διακονία in the general sense ‘ministry’ (*Amt*), ‘service’ (*Dienst*), not as the special designation of the service of the alms trustee.”<sup>30</sup> In commenting on Romans 15:17 and Paul’s call to be the apostle to the Gentiles, Stoeckhardt writes:

What actually decided and compelled the apostle to write to the Romans in this context is the grace, which had been given to him by God that he should be a servant of Christ Jesus with respect to the Gentiles. V. 15. 16. God gave him this special gift and grace; Christ, the Lord and regent of the church, assigned him this service, the office of apostle to the Gentiles.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> George Stoeckhardt, *Exegetical Lectures on the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, trans. H. W. Degner (Lake Mills, Iowa: Graphic Publishing, 1969), 23. (*Nota Bene*: German text not available).

<sup>29</sup> Stoeckhardt, *Jesaia*, 69: “Nachdem Jesaia sich bereit erklärt hat, sich senden zu lassen, gibt Gott ihm näheren Aufschluss über die Bedeutung dieses heiligen Dienstes, über die Wirkung der von Gott geordneten Predigt.”

<sup>30</sup> Stoeckhardt, *Römer*, 570: “Wir übersetzen: ‘sei es, dass wir ein Amt haben’ und nehmen also διακονία in dem allgemeinen Sinn ‘Amt,’ ‘Dienst,’ nicht speciell als Bezeichnung des Dienstes der Almosenpfleger.”

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 627: “Was aber den Apostel eigentlich bestimmt, ja genöthigt hat, zu dem genannten Zweck an die Römer zu schreiben, ist die Gnade, die ihm von Gott gegeben ist, dass er ein Diener Christi Jesu sein soll in Bezug



In commenting on the work of Phoebe in Romans 16, Stoeckhardt describes how Paul wrote to the Romans and urged them to receive Phoebe because of her service.<sup>32</sup>

In his 1 Peter commentary, Stoeckhardt describes the elders mentioned in 1 Peter 5:2 as both shepherds and servants of Christ: “The elders are shepherds, they stand in service to Christ, who is the arch-shepherd or chief shepherd, who owns the sheep, v. 4, and some day they must give account of their stewardship of their shepherding office.”<sup>33</sup> Stoeckhardt also elaborates on what he means when he describes the ministry as an act of service and what source of authority is to be consulted in carrying out the ministry:

The ministry of the church is not sovereign authority, but service, performance of duty. God’s Word alone, which preachers are to preach and use, is the only guiding authority in a Christian congregation. There are three evil pitfalls, which the servants of the church should earnestly protect themselves from, laziness, greediness and love of power.<sup>34</sup>

As one summarizes George Stoeckhardt’s first locus on the doctrine of the ministry, it is noted that Stoeckhardt prefers in his published writings to refer to the ministry not as much as an office, but more as continuous acts of service. Closely associated with the “ministry is service” motif is the connection of the ministry with the Word of God. Clearly he saw the Word of God as providing the empowerment for the ministry of the Word as well as its source of authority. Moreover, he regarded the ministry as representative of a higher power, namely, Christ, the Lord

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auf die Heiden. V. 15. 16. Gott hat ihm diese besondere Gabe und Gnade ertheilt, Christus, der Herr und Regent der Kirche, hat ihm diesen Dienst zugewiesen, das Heidenapostelamt.”

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 636: “Die römischen Christen sollen dieselbe aufnehmen in dem Herrn, wie es den Heiligen geziemt, ihr nicht nur äusserlich Gastfreundschaft erweisen, sondern sie als Schwester, als Mitchristin und um ihres Dienstes willen werth halten.”

<sup>33</sup> Stoeckhardt, *1 Petri*, 220: “Die Presbyter sind Hirten, stehen im Dienst Christi, des Erzhirten oder Oberhirten, des die Schafe eigen sind, V. 4, müssen also auch Christo dereinst von der Verwaltung ihres Hirtenamts Rechenschaft geben.”

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 221: “Das Amt der Kirche ist nicht Herrschaft, sondern Dienst, Pflichterfüllung. Gottes Wort allein, das die Prediger auszulegen und anzuwenden haben, soll in der christlichen Gemeinde das Regiment führen. Das sind drei böse Stücke, vor denen die Diener der Kirche sich ernstlich hüten sollen: Trägheit, Geiz und Herrschsucht.”

of the church. Called ministers were to be channels between God and sinful mankind. Finally, George Stoeckhardt regarded the ministry as acts of spiritual service with a definite eschatological emphasis. He saw the ministry of the Word as a means to an end, not an end in and of itself. He regarded the ministry as having the goal of eternal life for all whom the ministry touched. Here, once again, Stoeckhardt's exegetical methodology delineates his understanding of the ministry. He saw the ministry as a particular, temporal activity, while never losing sight of the totality of the office's goal, the salvation of souls.

### **Locus II: The Ministry of the Word is Perpetuated by the Universal Priesthood**

The second main *locus* for George Stoeckhardt regarding the ministry is that he consistently taught that the ministry is perpetuated by the priesthood of all believers. This aspect of the ministry was most important to him. Stoeckhardt was not only a formidable exegete, but also an astute student of church history. While he recognized the doctrine of the spiritual priesthood of all believers as "the matrix of Lutheran truth,"<sup>35</sup> he also recognized that this doctrine had long been neglected in the Lutheran church, predating his personal struggles with the rationalism in the Saxon *Landeskirche*:

However, this doctrine more and more sank into oblivion. Through ecclesiastical practice, through the authority of the consistories or senior pastors, etc., it was forced into the background. With justification, the pietist Spener accused orthodox Lutherans of his day of completely forgetting what Luther had written two hundred years prior concerning the spiritual priesthood. Even today Lutherans in Germany know almost nothing about this doctrine. They concede to Christians such certain priestly functions, e.g., prayer, in the privacy of their home. However, e.g., according to their thinking, the administration of ecclesiastical matters belongs not to

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<sup>35</sup> George Stoeckhardt, "Thesen über die Rechte und Pflichten des geistlichen Priestertums," *Vierter Synodal-Bericht des Iowa-Distrikts der deutschen evang.-luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio und anderen Staaten, 1883* (St. Louis: Luth. Concordia-Verlag, 1883), 11: "Die Lehre vom geistlichen Priestertum aller Christen, auf die sich diese Thesen beziehen, gehört zum Grundstock der lutherischen Wahrheit; sie hängt mit der Lehre von der Rechtfertigung auf das innigste zusammen." English translation by Erwin W. Koehlinger, "The Privileges and Duties of the Spiritual Priesthood," available in George Stoeckhardt, *Essays and Papers* (Fort Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 1980), 103–161.

Christians as priests but to certain positions and offices which were created from the start for this very purpose.<sup>36</sup>

Stoeckhardt began delivering essays for Missouri Synod district conventions five years after his arrival in America and after the worst of the Election Controversy was over. His first essay “The Rights and Duties of the Spiritual Priesthood” was delivered to the Iowa District in 1883. In this essay, Stoeckhardt details this doctrine through five theses, followed by lengthy expositions. This is his most extensive treatment of the doctrine of the spiritual priesthood of all believers. His first thesis sets the tone for the presentation by defining the spiritual priesthood of believers:

#### THESIS I

The spiritual priesthood of believing Christians embraces not only the privileges of direct communication with God, the right to all treasures of the church, but also the privilege and duty to administer the treasures of God’s house to the benefit of others.<sup>37</sup>

In his second thesis, Stoeckhardt spells out his understanding of the origin of the ministry of the Word in Christ’s Great Commission and how it is perpetuated by the universal priesthood and more specifically, by a local congregation, when it issues a divine call or summons to a pastor to publicly carry out the ministry of the Word among the members and for their behalf:

#### THESIS II

As a congregation and within the congregation believing Christians actuate their priestly privilege and office by:

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 22: “Aber allmählich geriet diese Lehre mehr und mehr in Vergessenheit. Durch die kirchliche Praxis, durch das Regiment der Konsistorien, Superintendenten u.s.w. wurde sie in den Hintergrund gedrängt. Spener, der Pietist, klagte mit Recht die orthodoxen Lutheraner seiner Zeit an, dass sie ganz verlernt hätten, was Luther vor zweihundert Jahren vom geistlichen Priestertum geschrieben habe. Auch heutzutage wissen die Lutheraner in Deutschland so gut wie nichts von dieser Lehre. Sie gestehen den Christen als solchen gewisse priesterliche Verrichtungen zu, z. B. das Gebet im Kämmerlein; aber z. B. die Verwaltung der kirchlichen Angelegenheiten gehört nach ihrer Meinung nicht den Christen, als Priestern, zu, sondern dafür seien gewisse Stände und Ämter von vornherein festgesetzt.”

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 10: “Das geistliche Priestertum der gläubigen Christen umfasst nicht nur das Recht des unmittelbaren Verkehres mit Gott, das Anrecht an alle Güter der Kirche, sondern auch Recht und Pflicht, die Güter des Hauses Gottes zum Besten anderer zu verwalten.”

- (a) calling preachers and teachers,
- (b) regulating the doctrine and life of the church's servants,
- (c) practicing church discipline,
- (d) baptizing, absolving, etc. in cases of necessity.<sup>38</sup>

Stoeckhardt understood the doctrine of the ministry as a necessity due to the fact that God wanted his Word to be publicly preached and the Sacraments rightly administered. Stoeckhardt sees the most important duty of believers within a Christian congregation is to insure the public proclamation of the Word of God: "Just what is the duty of all believers within the congregation? Above all, it is this, that they call pastors and teachers."<sup>39</sup> Stoeckhardt further explains this position with three statements highlighting the progression of the thought of Thesis II:

- (1) As spiritual priests all Christians have the authority and the right themselves to teach, to baptize, to absolve or to administer the Office of the Keys.
- (2) However, it is, of course, God's will and order that certain persons, who are specially qualified, administer the public ministry of the Word.
- (3) And, therefore, it is the duty of the congregation, of the priestly people, to commission this public ministry, the ministry of the Word.<sup>40</sup>

Stoeckhardt's understanding of the ministry, according to this essay, begins with Christ's Great Commission. He maintains that when Christ instructed his disciples to go into all the world and make disciples (Matthew 28), to go into all the world and preach the gospel (Mark 16) and to forgive and retain sins (John 20), that he was giving these exhortations to all believers until the

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.: "Als Gemeinde und innerhalb der Gemeinde bethätigen die gläubigen Christen ihr Priesterrecht und—amt damit, dass sie: (a) Prediger und Lehrer berufen, (b) Lehre und Leben der Diener der Kirche richten, (c) untereinander Zucht üben, d. im Notfall selber taufen, absolvieren, u.s.w."

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 22: "Was ist denn nun Pflicht aller Gläubigen innerhalb der Gemeinde? Nun vor allem dieses, dass sie Prediger und Lehrer berufen."

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 23: "(1) Alle Christen haben als geistliche Priester Macht und Recht, selber zu lehren, zu taufen, zu absolvieren oder das Schlüsselamt zu verwalten; (2) Nun ist's aber freilich Gottes Wille und Ordnung, dass bestimmte Personen, die besonders dazu geschickt sind, das öffentliche Predigtamt verwalten; (3) Und darum ergibt sich als Pflicht der Gemeinde, des priesterlichen Volkes, diesen öffentlichen Dienst, das Predigtamt, zu bestellen."

end of time: “But when we look at the passages themselves, we do not find a single word which indicates that the disciples come into consideration here as apostles. To the contrary the entire context indicates that they received that assignment simply as disciples, as believers.”<sup>41</sup>

Stoeckhardt argues that since Jesus promised that he was present wherever two or three believers gathered in his name (Matthew 18), and this promise is for all believers, then the Gospel imperative—to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28)—is for all believers as well: “To the same individuals with whom this promise (Matthew 18) is concerned, however, the Lord Christ shortly before gave that command and assignment. Accordingly, the disciples come into consideration as disciples, as believers.”<sup>42</sup> Stoeckhardt saw the Office of the Keys as belonging to all believers as well, citing Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions and Luther to make his point that all Christians are priests and have a command from the Lord of the church to preach the Word.<sup>43</sup> “We wish here simply to drive into the heart and conscience of our Christians the truth that they all are priests and so are also preachers.”<sup>44</sup>

Stoeckhardt then in his essay “The Rights and Duties of the Spiritual Priesthood” comes to his main point, “that it now is God’s will and order that certain persons, who are especially qualified, administer the public service of the Word, the ministry of the Word. Along with the universal priesthood of all Christians there is a public ministry of the Word.”<sup>45</sup> Stoeckhardt then

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 23: “Aber sehen wir die Sprüche selbst an, so finden wir mit keinem Wort angedeutet, dass die Jünger hier als Apostel in Betracht kommen. Der ganze Zusammenhang zeigt im Gegenteil, dass sie bloss als Jünger, als Gläubige jenen Auftrag empfangen haben.”

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 24: “Denselben Personen aber, denen diese Verheissung gilt, hat der Herr Christus kurz zuvor jenen Befehl und Auftrag gegeben. Somit kommen die Jünger als Jünger, als Gläubige in Betracht.”

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 24–28.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 28: “sondern wir wollen hier nur die Wahrheit unsern Christen ins Herz und Gewissen treiben, dass sie alle Priester, und darum auch alle Prediger sind.”

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.: “dass es nun aber Gottes Wille und Ordnung ist, dass bestimmte Personen, die besonders geschickt sind, den öffentlichen Dienst des Wortes, das Predigtamt, verwalten. Neben dem allgemeinen Priestertum aller Christen gibt es ein öffentliches Predigtamt.”

explained that while all Christians have the right to preach the Gospel, to forgive and retain sin, and to administer the Sacraments, for the sake of harmony and good order in the church, there must be a public ministry, “that one person in the congregation preaches; the others remain silent and listen to what the speaker has to say.”<sup>46</sup> Stoeckhardt was quick to make the point that unlike the nineteenth-century Erlangen theologian, J. W. F. Höfling, who appears to have denied the divine institution of the ministry, he believed, taught and confessed that the public ministry was a divine institution. Stoeckhardt regarded the belief that the ministry of the Word is merely a human arrangement as a Reformed teaching.<sup>47</sup>

What biblical proof does Stoeckhardt cite to establish the second *locus* of his understanding of the ministry, that the ministry of the Word is perpetuated by the universal priesthood? He cites three New Testament passages:

In Acts 20:28, St. Paul addresses the elders (we may say: pastors) of the congregation at Ephesus: ‘Listen carefully! Watch yourselves and the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, so that you feed the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood.’ In 1 Cor. 12:28 it reads: ‘And God has first appointed in the church apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those who administer, and those speaking with different kinds of tongues.’ And in Eph. 4:10–12 it is written: ‘He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill all things. And he gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, so that the saints might be prepared for the work of the ministry, so that the body of Christ may be built up.’<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 29: “Diese Ordnung ist nun das Predigtamt, dass einer in der Gemeinde predigt, die andern aber schweigen und dem, was jener sagt, zuhören.”

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.: “Aber wir könnten nun geneigt sein, zu denken, das Predigtamt sei eine gute, vernunftgemässe, menschliche Ordnung, ähnlich der andern menschlichen Ordnung, dass die Leute gerade am Sonntage sich zum öffentlichen Gottesdienst versammeln, und weiter nichts. So stellen es die Reformierten thatsächlich dar. Aber das ist falsch.”

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 29: “Apost. 20, 28. redet St. Paulus die Ältesten (wir können sagen: die Pastoren) der Gemeinde zu Ephesus also an: ‘So habt nun acht auf euch selbst und auf die ganze Herde, unter welche euch der Heilige Geist gesetzt hat zu Bischöfen, zu weiden die Gemeinde Gottes, welche er durch sein eigen Blut erworben hat.’ 1 Kor. 12, 28. heisst es: ‘Und Gott hat gesetzt: in der Gemeinde aufs erste die Apostel, aufs andere die Propheten, aufs dritte die Lehrer, danach die Wunderthäter, danach die Gaben gesund zu machen, Helfer, Regierer, mancherlei Sprachen.’ Und Eph. 4, 10–12. steht geschrieben: ‘Der hinunter gefahren ist, das ist derselbige, der aufgefahren ist

On the basis of these passages, at least in this essay, Stoeckhardt understands the ministry as more function than form:

In these three passages special individuals are mentioned: bishops, pastors, evangelists, teachers, prophets. These persons get their names from the work they perform. It is their function that as teachers they teach, as prophets preach, as pastors nourish, as bishops oversee and direct (since bishop means in German ‘overseer’).<sup>49</sup>

On the basis of these passages, Stoeckhardt also concludes that while all Christians are priests, every Christian pastor who holds a legitimately issued call possesses a call of divine origin, and this fact must be impressed upon Christians.<sup>50</sup>

Stoeckhardt in his stressing that the public ministry is perpetuated by the universal priesthood, according to God’s will and order, is also concerned not to give any impression that the outcome of this is two separate and distinct classes of priests. Instead, he emphasizes that while all Christians have been given the Gospel imperative to make disciples of all nations, pastors have received a divine call to publicly preach and teach on behalf of the congregation. Thus the universal priesthood and the ministry of the Word do not cancel one another out, but instead complement each other.<sup>51</sup> They are two separate and distinct offices:

The priestly honor is for all Christians, but the public ministry of the Word is a service, and it is indeed a public service, a service to the congregation. Ministers are to regard themselves as servants. The congregations are to regard their pastors as servants. Preachers are not to domineer but are to realize that they are servants. On the other hand congregations ought not to forget that the service which their pastors

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über alle Himmel, auf dass er alles erfüllete, und er hat etliche zu Aposteln gesetzt, etliche aber zu Propheten, etliche zu Evangelisten, etliche zu Hirten und Lehrern, dass die Heiligen zugerichtet werden zum Werk des Amts, dadurch der Leib Christi erbauet werde.”

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 29–30: “In diesen drei Stellen sind besondere Personen namhaft gemacht: Bischöfe, Hirtern, Evangelisten, Lehrer, Propheten. Diese Personen haben ihren Namen von dem Werk, das sie ausrichten; es ist ihre Aufgabe, dass sie lehren als Lehrer, predigen als Propheten, weiden als Hirten, aufsehen, regieren als Bischöfe (denn Bischof heisst zu deutsch ‘Aufseher’).”

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 30: “Darum müssen wir denn auch dies unsern Christen einschärfen: So gewiss alle Gläubigen Priester und darum auch Prediger sind, so gewiss ist doch auch das Amt, das ein jeder berufener Prediger in seiner Gemeinde verwaltet, eine göttliche Stiftung.”

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 31: “Das sind nun aber doch verschiedene Dinge, verschiedene Ämter: Priestertum und Amt des Dienstes. Darum heben sich allgemeines Priestertum und öffentliches Predigtamt nicht auf.”

render is ordained by God, that they who preach to them have been placed by God to be their servants.<sup>52</sup>

Stoeckhardt here presents the idea that all Christians are priests and thus have a *private* ministry, while pastors on the other hand are never called priests but are consistently referred to as servants, who conduct a *public* ministry in behalf of and in the name of others.

Stoeckhardt spends the rest of his district convention essay explaining exactly how the ministry is perpetuated by the universal priesthood. He maintains that while the Word of God has established the duties and privileges of the spiritual priesthood: “In that same Word of God, however, it is written that God has made still another arrangement, namely, has established the holy ministry, so that things with which the spiritual priesthood is concerned can be publicly administered.”<sup>53</sup> According to Stoeckhardt, local believers commission the public ministry in their midst through these activities: (1) by calling and installing qualified pastors and teachers; (2) by giving their called pastors and teachers the means to support themselves; and (3) by passing judgment on called pastors and teachers regarding their adherence to the Word of God.<sup>54</sup>

The act that commences the establishment of the ministry of the Word in a local congregation, according to Stoeckhardt, is when a local congregation issues a divine call or

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.: “Die priesterliche Würde kommt allen Christen zu, das öffentliche Predigtamt aber ist ein Dienst, und zwar ein öffentlicher Dienst, ein Dienst an der Gemeinde. Als Diener sollen die Prediger sich selbst, als Diener sollen die Gemeinden ihre Pastoren ansehen. Die Prediger sollen sich nicht überheben, sondern wissen, dass sie Diener sind; hinwiederum die Gemeinden sollen das nicht vergessen, dass der Dienst, welchen die Prediger ihnen erweisen, von Gott verordnet ist; dass die, welche ihnen predigen, von Gott als Diener ihnen gesetzt sind.”

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 33: “In demselben Worte Gottes steht aber auch, dass Gott noch eine andere Ordnung getroffen, nämlich, das heilige Predigtamt eingesetzt habe, damit die Dinge, mit welchen das geistliche Priestertum umgeht, öffentlich verwaltet werden.”

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 34–42, especially 41: “Aus dem Obersatz, dass alle Christen Priester, und in folgedessen auch Prediger sind, folgt weiter b. dass sie auch Recht und Pflicht haben, Lehre und Leben der Diener der Kirche zu richten. Die Christen haben als Priester das Evangelium, Lehre und Predigt in der Hand. Kraft dieses Rechtes bestellen sie das Predigtamt, berufen und erhalten Prediger und Lehrer. Aber eben weil sie dieses Recht von Gott haben, so haben sie nun auch das Recht und die Pflicht, über die Lehre und Predigt zu wachen, und dafür zu sorgen, dass die, welche den öffentlichen Dienst verwalten, recht lehren und weiden.”



summons to a qualified pastor or candidate. Stoeckhardt distinguished two types of divine calls, immediate and mediate:

One distinguishes a double kind of sending or calling. In former times God called immediately, through revelations, dreams, and visions. As experience teaches, this has now ceased. Calling now occurs mediately. But no matter what, calling must occur. Since God is now silent and no longer calls directly, it must then be humans who do the calling. But from what has been previously said it is clear enough that these humans are none other than the spiritual priests. Pastors are to be sent, called. This is required by the rule and order laid down by the apostle in Rom. 10. Such sending or calling, however, is the right of those who are generally entrusted and commanded with spiritual matters, the spiritual priests, all believing Christians.<sup>55</sup>

Through several lengthy quotes from Martin Luther, Stoeckhardt then further explains that since the ministry of the Word is perpetuated by the universal priesthood, the priesthood of all believers needs to support pastors and teachers after they accept calls to local congregations.<sup>56</sup> Closely associated with supporting one's local ministry, is the importance of establishing and then maintaining a system to educate future ministers of the Gospel: "If Christians are responsible for the ministry of the Word, then they are also responsible for the education of teachers and pastors, this is their priestly right and duty."<sup>57</sup> Stoeckhardt also makes the point that it is very rare to possess the pure Gospel, and even if a church body has the pure Gospel, it can

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 34: "Man unterscheidet nun eine doppelte Art von Sendung oder Berufung. Früher hat Gott unmittelbar berufen, durch Offenbarungen, Träume und Gesichte. Das hat jetzt aufgehört, wie die Erfahrung lehrt; die Berufung geschieht jetzt mittelbar. Aber irgendwelche Berufung muss geschehen; da Gott nun schweigt und nicht mehr direkt beruft, so müssen es Menschen sein, die berufen. Aus dem bisher Gesagten aber ist's klar genug, dass das keine andere, als die geistlichen Priester sind. Die Prediger sollen gesandt, berufen werden, das fordert die von dem Apostel Röm. 10. aufgestellte Regel und Ordnung. Solches Senden und Berufen kommt aber denen zu, welchen überhaupt alle geistlichen Dinge anvertraut und befohlen sind, den geistlichen Priestern, allen gläubigen Christen."

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 42–46.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 40: "Wenn Christen für das Predigtamt verantwortlich sind, so sind sie auch dafür verantwortlich, dass Lehrer und Prediger erzogen werden, das ist ihr priesterlich Recht und Pflicht."

easily lose it. One way to help insure the preaching of the pure Gospel was to support the training of teachers and pastors and especially to support needy students.<sup>58</sup>

The duty of establishing and maintaining the public ministry also required measures of quality control on the part of the spiritual priesthood of all believers according to Stoeckhardt: “But since they have this privilege from God, they now also have the privilege and duty to keep watch over doctrine and preaching and ensure that those who engage in this public ministry teach and nourish correctly.”<sup>59</sup> Stoeckhardt uses several examples from Scripture to demonstrate the importance of this duty of the universal priesthood, including citing the example of the Bereans in Acts 17. Ideally, it was his heart’s desire to see this scenario take place in every Christian congregation:

Ah, how happy our congregations can and ought to be when their pastors come before them and say: ‘Look you, namely, you Christians in the congregation, you have every right to scrutinize us, to determine whether every word we speak truly agrees with the Word of God. You are the people who ultimately must judge as to whether the preaching is true or false, whether to obey or refuse to obey.’<sup>60</sup>

In another Iowa District convention essay, “Directions for Congregational Life As Contained in the Letters to the Corinthians,” delivered in 1889, Stoeckhardt further elaborates on the duties of a Christian congregation to pass judgment on its called workers’ faithfulness to the Word of God:

A Christian congregation ought to demand nothing more and nothing less of its minister than that he administer the mysteries of God faithfully and knowledgeably,

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 41: “Dazu dient nun aber auch dieses scheinbar ganz äusserliche Werk, dass man Lehrer, Prediger heranbildet, arme Studenten unterstützt.”

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.: “Aber eben weil sie dieses Recht von Gott haben, so haben sie nun auch das Recht und die Pflicht, über die Lehre und Predigt zu wachen, und dafür zu sorgen, dass die, welche den öffentlichen Dienst verwalten, recht lehren und weiden.”

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 45: “Ach, wie können und sollen sich doch unsere Gemeinden freuen, dass ihre eigenen Pastoren vor sie hintreten und sagen ihnen: ‘Sehet ihr, nämlich ihr Christen in der Gemeinde, ihr habt das Recht, auf uns acht zu geben, ob jedes Wort, das wir reden, auch wirklich mit Gottes Wort stimmt. Ihr seid die Leute, die am letzten darüber zu richten und zu urteilen haben, ob recht oder falsch gepredigt, ob zu gehorchen, oder der Gehorsam zu verweigern sei.’”

clearly and intelligibly present the divine mysteries which concern salvation, so that each individual is able to comprehend and understand, so that he can come to faith and be saved, in other words, that the pastor preach the sure and undefiled Word of God.<sup>61</sup>

Stoeckhardt reminds the convention attendees: “A congregation should feel itself fortunate and count its blessings if it has a minister who proclaims to it the Word loud and clear.”<sup>62</sup> Exactly what should a faithful pastor share with the congregation that called him? Stoeckhardt declares “The Gospel is the content of the office, the main thing of all preaching.”<sup>63</sup> “The office of a Christian minister consists in this, that he constantly reminds his congregation of the age-old truth: Christ, the Crucified and the Resurrected.”<sup>64</sup> Stoeckhardt clearly disagreed with some other Lutheran synods of his day that denied their congregations the right to evaluate the doctrine and practice of its pastors, such as the Buffalo Synod.<sup>65</sup>

Stoeckhardt also points out that matters of doctrine and practice were not the only spheres the members of a Christian congregation could and should rightly evaluate in regard to their pastor. Functioning as spiritual priests, the members of a local congregation have both the right and the obligation to judge their called workers’ lifestyles. In his essay regarding the spiritual lessons to be learned from Paul’s Corinthian correspondence, Stoeckhardt’s fourth thesis reads: “Of course, the congregation must pay attention to the life the minister leads, whether it is in

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<sup>61</sup> George Stoeckhardt, “Die Weisungen für das Gemeindeleben, welche in den Corintherbriefen enthalten sind,” *Achter Synodal—Bericht des Iowa-Districts der deutschen evang.-luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio und anderen Staaten, 1889* (St. Louis: Luth. Concordia-Verlag, 1889), 21: “Eine Christengemeinde soll von ihrem Prediger nicht mehr und nicht weniger verlangen, als dass er Gottes Geheimnisse treu und gewissenhaft verwalte, die göttlichen Geheimnisse, welche die Seligkeit betreffen, recht klar und fasslich vorlege, so dass sie Jeder fassen und verstehen, also zum Glauben kommen und selig werden kann, mit andern Worten, dass er Gottes Wort lauter und rein verkündige.” English translation by Erwin W. Koehlinger, “Directions for Congregational Life as Contained in the Letters to the Corinthians,” available in *Essays and Papers*, 205–252.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 22: “Eine Gemeinde soll sich glücklich, selig preisen, wenn sie einen solchen Prediger hat, der ihr Gottes Wort lauter und rein verkündigt.”

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 23: “Das Evangelium ist Inhalt des Amtes, die Hauptsache aller Predigt.”

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*: “Das Amt eines christlichen Predigers besteht darin, dass er seine Gemeinde immer wieder an die alte Wahrheit erinnert: an Christum, den Gekreuzigten und Auferstandenen.”

<sup>65</sup> Stoeckhardt, “Thesen über die Rechte und Pflichten des geistlichen Priestertums,” 46–47.

conformity with his teaching.”<sup>66</sup> Stoeckhardt sees many parallels between a pastor’s personal lifestyle and his pulpit effectiveness. He points out in this essay that if a pastor does not live a sanctified personal and family life out of the pulpit, people can easily be led to believe that Christianity is an exercise in hypocrisy. But on the other hand, a pastor backing up his preaching with a life which truly reflects committed discipleship is a life that gives power to his preaching.<sup>67</sup> “One can then see that what he is saying is not just babble, but that his teaching is bringing forth fruit. It is certainly the duty of a congregation to observe whether the pastor is living what he is preaching.”<sup>68</sup>

Throughout his essay on the directions that can be learned from the Corinthian correspondence, Stoeckhardt places the responsibility of holding the pastor accountable to living a God-pleasing lifestyle on the local congregation that issued a divine call to the pastor. Stoeckhardt here makes a clear distinction between the general spiritual priesthood of believers and the ministry of the Word in regard to whether a pastor can continue to be in the ministry after a moral lapse. While assuring a repentant person of the forgiveness of sins, Stoeckhardt was quick to point out:

We should say to him, ‘If you are repentant, you are forgiven, and heaven is open to you. However, God’s Word makes a distinction between a Christian and a minister. According to God’s Word those who are in charge of the church’s affairs ought to

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<sup>66</sup> Stoeckhardt, “Die Weisungen für das Gemeindeleben,” 11: “Freilich muss die Gemeinde aber auch darauf Acht haben, ob der Wandel des Predigers mit seiner Lehre stimmt.”

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 25: “Der Segen der Amtsführung hängt mit vom Wandel des Predigers ab. Der ärgerliche Wandel eines Predigers hindert offenbar den Erfolg der Predigt. Wenn der Prediger einen ärgerlichen Wandel führt, so denkt Mancher: der predigt nur, weil es sein Amt und Geschäft ist; man sieht, es ist ihm kein Ernst, was er predigt; wer weiss, ob das wahr ist, was er predigt, vielleicht ist das ganze Christentum nichts als Heuchelei. Wenn dagegen der Prediger einen guten Wandel führt, so bekräftigt er seine Lehre mit der That.”

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.: “Man sieht dann, dass das, was er sagt, kein leeres Geschwätz ist, sondern dass diese Lehre auch gute Früchte bringt. So ist gewiss Pflicht einer Gemeinde, auch darauf Acht zu haben, ob der Prediger das, was er lehrt, auch lebt.”

have good repute among those who are without. For this reason you cannot again assume the public ministry.’<sup>69</sup>

In summary, Stoeckhardt sees the public ministry of the Word as a God-instituted office which God designed to be perpetuated by the universal priesthood of all believers. Clergy and laity constitute this priesthood of believers. From within this fellowship of believers, men are trained and then called by local congregations into the ministry of the Word. In this public office, instituted by God, the task of preaching the Word of God and the administration of the Sacraments—although given to the whole church—is entrusted to one person. The spiritual priesthood of all believers, represented locally by members of a Christian congregation, according to Stoeckhardt, establishes the ministry of the Word in its midst by issuing a divine call to a qualified candidate and then by continuously supporting him in his work. The congregation safeguards the ministry of the Word by maintaining a careful watch over its pastor’s doctrine and life by constantly comparing these with the Word of God.

### **Locus III: The Ministry of the Word is Instituted by God**

George Stoeckhardt also testifies in his published writings that he regards the ministry of the Word as divinely instituted. Although it is crystal clear in his writings that Stoeckhardt regards the ministry as instituted by God himself, it is not always clear from his writings *when* he believed the ministry was actually instituted. Did Stoeckhardt believe that God ordained the ministry in the Old Testament and then continued this same ministry in the New Testament? Or did he believe that God ordained one ministry of the Word for his Old Testament people and another ministry of the Word for his New Testament church?

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 28: “. . . sondern man sage zu ihm: Wenn du bussfertig bist, so hast du Vergebung und es steht dir der Himmel offen, aber Gottes Wort macht einen Unterschied zwischen einem Christen und einem Prediger, dem Träger des Amtes; nach Gottes Wort sollen diejenigen, die der Kirche vorstehen, ein gut Gerücht haben bei denen, die draussen sind, darum kannst du das öffentliche Amt nicht wieder übernehmen.”

From his published writings, it first must be stated unequivocally that George Stoeckhardt certainly believed that the ministry was both a divinely instituted office and divinely instituted functions. In employing a developmental approach to how Stoeckhardt came to understand these aspects of the ministry, one again must begin with the exposition that he wrote on Luther's Small Catechism. The first known Bible citation he uses in regard to any kind of divine institution of the ministry of the Word is Hebrews 13:17: "Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you." In his catechism exposition, Stoeckhardt points to this verse as justification for showing respect toward members of the ministry as part of keeping the Third Commandment:

And finally, all owe to the spiritual fathers, preachers and teachers [who through the office is commanded by God to care for congregational members and students] submission, obedience and love, that they willingly accept the wholesome doctrine and adorn the doctrine through a good mode of life. Hebrews 13:7.<sup>70</sup>

In his first published writing, Stoeckhardt described the ministry (*Seelsorger-Amt*) as an institution commanded or ordered by God, although he does not provide a chronology about when he believed this ministry of the Word was instituted.

About fifteen years after he published his explanation of the Small Catechism, Stoeckhardt was asked to deliver a convention essay on the spiritual priesthood of all believers. In this previously cited essay (under Locus II.), Stoeckhardt clearly states that he regards the modern day ministry of the Word as being instituted by God at the beginning of the New Testament. He regards the reason God instituted the ministry as soteriological and eschatological:

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<sup>70</sup> Stoeckhardt, *Die heilsame Lehre*, 34: "Und schliesslich schulden Alle auch den geistlichen Vätern, Predigern und Lehrern, denen von Gott das Seelsorger-Amt für Gemeindeglieder und Schüler befohlen ist, Gehorsam, Folgsamkeit, Liebe, dass sie die heilsame Lehre willig aufnehmen und durch einen guten Wandel zieren. Hebr. 13, 17."

However, we could be inclined to think that the ministry of the Word is a good, logical, human arrangement, similar to the other human arrangement that people just gather together on Sunday for public worship, and that is all. This is exactly the way the Reformed portray it. But this is wrong. This arrangement, about which we admit that it is natural and logical, is also God's arrangement, ordained by him. (Note: One could wonder perhaps why our dear God established this public ministry of the Word, and did not leave it, as he has many others, e.g. the place and time for public worship, to the judgment of the Christians. Now, under no circumstances are we to dispute with God and ask: Why are you doing this? But this arrangement, as far as we are able to see, God undoubtedly established because it was his concern that through the preaching of the Gospel many should be saved, that it would gain acceptance everywhere, and should be conducted in the proper manner.)<sup>71</sup>

Stoeckhardt here clearly testifies that the ministry of the Word is divinely instituted and not a human arrangement. But when did this divine institution take place? Stoeckhardt continues by quoting three passages which he regards as scriptural proof that the ministry is divinely instituted:

This we wish to prove from three Scripture passages: In Acts 20:28, St. Paul addresses the elders: (we may say: pastors) of the congregation at Ephesus: 'Listen carefully! Watch yourselves and the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, so that you feed the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood.' In 1 Cor. 12:28 it reads: 'And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those who administer, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.' And in Eph. 4:10–12 it is written: 'He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill all things. It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, so that the saints might be prepared for the work of the ministry, so that the body of Christ may be built up.'<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Stoeckhardt, "Thesen über die Rechte und Pflichten des geistlichen Priestertums," 29: "Aber wir könnten nun geneigt sein, zu denken, das Predigtamt sei eine gute, vernunftgemässe, menschliche Ordnung, ähnlich der andern menschlichen Ordnung, dass die Leute gerade am Sonntage sich zum öffentlichen Gottesdienst versammeln, und weiter nichts. So stellen es die Reformierten thatsächlich dar. Aber das ist falsch. Diese Ordnung, von der wir zugeben, dass sie natürlich und vernunftgemäss ist, ist vielmehr zugleich Gottes Ordnung, von Gott gestiftet.\* (\*Man könnte sich vielleicht darüber wundern, dass der liebe Gott diese Ordnung des öffentlichen Predigtamtes festgesetzt, und sie nicht, wie manche andere, z. B. Ort und Zeit des öffentlichen Gottesdienstes, der Vernunft der Christen überlassen hat. Nun sollen wir ja in keinem Stück mit Gott rechten und ihn fragen: Warum thust du das? Aber diese Ordnung, so viel können wir wohl erkennen, hat Gott selbst ohne Zweifel deshalb getroffen und festgesetzt, weil ihm alles daran liegt, dass durch die Predigt des Evangeliums recht viele selig werden, dass sie darum überall im Schwange gehe, und in der rechten Weise geführt werde)."

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 29: "Diese wollen wir aus drei Schriftstellen beweisen: Apost. 20, 28. redet St. Paulus die Ältesten (wir können sagen: die Pastoren) der Gemeinde zu Ephesus also an: 'So habt nun acht auf euch selbst und auf die

Stoeckhardt then makes the point after listing several individual offices of the ministry, overseers, pastors, evangelists, teachers and prophets, that the individuals who hold these offices have received them from above:

All three passages teach, however, that these individuals have received their office from God himself; that it is God's will, order and institution that these very persons publicly nourish and teach the church of God. For in the one passage it is stated that God has established some as pastors, in another that Christ, who descended and then ascended, therefore, the exalted Christ, and in the third the Holy Spirit has established some as overseers. According to these passages, therefore, the public ministry was instituted by the triune God. Thus we must enjoin this upon our Christians: As certain as it is that believers are priests and therefore also preachers, in the same way, it is also certain that the office every called servant holds in his congregation is of divine origin.<sup>73</sup>

So here Stoeckhardt clearly takes the position that the ministry of the Word, as it is understood in the New Testament era, arose during the time of the New Testament by the direct action of God working within his church and among his people.

Two years after he presented this lengthy essay, Stoeckhardt preached a sermon, "Das Amt des alten Testaments und das Amt des neuen Testaments" (The Office of the Old Testament and the Office of the New Testament). In this sermon Stoeckhardt again does not provide an exact chronology of when he believed God instituted the ministry; but in this 1893 sermon, he

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ganze Herde, unter welche euch der Heilige Geist gesetzt hat zu Bischöfen, zu weiden die Gemeinde Gottes, welche er durch sein eigen Blut erworben hat.' 1 Kor. 12, 28. heisst es: 'Und Gott hat gesetzt in der Gemeinde aufs erste die Apostel, aufs andere die Propheten, aufs dritte die Lehrer, danach die Wunderthäter, danach die Gaben, gesund zu machen, Helfer, Regierer mancherlei Sprachen.' Und Eph. 4, 10–12. steht geschrieben: 'Der hinunter gefahren ist, das ist derselbige, der aufgefahren ist über alle Himmel, auf dass er alles erfüllete, und er hat etliche zu Aposteln gesetzt, etliche aber zu Propheten, etliche zu Evangelisten, etliche zu Hirten und Lehrern, dass die Heiligen zugerichtet werden zum Werk des Amts, dadurch der Leib Christi erbauet werde.'"

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 30: "Alle drei Stellen lehren aber nun auch, dass diese Personen ihr Amt von Gott selbst empfangen haben; dass es Gottes Wille, Ordnung und Stiftung ist, dass gerade diese Personen die Gemeinde Gottes öffentlich weiden und lehren; denn in der einen Stelle heisst es, Gott habe die Hirten gesetzt, in der andern, Christus, der hinunter und aufgefahren ist, also der erhöhte Christus, und in der dritten, der Heilige Geist habe sie zu Bischöfen gesetzt. Nach diesen Stellen ist also das Predigtamt eine Stiftung des dreieinigen Gottes. Darum müssen wir denn auch dies unsern Christen einschärfen: So gewiss alle Gläubigen Priester und darum auch Prediger sind, so gewiss ist doch auch das Amt, das ein jeder berufener Prediger in seiner Gemeinde verwaltet, eine göttliche Stiftung."



declares: “The preaching of the Law, just as the preaching of the Gospel, has been ordained and established by God.”<sup>74</sup>

Over ten years later, Stoeckhardt wrote an article, “Von der Aufrichtung und Erhaltung des öffentlichen Predigtamts” (On the Establishment and Preservation of the Public Ministry of the Word). This was one of a series of in-depth doctrinal articles Stoeckhardt and other Missouri Synod theologians wrote in *Der Lutheraner* to explain and defend the doctrinal position of the synod in the years following the death of C. F. W. Walther. In this 1895 writing, which is his most complete treatment of the ministry, Stoeckhardt again sees the New Testament era as the time when God instituted the ministry. Stoeckhardt began this article by reiterating some familiar themes. The church is the congregation of believers. The church has been entrusted with the Word and the Sacraments for the salvation of souls. Christ gave his church the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations, and the Office of the Keys, the power to forgive and retain sin, since all Christians are spiritual priests before God.<sup>75</sup> Then Stoeckhardt explains why God considered it a necessity to institute a public office to administer the means of grace:

Now to be sure, from the outset in Christendom, there was the practice and system, that one [Christ] prescribed particular individuals for the public service of Word and Sacrament, who were qualified and able. In the ancient church they were the bishops, the presbyters and deacons. They are the preachers or pastors today.<sup>76</sup>

Stoeckhardt continues this article by explaining his belief in the *übertragen* relationship between the priesthood of all believers and the public ministry of the Word. This is the concept that while

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<sup>74</sup> George Stoeckhardt, “Das Amt des alten Testaments und das Amt des neuen Testaments,” *Magazin für ev.-luth. Homiletik* 11 (August 1893): 256: “Die Predigt des Gesetzes, wie die Predigt des Evangeliums ist von Gott eingesetzt und verordnet.”

<sup>75</sup> George Stoeckhardt, “Von der Aufrichtung und Erhaltung des öffentlichen Predigtamts,” *Der Lutheraner* 51 (January 29, 1895): 17. This article is translated into English as Appendix Two.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 17: “Nun ist freilich von Anfang an in der Christenheit Brauch und Ordnung gewesen, dass man für den öffentlichen Dienst am Wort und Sacrament besondere Personen, welche dazu tüchtig und geschickt waren, verordnet hat. Das waren in der alten Kirche die Bischöfe, Presbyter, Diakonen. Das sind jetzt die Prediger oder Pastoren.”

all Christians are spiritual priests and have the right to publicly preach, administer the Sacraments, absolve sins, etc., they do not publicly use these rights for the sake of harmony and good order in the church. Instead, they confer or transfer these rights to either one man or a group of men who are properly called and qualified to serve in the public ministry in behalf of the entire congregation.

One year after Stoeckhardt wrote his major writing on the ministry in *Der Lutheraner*, he published his *Die biblische Geschichte des Alten Testaments*, which was republished in 1906. This biblical history text was based on morning devotions which Stoeckhardt delivered at Concordia Seminary. Stoeckhardt sees a public ministry already in the Old Testament, but consistently, he never identifies it with the New Testament ministry of the Word. He often in his Old Testament history, however, makes applications for pastors based on Old Testament examples and lessons. When did God in a general way institute a public preaching of the Gospel for his Old Testament people? According to Stoeckhardt, it began among the prediluvian patriarchs when public worship of God began. His comments on Genesis 4 would be typical of his remarks on the public ministry in the Old Testament:

The family of the pious stands in opposition to the family of the godless. God gave Adam and Eve a replacement for Abel, Seth. He had Abel's mind. In this family the public sermon arose. They preached the name of the LORD, of the man, the LORD, in whom Eve had already hoped, of the future Redeemer. There is in all times among this perverted race a holy people on earth, God's people. This people has its desire and joy in the preaching and God's Word. Yes, God's Word, the Gospel of Christ, that is our sole comfort, our rod and staff in this evil life.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> George Stoeckhardt, *Die biblische Geschichte des Alten Testaments* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1896), 9: "Dem Geschlecht der Gottlosen steht das Geschlecht der Frommen gegenüber. Gott gab Adam und Eva Ersatz für Abel, den Seth. Der hatte Abels Sinn. In diesem Geschlecht kam öffentliche Predigt auf. Man predigte von dem Namen des Herrn, von dem Mann, dem Herrn, auf den Eva schon gehofft hatte, von dem zukünftigen Erlöser. So gibt's zu allen Zeiten mitten unter diesem verkehrten Geschlecht ein heiliges Volk auf Erden, Gottes Volk. Das hat seine Lust und Freude an der Predigt und Gottes Wort. Ja, Gottes Wort, das Evangelium von Christo, das ist unser einziger Trost, unser Stecken und Stab in diesem bösen Leben."

Stoeckhardt provides similar comments elsewhere in his Old Testament history regarding the public preaching of the Word. He describes Abram, upon arriving in the land of Canaan, as one who “preached again the name of the Lord.”<sup>78</sup> He cites the calling of Moses, as an example of the Lord instituting an Old Testament form of the ministry. Yet Stoeckhardt points out that Moses had his call from the Lord himself and likewise servants of the church today cannot serve unless they are duly called by the Lord: “And now Moses received from God the commission, to lead Israel out of Egypt. Without a commission and call from God, no one should undertake anything in the kingdom of God.”<sup>79</sup>

In the middle of *Die biblische Geschichte des Alten Testaments*, in addressing the prophetic office, Stoeckhardt begins to draw close parallels between the prophetic office and the New Testament office of the ministry. Concerning the call of Samuel, Stoeckhardt remarks: “For Samuel, the call of God was at the same time an appointment into the office of the prophet.”<sup>80</sup> Stoeckhardt then soon looks into the future and applies the call of Samuel to the future office of the ministry, and basically equates the Old Testament prophetic office with the New Testament ministry of the Word:

In his Word the Lord has revealed the future destiny of the world and of the church, his wonderful ways and righteous judgments. And it is part of the office and call of a prophet and a preacher, that he tells the people also the bitter truth, proclaiming to them also without timidity and fear of man the future wrath and the judgment of God.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 18: “Er predigte wiederum von dem Namen des Herrn.”

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 69–70: “Und nun erhielt Mose von Gott den Auftrag, Israel aus Egypten auszuführen. Ohne Auftrag und Beruf Gottes soll Niemand im Reich Gottes etwas unternehmen.”

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 208: “Für Samuel war der Ruf Gottes zugleich Berufung in das Prophetenamt.”

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.: “Im Wort hat er uns die künftigen Geschehisse der Welt und der Kirche, seine wunderbaren Wege und gerechten Gerichte offenbart. Und es gehört zum Amt und Beruf eines Propheten und Predigers, dass er den Leuten auch die bittere Wahrheit sagt, ohne Scheu und Menschenfurcht ihnen auch den zukünftigen Zorn und das Gericht Gottes verkündigt.”

Stoeckhardt sees a degree of parallelism with the institution of the monarchy in 1 Samuel and the later divine institution of the New Testament ministry: “God had selected this man, Saul, and appointed him to be king over his people. Similar things still happen today in God’s church. God selects and appoints men, who should help his people. Christ gives to his congregation teachers, shepherds and leaders.”<sup>82</sup> In commenting on the 1 Samuel 10 account of the Israelites choosing Saul as their king, Stoeckhardt draws a parallel between the institution of the office of king and the New Testament ministry of the Word:

The people proceeded to elect a king. This happened through the lot. God guided the lot, so that it fell on Saul, the son of Kish. And all the people proclaimed Saul to be king. We are reminded here of an arrangement of God of the New Testament. The congregation of God chooses, according to God’s will, its teachers, shepherds and leaders and installs them in their office. The called servants of the Word, however, are instituted precisely for this reason by God and given to the congregation. And God equips these same ones also with his Spirit and gifts, so that they can perform the duties of their office, just like Saul had received the Spirit of God.<sup>83</sup>

In his Old Testament history, Stoeckhardt consistently avoids directly pairing the divine institution of any Old Testament ministerial office with the divine institution of any New Testament ministerial office. It appears that he regards the Old Testament ministerial offices of prophet, priest and king to be specifically for Old Testament times, while God instituted a new ministerial office for his New Testament people. However he does use Old Testament examples of faithful ministers to inspire and encourage contemporary ministry. He uses the narrative of how the prophet Nathan confronted King David about his adultery and murder as a sterling

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 214: “Gott hatte sich diesen Mann, Saul, ersehen und zum König über sein Volk bestimmt. Aehnliches geschieht auch jetzt noch in der Kirche Gottes. Gott ersieht und erwählt sich die Männer, die seinem Volk helfen sollen. Christus gibt seiner Gemeinde Lehrer, Hirten, Regenten.”

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 216–217: “Nun schritt das Volk zur Königswahl. Dieselbe geschah durch das Loos. Gott lenkte das Loos, dass Saul, der Sohn Kis, getroffen wurde. Und alles Volk rief Saul zum Könige aus. Wir werden hier an eine Gottesordnung des Neuen Testaments erinnert. Die Gemeinde Gottes ist es, die nach Gottes Willen sich Lehrer, Hirten, Regenten erwählt und in ihr Amt einsetzt. Die berufenen Diener des Worts sind aber eben damit von Gott der Gemeinde gesetzt und gegeben. Und Gott rüstet dieselben auch mit seinem Geist und Gaben aus, dass sie ihr Amt recht ausrichten, wie ja auch Saul den Geist Gottes empfangen hatte.”

example to follow: “Nathan is an example of a righteous preacher and pastor. It is part of the office and calling of a preacher, that he chastise sin, without regard of the person, that he tell him his sin directly and proclaim to the offender God’s wrath and judgment.”<sup>84</sup> Similarly Stoeckhardt holds up the faithful execution of the divinely instituted priesthood during Old Testament times as an example for New Testament ministers of the Gospel to follow. In commenting on how Azariah and eighty other priests confronted King Uzziah when he burned unlawful incense in the temple sanctuary, he writes: “Azariah and his priests are a splendid example also for the New Testament servants in the sanctuary, for the servants of the Word. They should also preserve the rights of the sanctuary, and under circumstances without timidity confront kings, princes, worldly authority.”<sup>85</sup> Stoeckhardt also pairs the divine institution of the Levitical priesthood with a pastor’s divine call to conduct a local ministry in his comments on the story of Nehemiah dedicating the rebuilt walls of Jerusalem:

We find here first a registry of leaders of the priests and Levites, which alternately provide the service in the sanctuary. Proof was required of the priests and Levites, that they really belonged to the tribe of Levi, because only to them the command to serve in the sanctuary was given by God. So now all, who have an office in the congregation and who furnish public service, must be able to prove that this has been commanded to them by God. The regular call from a Christian congregation is the proof for it.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 253: “Nathan ist ein Exempel eines rechten Predigers und Seelsorgers. Es gehört zum Amt und Beruf eines Predigers, dass er die Sünde straft, ohne Ansehen der Person, Jedem seine Sünde aufs Haupt gibt und dem Uebelthäter Gottes Zorn und Gericht verkündigt.”

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 331: “Asarja und seine Priester sind ein treffliches Vorbild auch für die neutestamentlichen Diener am Heiligthum, für die Diener am Wort. Die sollen auch die Rechte des Heiligthums wahren und unter Umständen auch ohne Scheu Königen, Fürsten, der weltlichen Obrigkeit entgegentreten.”

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 377: “Wir finden hier zunächst ein Verzeichniss der Häupter der Priester und Leviten, welche abwechselnd im Heiligthum den Dienst versahen. Von den Priestern und Leviten wurde der Nachweis verlangt, dass sie wirklich dem Stamm Levi zugehörten, denn dem war allein von Gott der heilige Dienst befohlen. So müssen auch jetzt Alle, die in der Gemeinde ein Amt haben und den öffentlichen Dienst versehen, beweisen können, dass ihnen dies von Gott befohlen ist. Der ordentliche Beruf von Seiten einer christlichen Gemeinde ist der Beweis dafür.”

The only other Old Testament writing of Stoeckhardt that speaks clearly about the divine institution of the ministry is his Isaiah commentary. In his commentary on the call of Isaiah in chapter 6, Stoeckhardt describes Isaiah's calling as a prophet as a call to engage in the preaching of reconciliation.<sup>87</sup> He then equates the immediate call of Isaiah to be a preacher of reconciliation to the mediate call contemporary preachers have to be preachers of reconciliation and states that this ministerial office has been established by God:

This was the calling of the prophet, this is the calling of Christian preachers on earth. Such calling is from God. God sends preachers. Isaiah and the other prophets were directly called and sent by God. When preachers now are called through men, through the congregation, it is nonetheless the calling of God, it is the triune God, who is sending them. He has established the ministry, which preaches reconciliation.<sup>88</sup>

To summarize Stoeckhardt's understanding of the divine institution of an Old Testament ministry, it can be said that he understood that at various times, God established different offices to convey his holy will to his chosen people. These offices included the prophet, the priest and the king. Nowhere does Stoeckhardt indicate in his Old Testament history that any Old Testament office would continue on when Judaism was fulfilled in the establishment of Christianity in the New Testament era. Three years after Stoeckhardt published his Old Testament history, he published a New Testament history, *Die biblische Geschichte des Neuen Testaments*, which was also reprinted in 1906. In this Bible history commentary, Stoeckhardt finds a divine institution for the office of the ministry in several New Testament pericopes, starting with the words of Jesus Christ in the Gospels. He also speaks about the institution of the ministry in some of his district convention essays, which have been previously noted. According

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<sup>87</sup> Stoeckhardt, *Jesaia*, 67–68.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*: “Das war der Beruf der Propheten, das ist der Beruf der christlichen Prediger auf Erden. Solcher Beruf ist von Gott. Gott sendet Prediger. Jesaia, die Propheten wurden unmittelbar von Gott gesendet und berufen. Wenn die Prediger jetzt durch Menschen, durch die Gemeinde berufen werden, so ist gleichwohl der Beruf von Gott, der dreieinige Gott ist's, der sie sendet. Der hat das Amt, das die Versöhnung predigt, aufgerichtet.”

to Stoeckhardt's New Testament history, the ministry of the Word is a continuation of the public ministry of Jesus Christ. Stoeckhardt saw the baptism of Jesus as the beginning of Christ's public ministry: "With his baptism Jesus entered into his 'ministry of the Anointed One' (*Christusamt*), into his ministry as Redeemer, into his prophetic, high priestly, kingly public calling of life."<sup>89</sup> Stoeckhardt then pairs the public ministry of Jesus with the calling of the twelve apostles, who were then to continue what Christ began during his public ministry:

From the circle of these his disciples, who surrounded him, the Lord summoned now twelve and appointed them to be apostles. Apostle means 'a messenger who is sent.' These his apostles, the Lord wanted to send out later, so that they should preach, and to proclaim Christ to the world, and so continue his work on earth. Yes, they should be witnesses of Christ in still another way, as the other disciples, they should write and speak from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, so that the church should be built on the Word of the apostles, like the prophets, as on an unshakeable foundation. In confirmation of this their special calling, the Lord desired to equip them with miraculous gifts and abilities. The Lord chose twelve apostles according to the number of the twelve tribes of Israel. The twelve apostles are the holy patriarchs of New Testament Israel.<sup>90</sup>

Stoeckhardt then follows the line of thought that contemporary ministers of the Gospel are the successors of the ministry of the apostles. Stoeckhardt uses the word image or illustration (*Bild*) to describe the relationship of the ministry of the apostles to the contemporary ministry of the Word:

We see in the band of the apostles an illustration of the church of Christ and the called servants of the church. Christ gathers his church and elects his servants and

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<sup>89</sup> George Stoeckhardt, *Die biblische Geschichte des Neuen Testaments* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1899), 23: "Mit seiner Taufe ist Jesus in sein Christusamt, in sein Erlöseramt, in sein prophetisches, hohepriesterliches, königliches Berufsleben öffentlich eingetreten."

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 86: "Aus dem Kreis dieser seiner Jünger, die ihn umgaben, sonderte der Herr nun zwölf aus und bestellte sie zu Aposteln. Apostel heisst Sendbote. Diese seine Apostel wollte der Herr später aussenden, dass sie predigen, Christum der Welt, verkündigen und so sein Werk auf Erden fortsetzen sollten. Ja, sie sollten Christi Zeugen sein noch in anderer Weise, als die andern Jünger, sollten aus Eingebung des Geistes reden und schreiben, und so sollte auf das Wort der Apostel, wie der Propheten, die neutestamentliche Kirche als auf einen unerschütterlichen Grund aufgebaut werden. Zur Beglaubigung dieses ihres besondern Berufs wollte der Herr sie auch mit Wundergaben und—kräften ausrüsten. Zwölf Apostel erwählte der Herr nach der Zahl der zwölf Stämme Israels. Die zwölf Apostel sind die heiligen Patriarchen des neutestamentlichen Israel."

instruments in most cases from the insignificant people. He accepts poor tax collectors and sinners and takes them into his service.<sup>91</sup>

In connection with the divine institution of the ministry by Jesus Christ, Stoeckhardt in his New Testament history also regards the Office of the Keys to be divinely instituted. While he recognized the fact that all Christians have the Office of the Keys, he also stresses that called ministers of the Gospel publicly administer this office by divine command. The divine institution of the Office of the Keys came on the evening of the first Easter, when the risen Christ appeared to his disciples and gave them the authority to forgive and retain sins:

The peace, which Christ purchased for us and which the disciples in the power of the Spirit are supposed to spread on earth, essentially consists of the forgiveness of sins. Having completed and sealed the work of redemption, the Lord confirmed for his disciples the Office of the Keys, which he already earlier had again and again awarded them, the power to forgive and retain sins. And namely not only to the apostles, but all disciples, all believers. For not only were the eleven assembled on that evening, but also the other disciples with them. What the called disciples of Christ do with us from his divine command, that they do in the name and commission of the congregation of believers.<sup>92</sup>

Furthermore, George Stoeckhardt saw the reinstatement of Peter in John 21 after his denial of Jesus as Christ reinstating Peter into the ministry of the Word, which in this pericope he describes as the office of the shepherd or apostle. He then immediately applies this story to the contemporary ministry of the Word:

He installs him anew in the office of shepherd, the office of apostle, which he had forfeited with his denial. Ardent love toward Christ in every way is a prime

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 88: "Wir sehen in der Apostelschaar ein Bild der Kirche Christi und der berufenen Diener der Kirche. Christus sammelt seine Kirche und erwählt sich seine Diener und Werkzeuge zumeist aus dem geringen Volk. Arme Zöllner und Sünder nimmt er an und nimmt sie in seinen Dienst."

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 323: "Der Friede, den Christus erworben hat und den die Jünger in der Kraft des Geistes auf Erden ausbreiten sollen, besteht wesentlich in der Vergebung der Sünden. Nachdem das Werk der Erlösung vollendet und besiegelt war, bestätigte der Herr seinen Jüngern die Schlüsselgewalt, die er schon früher wiederholt ihnen zugesprochen hatte, die Gewalt, Sünden zu vergeben und zu behalten. Und zwar nicht nur den Aposteln, sondern allen Jüngern, allen Gläubigen. Denn es waren an jenem Abend nicht nur die Elfe versammelt, sondern auch die andern Jünger mit ihnen. Was die berufenen Diener Christi aus seinem göttlichen Befehl mit uns handeln, das thun sie im Namen und Auftrag der Gemeinde der Gläubigen."



requirement for the ministry of the Word. Whoever loves the chief shepherd from the heart, he then also devotes himself completely to the service of his flock.<sup>93</sup>

Once Stoeckhardt begins his commentary on events in the Acts of the Apostles, he demonstrates that he believes that since the ministry of the Word had been instituted by Christ himself, the apostles of Christ continued this ministry of the Word by selecting and electing qualified individuals to continue the task of the Great Commission. In commenting on the first Christian congregation in Jerusalem, Stoeckhardt describes the apostles as men who held a divinely instituted or ordained office: “The apostles, who were God-ordained teachers of all of Christendom, were at first teachers of the first Christian congregation in Jerusalem. And their teaching was Christ’s teaching.”<sup>94</sup> In commenting on the election of the seven deacons in Acts 6, Stoeckhardt uses the expression *Amt des Wort* (ministry of the Word), to describe the work of the apostles.<sup>95</sup> In his comments on Acts 14, he remarks how Paul and Barnabas ordained elders in and with the consent of the newly founded congregations:

The apostles also ordained here and there elders in the congregations, according to the approval of the congregations. This is God’s will, that Christian congregations in all places establish the ministry of the Word, so that the faithful are preserved in the faith and more and more souls are won for the faith.<sup>96</sup>

In perhaps his clearest comments on his belief that the contemporary ministry of the Word is a continuation of the apostolic office of the Word, Stoeckhardt has these comments on Paul’s address to the elders from Ephesus in Acts 20:

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 326: “Er setzt ihn von Neuem in das Hirtenamt, das Apostelamt ein, das er mit seiner Verleugnung verscherzt hatte. Brünstige Liebe zu Christo ist allewege ein Haupterforderniss für das Predigtamt. Wer den Erzhirten von Herzen liebt, der gibt sich dann auch ganz in Liebe dem Dienst seiner Heerde hin.”

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 337: “Die Apostel, die von Gott verordneten Lehrer der ganzen Christenheit, waren zuerst die Lehrer der ersten Christengemeinde in Jerusalem. Und ihre Lehre war Christi Lehre.”

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 350.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 374: “Die Apostel ordneten auch hin und her Aelteste in den Gemeinden, unter Zustimmung der Gemeinden. Das ist Gottes Wille, dass die christlichen Gemeinden aller Orten das Amt des Worts aufrichten, damit die Gläubigen im Glauben erhalten und immer mehr Seelen für den Glauben gewonnen werden.”

In this farewell address, Paul reminded them first of all, that for three years, which he spent in Ephesus, he had walked as an apostle among them, and what he here says of himself, is an example for all servants of the Word. . . . Thereupon the apostle turned to the elders and that, what he said to them, also applies to all pastors and shepherds. The elders or presbyters here are called bishops, which means overseers. There is only one office in the church, the office of the Word. And this is founded by God. The bishops or shepherds of the congregation are, if they are also called by the congregation, ‘placed there by the Holy Spirit.’ And so they are supposed to establish the office, which has been commanded to them by God, with all faithfulness and to feed the congregation of God, which he, which God has bought with his own blood.<sup>97</sup>

In his lengthy 1895 convention essay to the Missouri Synod’s Nebraska District, Stoeckhardt points to the day of Pentecost as the beginning of at least the teaching ministry of the twelve apostles: “The apostles were the teachers ordained by God for all Christendom. It was on the day of Pentecost that they entered their actual teaching ministry. The apostles’ doctrine was Christ’s doctrine. They taught what they had received from the Lord.”<sup>98</sup> In his commentary on Ephesians 4, Stoeckhardt uses three verbs to describe how the Lord of the church has instituted the ministry of the Word in both New Testament times and in contemporary times:

And now the apostle emphasizes the fact that not only did the Lord designate, appoint, and allot these very persons to the church, respectively, to the individual congregations, ζῆτο, Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 12:28, but that he *gave* them to his church. No one can fail to see that this is true in the case of the apostles, who were inspired by God, and also of the prophets, to whom God gave revelations. But also the regular

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 393: “In dieser Abschiedsrede erinnert Paulus zunächst daran, wie er die drei Jahre lang, die er in Ephesus zugebracht, als Apostel unter ihnen gewandelt, und was er hier von sich aussagt, ist ein Exempel für alle Diener am Wort. . . . Darauf wendet sich der Apostel an die Aeltesten und auch das, was er ihnen sagt, gilt allen Predigern und Hirten. Die Aeltesten oder Presbyter heissen hier Bischöfe, das heisst Aufseher. Es gibt nur Ein Amt in der Kirche, das Amt des Worts. Und das ist von Gott gestiftet. Die Bischöfe oder Hirten der Gemeinde sind, wenn auch von der Gemeinde berufen, ‘vom Heiligen Geist gesetzt.’ Und so sollen sie das Amt, das ihnen von Gott befohlen ist, mit aller Treue ausrichten und die Gemeinde Gottes weiden, welche Er, welche Gott mit seinem eigenen Blut erworben hat.”

<sup>98</sup> Stoeckhardt, “Die ersten Christengemeinden, von denen die Apostelgeschichte berichtet, Muster und Vorbilder für unsere Gemeinden,” *Zehnter Synodal—Bericht des Nebraska-Districts der deutschen evang.-lutherischen Synode von Missouri, Ohio und anderen Staaten, 1895* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1895), 13: “Die Apostel waren die von Gott verordneten Lehrer der ganzen Christenheit. Mit dem Tag der Pfingsten hatten dieselben ihr eigentliches Lehramt angetreten. Der Apostel Lehre war Christi Lehre. Sie lehrten, was sie vom Herrn empfangen hatten.” English translation by Erwin W. Koehlinger, “The First Christian Congregations,” available in *Essays and Papers*, 1–58.

shepherds or pastors of the individual congregations, in short, all Christian preachers are gifts of Christ to his church.<sup>99</sup>

In conclusion, Stoeckhardt's third *locus* on the ministry, that the ministry of the Word is instituted by God, is thoroughly documented in his writings. Stoeckhardt certainly believed and taught that God had instituted a ministry in the Old Testament, but these various offices ended when the Old Testament ended and the New Testament began. Stoeckhardt traces the divine institution of the New Testament ministry to the public ministry of Jesus Christ. To him, the New Testament ministry was a continuation of the public ministry of Jesus Christ. The apostles were the first ministers of the Gospel in the New Testament. They began their preaching and teaching ministry on the same day that is considered to be the birthday of the Christian church, the day of Pentecost. All subsequent ministers of the Gospel, while not actually holding the office of apostleship, are still in an office that in many respects is a continuation of the office that Jesus instituted during his public ministry. According to Stoeckhardt, this office is the office of the Word. All pastors in future generations are members of this one office of the Word.

Stoeckhardt's consistent use of certain terminology through his multifarious writings demonstrates that his broad outlines and major *loci* on the doctrine of the ministry stayed the same. He consistently describes the functions of the ministry as a *Dienst*, a service to God, and ministers as *Diener Gottes*, servants of God. When Stoeckhardt uses the word *Amt* to describe the ministry, he uses this word more to describe the specific office of the ministry rather than the specific functions of the ministry. As a rule, in writing and speaking about the ministry in general, he prefers *Dienst* rather than *Amt*. Stoeckhardt also consistently teaches that the

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<sup>99</sup> Stoeckhardt, *Epheser*, 198: "Und nun hebt der Apostel hervor, nicht nur dass der Herr eben diese Personen der Kirche, resp. den einzelnen Gemeinden, gesetzt, bestellt, verordnet hat, ἔθετο, Act. 20, 28; 1 Kor. 12, 28, sondern dass er sie seiner Kirche gegeben hat. Dass dies bei den Aposteln, die eben von Gott inspiriert waren, wie bei den Propheten, welchen der Herr Offenbarung gab, der Fall war, leuchtet von selbst ein. Aber auch die regulären Hirten der einzelnen Gemeinden, alle christlichen Prediger sind Gabe Christi."

members of the public ministry are summoned out of the universal priesthood of all believers. The Lord of the church specifically called twelve men to be his apostles, who had specific qualifications. Likewise, he taught that the universal priesthood and the ministry of the Word are not identical; they are two separate entities. Only such men who possess the biblical qualifications of the ministry and who are duly summoned through a divine call have the right to be in the ministry of the Word.

Stoeckhardt regarded God as the one who established both an Old Testament ministry and a New Testament ministry. While there are many parallels between public ministers in the two testaments, throughout his writings, Stoeckhardt did not ever equate any Old Testament ministerial office with a New Testament ministerial office. He recognized the New Testament office, which he describes as both *Predigtamt* and *Amt des Wort*, as a separate and distinct office from any similar office in the Old Testament. This New Testament office was instituted by Christ himself when he called his twelve apostles and then implemented by the universal priesthood throughout the rest of the New Testament era. The New Testament ministry of the Word, according to Stoeckhardt, is perpetuated by this spiritual priesthood of all believers, who prayerfully issue divine calls to qualified individuals. These called individuals then conduct a public ministry of Word and Sacrament in behalf of and in the name of the calling body. There is one common spiritual thread running through the three main *loci* of Stoeckhardt's doctrine of the ministry. It is this. In his exegesis, Stoeckhardt applies an approach that one would expect to see from an exegete trained under Johann von Hofmann. Remembering Hofmann's approach of understanding the particulars of Scripture in light of the totality of God's revelation, Stoeckhardt proceeded and articulated a doctrine of the ministry on the basis of the totality of God's

revelation, God's love for people culminating in the cross of Christ, essentially salvation history (*Heilsgeschichte*).

While Johann von Hofmann's apologist, Matthew Becker, is convinced after years of intensive study of Hofmann's writings that the typical interpretation of Hofmann's theological method is inaccurate, this writer is hard-pressed not to point out that Hofmann never broke completely free from the subjective climate of nineteenth-century German idealism, which Stoeckhardt came to renounce.<sup>100</sup> Hofmann's kenocism makes it hard for many to believe that his concept of *Heilsgeschichte* and atonement was the same as George Stoeckhardt's. Be that as it may, since Stoeckhardt regarded the Bible as thoroughly Christocentric, his exegetical methodology proceeded to articulate an understanding of the ministry which would have as its chief activity the proclamation of Jesus Christ as the atoning sacrifice for sin to the entire world. The proclamation of the atonement—a particular event in history—for Stoeckhardt served as the whole message for the ministry of the Word

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<sup>100</sup> Becker, 20–24.

## CHAPTER 4

### FURTHER ARTICULATIONS OF STOECKHARDT'S DOCTRINE OF THE MINISTRY

When one surveys the chronological bibliography of George Stoeckhardt, which is listed as Appendix E in the dissertation of William Goerss, one does not easily get the impression that Stoeckhardt wrote extensively on the doctrine of the ministry. One of the reasons why Goerss compiled a listing of every published periodical article and book that Stoeckhardt wrote during his career was Goerss's wish that his bibliography would be a help to "future researchers in determining how Stoeckhardt reacted to historical events as they occurred."<sup>1</sup> Since the battle in crafting and then articulating the Missouri Synod's doctrine of church and ministry had already taken place in the synod's first generation of existence, Stoeckhardt's writings focus on other issues that were confronting the Missouri Synod in its second generation. His arrival in America in 1878 coincided with the beginning of the Election Controversy, which racked the Synodical Conference in the late 1870s and early 1880s. Stoeckhardt also wrote extensively on the ecclesiastical life in his native Germany and was especially critical of contemporary German theologians and their modernism. The Missouri Synod's ongoing doctrinal conferences and battles with other Lutheran synods, such as the Ohio and Iowa Synods, also produced a steady stream of articles by Stoeckhardt.

In the previous chapter, Stoeckhardt's three main doctrinal *loci* on the ministry were delineated from various writings he produced. This chapter will now expand on these *loci* and

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<sup>1</sup> Goerss, Appendix E, 414.

how he also tried to enable others to understand the ministry primarily through his periodical writings and his convention essays. Succinctly, this chapter will provide further articulations of Stoeckhardt's doctrine of the ministry, beginning during his ministry in the Saxon *Freikirche* through the last New Testament commentaries he published shortly before his death.

Stoeckhardt's first published work listed in Goerss' bibliography is his explanation of Luther's Small Catechism, published in 1875. Stoeckhardt devoted his writing for the next three years to articles in *Die Ev.-Luth. Freikirche*, dealing with a wide range of topics involving ecclesiastical affairs in Germany at the time. He served as an editor of this periodical from its inception until his acceptance of the call to Holy Cross in St. Louis. In July 1878, Stoeckhardt published a retraction of what he considered to be doctrinal errors in his catechism exposition in both *Die Freikirche* and *Der Lutheraner*. After this retraction, he wrote three short pieces in *Die Ev.-Luth. Freikirche*, and then stopped writing published articles altogether for nearly a year, as he began his ministry at Holy Cross.

The first significant writing that George Stoeckhardt published in America which sheds light on how he understood the ministry was a series of articles he wrote on Law and Gospel while he was still in the parish ministry at Holy Cross, "Gesetz und Evangelium nach ihren unterschiedlichen Wirkungen," translated into English by Walter H. Bouman as "Law and Gospel According to Their Several Effects."<sup>2</sup> In this writing, Stoeckhardt highlights that the ministry is all about preaching and about being a servant of Christ and not a servant of Moses:

Christian pastors are called and are preachers of the Gospel. The Gospel characterizes their office and makes them effective. The purpose and end of their calling is to save those who hear them. However, it is only by the Gospel men are

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<sup>2</sup> George Stoeckhardt, "Gesetz und Evangelium nach ihren unterschiedlichen Wirkungen," *Lehre und Wehre* 39 (June 1887): 154–160; (July and August): 191–205; (September 1887): 241–49; (October 1887): 273–282; George Stoeckhardt, "Law and Gospel According to Their Several Effects," trans. Walter H. Bouman, Valparaiso University Pamphlet Series – no. 9 (Valparaiso, Indiana: Valparaiso University Association, 1946), 5–40

converted, renewed, and saved. There are preachers, earnest men, who are more the servants of Moses than of Christ.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover in his preaching, a pastor has to properly distinguish between Law and Gospel in order to conduct his call properly: “If a pastor, mindful of the distinct effects of these two kinds of words, rightly divides Law and Gospel, each of his hearers will receive the appropriate portion of the meal.”<sup>4</sup> Stoeckhardt was also very concerned that a pastor preaches the Law in all its severity and the Gospel in all its sweetness:

What is the use of all sweetness and salvation if one is not able to taste and to enjoy it, if it does not enter into the heart? However, only an alarmed, terrified, bruised heart is able to grasp and retain the comfort of God. No; a pastor who is not fully in earnest with the Law is not in earnest with the Gospel either.<sup>5</sup>

According to “Law and Gospel According to Their Several Effects,” Stoeckhardt saw a pastor’s office as comprised of two basic activities, public preaching and the private care of souls, with the Law and the Gospel having to be applied faithfully to each activity:

A pastor will always be mindful of the different effect of Law and Gospel also in his care of souls. There is indeed a difference between preaching and the care of souls. Public preaching is designated for the whole group. In the care of souls the preacher applies the Word to the individual.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 273: “Die christlichen Prediger heissen und sind Prediger des Evangeliums. Das Evangelium gibt ihrem Amt und ihrer Wirksamkeit den Character. Das ist Zweck und Ziel ihres Berufs, dass sie die, welche sie hören, selig machen. Das Evangelium aber allein ist es, welches die Menschen bekehrt, bessert und selig macht. Es gibt Prediger, ernste Männer, welche viel mehr Mosis, als Christi Diener sind.” Bouman, 32.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 275: “Wenn ein Prediger, des Unterschieds und der unterschiedlichen Wirkung der beiderlei Worte eingedenk, Gesetz und Evangelium recht theilt, so empfängt jeder seiner Zuhörer sein gebührend Theil Speise.” Bouman, 33.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 277: “Was hilft alle Süßigkeit und Seligkeit, wenn man nicht fähig ist, sie zu kosten und zu schmecken, ihrer zu geniessen, wenn sie nicht in das Herz eingehet? Aber eben nur ein geängstetes, erschrockenes und zerschlagenes Herz ist fähig und geschickt dazu, den Trost Gottes zu fassen und zu bewahren. Nein, ein Prediger, dem es mit dem Gesetz kein voller Ernst ist, meint es auch nicht ernst mit dem Evangelium.” Bouman, 36.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 278: “Der unterschiedlichen Wirkung von Gesetz und Evangelium wird ein Prediger des Evangeliums aber auch in seiner Seelsorge stets eingedenk sein. Allerdings ist ja hier nun ein Unterschied zwischen Predigt und Seelsorge. Die öffentliche Predigt gilt dem ganzen Haufen. In der Seelsorge applicirt der Prediger das Wort den Einzelnen.” Bouman, 36.



A major theme of Stoeckhardt's understanding of the Christian ministry is that a pastor constantly must maintain an evangelical practice in dealing with his members, so that he might consistently be seen as a servant of Christ and not a servant of Moses. Stoeckhardt's idea of a pastor personally caring for the souls of his people was to apply a specific Word of God to a specific situation and to train laity in using the Word of God to comfort themselves:

It belongs to the vocation of the pastor to familiarize the weak, the sick, the suffering, the sorrowing, with the Word of God, especially with the Word of comfort. . . . It is self-evident that a Christian pastor should proclaim nothing else than the full comfort of the Gospel to the afflicted who are being tortured day and night by their sins.<sup>7</sup>

For Stoeckhardt, maintaining church discipline was an integral part of the pastoral care of souls and an integral part of correctly employing Law and Gospel:

An important part of the office of a bishop entrusted to pastors is the exercising and handling of church discipline. A pastor, heartily concerned with the welfare of his congregation, on his part will see to it that all things are done decently and in order in the congregation. He will take care that no evil practices prevail, and he will instruct his congregation to exercise church discipline in the manner prescribed by the Lord. Above all, the pastor must watch closely over himself that he gain and maintain the correct bearing over against the congregation. This part of his office requires special wisdom and understanding, courage and determination.<sup>8</sup>

Stoeckhardt concluded his lengthy series of articles on the various effects of Law and Gospel by expressing thanks to God for the fact that in the Missouri Synod few congregations existed that were impenitent and were unworthy of the public ministry.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 280: "Es gehört zum Beruf des Seelsorgers, den Schwachen, Kranken, Leidenden, Traurigen das Wort Gottes nahezubringen, und zwar vornehmlich das Wort des Trostes. . . . Dass der Seelsorger vollends Angefochtenen, die von ihren Sünden Tag und Nacht gequält werden, nichts anders zu verkündigen hat, als den vollen Trost des Evangeliums, versteht sich von selbst." Bouman, 38.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.: "Ein wichtiges Stück des den Predigern anvertrauten Bischofsamts ist die Handhabung der Gemeindezucht. Ein Prediger, dem das Wohl und Gedeihen seiner Gemeinde am Herzen liegt, wird an seinem Theil darauf sehen und darüber wachen, dass in der Gemeinde Alles ehrlich und ordentlich zugehe, dass keine Mißstände einreissen und sich festsetzen, und wird seine Gemeinde anleiten, in der von dem Herrn befohlenen Weise Zucht zu üben. Ein Prediger muss da vor Allem sich selbst recht überwachen, dass er der Gemeinde gegenüber die rechte Haltung gewinne und bewahre. Gerade dieser Theil seines Amtes erfordert Weisheit und Verstand, hinwiederum auch Muth und Entschlossenheit." Bouman, 38–39.

In light of the death of C. F. W. Walther in May 1887, George Stoeckhardt published his first of many periodical articles which all had as their theme the importance of conserving and preserving the Missouri Synod's doctrinal heritage. In 1888 the first of these articles appeared, "Wie kann und soll jeder einzelne Lutheraner dazu helfen, dass seiner Kirche die reine Lehre erhalten bleibe?" (How Can and Should Each Lutheran Assist His Church in Preserving Pure Doctrine?) In this article, Stoeckhardt noted that the founding generation of the Missouri Synod was rapidly dying off and that a new generation was rising. He then reviewed the often bitter experiences of the Saxon immigrants, both in their native Germany and also once they arrived in America. Stoeckhardt then recalled the Saxons' heated controversy with the Prussian Lutheran immigrants concerning the doctrines of church and ministry. Stoeckhardt's interpretation of the outcome of this struggle was that the founding fathers of the Missouri Synod drew from the truths of God's Word and arrived at the conclusion that they were God's church and that each congregation possessed the Office of the Keys.<sup>9</sup> He described the result of this doctrinal controversy for the Missouri Synod: "In short, the Lutheran, scriptural doctrine of the church and the ministry, Luther's doctrine, the teaching of the apostles concerning the royal priesthood of all believers, was salvaged and again practiced."<sup>10</sup> This *Der Lutheraner* article convincingly demonstrates that a year after Walther's death, Stoeckhardt publicly identified the Missouri Synod's doctrine of the ministry as the scriptural doctrine of the ministry.

Stoeckhardt presented his next article that significantly addressed the doctrine of the ministry in 1889 with his lengthy writing on the pastoral instructions in the letter to Titus. These

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<sup>9</sup> George Stoeckhardt, "Wie kann und soll jeder einzelne Lutheraner dazu helfen, dass seiner Kirche die reine Lehre erhalten bleibe?" *Der Lutheraner* 44 (January 3, 1888): 2-4; (January 17, 1888): 11-13; (January 31, 1888): 19-20.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: "Kurz, die lutherische, schriftgemässe Lehre von Kirche und Amt, die Lehre Luthers, die Lehre der Apostel von dem königlichen Priesterthum aller Gläubigen war wieder zu Bewusstsein und in Kraft, Schwang und Uebung gekommen."

periodical articles have already been extensively cited (cf. pp. 67–72 of chapter 3). In these *Lehre und Wehre* articles he consistently describes the ministry as a service and ministers of the Gospel as servants of Christ. In his opening paragraph of these serial articles, Stoeckhardt explained that the epistles of Timothy and Titus are called pastoral epistles because they contain practical theology for pastors:

Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus have from ages past been called the pastoral letters. And rightly so. For they contain chiefly instructions, exhortations that concern the ministry in the Word, the office of shepherds, the pastors. 'A Pastorate of St. Paul' lies before us, or which is the same thing, a pastoral theology of the Holy Spirit.<sup>11</sup>

Stoeckhardt's article on the pastoral theology in Titus ran in seven installments during 1889. It is in this article that he crystallizes one of his chief ideas about the nature of the ministry, that the ministry is an office that is marked by service. Stoeckhardt uses two terms, *Knecht* (servant) and *Dienst* (service), to describe the ministry of the Word. He regarded St. Paul as holding the *Amt* (office) of the apostolate.<sup>12</sup> What was the nature of this ministry? It was an apostolic office of proclamation, it was an office which was a service in the Word and which featured public preaching as its main component.<sup>13</sup>

Nowhere in this writing, however, does Stoeckhardt ever equate the office of the apostolate with the contemporary ministry, but he regards the contemporary ministry of the Word as the true, legitimate successor of the apostolate: "We are on solid ground, that we apply, what the

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<sup>11</sup> Stoeckhardt, "Die pastoralen Anweisungen im Titusbrief," 6: "Die Briefe St. Pauli an Timotheus und an Titus hat man von Alters her Pastoralbriefe genannt. Und mit Recht. Denn sie enthalten vornehmlich Belehrungen, Vermahnungen, die den Dienst am Wort, das Amt der Hirten, der Pastoren betreffen. Ein Pastorale St. Pauli liegt hier vor, oder, was dasselbe ist, eine Pastoraltheologie des Heiligen Geistes."

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 7: "Paulus nennt sich selbst einen 'Knecht Gottes' und 'Apostel Jesu Christi' und bezeichnet damit sein Amt. Das ist ein Dienst, zu dem Gott ihn bestellt hat, und dieser Dienst ist das Apostolat, in welches Christus ihn berufen hat. Was das für ein Dienst, für ein Amt sei, erläutert er durch die folgenden Närbestimmungen."

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 9: "Von dem apostolischen Amt als einem Dienst am Wort, als einer Predigt des Worts sagt der letzte Satz: 'hat aber geoffenbaret zu seiner Zeit sein Wort durch die Predigt, die mir vertrauet ist nach dem Befehl Gottes, unsres Heilandes.'"

apostle here says concerning his office, to the service in the Word, which called pastors now provide to Christian congregations.”<sup>14</sup>

Stoeckhardt devotes the rest of this article to articulating what the requirements of the ministry of the Word are for pastors today. He continues with some familiar themes already discussed: Pastors are servants of the Word, and thus, are channels of the divine Word.<sup>15</sup> Because it is God’s Word, so also preaching is merely the truth, infallible truth.<sup>16</sup> A pastor conducts the duties of his office at the command of God.<sup>17</sup> No less than eternal life is the final goal of preaching, of the ministry of the Word.<sup>18</sup>

As far as George Stoeckhardt is concerned, the basic qualification of a servant of the Word is a genuine faith in Christ.<sup>19</sup> When a candidate has this, then he can truly be God’s spokesman to the church. In complete line with Stoeckhardt’s high regard for Scripture, he repeatedly states in this *Lehre und Wehre* article that diligent, constant study of doctrine and Scripture is a matter of conscience for a pastor.<sup>20</sup> When a servant of the Word is a constant student of Scripture, he is then qualified to be God’s spokesman of that Word, in speaking, exhorting and rebuking.<sup>21</sup> In his concluding remarks in this article, Stoeckhardt presents the performance of the ministry of the

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.: “Wir haben gutes Recht, das, was der Apostel hier von seinem Amt sagt, auf den Dienst am Wort, den jetzt die berufenen Prediger christlicher Gemeinden versehen, anzuwenden.”

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 10: “Die Prediger sind Diener am Wort, am Wort Gottes. Was sie predigen, ist Gottes Wort. Gott offenbart jetzt, in der Zeit des Neuen Testaments, sein Wort durch die Predigt, lässt das, was er den Menschen zu sagen hat, durch den Mund sündiger Menschen sagen. Die Prediger sind Canäle des göttlichen Worts.”

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.: “Und weil Gottes Wort, so ist die Predigt die Wahrheit schlechtweg, unfehlbare Wahrheit.”

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.: “Aber auf Befehl Gottes, des Heilandes, richtet ein christlicher Prediger sein Amt aus.”

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 11: “Das ewige Leben ist der letzte Endzweck der Predigt, des Predigamts.”

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 37: “Wir ersehen daraus, dass auch ein Diener am Wort gerade das Zeugnis haben muss, dass er ein aufrichtiger, rechtschaffener Christ sei, dass er echten, unverfälschten Glauben an den Tag lege.”

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 113: “Also fleissiges, anhaltendes Studium, Studium der Lehre, Studium der Schrift, macht der Apostel den Predigern zur Gewissenspflicht.”

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 116: “Dies ist die recht sachliche Ordnung und Reihenfolge der drei Stücke, welche der Apostel, 2, 15: angibt: 1. Rede, 2. Ermahnung, 3. Strafe.”

Word as being dependent on the grace of God: “The grace of God—this is what Christians constantly need to fulfill their Christian calling, what pastors need in order to carry out the duties of their calling.”<sup>22</sup>

The next writing that Stoeckhardt produced focusing on his understanding of the ministry was a *Der Lutheraner* article he wrote on the establishment and preservation of the public ministry of the Word.<sup>23</sup> This is the most extensive writing that Stoeckhardt produced on the general subject of the ministry. This article was part of the herculean effort made by Missouri Synod leaders to conserve the synod’s doctrinal heritage in the decades following the death of Walther, and was briefly referenced in chapter 3.

In this article, Stoeckhardt remains true to his exegetical method by taking the key scriptural passages pertaining to the doctrine of the ministry “as they read.” He begins his article by stating that the church is the congregation of believers, produced by the efficacious Word of God.<sup>24</sup> Then Stoeckhardt asks: “But to whom did the Lord give the command to preach the Word and to administer the Sacraments?”<sup>25</sup>

Stoeckhardt then explained to the readers of *Der Lutheraner*, that while Christ gave all Christians the command to make disciples of all nations and while all Christians are priests before God, nevertheless, the Lord of the church insured that “from the beginning of Christendom, there has been the custom and arrangement of appointing for the public service in

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 376: “Das ist’s, dessen die Christen zur Erfüllung ihres Christenberufs, dessen die Prediger zur Ausrichtung ihres amtlichen Berufs fort und fort bedürfen, die Gnade Gottes.”

<sup>23</sup> Stoeckhardt, “Von der Aufrichtung und Erhaltung des öffentlichen Predigtamts,” *Der Lutheraner* 41 (January 29, 1895): 17–19.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.: “Wem aber hat der Herr die Predigt des Worts und die Verwaltung der Sacramente anbefohlen?”

Word and Sacrament particular individuals who were especially qualified and able.”<sup>26</sup> “Custom and arrangement” is the wording that Stoeckhardt uses to describe the establishment (*Aufrichtung*) of the ministry of the Word.

What exegetical proof did George Stoeckhardt find in Scripture for the actual establishment of the ministry? He regarded the passages in which Christ established the Office of the Keys as the proof passages for the formal institution of the ministry of the Word. The Lord has entrusted to his disciples, to his believers the power of the keys, which is the right to forgive and retain sins, and with that all ecclesiastical authority (Mt. 16:16–19; Mt. 18:17–19; John 20:21–23).<sup>27</sup> Stoeckhardt regards the bishops, elders and deacons as members of the ministry of the Word in New Testament times and he regards pastors and preachers as members of the ministry in modern times.<sup>28</sup>

Central to Stoeckhardt’s understanding of how the ministry was established and maintained in a given locality is his concept of the laity transferring their ministerial rights to qualified men who then publicly administer these rights for the good of the entire Christian community.<sup>29</sup> He insists that each local congregation had the right and duty to establish the public ministry in its midst. He derived his position by citing Matthew 18:18, 20 and thus concluded:

That means at every locality, where a band of Christians find itself gathered together, and where only two or three are there, there is Christ with all his grace, gifts and

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.: “Nun ist freilich von Anfang an in der Christenheit Brauch und Ordnung gewesen, dass man für den öffentlichen Dienst am Wort und Sacrament besondere Personen, welche dazu tüchtig und geschickt waren, verordnet hat.”

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.: “Seinen Jüngern, seinen Gläubigen hat der Herr die Schlüsselgewalt übergeben, das Recht, Sünden zu vergeben und Sünden zu behalten, und damit alle Kirchengewalt. Matth. 16, 16–19. Matth. 18, 17–19. Joh. 20, 21–23.”

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.: “Das waren in der alten Kirche die Bischöfe, Presbyter, Diakonen. Das sind jetzt die Prediger oder Pastoren.”

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

privileges, there are keys to the kingdom of heaven, there is also the power to choose and to appoint servants of the church.<sup>30</sup>

Stoeckhardt also proceeds in his 1895 article to demonstrate from Scripture that the existence of the public ministry is a demonstration of Christ's kingdom on this earth. He rejects a Höfling-like view of the ministry—that the public ministry arose from mere expediency—with the assertion: “The matter does not rest solely in their free judgment or discretion, whether they want to administer their entrusted gifts, that is Word and Sacrament, in this way or in some other way. For the public ministry of the Word (*Predigtamt*) is itself ordained and established by God.”<sup>31</sup> Instead, citing Paul's address to the Ephesian elders at Miletus and Paul's epistle to the Ephesian congregation and the designated offices in these citations, Stoeckhardt concludes: “Therein lies to be sure, that the named offices are desired, established and ordained by Christ.”<sup>32</sup>

The rest of Stoeckhardt's lengthy *Der Lutheraner* article on the ministry focuses on the proper practice of how a local congregation establishes the ministry of the Word in its midst. Stoeckhardt writes to his readers that when a local parish sets out to call a pastor, the Christians there “exercise a high, godly right and fulfill a high godly duty, when they establish the public ministry of the Word (*öffentliche Predigtamt*).”<sup>33</sup> He is then quick to point out the calling of a shepherd must be done “honestly and orderly.”<sup>34</sup> Stoeckhardt points out that since the Holy Spirit

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.: “Also an jedem Ort, wo ein Häuflein Christen sich beisammen findet, und wären es nur zwei oder drei, da ist Christus mit allen seinen Gnaden, Gaben und Rechten, da sind die Schlüssel des Himmelreichs, da ist auch die Macht, Kirchendiener zu wählen und zu bestellen.”

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.: “Es steht nicht in ihrem freien Ermessen und Belieben, ob sie die ihr anvertrauten Güter, Wort und Sacrament, auf diese oder auf irgend eine andere Weise verwalten will. Denn das öffentliche Predigtamt ist von Gott selbst verordnet und gestiftet.” Johann W. F. Höfling (1802–1853) was a professor of theology at Erlangen and taught the public ministry arose from the expediency of preaching the gospel.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.: “Darin liegt allerdings, dass die hier genannten Aemter von Christo gewollt, gesetzt und geordnet sind.”

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.: “Ja, die Christen üben ein hohes, göttliches Recht aus und erfüllen eine hohe, göttliche Pflicht, wenn sie das öffentliche Predigtamt aufrichten.”

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.: “dass dabei Alles ehrlich und ordentlich zugehe.”

gives a variation of gifts to men, the congregation must recognize this and carefully and prayerfully call a man that matches the requirements and needs of the local congregation. Since all believers have been given the ministry or service (*Dienst*) of Word and Sacrament, the voting members of the congregation are to act in behalf of all the members and the non-voting members are to give their heartfelt unanimous consent to the decision of the voters.<sup>35</sup>

Stoeckhardt further elucidates that once a Christian congregation establishes the public ministry in its midst, it then has a sacred obligation to preserve it.<sup>36</sup> The first duty of parish members in preserving the public ministry is to understand that they certainly have not relinquished their rights as priests before God. Certainly no one without a call in the Christian congregation—except for the called preacher—is allowed to teach publicly while all the while the congregation steadfastly maintains the power of the keys and all church authority.<sup>37</sup>

According to Stoeckhardt, congregational members also preserve the ministry of the Word by being doctrinal watchdogs. Parish members are to obey their pastor as long as their pastor faithfully presents God's counsel and will: "As long as a preacher is faithful in his ministry, the congregation should hold him in high esteem."<sup>38</sup> When congregations cherish their pastors, they then honor the ministry of the Word.<sup>39</sup> Finally, Stoeckhardt writes a key element in preserving the ministry of the Word is providing for the physical needs of the pastor: "Therefore the

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.: "Es ist heilige Pflicht einer christlichen Gemeinde, das öffentliche Predigtamt in ihrer Mitte aufzurichten und dann auch zu erhalten."

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.: "Zunächst soll die Gemeinde bedenken, dass sie, indem sie dem berufenen Prediger den öffentlichen Dienst am Wort und Sacrament befohlen hat, damit nicht ihre priesterlichen Rechte und Pflichten aus der Hand gegeben hat. Gewisslich darf in der christlichen Gemeinde ohne Beruf, ausser dem berufenen Prediger, Niemand öffentlich lehren. Trotzdem aber ist und bleibt die Gemeinde die eigentliche Inhaberin der Schlüsselgewalt und aller Kirchengewalt."

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.: "So lange ein Prediger seines Amtes treulich wartet, soll die Gemeinde ihn hoch und werth halten."

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.: "Wenn die Gemeinden ihre Prediger in Ehren halten, dann bleibt auch das Predigtamt unter ihnen in Ehren."



congregation is obligated to provide them with the nourishment of the body and the necessities of life.”<sup>40</sup> Stoeckhardt quotes from Luther’s Large Catechism (which cites Scripture) to support this position that a pastor is worthy of double honor and then finishes his article on the ministry with the exhortation:

May God help all our congregations to give to the holy ministry of the Word, through which God builds his church on earth, through which he preserves and guides it toward the heavenly goal, and which has been commanded by God, the honor and respect it is due.<sup>41</sup>

A mere two years separate the two major articles George Stoeckhardt wrote on the doctrine of the ministry. In March 1897, Stoeckhardt published a journal article in *Lehre und Wehre*, in which he thoroughly explains and defends the divinity of the call of a woman parochial school teacher. This article contains the most detailed exegesis of selected New Testament texts of any writing that Stoeckhardt wrote on the ministry.

The divinity of a parochial teacher’s call has been an issue in American Lutheranism since the founding of the first Lutheran parish schools. A full two generations after the Missouri Synod was founded, Stoeckhardt and the St. Louis faculty were forced to address the issue in view of an article that was published in the synod’s school periodical, *Ev. Luth. Schulblatt*, which raised more questions than it answered on the parochial teacher’s call.<sup>42</sup> This article, compiled and published by E. W. Krauss in 1896, was merely an anthology of selected quotations from

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 18–19: “So ist die Gemeinde schuldig, ihnen des Leibes Nahrung und Nothdurst darzureichen.”

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 19: “Helfe Gott allen unsern Gemeinden, dass sie dem heiligen Predigtamt, durch welches Gott seine Kirche auf Erden baut, erhält und dem himmlischen Ziel entgegenführt, und welches ihnen von Gott befohlen ist, allewege in allen Stücken seine Gebühr geben!”

<sup>42</sup> E.A.W. Krauss, “The Missouri Synod and Its Parochial School System (1847–1922), trans. W.A. Dobberfuhr, *Ebenezer* ed. William H. T. Dau (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1922), 227, provides the information that the *Ev.-Luth. Schulblatt* was a monthly publication that first appeared in 1865. The article which necessitated a response from the St. Louis faculty, “Was sagen die alten lutherischen Kirchen—und Schulordnungen des 16. Jahrhunderts über Anstellung von Lehrerinnen?” (What Do the Old Lutheran Church and School Orders of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century Say Concerning the Appointment of Women School Teachers?) was authored by “K” (E. A. W. Krauss) and was published in *Ev.-Luth. Schulblatt* 31 (November 1896): 328–332.

Lutheran church and school orders (*Kirchenordnung*) in Germany, going back to the Reformation, all regarding the ministry of women school teachers. Why specifically this information was published in the *Schulblatt* is not explained, but in reaction to it, Stoeckhardt took it upon himself to write an eleven page article, “Von dem Beruf der Lehrerinnen an christlichen Gemeindeschulen” (On the Call of the Woman School Teacher in Christian Parochial Schools).

Stoeckhardt’s stated goal in his presentation of this aspect of the ministry is in the article’s first paragraph. In response to the question of how the call of a woman school teacher should be understood, Stoeckhardt’s response was to settle the matter according to Scripture: “This question should here in brief be illuminated with God’s Word.”<sup>43</sup>

Stoeckhardt’s exegetical method, summed up in the phrase, “take the text as it reads,” is demonstrated repeatedly in this article. He begins not with the divine institution of the ministry, but with a discussion of spiritual gifts. Here in his exegesis, Stoeckhardt equates *Aemter* (ministries) with *Dienste* (services): “To the church of Christ various gifts have been entrusted. To these gifts belong also the offices or services (*διακονία*). And there are various ministries.”<sup>44</sup>

Stoeckhardt’s exegesis leads him to conclude that since there is more than one listing of spiritual gifts in the New Testament and no two lists are exactly the same, the apostle Paul never intended to list all of the spiritual gifts available to the first century church.<sup>45</sup> Stoeckhardt’s exegesis leads him to also conclude that since the lists of New Testament spiritual gifts varied

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<sup>43</sup> George Stoeckhardt, “Von dem Beruf der Lehrerinnen an christlichen Gemeindeschulen,” *Lehre und Wehre* 43 (March 1897): 5: “Diese Frage soll hier in Kürze mit Gottes Wort beleuchtet werden.”; An English translation was prepared by the Martin Luther Institute of Sacred Studies, Decatur, Illinois, 2000 under the supervision of Kenneth K. Miller.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 65: “Der Kirche Christi sind mancherlei Gaben vertraut. Zu diesen Gaben gehören auch die Aemter oder Dienste, *διακονία*. Und es gibt verschiedene Dienste.”

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

according to locality, and since the early church was given the prerogative of being blessed with miraculous gifts, there are some ministries which were given at or for other times, of which the early church would not be aware:

He makes special mention of those gifts *χαρίσματα* which constituted a prerogative of the apostolic church—miraculous gifts and miraculous powers—with which the early church was adorned. For other times, then, other ministries were received into the church, which early Christendom did not know.<sup>46</sup>

Stoeckhardt then concludes that the public ministry takes its shape from the specific needs of the church at a particular time. But according to Stoeckhardt, the public ministry only involves profitably using the Word of God:

The congregation, being itself subject to Christ and God, is mistress over all and therefore has also the power and the right to arrange and prepare all ministries (*Dienste*), always according to needs and circumstances. The rule for this is *πρός τό συμφέρον*, to the general profit (1 Cor. 12:7). There is only one thing more to observe in this regard. All ecclesiastical ministries are somehow related to the Word, to the service of the Word.<sup>47</sup>

One of the most important contributions of this 1897 article is that it is the clearest extant example of Stoeckhardt's exegesis of the *sedes doctrinae* passages pertaining to the ministry of the Word, especially in regard to the particular form of the public ministry. Stoeckhardt's exegesis leads him to conclude that the pastorate, especially the parish pastor, is the highest office in the church and all other ministries are auxiliary to the pastor's office. He begins his argument by first stating the basic Gospel imperatives that Christ gave to his church. Then he proceeds to argue that God's Word acquires true, concrete (*greifbare*) form in the church in the

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.: "Er macht insonderheit diejenigen *χαρίσματα* namhaft, die eine Prärogative der apostolischen Kirche bildeten, Wundergaben und Wunderkräfte, mit denen die *ecclesia primitiva* geschmückt war. Zu andern Zeiten sind dann andere Dienste in der Kirche aufgekommen, welche die erste Christenheit nicht kannte."

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 65–66: "Die Gemeinde, ihrerseits Christo und Gott unterthan, ist Herrin über Alles und hat also auch die Macht und das Recht, alle Dienste zu ordnen und einzurichten, je nach Bedürfniss und Umständen. Der Maaßstab hierfür ist *πρός τό συμφέρον* zum gemeinen Nutzen. 1 Cor. 12, 7. Nur Eins ist noch hierbei zu beachten. Alle kirchlichen Dienste stehen irgendwie in Beziehung zu dem Wort, zu dem Dienst am Wort."

ministry of the Word, and the most basic form of the ministry of the Word is the pastorate. Thus Stoeckhardt concludes all other forms of the ministry are auxiliary to the parish pastorate:

Christ has ultimately summarized everything He had ordered and entrusted to His church in the words: 'Preach the Gospel to every creature.' Go forth, teach, baptize! Also, for example, such a service as the care of the poor, the care of the sick, is connected to the Word. Where this service is rightly executed and is properly practiced, there God's Word acquires true concrete form in the life of the congregation. And, therefore, all the other services are subjected to the chief office, to the office of the pastor as auxiliary services, whose establishment is not only given into the hand of the congregation, but is also ordered from God. According to Scripture, the congregational pastor (*Gemeindepastor*) is in the highest degree, *κατεξοχήν*, the teacher, the shepherd and overseer of the congregation; he is responsible for the whole congregation and must someday give account for it (Acts 20:28, 1 Pet. 5:1–3, Heb. 13:17). Thus, for example, the officers/elders are helpers of the pastor in his episcopate, to help him on this part to admonish and warn the individuals with God's Word.<sup>48</sup>

Stoeckhardt regarded the apostle Paul's exhortation to the Ephesian elders to be shepherds of the church of God, the apostle Peter's exhortations to church elders to be shepherds of God's flock and the exhortation of the author of the epistle to the Hebrews that church leaders should be obeyed as scriptural proof that the parish pastor (*Gemeindepastor*) is the called worker who exercises the most authority (*κατεξοχήν*), for he is "the teacher, the shepherd and the overseer of the congregation."<sup>49</sup> Consequently, since the parish pastor held the most comprehensive and overarching call in a local congregation, others who ministered in either a full- or a part-time way (*Dienste*) come under the authority of the chief office, the parish pastor. His office is not

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 66: "Christus hat schliesslich Alles, was er seiner Kirche befohlen und anvertraut hat, in die Worte zusammengefasst: 'Prediget das Evangelium aller Creatur.' Gehet hin, lehret, taufet!' Auch z. B. solch ein Dienst, wie die Almosenpflege, die Krankenpflege, hat Beziehung zum Wort. Wo dieser Dienst recht bestellt ist und recht geübt wird, da gewinnt Gottes Wort im Leben der Gemeinde recht greifbare Gestalt. Und eben darum sind alle andern Dienste dem vornehmsten Amt, dessen Aufrichtung der Gemeinde nicht nur in die Hand gegeben, sondern auch von Gott befohlen ist, dem Pfarramt als Helferdienste untergeordnet. Der Gemeindepastor ist nach der Schrift *κατεξοχήν* der Lehrer, der Hirte und Aufseher der Gemeinde, er ist für die ganze Gemeinde verantwortlich und muss über dieselbe dereinst Rechenschaft ablegen. Apost. 20, 28. 1 Petr. 5, 1–3. Hebr. 13, 17. So sind z. B. die Vorsteher Gehülfen des Pastors in der Episcopie, helfen ihm an ihrem Theil die Einzelnen mit Gottes Wort mahnen und verwarnen."

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

only perpetuated by the universal priesthood of all believers in a local church but was ordered by God himself. Therefore, the other ministries, according to Stoeckhardt, are auxiliary services or ministries which are subordinate to the office of the pastor (*dem Pfarramt als Helferdienste untergeordnet*).<sup>50</sup>

One ministry that George Stoeckhardt regarded as an auxiliary ministry to the parish pastor is “the ministry to the little ones,” the school teaching ministry: “One of these ministries which the congregation, as a mistress has in her hand, is the ministry (*Dienst*) to the little ones, the teaching profession.<sup>51</sup> He freely admits that in the ancient church, the office of the parochial school teacher did not exist. Like in Old Testament Israel, children received spiritual training first from their parents at home and then from the appointed elders of the believing community.<sup>52</sup> Stoeckhardt sees the office of the parochial school teacher as a ministry that evolved to meet the needs of the church:

In the course of time the ecclesiastical school system and the office of the Christian school teacher was developed. That the appointment of particular school teachers and the formation of Christian parochial schools nowadays correlates to the needs of the church and serves the general good is obvious.<sup>53</sup>

Stoeckhardt next addresses the main thrust of his article, “Can a woman parochial school teacher publicly teach the Word of God?” This was the burning issue, for Stoeckhardt concludes: “But what is spoken and taught before a large crowd of children in a classroom is public by its

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.: “Einer dieser Dienste, welche die Gemeinde, und zwar als Herrin, in ihrer Hand hat, ist der Dienst an den Kleinen, der Schuldienst.”

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.: “Im Laufe der Zeiten hat sich das kirchliche Schulwesen und das Amt christlicher Schullehrer herausgebildet. Dass heutzutage die Anstellung besonderer Schullehrer, die Errichtung christlicher Gemeindeschulen dem Bedürfniss der Kirche entspricht und dem gemeinen Nutzen dient, liegt auf der Hand.”

very nature. Whatever a teacher, even a lady teacher, does or says in the school, that he (she) does or says as before the eyes and ears of the congregation.”<sup>54</sup>

Stoeckhardt answers this question—which appeared to be a growing issue within the Missouri Synod and the Synodical Conference at the turn of the twentieth century—by doing a thorough exegesis of three selections of Paul’s writings: 1 Corinthians 14:34–36; 1 Corinthians 11:1–16; and 1 Timothy 2:11–14. His exegesis of these passages sheds light not only on how Stoeckhardt understood the role of women in a Christian congregation, but how he understood the concept of church offices that he regarded as auxiliary to that of the parish pastor.

Regarding his understanding of 1 Corinthians 14:34–36, Stoeckhardt regards all of 1 Corinthians 14 as apostolic instruction on the proper decorum of worship: “The ἐκκλησίαι of the one Corinthian congregation cannot be anything else than the public assemblies of this congregation. The entire chapter deals indeed with this, how public worship services should be conducted.”<sup>55</sup> In this chapter Stoeckhardt takes the position, that when the apostle Paul instructed that women should remain silent in the congregational assemblies, he meant that the Corinthian women should refrain from the public teaching of men. Stoeckhardt in his exegesis takes the position that women should not publicly teach men because God has commanded that women should be subject to men:

Since the beginning it was God’s will and commandment, that the women submit to men in all aspects. And precisely for that reason, it is not permitted, therefore, in the public assembly, for the women to speak in the presence of so many men, and to instruct the men. With this they would exalt themselves over the men. For the teacher is superior to the student. Precisely for that reason, since women should be subject

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 67: “Aber was vor einer grossen Schaar von Kindern, in einer Schulklasse geredet und gelehrt wird, das ist der Natur der Sache nach publik. Was ein Lehrer, resp. eine Lehrerin, in der Schule thut oder redet, das thut oder redet er als vor den Augen und Ohren der Gemeinde.”

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 68: “Die ἐκκλησίαι der einen corinthischen Gemeinde können nichts Anderes sein, als die öffentlichen Versammlungen dieser Gemeinde. Das ganze Capitel handelt ja auch davon, wie es in den gottesdienstlichen Versammlungen gehalten werden solle.”

to men, they should be silent in the divine worship assembly, should listen devoutly and let themselves be instructed by the men, the teachers of the congregation. Also in this way they are to be subordinate to the men. For the student is subordinate to the teacher.<sup>56</sup>

Stoeckhardt thus concludes from his exegesis of 1 Corinthians 14 that public worship in a Christian congregation is to be done on the basis of the Word of God, and thus women in the congregation may not function as teachers in a way that usurps the teaching authority of men and the order of creation.<sup>57</sup>

Stoeckhardt in this *Lehre und Wehre* article reveals that his position on the role of women in the church and serving in the public ministry (*Predigtamt* in the wide sense) is based on his understanding of the relationship that exists between man and woman since creation. In his exegesis of 1 Corinthians 11:1–16—pertaining to the issue of women wearing head coverings in Corinth—Stoeckhardt concludes that ultimately what was at issue was the order of creation:

In Christ, there is indeed neither man nor woman; the women are co-heirs of the same grace as the men. But Christianity still does not abandon the distinction between men and women that rests on the order of creation. In their outward contact, in gathering with men, also in the divine service, the women should not forget, but demonstrate, that they are women, and subordinate to the men.<sup>58</sup>

He further enunciated that when the Corinthian women prophesied, they did not usurp the authority of the men in the congregation, for God was simply speaking through these women's

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 68: "Das war von Anfang an Gottes Wille und Gebot, dass die Weiber in allen Stücken sich den Männern unterordnen. Und eben darum ist es den Weibern nicht gestattet, in der öffentlichen Versammlung, also in Gegenwart so vieler Männer zu reden und die Männer zu belehren. Damit würden sie sich über die Männer erheben. Denn der Lehrer ist dem Schüler übergeordnet. Eben damit, weil die Weiber den Männern unterthan sein sollen, sollen sie in der gottesdienstlichen Versammlung schweigen, andächtig zuhören und von den Männern, den Lehrern der Gemeinde, sich belehren lassen. Auch damit untergeben sie sich den Männern. Denn der Schüler ist dem Lehrer untergeordnet."

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 69–70: "In Christo ist zwar weder Mann noch Weib, die Weiber sind Mitgenossen derselben Gnade, wie die Männer. Aber doch hebt das Christenthum den in der Schöpfungsordnung begründeten Unterschied zwischen Mann und Weib nicht auf. Im äußerlichen Verkehr, im Zusammensein mit Männern, auch in den gottesdienstlichen Zusammenkünften sollen die Weiber nicht vergessen, sondern beweisen, dass sie Weiber sind, den Männern unterthan."

gift of prophesying: “Whoever prophesied there, was only an organ of God; God spoke through him. His person, his personal knowledge and understanding entirely receded. Now and again, it pleased God to give this revelation also to a woman.”<sup>59</sup> Stoeckhardt sees in Paul’s teaching in 1 Corinthians 14:33–35 no exceptions to the prohibition of women exercising authority over men.

George Stoeckhardt regarded the pericope of 1 Timothy 2:11–14 as another *sedes doctrinae* to demonstrate that women are not to serve in the pastorate, but they may serve in an auxiliary ministry of teaching children. Stoeckhardt was adamant that part of the godly submission of women involved not teaching men in a public setting. His exegesis of these passages is carefully reasoned and is driven by the grammar of the text:

The apostle acknowledges and affirms the same in another letter, 1 Tim. 2:11–14. He speaks also in this connection of the public worship assemblies and thereupon exhorts the men, to participate with holy fear, the women, to participate in modest dress (vs. 8–10). And then he proceeds: ‘Let a woman learn in silence with all subjection’ (v. 11). That pertains to the woman, that she silently and attentively hear and learn that what the teacher of the congregation says. Precisely with that, the woman herself submits to the man, that she allows herself to be instructed by him. The assertion of verse 11 is further explained through the following sentence in verse 12: ‘But I do not permit a woman, that she teaches, also not, that she be lord over the man, but be silent.’ The *γυνή μαθησάτω* in v. 11 corresponds to the *γυναικαί δὲ διδάσκειν οὐκ ἐπιτρέτω* in v. 12, and the *οὐδὲ ἀυθεντεῖν τοῦ ἀνδρός* in v. 12 corresponds to the *ἐν πάσῃ ὑποταγῇ* in v. 11. The woman should learn and not teach. Therefore this type of speaking, ‘teaching in a public assembly,’ is prohibited to women. *Docendi potestatem in publico coetu adimit mulieribus apostolus* (The apostle denies to the woman the power of teaching in a public assembly) Calov. The woman should be subject to and not be lord over the man. A woman would deny her submissiveness to be lord over the man, if she taught in the public worship service, which means she would be instructing men. For whoever teaches publicly, is master in a spiritual way, over those who hear him, and *determines their will. Nam nomine Dei praecipunt atque imperant, qui publice docent.* (Whoever teaches publicly, commands and rules in God’s name.) Calov.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 71: “Wer da weissagte, war nur Organ Gottes, Gott redete durch ihn. Seine Person, sein persönliches Wissen und Erkennen trat ganz zurück. Und nun gefiel es Gott hin und wieder, auch einer Frau Offenbarung zu geben.”

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 71–72: “Der Apostel bestätigt und bekräftigt dasselbe in einem andern Brief, 1 Tim. 2, 11–14. Er redet auch in diesem Zusammenhang von den gottesdienstlichen Versammlungen und ermahnt die Männer, mit heiligem Ernst, die Frauen, in sittsamer Tracht daran teilzunehmen. V. 8–10. Und dann fährt er fort: ‘Ein Weib lerne in der



Stoeckhardt thus concluded that it was categorically prohibitive for a woman to teach men in the realm of the Christian church. He further points out in this article that the apostle Paul based this instruction on two key teachings of Scripture: the order of creation and the history of the fall of man.<sup>61</sup> As a result of these two reasons—revealed in the Old Testament and then taught again by Paul in the New Testament—Stoeckhardt makes the blanket assertion: “Therefore the woman is truly not qualified for the public ministry of the Word” (*öffentliche Predigtamt*).<sup>62</sup>

After devoting most of this 1897 article to explaining why women cannot be part of the pastorate or publicly teach the men of the congregation, making it very clear that there are no exceptions to this rule, Stoeckhardt spends the final two paragraphs of this article detailing how a woman can be a legitimate teacher of children in the congregation. He maintains that neither 1 Corinthians 14 nor 1 Timothy 2 “forbid or deny to women all teaching altogether.”<sup>63</sup> An apt summary of Stoeckhardt’s entire article is the assertion: “It is nowhere forbidden for them to teach children, be it also a host of children, be it even on behalf of a congregation. This does not contradict the feminine character and call, nor the feminine modesty and discretion.”<sup>64</sup>

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Still mit aller Unterthänigkeit.’ V. 11. Das kommt dem Weibe zu, dass sie still und aufmerksam das höre und lerne, was der Lehrer der Gemeinde sagt. Ebendamit unterstellt sich das Weib dem Manne, dass sie sich von ihm belehren lässt. Die Aussage des 11. Verses wird durch den folgenden Satz V. 12. näher erklärt. Einem Weibe aber gestatte ich nicht, dass sie lehre, auch nicht, dass sie des Mannes Herr sei, sondern stille sei.’ Dem *Γυνή μανθανέτω* V. 11. entspricht das *γυναικί οὐκ ἐπιτρέπω* V. 12., dem *ἐν πάσῃ υποταγῇ* V. 11. das *οὐδε ἀθροεῖν ἀνδρός* V. 12. Das Weib soll lernen und nicht lehren. Also dieses Reden, das Lehren in öffentlicher Versammlung ist den Frauen untersagt. *Docendi potestatem in publico coetu adimit mulieribus apostolus*. Calov. Das Weib soll unterhan sein und nicht den Mann beherrschen. Ein Weib würde ihre Unterthänigkeit verleugnen und den Mann beherrschen, wenn sie im öffentlichen Gottesdienst lehren, also auch Männer belehren würde. Denn wer öffentlich lehrt, beherrscht damit geistlicher Weise, die ihn hören, und bestimmt ihren Willen. *Nam nomine Dei praecipunt atque imperant, qui publice docent*. Calov.”

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.: “Darum eignet sich das Weib wahrlich nicht für das öffentliche Predigtamt.”

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 72: “Dagegen ist weder 1 Cor. 14 noch 1 Tim. 2 noch sonst wo in der Schrift den Frauen alles Lehren schlechtweg untersagt.”

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.: “Es ist ihnen nirgends verboten, Kinder zu lehren, sei es auch eine Schaar von Kindern, sei es auch von Gemeinde wegen. Das widerspricht nicht dem weiblichen Character und Beruf, auch nicht der weiblichen Schamhaftigkeit und Zurückhaltung.”

Stoeckhardt's 1897 *Lehre und Wehre* article on the call of the woman school teacher in a Christian congregation reveals Stoeckhardt's most fundamental ideas about the essence and the practice of the ministry of the Word. He believed that the ministry belonged to the church and was instituted by Christ for the church. In the second to the last paragraph of this article, Stoeckhardt reviewed the broad outlines of how he understood public doctrine was to be delivered to the people of God by stating three principles in reference to the doctrine of the church: (1) The administration of the Word is committed and entrusted to the congregation as its priestly right; (2) For the administration of the Word, God himself in his Word has given the congregation certain directives; (3) In all parts—which are not regulated here through an explicit word of Scripture—the congregation has full freedom, only that everything that it ordains serves the common interest.<sup>65</sup>

Stoeckhardt by the turn of the twentieth century and after a generation of teaching at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis saw the public ministry as instituted by Christ in the New Testament. But then it was also established locally anew each time a Christian congregation exercised its priestly office and then duly called a properly trained man to publicly preach the Word and administer the Sacraments as Christ instituted them. To that end Stoeckhardt, in concluding his 1897 article wrote:

In this manner it is God's command and ordinance, that they under all circumstances, set up the pastoral office (*Pfarramt*), and suitable persons for it, to be sure call only men, not women, furthermore, that they carry the concern in return, that all members of the congregation be brought near to God's Word, so also the children receive their fitting food portion.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 73: "(1) Die Verwaltung des Worts ist der Gemeinde als priesterliches Recht übergeben und anvertraut; (2) Für die Verwaltung des Worts hat Gott selbst in seinem Wort der Gemeinde gewisse Directiven gegeben; (3) In allen Stücken, die hier nicht durch ausdrückliche Schriftworte geregelt sind, hat die Gemeinde volle Freiheit, nur dass Alles, was sie ordnet, dem gemeinen Nutzen diene."

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.: "So ist es Gottes Befehl und Ordnung, dass sie unter allen Umständen das Pfarramt aufrichte und hierfür geeignete Personen, und zwar nur Männer keine Frauen, berufe, ferner, dass sie dafür Sorge trage, dass allen

At the end of this article, Stoeckhardt *appears* to equate *Pfarramt* with *Predigtamt*. Stoeckhardt regularly uses *Predigtamt* to describe the pastoral ministry throughout this journal article, but it is only in the second to the last paragraph that he begins to use the term *Pfarramt* to describe the pastoral office which a congregation establishes in its midst to proclaim the Word and to administer the Sacraments.

In Stoeckhardt's final paragraph of "Von dem Beruf der Lehrerinnen an christlichen Gemeindeschulen," one could make an argument that he accepted and taught with conviction the "traditional Missouri" view of the ministry—that the pastoral office is truly a divinely instituted office and other offices in the church serve in an auxiliary role to the pastoral office. In writing on the issue of the permanency of the divine call, Stoeckhardt once again basically understands *Pfarramt* to be *Predigtamt* in a local parish setting, with auxiliary offices (*Helferdiensten*) as assisting the pastoral office in the congregation. Stoeckhardt takes the position in his closing comments that while the call of the parish pastor should not be anything but a permanent call, the call of a woman parochial school teacher can be a temporary call:

It often happens, that a congregation only appoints a woman teacher for a limited time. How? Is that in accord with the ecclesiastical call of the woman teacher? We answer with the counter-question: Where does one find a word of Scripture which obligates the congregation to consign permanently all ecclesiastical services to the pertaining persons? It arguably contradicts the character and nature and commission of the pastoral office (*Pfarramt*) if one sticks a time limit to the bearer of this office. The pastor should advance and further his congregation step by step in all knowledge and in all good things, that they grow up into the full measure of the maturity of Christ (Eph. 4:13–14). And that can only happen through constant, continued and patient work. The pastor as the shepherd has been assigned the feeding and caring for the entire fold, in return he gives an account for the same on the Last Day. This commitment and charge he will only be discharged from when God gathers

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Gliedern der Gemeinde Gottes Wort nahegebracht werde, also auch die Kinder ihr gebührend Theil Speise empfangen."

him to himself in some way. What applies to the pastoral office (*Pfarramt*) does not apply equally to all the ecclesiastical auxiliary offices.<sup>67</sup>

After firmly elevating the permanent call of the parish pastor above the sometimes temporary calls of the auxiliary offices (*Helferdiensten*), Stoeckhardt's concluding words to the readers of *Lehre und Wehre* reveal that the calls of women parochial school teachers are still to be respected as divine calls: "Since they serve the little ones, they serve Christ and his congregation, and for this reason they perform this their ministry (*Dienst*) in the fear of the Lord with all faithfulness and diligence."<sup>68</sup> This article, written only two years after his most extensive treatment of the doctrine of the ministry—the 1895 *Der Lutheraner* article—reveals that in the years immediately following the death of C. F. W. Walther, George Stoeckhardt appears to have professed the "traditional Missouri" understanding of the ministry.

In addition to his periodical articles pertaining to the doctrine of the ministry, which reached the widest audience, beginning in 1883, George Stoeckhardt began delivering essays at several Missouri Synod district conventions. Five years after coming to America, Stoeckhardt delivered his first convention essay to the Missouri Synod's Iowa District: "Thesen über die Rechte and Pflichten der geistlichen Priestertums" (Theses about the Rights and Duties of the Spiritual Priesthood). This essay—cited previously in chapter 3—and several others were another way in which Stoeckhardt articulated his ideas about the doctrine of the ministry.

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 74: "Es kommt oft vor, dass eine Gemeinde eine Lehrerin nur auf bestimmte Zeit anstellt. Wie? Stimmt das mit dem kirchlichen Beruf der Lehrerinnen? Wir antworten mit der Gegenfrage: Wo findet sich ein Schriftwort, welches die Gemeinde verpflichtet, alle kirchlichen Dienste den betreffenden Personen auf die Dauer zu übergeben? Es widerspricht wohl der Art und Natur und Aufgabe des Pfarramts, wenn man den Trägern desselben eine bestimmte Frist steckt. Der Pastor soll seine Gemeinde Schritt für in der Erkenntniss und allem Guten fördern und weiterbringen, dass sie heranwachse zu dem vollkommenen Maass des Altars Christi. Eph. 4, 13. 14. Und das kann nur durch stete, anhaltende, geduldige Arbeit geschehen. Dem Pastor ist als dem Gemeindegirten die ganze Heerde zur Weide und Pflege übergeben, damit er am jüngsten Tage für dieselbe Rechenschaft ablege. Dieser Verpflichtung und Verantwortung wird er nur dann enthoben, wenn Gott selbst sie ihm auf irgend eine Weise abnimmt. Was vom Pfarramt gilt, das gilt aber nicht gleichermassen von allen kirchlichen Helferdiensten."

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 74: "indem sie den Kleinen dienen, Christo und seiner Gemeinde dienen, damit sie in der Furcht des Herrn und mit aller Treue und Sorgfalt diesen ihren Dienst ausrichten."

In his 1883 essay on the spiritual priesthood of all believers, Stoeckhardt presented all of his basic ideas about the ministry in Thesis II and its explanation:

As a congregation and within the congregation, believing Christians actuate their priestly right and office by

- (a) calling preachers and teachers,
- (b) regulating the doctrine and life of the church's servants,
- (c) practicing church discipline,
- (d) baptizing, absolving, etc. in cases of necessity.<sup>69</sup>

Stoeckhardt then delivers an exposition of the parts of this thesis, beginning with the familiar theme that since all Christians are priests, all Christians have the duty of preaching, teaching, baptizing, etc. Stoeckhardt takes this position because he believed the Great Commission of Matthew 28 is directed to all believers, not just the apostles.

This position he clearly enunciates in his comments on the Great Commission pericope in his New Testament history: "This promise extends to the end of the world. Thereby we see that, not only to the apostles, but to disciples of all times, all believers by Christ are given the commission to preach, to teach and to baptize."<sup>70</sup> Returning to the Iowa District essay, he takes the same position regarding the establishment of the Office of the Keys, that Christ gave the right

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<sup>69</sup> Stoeckhardt, "Thesen über die Rechte und Pflichten des geistlichen Priestertums," 10: "Als Gemeinde und innerhalb der Gemeinde bethätigen die gläubigen Christen ihr Priesterrecht und—amt damit, dass sie (a) Prediger und Lehrer berufen, (b) Lehre und Leben der Diener der Kirche richten, (c) untereinander Zucht üben, (d) im Notfall selber taufen, absolvieren u. s. w." English translation by Erwin W. Koehlinger, "The Privileges and Duties of the Spiritual Priesthood," available in *Essays and Reports*, 103–161.

<sup>70</sup> Stoeckhardt, "*Die biblische Geschichte des Neuen Testaments*," 329–330: "Diese Verheissung reicht bis an das Ende der Welt. Daraus ersehen wir, dass nicht nur den Aposteln, sondern den Jüngern aller Zeiten, allen Gläubigen von Christo die Vollmacht gegeben ist, zu predigen, zu lehren und zu taufen."

to forgive and retain sins to all believers.<sup>71</sup> Here Stoeckhardt further bolsters his position by quoting from both the Lutheran Confessions and Luther.<sup>72</sup>

After asserting that “All Christians are priests and as such are God’s messengers, and have from God the command to preach his Word,”<sup>73</sup> Stoeckhardt then firmly asserts that another institution exists by the will of God, and that is the ministry of the Word, stating that “it is now however God’s will and order, that certain persons, who are especially able, administer the public service of the Word, (*den öffentlichen Dienst des Wortes*), the ministry of the Word (*Predigtamt*).”<sup>74</sup> Stoeckhardt, here and elsewhere, is consistent in never confusing the universal priesthood of all believers with the office of the public ministry: “Alongside the universal priesthood of all Christians, there is an office/ministry of the Word (*ein öffentliches Predigtamt*).”<sup>75</sup> He is also clear that God established the ministry of the Word as a demonstration of the order that he wants to see in his church, that his revealed Word might benefit people: “This is the order of the ministry of the Word, that one person in the congregation preaches; but the others remain silent and listen to what he says.”<sup>76</sup>

Stoeckhardt is also consistent in this district essay about where he finds biblical proof for the divine institution of the ministry. After dismissing out of hand the Reformed notion that the public ministry is a mere human institution, Stoeckhardt asserts that three Scripture passages prove the ministry of the Word is of divine origin: Acts 20:28, where Paul calls upon the

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<sup>71</sup> Stoeckhardt, “Thesen über die Rechte und Pflichten des geistlichen Priestertums,” 22–25.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 25–27.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 27: “Alle Christen sind Priester und als solche Gottes Boten und haben von Gott den Befehl, sein Wort zu verkündigen.”

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 28: “dass bestimmte Personen, die besonders geschickt sind, den öffentlichen Dienst des Wortes, das Predigtamt, verwalten.”

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*: “Neben dem allgemeinen Priestertum aller Christen gibt es ein öffentliches Predigtamt.”

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 29: “Diese Ordnung ist nun das Predigtamt, dass einer in der Gemeinde predigt, die andern aber schweigen und dem, was jener sagt, zuhören.”

Ephesian elders to be shepherds of the church of God; 1 Corinthians 12:28, where Paul lists a number of spiritual gifts, including apostles, prophets and teachers; and finally Ephesians 4:10–12, where Paul describes how Christ gave some individuals the gifts to fulfill the roles of apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers.<sup>77</sup> Central to Stoeckhardt’s understanding of the divine institution is that God has established the ministry of the Word to provide spiritual nourishment to his church: “All three passages teach, however, that these persons have received their offices from God himself, that it is God’s will, arrangement and institution, that these very persons publicly nourish and teach the church of God.”<sup>78</sup>

Stoeckhardt in this district essay also elaborates on the proper nomenclature regarding members of the ministry. While all Christians are priests and are rightly called priests, he points out that nowhere in Scripture are called ministers termed priests. Instead they are to be termed and designated ministers because they serve the people of God:

The distinction comes out plainest in the various names. Christians, all believers, are priests and have the ministry of the Word as a priestly rank and as a result are answerable before God for preaching and doctrine. Preachers in contrast, who teach the congregation, which institute the office of preaching, are never called priests in Scripture and do not want to be referred to as priests. They have no particular priestly office, this they have only as far as they are believers; as preachers, pastors, Scripture gives to them altogether other names and titles. The title, which is especially given to a preacher, is that of a servant. So Paul says in 1 Cor. 3:5: ‘Who is now Paul? Who is Apollos? Servants they are, through whom you came to believe.’ And chapter 4:1: ‘Therefore let everyone consider us, namely servants for Christ and managers over God’s mysteries.’ When Paul speaks to Christians as an apostle, he does not represent himself as a priest before God, he calls all believers priests, he speaks of himself as a servant. These are however now two different things, two different offices: priesthood and office of service. Therefore the universal priesthood and the ministry of the Word do not nullify one another. The priestly rank comes to all Christians, the public ministry of the Word is however a service, and to be sure a public service, a service to the congregation. Preachers should consider themselves as

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 30: “Alle drei Stellen lehren aber nun auch, dass diese Personen ihr Amt von Gott selbst empfangen haben; dass es Gottes Wille, Ordnung und Stiftung ist, dass gerade diese Personen die Gemeinde Gottes öffentlich weiden und lehren;”

servants, congregations should consider their pastors as servants. Pastors are not to domineer, but know that they are servants; in return congregations should not forget, that the service which preachers render to them, is ordained by God; that they, who preach to them, are placed by God as servants to them.<sup>79</sup>

Stoeckhardt in this quotation also consistently maintains that the priesthood is the privilege of all believers.

How this priesthood then establishes the ministry is further explained in Stoeckhardt's exposition of Thesis II. In view of their call to faith, believers designate that *public* ministry be done by a smaller number of believers. These believers are called by God through the spiritual priesthood to perform ministry on behalf of God's people. He writes: "It is now the duty of Christians, of the congregation, of the priestly people, to commission this public service, the ministry of the Word."<sup>80</sup> Stoeckhardt points out that once believers recognize what a high, glorious calling they have as spiritual priests before God, they will want to obey the rest of the counsel of God and then dutifully establish the ministry, so that the Word of God can be publicly proclaimed:

In this same Word of God is also written, that God has made still another arrangement, namely, has established the holy ministry of the Word, so that the things which the spiritual priesthood handles can be publicly administered. And the true

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 30–31: "Am deutlichsten tritt der Unterschied an den unterschiedenen Namen hervor. Die Christen, alle Gläubige sind Priester und haben das Predigtamt als eine priesterliche Würde und daher auch Verantwortung vor Gott für Predigt und Lehre. Die Prediger dagegen, welche die Gemeinde lehren, welche das öffentliche Predigtamt verwalten, heissen nie in der Schrift Priester und wollen nicht Priester genannt werden. Sie haben kein besonderes priesterliches Amt, das haben sie nur, sofern sie Gläubige sind; als Predigern, Pastoren gibt ihnen die Schrift ganz andere Namen und Titel. Der Titel, der sonderlich dem Prediger beigelegt wird, ist der eines Dieners. So sagt Paulus 1 Kor. 3, 5: 'Wer ist nun Paulus? wer ist Apollo? Diener sind sie, durch welche ihr seid gläubig worden.' Und Kap. 4, 1: 'Dafür halte uns jedermann, nämlich für Christi Diener und Haushalter über Gottes Geheimnisse.' Wenn Paulus zu den Christen als Apostel redet, so stellt er sich nicht als Priester Gottes dar, Priester nennt er alle Gläubigen, von sich redet er als von einem Diener. Das sind nun aber doch verschiedene Dinge, verschiedene Ämter: Priestertum und Amt des Dienstes. Darum heben sich allgemeines Priestertum und öffentliches Predigtamt nicht auf. Die priesterliche Würde kommt allen Christen zu, das öffentliche Predigtamt aber ist ein Dienst, und zwar ein öffentlicher Dienst, ein Dienst an der Gemeinde. Als Diener sollen die Prediger sich selbst, als Diener sollen die Gemeinden ihre Pastoren ansehen. Die Prediger sollen sich nicht überheben, sondern wissen, dass sie Diener sind; hinwiederum die Gemeinden sollen das nicht vergessen, dass der Dienst, welchen die Prediger ihnen erweisen, von Gott verordnet ist; dass die, welche ihnen predigen, von Gott als Diener ihnen gesetzt sind."

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 33: "Es ist nun Pflicht der Christen, der Gemeinde, des priesterlichen Volkes, diesen öffentlichen Dienst, das Predigtamt, zu bestellen."



spiritual priest obeys even also this Word and this arrangement of God, yes, he rejoices about this, for he knows that this will not prove pointless to him.<sup>81</sup>

So how do members of the spiritual priesthood practically establish the public ministry of the Word in their midst? Stoeckhardt reiterates in his essay that this is done through the divine call:

All believers activate their priestly right in such a way, that they commission the public ministry of the Word, call able people into the preaching office and the teaching office; indeed because Christians are priests, therefore they also have the sacred duty to call preachers and teachers, and look after, that through the office, the Gospel will be publicly and properly preached to many.<sup>82</sup>

How do the Lord's workers actually receive their calls? Stoeckhardt is quick to point out that in biblical times, God called the persons directly through various means, but he now employs the spiritual priesthood to be the calling body:

One distinguishes now a double manner of sending or calling. In former times, God called directly, through revelation, dreams and visions. This has now ceased, as experience teaches; the calling now happens mediately. But some sort of calling must happen. Since God is now silent and no more directly calls, so it must be human beings who call. But from what has been said up to now, however, it is clear enough that those are none other than the spiritual priests. Pastors should be sent, called, this is called for by the rule and order set down by the apostle in Rom. 10. Such sending and calling is the province of those who overall have been entrusted and directed with spiritual matters, the spiritual priests, all believing Christians.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.: "In demselben Worte Gottes steht aber auch, dass Gott noch eine andere Ordnung getroffen, nämlich, des heilige Predigtamt eingesetzt habe, damit die Dinge, mit welchen das geistliche Priestertum umgeht, öffentlich verwaltet werden. Und der wahre geistlichen Priester gehorcht eben auch diesem Wort und dieser Ordnung Gottes, ja, er freut sich über dieselbe, denn er weiss, dass sie sich nicht nutzlos erweisen werde."

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 34: "Alle Gläubigen bethätigen ihr priesterliches Recht damit, dass sie das öffentliche Predigtamt bestellen, geschickte Leute ins Predigt—und Schulamt berufen; eben weil die Christen Priester sind, darum haben sie auch die heilige Pflicht von Gott, Prediger und Lehrer zu berufen, und dafür zu sorgen, dass von Amts wegen öffentlich das Evangelium recht vielen gepredigt werde."

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.: "Man unterscheidet nun eine doppelte Art von Sendung oder Berufung. Früher hat Gott unmittelbar berufen, durch Offenbarungen, Träume und Gesichte. Das hat jetzt aufgehört, wie die Erfahrung lehrt; die Berufung geschieht jetzt mittelbar. Aber irgendwelche Berufung muss geschehen; da Gott nun schweigt und nicht mehr direkt beruft, so müssen es Menschen sein, die berufen. Aus dem bisher Gesagten aber ist's klar genug, dass das keine andere, als die geistliche Priester sind. Die Prediger sollen gesandt, berufen werden, das fordert die von dem Apostel Röm. 10. aufgestellte Regel und Ordnung. Solches Senden und Berufen kommt aber denen zu, welchen überhaupt alle geistlichen Dinge anvertraut und befohlen sind, den geistlichen Priestern, allen gläubigen Christen."

After referencing numerous citations from the Lutheran Confessions and Luther, Stoeckhardt concludes that if Christians are responsible for establishing the ministry of the Word, they are also responsible for supporting educational institutions which train future pastors: “If Christians are responsible for the ministry of the Word, thus they are also responsible, that teachers and preachers be educated, that is their priestly right and duty.”<sup>84</sup>

The final section of Stoeckhardt’s convention essay pertaining to the ministry is on the importance of the calling body keeping close watch on the doctrine and practice of their called workers. Since the ministry of the Word is derived from the priesthood of all believers, it is the responsibility of all Christians to see to it that the Gospel is purely preached and the Sacraments are rightly administered:

As priests Christians have in hand the Gospel, doctrine and preaching. On the strength of this right, they commission the ministry of the Word, call and maintain preachers and teachers. But because they have this right from God, they now also have the right and the duty, to watch over doctrine and preaching, and need to be concerned that those who administer the public service teach and feed rightly. Both things hold true: Preachers have the office of watchman over the congregation, and inverse, the congregation has the right to watch over the preachers.<sup>85</sup>

Once again, in citing proof texts, Stoeckhardt’s exegesis remains a consistent: “Take the text as it reads.” But after he does that, he also appropriates the text to the matter at hand and then applies the text to the reader. His exegesis and application of 1 John 4:1 would be typical of his method of interpretation and application:

This we also conclude directly from the Bible. The apostle John says in 1 John 4:1: ‘Beloved, believe not every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are from God, for

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 40: “Wenn Christen für das Predigtamt verantwortlich sind, so sind sie auch dafür verantwortlich, dass Lehrer und Prediger erzogen werden, das ist ihr priesterlich Recht und Pflicht.”

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 41: “Die Christen haben als Priester das Evangelium, Lehre und Predigt in der Hand. Kraft dieses Rechtes bestellen sie das Predigtamt, berufen und erhalten Prediger und Lehrer. Aber eben weil sie dieses von Gott haben, so haben sie nun auch das Recht und die Pflicht, über die Lehre und Predigt zu wachen, und dafür zu sorgen, dass die, welche den öffentlichen Dienst verwalten, recht lehren und weiden. Man kann also beides sagen: die Prediger haben das Wächteramt über die Gemeinde, aber auch umgekehrt, die Gemeinde hat das Recht, die Prediger zu überwachen.”

many false prophets have gone out into the world.’ The apostle bids for his beloved, his Christian brothers, they should test every spirit, namely all who preach and teach to them, for it is those he is referring to in this connection. This is also the duty of all congregations, to test and see each one who teaches, whether he rightly conveys doctrine according to the Word of God. The reason for this command is this: There are many deceivers in the world; when Christians do not test and do not watch over their teachers, they can easily fall into the hands of deceivers.<sup>86</sup>

Stoeckhardt regards the ministry as an awesome responsibility, to rightly preach and teach according to God’s Word. He sees direct application in the words of 1 John 4:1 for his listeners at this district convention, that lay people, the spiritual priests, have to carefully evaluate the preaching and teaching of their called workers, to insure quality control and prevent the teaching of false doctrine. His own bitter experiences in the *Landeskirche* undoubtedly played a significant role in the earnestness of his pleas. He had seen what deceivers in the church could do to an unsuspecting flock; he did not want the laity of the Missouri Synod to experience what he had experienced with rationalistic officials of the Saxon *Landeskirche*.

Stoeckhardt declares that it is truly a blessed event when a congregation takes its responsibility seriously, how they judge their called workers’ doctrine. To the delegates of this district convention in Iowa, he exclaimed:

Ah, how happy congregations can and ought to be when their own pastors come before them and say: ‘Look you, namely, you Christians in the congregation, you have every right to scrutinize us, to determine whether every word which we speak indeed truly agrees with God’s Word. You are the people who ultimately must judge as to whether the preaching is true or false, whether to listen, or to refuse to obey.’<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 41–42: “Das erschliessen wir auch direkt aus der Bibel. Der Apostel Johannes sagt 1 Joh. 4, 1.: ‘Ihr Lieben, glaubet nicht einem jeglichen Geist, sondern prüfet die Geister, ob sie von Gott sind; denn es sind viel falscher Propheten ausgegangen in die Welt.’ Das gebietet der Apostel seinen Lieben, seinen christlichen Brüdern, sie sollen einen jeglichen Geist prüfen, nämlich alle, die ihnen predigen und sie lehren, denn von solchen ist in diesem Zusammenhang die Rede. Also das ist Pflicht aller Gemeinden, einen jeden, der sie lehrt, zu prüfen und zu sehen, ob er rechte Lehre nach Gottes Wort führe. Der Grund für dieses Gebot ist der: es gibt viel Verführer in der Welt; wenn die Christen nicht prüfen und ihre Lehrer überwachen, so können sie leicht den Verführern in die Hände fallen.”

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 45: “Ah, wie können und sollen sich doch unsere Gemeinden freuen, dass ihre eigenen Pastoren vor sie hintreten und sagen ihnen: ‘Sehet ihr, nämlich ihr Christen in der Gemeinde, ihr habt das Recht, auf uns acht zu geben, ob jedes Wort, das wir reden, auch wirklich mit Gottes Wort stimmt. Ihr seid die Leute, die am letzten,

Stoeckhardt concludes his exposition of his second thesis by addressing another key topic revolving around the ministry of the Word—the importance of congregational members standing in judgment on how their pastors and teachers live their personal lives and the ongoing issue of the divinity of temporary calls for church workers. Stoeckhardt recognizes the relationship between pure doctrine and the living of a pure life for church workers: “It is obvious by itself that Christians, who are to pass judgment on the doctrine of preachers, also judge the lives they live; since they are connected; through a godless life right preaching will be hindered, and the course of pure doctrine impeded.”<sup>88</sup> He then devotes several pages of his essay addressing the importance of being “our brother’s keeper” by admonishing believers to live a Christian lifestyle and to practice church discipline when brotherly warnings go unheeded.<sup>89</sup>

Six years after he delivered his first convention essay to the Iowa District, George Stoeckhardt returned as a convention essayist in 1889. This time he presented fifteen theses regarding congregational life with the title: “Die Weisungen für das Gemeinschaft, welche in den Corinthbriefen enthalten sind” (Directions for Congregational Life, as Contained in the Letters to the Corinthians). These fifteen theses were presented partially in commemoration of the golden anniversary of several of the founding congregations of the Missouri Synod.<sup>90</sup> Theses III, IV, and V pertain directly to the ministry of the Word and further illuminate Stoeckhardt’s understanding

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darüber zu richten und zu urteilen haben, ob recht oder falsch gepredigt, ob zu gehorchen, oder der Gerhorsam zu verweigern sei.”

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 48: “Es versteht sich von selbst, dass die Christen, die als geistliche Priester über die Lehre der Prediger zu urteilen haben, auch das Leben derselben richten; denn das hängt zusammen; durch gottloses Leben wird rechte Predigt gehindert, und der Lauf der reinen Lehre aufgehalten.”

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 48–54.

<sup>90</sup> Stoeckhardt, “Die Weisungen für das Gemeinschaft welche in den Corinthbriefen enthalten sind,” English translation by Erwin W. Koehlinger, “Directions for Congregational Life as Contained in the Letters to the Corinthians,” available in *Essays and Papers*, 205–252.

of the ministry and how he came to this understanding based upon his biblical interpretation. This essay was also cited previously in chapter 3.

Stoeckhardt's first thesis in his 1889 essay deals with the nature of the church, that members of a Christian congregation should regard themselves as saints of God.<sup>91</sup> His second thesis details how a Christian congregation should regard its pastor as a servant of the congregation and as a servant of Christ: "It is the duty of a Christian congregation, to have the proper attitude towards its pastors, to properly appraise them as servants of the congregation and servants of Christ."<sup>92</sup> In writing expositions to all fifteen theses, Stoeckhardt follows the apostle Paul's line of thought in both 1 and 2 Corinthians and applies to his hearers the lessons the Corinthians learned from the instruction of the apostle. Regarding Thesis II, he remarks that a congregation's relationship with its pastor has always been a timely issue, both in biblical times and in contemporary times. This is the way Stoeckhardt states the crux of the issue: "This is a question of life for every congregation: How should it position itself toward the Word of God and then to the called servant of the Word?"<sup>93</sup> He then details in his essay the problem that existed in Corinth, how the congregational members had quartered themselves over their favorite preachers. He concludes that when such a situation happens, be it in the first century or the late nineteenth century, it is carnal and does not serve the church nor the kingdom of God.<sup>94</sup>

Stoeckhardt's exegetical solution to this timeless problem was to review the key tenets of the biblical doctrine of the ministry. Stoeckhardt points to 2 Corinthians 4:5–6 as the biblical answer to this theological problem: "For we preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ, that he is

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.: "Eine christliche Gemeinde hat die Pflicht, zu ihren Predigern die rechte Stellung einzunehmen, dieselben recht zu beurtheilen als Diener der Gemeinde und als Diener Christi."

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 16: "Das ist eine Lebensfrage für jede Gemeinde: wie sie sich zum Wort Gottes und dann zu dem berufenen Diener des Worts stellen soll."

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 16–18.

Lord, we, however, are your servants for Jesus' sake."<sup>95</sup> Stoeckhardt succinctly explains the relationship between the congregation and the pastor by reaffirming that while the pastor is truly a servant of the congregation, his chief responsibility is to lead the congregation to Jesus Christ: "Preachers are servants of the congregation for the sake of Jesus, this means: This is their service, that they lead a congregation to Jesus, they lead it to the right knowledge of Jesus Christ."<sup>96</sup> Stoeckhardt thus concludes his exposition of Thesis II with the assertion that since they perform God's work, they should be regarded as God's workers: "So they are and they are called equally servants of Christ and of God."<sup>97</sup> Since pastors do the work of God, a congregation, while it has the right to establish the ministry of the Word, has no right to decide not to establish it:

The congregation establishes the ministry of the Word, however it is not left to its free will to establish the office or not, but they have God's command and commission. They should, therefore, also regard those who serve a congregation as this, because of God, as God's servants and Christ's ambassadors; that whatever the preachers bring, they should receive it as a message from God, who wants to make them blessed in this manner.<sup>98</sup>

The other thesis in Stoeckhardt's 1889 convention essay which pertains directly to the ministry of the Word is Thesis III: "A Christian congregation should demand from its called preacher nothing more and nothing less, than that he preach God's Word pure and clear, that he preach Christ the Crucified."<sup>99</sup> In Thesis II Stoeckhardt focuses on the nature of the ministry of

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 19: "Denn wir predigen nicht uns selbst, sondern Jesum Christ, dass er sei der Herr, wir aber eure Knechte um Jesu willen."

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 19: "Die Prediger sind Diener der Gemeinde um Jesu willen, das heisst: das ist ihr Dienst, dass sie die Gemeinden zu Jesu führen, ihr zur rechten Erkenntniss Jesu Christi verhelfen."

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 19: "So sind sie und heissen sie gleichermassen Christi und Gottes Diener."

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 20: "Die Gemeinde richtet das Predigtamt auf, aber es steht nicht in ihrer Willkür, das Amt aufzurichten oder nicht, sondern sie hat dafür Gottes Befehl und Weisung; sie soll daher auch diejenigen, die ihr dienen, als das ansehen, was sie von Gottes wegen sind, nämlich als Gottes Diener und Christi Botschafter; das, was die Prediger, ihr bringen, soll sie als Botschaft Gottes annehmen, der sie auf diese Weise selig machen will."

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 20: "Eine Christengemeinde soll von ihrem berufenen Prediger nichts mehr und nichts weniger verlangen, als dass er ihr Gottes Wort lauter und rein verkündige, dass er Christum, den Gekreuzigten, predige."

the Word, that it is marked by service to God and service to God's people. In Thesis III, Stoeckhardt turns his attention to the basic functions of the office, to preach a crucified Christ and to administer the Sacraments rightly and faithfully. Stoeckhardt maintained that it was the responsibility of the congregation to know what pure doctrine is, so the congregational members might know what to demand from their pastor.<sup>100</sup> In doing so, Stoeckhardt describes how the apostle Paul taught exactly the same thing in his Corinthian correspondence, indicating that the most basic requirement of a steward of the mysteries of God is that he be found faithful.<sup>101</sup>

Stoeckhardt's exposition of this thesis cites one passage after another from either 1 or 2 Corinthians to prove his point—a faithful minister preaches the Word of God in such a way that people understand exactly the message that God wants them to hear:

A Christian congregation should demand from its preacher nothing more and nothing less, than that he administer God's mysteries faithfully and conscientiously, that he present the divine mysteries which pertain to salvation very clearly and comprehensively, so that each individual is able to comprehend and understand that he so can come to faith and be saved, in other words, that he preaches God's Word purely and clearly.<sup>102</sup>

Stoeckhardt's treatment of 2 Corinthians 3 is especially noteworthy. He takes a passage such as 2 Corinthians 3:6: "He (God) has made us competent as ministers of the new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life," as Paul referring to the basic office of the New Testament, the office of preaching the Word. Here he clearly differentiates between the ministry of the Word in the Old Testament and the ministry of the Word in the New Testament. To Stoeckhardt, clearly they are not the same: "The apostle

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 21: "Eine Christengemeinde soll von ihrem Prediger nicht mehr und nicht weniger verlangen, als dass er Gottes Geheimnisse treu und gewissenhaft verwalte, die göttlichen Geheimnisse, welche die Seligkeit betreffen, recht klar und fasslich vorlege, so dass sie Jeder fassen und verstehen, also zum Glauben kommen und selig werden kann, mit andern Worten, dass er Gottes Wort lauter und rein verkündige."

specifies still more with respect to the content of these letters. The office, which he conducts, he particularly calls in 2 Cor. 3, ‘the office of the New Testament.’ He distinguishes this, his office, from the office of the Old Testament, or the office of Moses.”<sup>103</sup>

Furthermore, Stoeckhardt points out a consistent tendency in Paul’s treatment of the doctrine of the ministry. According to Stoeckhardt, Paul included everyone who preached and taught the Gospel of Christ as part of the ministry: “Where Paul characterizes this ministry, he speaks always in the plural: ‘We’; he affiliates himself with Apollos and other teachers and preachers.”<sup>104</sup> This statement sheds significant light on why Stoeckhardt considered Lutheran school teachers to be part of the ministry of the Word, but in a supporting role (*Hilfsämter* or *Helferdienste*). Because they teach the Gospel, they are still part of the “We,” part of the ministry of the Word.

Stoeckhardt concludes that while the New Testament minister still proclaims the Law as Moses did, as he is doing so, “he conducts always a foreign office, not his own office. The essential office, which Paul and now a Christian preacher conducts, is the office of the New Testament.”<sup>105</sup> This New Testament office, while certainly proclaiming its share of God’s Law, concentrates the effort on proclaiming God’s Gospel, according to Stoeckhardt: “The Gospel is the content of the office, the main point of all preaching. . . . The office of the Christian

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 22: “Der Apostel gibt in diesen Briefen noch näher den Inhalt des Wortes an. Das Amt, das er führt, nennt er sonderlich 2 Cor. 3. ‘das Amt des neuen Testaments.’ Er unterscheidet dieses sein Amt von dem Amt des alten Testaments oder dem Amte Moses.”

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 22–23: “Wo Paulus dieses Amt beschreibt, redet er immer in der Mehrzahl: “Wir”; er schliesst sich mit Apollo und andern Lehrern und Predigern zusammen.”

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 22: “so führt er immer ein fremdes, nicht sein eigentliches Amt. Das eigentliche Amt, das Paulus und jetzt ein christlicher Prediger führt, ist das Amt des neuen Testaments.”



preacher consists in this, that he constantly reminds his congregation of the age-old truth: Christ, the Crucified and the Resurrected.”<sup>106</sup>

The most extensive convention essay George Stoeckhardt ever presented was delivered at two successive district conventions of the Missouri Synod’s Central District. These serial essays “Unsere Missourisynode ist eine wahrhaft evangelisch-lutherische Gemeinschaft, denn sie schöpft alle ihre Lehren aus dem klaren Schriftwort” (Our Missouri Synod is a True, Evangelical Lutheran Fellowship, Since It Takes All Its Doctrines from the Clear Word of Scripture), also features several significant statements about how Stoeckhardt understood the ministry and where he saw scriptural support for his views.<sup>107</sup>

Stoeckhardt delivered this two-part essay through a series of theses about the doctrinal position of the Missouri Synod, how it was completely drawn from the Word of God. The first four theses were presented to the Central District in 1894, the remaining five were delivered to the same district in 1895. Thesis VI and its exposition contains an extensive treatment of his understanding of the ministry, with Stoeckhardt making some comments about the ministry that are not located in any of his other writings.

Thesis VI reads:

We teach and confess simply according to Scripture, that the keys of the kingdom of heaven are given by Christ to the whole church, all believing Christians, and that the

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 23: “Das Evangelium ist Inhalt des Amtes, die Hauptsache aller Predigt. . . . Das Amt eines christlichen Predigers besteht darin, dass er seine Gemeinde immer wieder an die alte Wahrheit erinnert: an Christum, den Gekreuzigten und Auferstandenen.”

<sup>107</sup> George Stoeckhardt, “Unsere Missourisynode ist eine wahrhaft evangelisch-lutherische Gemeinschaft, denn sie schöpft alle ihre Lehren aus dem klaren Schriftwort,” *Verhandlungen der zweiunddreißigsten Jahresversammlung des Mittleren Districts der deutschen evang.-lutherischen Synode von Missouri, Ohio und anderen Staaten, 1894* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1894), 10–64; *Verhandlungen der dreiunddreißigsten Jahresversammlung des Mittleren Districts der deutschen evang.-lutherischen Synode von Missouri, Ohio und anderen Staaten, 1895* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1895), 9–96; English translation by Erwin W. Koehlinger, “Our Missouri Synod is a True, Evangelical-Lutheran Fellowship, Since It Takes All Its Doctrines from the Clear Word of Scripture,” available in *Essays and Papers*, 253–365.

church of every locale has authority and command from God to establish the public ministry of the Word.<sup>108</sup>

Stoeckhardt begins his exposition of this thesis by stating how he understands the doctrine of the ministry in regard to its placement in the field of systematic theology. He believes that the doctrine of the ministry is part of ecclesiology: “The doctrine of the office of the church is closely connected with the doctrine of the church.”<sup>109</sup> He next describes what he basically believes the public ministry is, and that is a pastor of a local congregation: “We understand the office of the church to be the public ministry of the Word, or the pastoral office, the public service in Word and Sacrament, within the local congregation.”<sup>110</sup> In presenting the doctrine of the ministry, Stoeckhardt acknowledged: “On this point also much confusion dominates in Protestant Christendom.”<sup>111</sup> While he acknowledges that many contemporary churchmen see the office of the ministry of the Word as divinely instituted, Stoeckhardt expresses surprise that “some even yet consider miscellaneous ecclesiastical offices and services, like for example, church order, consistories, synods, synodical offices, etc. for divine foundation.”<sup>112</sup>

In his exposition of Thesis VI pertaining to the ministry of the Word, Stoeckhardt addresses the topic first systematically and then exegetically. In the first portion of this exposition, Stoeckhardt cites no passages from Scripture, but instead reiterates what the public doctrine was of his church body, the Missouri Synod, concerning the ministry. In this convention essay, he equates *Predigtamt* with *Pfarramt* as he resolutely defends the divine institution of the

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<sup>108</sup> Stoeckhardt, “Unsere Missourisynod, 1895,” 28: “Wir lehren und bekennen einfältig nach der Schrift, dass die Schlüssel des Himmelreichs der ganzen Kirche, allen gläubigen Christen von Christo gegeben sind, und dass die Kirche jedes Orts Macht und Befehl von Gott hat, das öffentliche Predigtamt aufzurichten.”

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.: “Mit der Lehre von der Kirche hängt die Lehre vom Amt der Kirche eng zusammen.”

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.: “Wir verstehen unter dem Amt der Kirche das öffentliche Predigtamt oder das Pfarramt, den öffentlichen Dienst am Wort und Sacrament innerhalb der Ortsgemeinde.”

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.: “Auch in diesem Punkt herrscht heutzutage in der protestantischen Christenheit viel Verwirrung.”

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.: “Ja, man sieht auch noch sonstige kirchliche Aemter und Dienste, wie z. B. das Kirchenregiment, Konsistorien, Synoden, Synodalämter, u.s.w., für göttliche Stiftungen an.”

ministry, while all the while contending that the ministry is not above the church but in the midst of it:

Our synod has constantly given the office of the church due honor. We hold also unswervingly thereon, that the ministry of the Word or the pastoral office is founded by God, that it is God's will and arrangement, that through persons who are able and qualified for it, his Word is publicly preached and the Sacraments publicly administered and that God constantly also gives his church faithful preachers. However we place the ministry of the Word not over the church but into the midst of the church (*Gemeinde*), and place it in connection with the privileges the Lord has given his church generally and each individual local congregation.<sup>113</sup>

Stoeckhardt continues his exposition by highlighting now familiar themes, that the public ministry is implemented at the congregational level through the divine call and that a pastor's ordination is not a divine, but human rite whereby the call of the congregation is publicly affirmed.<sup>114</sup> Stoeckhardt explains the relationship between the priesthood of all believers and the work of the local pastor through the transference concept in this essay:

When the congregation calls a preacher, it transfers to him the authority, which they themselves have in hand, and all individual congregational members transfer to the man, whom they call, their priestly rights and powers, that he administers them in the name of all and for the benefit of all.<sup>115</sup>

Furthermore in this section, Stoeckhardt reiterates that a pastor enters into the ministry when he accepts a call issued to him by a congregation and throughout his ministry, he remains, at the same time, a servant of the congregation and a servant of God.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 29: "Unsere Synode hat je und je dem Amt der Kirche die gebührende Ehre gegeben. Wir halten auch unentwegt daran fest, dass das öffentliche Predigtamt oder das Pfarramt von Gott gestiftet ist, dass es also Gottes Wille und Ordnung ist, dass durch Personen, die dazu tüchtig und geschickt sind, sein Wort öffentlich verkündigt und das Sacrament öffentlich verwaltet werde, und dazu Gott je und je auch seiner Kirche treue Prediger gibt. Aber wir stellen das Predigtamt nicht über die Gemeinde, sondern mitten in die Gemeinde hinein und setzen es in Verbindung mit den Vorrechten, die der Herr seiner Kirche überhaupt und jeder einzelnen Ortsgemeinde gegeben hat."

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 30: "Wenn eine Gemeinde einen Prediger beruft, so überträgt sie ihm die Gewalt, die sie selber in Händen hat, und alle einzelnen Gemeindeglieder übertragen dem Mann, den sie berufen, ihre priesterlichen Rechte und Vollmachten, dass er sie im Namen Aller und zum Besten Aller verwalte."

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

While Stoeckhardt most often equates the ministry of the Word with the office of the local parish pastor, in this essay, he appears to include the office of the Lutheran school teacher with the ministry of the Word (*Predigtamt*). All other ecclesiastical offices he regarded as human institutions, which the church has the right to establish as it sees fit:

What we say about the public ministry of the Word, the same applies also to the office of the congregation's school teachers; for this is a part of the public service in the Word, the public service to the youth of the congregation. On the other hand, it is different with other ecclesiastical offices and services, like with church order, synodical offices and the like. We regard all of these as human institutions, which a larger ecclesiastical fellowship might adopt according to its best judgment and for the establishment of good order.<sup>117</sup>

After Stoeckhardt in this essay presents the Missouri Synod's public doctrine regarding the ministry, he then cites his sources from which he draws his doctrine. The 1890s were a period of conservation in the Missouri Synod after the death of C. F. W. Walther. So that no one would misunderstand his position, Stoeckhardt's first cited source is Walther's *The Voice of Our Church on the Question of Church and Ministry*. Stoeckhardt cites verbatim these theses in this order: Thesis IV, Thesis II, Thesis VI, Thesis VII, and Thesis X. He concludes his lengthy citation of Walther's theses with this assertion: "This is however nothing else but the voice of our church."<sup>118</sup>

Stoeckhardt then provides numerous other citations and scriptural proofs for his assertions regarding the doctrine of the ministry. After devoting several passages to discussing the doctrine of the church, the Office of the Keys and the universal priesthood of all believers, Stoeckhardt points out that besides the church, there is an office which God instituted to serve the church:

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid.: "Was wir vom öffentlichen Predigtamt sagen, das gilt auch vom Amt der Gemeindegemeinschullehrer; denn dieses ist ein Theil des öffentlichen Dienstes am Wort, der öffentliche Dienst an der Jugend der Gemeinde. Anders verhält es sich dagegen mit andern kirchlichen Aemtern und Diensten, wie mit dem Kirchenregiment, Synodalämtern und dergleichen. Die halten wir allerdings für menschliche Einrichtungen, welche eine grössere Kirchengemeinschaft nach bestem Ermessen und zur Erhaltung guter Ordnung treffen mag."

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 31: "Das ist aber nichts anderes als die Stimme unserer Kirche."

Along with the words of Scripture, which confer the Office of the Keys on the entire church, all believing Christians, each local congregation, one finds however in the Scriptures another array of passages, which speaks about a special office of the church, an office, which is entrusted to only a few, which not all Christians administer.<sup>119</sup>

To prove his position, Stoeckhardt does a brief exegesis of two New Testament passages; James 3:1: “Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly,” and 1 Corinthians 12:29: “Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles?” Stoeckhardt provides this answer to the question that Paul raises about whether all Christians should teach: “No! All Christians have authority and call, to teach. But the apostle also says, that not everyone, not every Christian should venture, should presume, to be a teacher.”<sup>120</sup> Here Stoeckhardt makes it clear that a distinction must be made between the responsibilities of the universal priesthood and the responsibilities of a public minister. He makes it clear that while all Christians are to teach the Word of God, not all Christians are to be public teachers of the Word. Who should be a public teacher of the Word? Stoeckhardt asserts: “Only he who is capable and qualified for this purpose, and who is called for this purpose, should be a teacher, should act as a teacher. The apostle means here the public office of teaching.”<sup>121</sup>

Stoeckhardt next addresses Paul’s counsel to Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:12, that he should set an example in the conduct of his ministry. Stoeckhardt thus concludes the office which Paul is writing about—the preaching and teaching office—is meant to continue until the end of time:

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 38: “Neben den Schriftworten, welche das Amt der Schlüssel der ganzen Kirche, allen gläubigen Christen, jeder Ortsgemeinde zuerkennen, findet sich aber in der Schrift eine andere Reihe von Aussagen, in welchen von einem besondern Amt der Kirche die Rede ist, von einem Amt, welches nur Etlichen befohlen ist, welches nicht alle Christen verwalten.”

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.: “Nein! Alle gläubigen Christen haben Macht und Beruf, zu lehren. Trotzdem sagt der Apostel, dass nicht Jedermann, nicht jeder Christ sich unterwinden, es sich herausnehmen soll, Lehrer zu sein.”

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.: “Nur wer dazu tüchtig und geschickt, und wer dazu berufen ist, soll ein Lehrer sein, als Lehrer auftreten. Der Apostel meint hier das öffentliche Lehramt.”

This public office of teaching or office of preaching, the office of preacher or pastor, then has always existed in the church and still exists today and will remain until the Last Day. And this public ministry of the Word is not exactly everybody's thing. This public office of preaching or the pastoral office is distinguished from the universal priesthood of all believers. All believing Christians are priests, but are not all ministers or pastors.<sup>122</sup>

Unlike previous convention essays, Stoeckhardt in this essay to the Nebraska District does an extensive exegesis of Ephesians 4 in order to explain how the ministry of the Word has been instituted and established by God. In his exposition of the pertinent verses of chapter 4, Stoeckhardt notes that Paul mentions several offices, but some of these offices were not meant to exist for all times, but only to serve the church for a particular period of time. But there was one office that God instituted that he meant to serve God's people continually until the end of time and that was the one office of the pastor-teacher:

Here the apostle names various offices. These offices have not existed at all times. The apostles had a unique office. They had no successors. Certainly the apostles live in their writings. And this Word of the apostles is the firm foundation of the church of all time. All Christian teachers draw constantly from the Scriptures of the apostles. The special miraculous gifts, like the gift of prophecy, the gift of healing, the gift of languages and the interpretation of languages, were a special jewel of the apostolic church. But the one office, the office of teacher and shepherd, the preacher and the pastor, has remained. And now the apostle teaches, that shepherds and teachers are established and ordained by God himself, by the exalted Christ. This is therefore God's will and arrangement, that the Word of God be publicly taught, preached, that the Sacraments be publicly administered, by persons, who for this purpose are capable and able.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid.: "Dieses öffentliche Lehramt oder Predigtamt, das Amt der Prediger oder Pastoren hat dann je und je in der Kirche bestanden und besteht heute noch und wird bleiben bis zum jüngsten Tag. Und dieses öffentliche Predigtamt ist nun eben nicht Jedermanns Ding. Das öffentliche Predigtamt oder Pfarramt ist von dem allgemeinen Priesterthum aller Gläubigen verschieden. Alle gläubigen Christen sind Priester, sind aber nicht alle Pfarrer oder Pastoren."

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 39: "Hier nennt der Apostel verschiedene Aemter. Nicht zu allen Zeiten haben alle diese Aemter bestanden. Die Apostel hatten ein einzigartiges Amt. Sie hatten keine Nachfolger. Freilich leben die Apostel fort in ihren Schriften. Und dieses Wort der Apostel ist der feste Grundbau der Kirche aller Zeiten. Alle christlichen Lehrer schöpfen fort und fort aus den Schriften der Apostel. Die besondern Wundergaben, wie die Gabe der Weissagung, die Gabe der Krankenheilung, die Gabe der Sprachen und der Sprachendeutung, waren ein besonderer Schmuck der apostolischen Kirche. Aber das Eine Amt, das Amt der Lehrer und Hirten, der Prediger und Pastoren, ist geblieben. Und nun lehrt der Apostel, dass Hirten und Lehrer von Gott selbst, von dem erhöhten Christus der Kirche gesetzt

Stoeckhardt then provides a lengthy exposition about how he understood the purpose of the ministry. After citing Ephesians 4:12–14, he then proceeds to explain the purpose of the ministry of the Word:

The purpose of the teaching and pastoral office is, to build up the body of Christ, to strengthen and to build up the congregation in the faith, to prepare the saints for all kinds of good works, to make them willing and able to win always more souls for the one faith, to bring them to the knowledge of the Son of God, to protect and warn believers from every sort of wind of teaching, from every sort of deceit and seduction. All Christians should indeed teach, confess the truth, testify, which they themselves have known, and they can also do it; for they have the anointing, the Holy Spirit. But a special teaching ability and teaching aptitude is required, to build up and to teach the whole congregation, to lecture point for point, in long, ordered lectures of Christian doctrine in their connection, to govern the congregation, and to give every man his due, to refute false doctrine, to warn Christians against the thousand fold deceptions of error, against all wrong paths, and to bring back those which are involved in error. And just for this reason it is the will of God, that men, who hereto have gifts and ability, who hereto are able, to preside over the congregation, teach and lead the whole congregation. For this reason he has established and ordained some to be shepherds and teachers.<sup>124</sup>

How does Stoeckhardt proceed to explain how the ministry of the Word becomes a reality for Lutheran congregations? He continues by devoting a lengthy paragraph to explaining how a young man is educated to be a pastor through the Missouri Synod school system. While he freely admits that trained pastors do not “fall down from heaven,” still he asserts: “Everything proceeds

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und verordnet sind. Das ist also Gottes Wille und Ordnung, dass das Wort Gottes öffentlich gelehrt, gepredigt, dass das Sacrament öffentlich verwaltet werde, von Personen, die hierzu tüchtig und geschickt sind.”

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 39–40: “Der Zweck des Lehrer—und Hirtenamtes ist, den Leib Christi zu erbauen, die Gemeinde im Glauben zu stärken und zu erbauen, die Heiligen zu allerlei guten Werken zuzurichten, willig und geschickt zu machen, immer mehr Seelen für den Einen Glauben zu gewinnen, zur Erkenntniss des Sohnes Gottes zu bringen, die Gläubigen vor allerlei Wind der Lehre, der Irrlehre, vor allerlei Betrug und Verführung zu warnen und zu bewahren. Alle Christen sollen freilich lehren, die Wahrheit bekennen, bezeugen, die sie selbst erkannt haben, und sie können es auch; denn sie haben die Salbung, den Heiligen Geist. Dazu aber gehört eine besondere Lehrfähigkeit und Lehrtüchtigkeit, die ganze Gemeinde zu lehren und zu erbauen, in langen, geordneten Vorträgen die christliche Lehre in ihrem Zusammenhang, Stück für Stück vorzulegen, die Gemeinde zu regieren und Jedermann sein Gebühr zu geben, Irrlehren zu widerlegen, die Christen vor dem tausendfältigen Betrug des Irrthums, vor aller Verführung, vor allen Abwegen zu warnen und die, welche in Irrthum verstrickt sind, zurecht zu bringen. Und eben deshalb ist es des Herrn Wille, dass Männer, die hierzu Gaben und Geschick haben, die hierzu tüchtig sind, der Gemeinde vorstehen, die Gemeinde, die ganze Gemeinde lehren und leiten. Eben deshalb hat er Etliche zu Hirten und Lehrern gesetzt und verordnet.”

in an orderly way.”<sup>125</sup> While attending an educational institution to learn the necessary languages and to study theology is certainly part of the process to becoming a pastor, Stoeckhardt saw the Lord of the church working through this arrangement to provide shepherds for the church of God: “Thus the Lord himself prepares the instruments, who should serve him in his kingdom.”<sup>126</sup> What is again revealing about Stoeckhardt’s understanding of the ministry in this paragraph of his essay is the fact that while he considers the office of the Lutheran school teacher to be part of the ministry of the Word, he regards it as a separate office from that of the pastor: “What here is said of the ministry of the Word, applies also to the office of a school teacher. Christ gives to his church also faithful school teachers. He works with his Spirit and gifts also in the Christian teachers’ college.”<sup>127</sup>

Stoeckhardt begins to conclude his exposition of the *sedes doctrinae* pertaining to the ministry of the Word by describing how the ministry is a gift of the Holy Trinity to the people of God: In summary, the Scriptures teach: God places shepherds and teachers.

The exalted Christ places and gives shepherds and teachers. The Holy Spirit gives to each individual congregation bishops. Thus the ministry of the Word is indeed an arrangement and foundation of the triune God, and therefore a high, divine office.<sup>128</sup>

He then reiterates that when studying the ministry of the Word, one has to understand that there is a persistent tension between the fact that while God gives the right and responsibility of the public proclamation of the Word to all Christians, at the same time he also has instituted an

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 40: “Er lässt freilich nicht fertige Prediger vom Himmel fallen. Es geht Alles seinen geordneten Weg.”

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.: “So bereitet der Herr selbst sich die Werkzeuge, die ihm in seinem Reiche dienen sollen.”

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 40: “Was hier vom Predigtamt gesagt ist, gilt auch vom Schulamt. Christus gibt seiner Kirche auch treue Schuldiener. Er waltet mit seinem Geist und Gaben auch in den christlichen Lehrerseminarien.”

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 41: “Summa, die Schrift lehrt: Gott setzt Hirten und Lehrer. Der erhöhte Christus setzt und gibt Hirten und Lehrer. Der Heilige Geist setzt jeder einzelnen Gemeinde Bischöfe. So ist also das öffentliche Predigtamt eine Ordnung und Stiftung des dreieinigen Gottes, und darum ein hohes, göttliches Amt.”



office which is entrusted with the public proclamation of the Word and the proper administration of the Sacraments:

We find therefore in Scripture, pertaining to the proclamation of the Word, a double series of statements. According to one, the keys, the authority to preach, to baptize, to absolve, belongs to all Christians, to every local congregation. According to the other, God has placed and established for the public service of Word and Sacrament a special office, the public office of teaching, and bestows shepherds and teachers.<sup>129</sup>

The way Stoeckhardt addresses these two series of passages which apply to the public proclamation of the Word reveals much about his understanding of Scripture and his exegetical method. He takes great pains to make both of these sets of passages conform and complement one another. He describes his exegetical approach by writing:

What emerges now, when one binds together both statements of Scripture? We do not want to develop a new truth from this, what Scripture says. We merely put forth what is located in the words of Scripture themselves. But this belongs to the proper understanding of Scripture and to the proper interpretation of Scripture, that one compiles together all the passages which deal with one and the same subject, compares them with one another, and figures out how they fit together with one another.<sup>130</sup>

Stoeckhardt then addresses the issue at hand, that the Scriptures consistently teach two fundamental truths about the proclamation of the Gospel: (1) that each congregation possesses the Office of the Keys; and (2) each member of the congregation belongs to the spiritual priesthood of all believers, and hence is called to proclaim the virtues of God.<sup>131</sup> But Stoeckhardt makes it very clear in this convention essay that each spiritual priest can take his/her rights and

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid.: “Wir finden also in der Schrift, was die Verkündigung des Wort betrifft, eine doppelte Reihe von Aussagen. Gemäss der einen gehören die Schlüssel, gehört die Macht, zu predigen, zu taufen, zu absolviren, allen Christen, jeder Ortsgemeinde. Der andern zufolge hat Gott für den öffentlichen Dienst an Wort und Sacrament ein besonderes Amt, das öffentliche Lehramt gestiftet und setzt und gibt Hirten und Lehrer.”

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.: “Was ergibt sich nun, wenn man beiderlei Schriftaussagen zusammenhält? Wir wollen aus dem, was die Schrift sagt, keine neue Wahrheit erschliessen. Wir kehren nur hervor, was in den Schriftworten selbst liegt. Aber das gehört zum rechten Schriftverständniss und zur rechten Schriftauslegung, dass man alle die Sprüche, die von ein und derselben Sache handeln, zusammenstellt, mit einander vergleicht und zusieht, wie sie sich in einander fügen.”

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

responsibilities only so far: “We reiterate, that the spiritual priesthood does not bring the right with it that every Christian teach all his fellow Christians; the whole congregation, and is authorized to command from his fellow Christians, that they listen to him.”<sup>132</sup> Stoeckhardt concludes that if this was done, the rights of other congregational members would be violated and “hopeless confusion” would result in Christ’s church.<sup>133</sup> While it is God’s will and order that the entire congregation preach the Word and rightly administer the Sacraments, Stoeckhardt sees in Scripture another God-given mandate. Since the church was the house of God and since God was the master of the house, and since God has given the church the keys to the house, the church is bound to obey God’s will and order. Thus Stoeckhardt concludes: “And now it is the Lord’s will and order, that all congregations have shepherds, teachers, overseers.”<sup>134</sup>

After establishing through his exegesis of Scripture that there are indeed two mandates from God concerning the proclamation of the Word, Stoeckhardt then proceeds to establish the basis for the institution of the ministry of the Word: “The congregation should directly listen and pay attention to the Word of God, which institutes the public ministry. This Word of God contains for every local congregation the command, to establish the public ministry of the Word, to select for itself a shepherd and teacher.”<sup>135</sup> Stoeckhardt then reiterates the doctrine of transference (*Übertragungslehre*), that upon a pastor’s reception of a call, the congregation transfers to the pastor for public implementation all the rights and authority of the ministry of the Word which belong to it originally from the congregation. According to Stoeckhardt, when the

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid.: “Wir wiederholen, dass das geistliche Priesterthum nicht das Recht mit sich bringt, dass jeder Christ alle seine Mitchristen, die ganze Gemeinde lehren und von allen Mitchristen verlangen dürfte, dass sie auf ihn hören.”

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.: “Und nun ist es des Herrn Wille und Ordnung, dass alle Gemeinden Hirten, Lehrer, Aufseher haben.”

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 41–42: “Das Wort Gottes, welches das öffentliche Predigtamt einsetzt, soll gerade die Gemeinde hören und beachten. Dies Wort Gottes enthält für jede Ortsgemeinde den Befehl, das öffentliche Predigtamt aufzurichten, sich einen Hirten und Lehrer zu wählen.”

ministerial candidate accepts the call from the congregation, he becomes a servant of the church and then publicly begins to function in behalf of the congregation:

And now the called candidate accepts this commission, the Lord himself places the assent into his heart and so he enters into the service of the congregation. He is henceforth a servant of the church. He does nothing spectacular. He practices no secret arts, of which others know and understand quite nothing. He does that whereto all Christians have the power and authority, he preaches, baptizes, absolves, but he does that in the commission of all, in the name of all, for all, in the best interest of the entire congregation, for the building up of the body of Christ, and he is indeed qualified to such service.<sup>136</sup>

Immediately after asserting the transference concept, Stoeckhardt further explains that a ministerial candidate receives this transference or conferring of the rights and responsibilities of the ministry through a public call issued by a local congregation. After citing Romans 10:15, where the apostle Paul inquires: “How can they preach unless they are sent?” Stoeckhardt asserts that one cannot presume to publicly preach the gospel without a divine mandate to do so:

Preaching, public preaching is tied in with the sending. No one is supposed to preach who is not sent or called. God must send and he does send. But now God no longer calls and sends immediately, like in former times the prophets and apostles, but through men, and to be sure through the congregation, to which all ecclesiastical power is entrusted. Thus it is indeed the sending, the call of the congregation, and at the same time this is God’s call, which gives a preacher the right and authority to publicly teach and officiate.<sup>137</sup>

An important tenet of Stoeckhardt’s understanding of the ministry of the Word is that Scripture teaches a twofold truth about the proclamation of the Word of God. The Lord of the church gave all Christians as spiritual priests the right and responsibility to proclaim the Word,

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 42: “Und nun nimmt der berufene Candidat diesen Auftrag an, der Herr selbst gibt ihm das Jawort ins Herz, und so tritt er in den Dienst der Gemeinde. Er ist fortan ein Diener der Kirche. Er thut nichts Sonderliches, er treibt keine geheimen Künste, von denen die Andern gar nichts wüssten und verständen, er thut das, wozu alle Christen, Macht und Recht haben, predigt, tauft, absolvirt, thut das aber im Auftrag Aller, im Namen Aller, für Alle, zum Besten der ganzen Gemeinde, zur Erbauung des Leibes Christi, und er ist auch zu solchem Dienst geschickt.”

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 43: “Die Predigt, die öffentliche Predigt ist an die Sendung gebunden. Es soll Niemand predigen, der nicht gesandt oder berufen ist. Gott muss senden, und er sendet. Aber Gott sendet und beruft jetzt nicht mehr unmittelbar, wie vor Zeiten die Propheten und Apostel, sondern durch Menschen, und zwar eben durch die Gemeinde, welcher alle Kirchengewalt befohlen ist. So ist es also die Sendung, der Beruf der Gemeinde, und der ist zugleich Gottes Ruf, welcher einem Prediger Recht und Macht gibt, öffentlich zu lehren und zu amtiren.”

but at the same time the Lord of the church also instituted the ministry of the Word to ensure the public proclamation of that Word in behalf of an entire congregation of believers. This public ministry is instituted locally through the issuance of a divine call to a trained, qualified and willing individual.

George Stoeckhardt also delivered a convention essay to the Nebraska District of the Missouri Synod, “Die ersten Christengemeinden, von denen die Apostelgeschichte berichtet, Muster und Vorbilder für unsere Gemeinden” (The First Christian Congregations, Recounted in the Acts of the Apostles, Patterns and Models for Our Congregations).<sup>138</sup> This essay also was first cited in chapter 3. Stoeckhardt describes the founding of the Christian congregations from Jerusalem to Ephesus in this essay. While he does not address his view of the ministry to any large degree, his descriptions of various accounts in Acts shed light on how he understood the doctrine of the call and the practice of ordination.

In writing on the founding of the church in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, Stoeckhardt describes the apostles as God’s appointed teachers for all of Christian history who began their teaching ministry on Pentecost:

The apostles were the teachers ordained by God for all Christendom. On the day of Pentecost these same entered their actual teaching ministry. The apostles’ doctrine was Christ’s doctrine. They taught what they received from the Lord. The apostles’ word was God’s Word. What they taught, spoke, and wrote was given to them by the Spirit of God.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> George Stoeckhardt, “Die ersten Christengemeinden, von denen die Apostelgeschichte berichtet, Muster und Vorbilder für unsere Gemeinden,” 10–79; English translation by Erwin W. Koehlinger, “The First Christian Congregations,” available in *Essays and Papers*, 1–58.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 13: “Die Apostel waren die von Gott verordneten Lehrer der ganzen Christenheit. Mit dem Tag der Pfingsten hatten dieselben ihr eigentliches Lehramt angetreten. Der Apostel Lehre war Christi Lehre. Sie lehrten, was sie vom Herrn empfangen hatten. Der Apostel Wort war Gottes Wort. Was sie lehrten, redeten und schrieben, war ihnen vom Geist Gottes eingegeben.”

While Stoeckhardt certainly did not espouse apostolic succession in regard to the actual office of the apostle, here he clearly affirms his belief that the original apostles of Jesus succeeded their work and their doctrine to subsequent generations of believers.

Stoeckhardt's treatment of the Acts 6 narrative displays several aspects of his view of the ministry, that pastors today carry on the work of the office of the apostles during the New Testament, and the church has the authority and freedom to create new offices in order to serve its needs. In this Acts 6 account, Stoeckhardt's view of ordination is also clearly enunciated. Regarding the ministry of the apostles and how it is related to the pastoral office of today, Stoeckhardt comments: "The apostles, the infallible teachers of all Christendom, were, at the same time, teachers and leaders of the first Christian congregation at Jerusalem. And so, what is said here of the apostles pertains for the office of all preachers."<sup>140</sup> According to Stoeckhardt, since preaching the Word was the most important activity in the kingdom of God, other qualified individuals can assist the pastor in important activities within the congregation. The Christian church has freedom to establish new offices according to the needs of the church:

In accordance with the advice of the apostles, the entire assemblage selected seven almoners (deacons), who were supposed to distribute the gifts of the congregation among the poor. The apostles did not act here independently, arbitrarily. No, the congregation made this arrangement, established this new office and appointed men for this necessary work. Therefore it conforms to the pattern of the apostolic congregation, when today our congregations administer their own matters, permit neither their pastors nor a church authority to make regulations for them, when they themselves select their own officers and when not only pastors, but also the congregational directors, take care of the almoners, the administration of the alms chest.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 30: "Die Apostel, die unfehlbaren Lehrer der ganzen Christenheit waren zugleich Lehrer und Leiter der ersten Christengemeinde zu Jerusalem. Und so gilt, was hier von den Aposteln gesagt ist, von dem Amt aller Prediger."

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.: "Dem Vorschlag der Apostel gemäss wählte die ganze Menge sieben Almosenpfleger, welche die Gaben der Gemeinde unter die Armen vertheilen sollten. Die Apostel handelten hier nicht selbständig, eigenmächtig. Nein, die Gemeinde hat diese Ordnung getroffen, dieses neue Amt eingerichtet und Männer für diese Nothdurft bestellt. Es entspricht also dem Vorbild der apostolischen Gemeinden, wenn heute unsere Gemeinden alle

How were these new office holders, more known in New Testament history as deacons, officially presented for service to the church? Stoeckhardt points out that it was done through the ceremony of the laying on of hands, which was a public demonstration that a call was issued and accepted: “That the apostles laid their hands upon the selected almoners was only an outward ceremony, through which the call of the congregation was publicly confirmed.”<sup>142</sup>

George Stoeckhardt’s convention essays are his clearest and most prolific expressions of his views about the ministry. His last convention essay was delivered in 1895. In the final chapter of his life, after his hospitalization and recovery from his nervous disorder at the turn of the twentieth century, Stoeckhardt devoted his attention to writing biblical commentaries. These have all been cited previously but will be briefly reviewed as the final summation of how he presented his understanding of the ministry.

In his two Bible histories, Stoeckhardt traces the development of the ministry in both the Old and the New Testament. He traces the public sermon back to the time of the godly Sethites: “In this line, the public sermon arose. Men preached in the name of the LORD, about the man, the LORD, in whom Eve had already hoped, about the future Redeemer.”<sup>143</sup> In his New Testament history, like in his earlier convention essays, Stoeckhardt regarded the apostles of Jesus Christ as the first members of the ministry in the New Testament, whose ministry now continued through their sacred writings: “The apostles, the God-ordained teachers of all Christendom, were first the teachers in the first Christian congregation in Jerusalem. And their

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ihre Angelegenheiten selbst verwalten, weder von ihren Pastoren noch von einem Kirchenregiment sich Vorschriften machen lassen, wenn sie selber ihre Beamten wählen und wenn bei uns nicht sowohl die Prediger, sondern die Gemeindevorsteher die Armenpflege, die Verwaltung der Armenkasse in Händen haben.”

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 31: “Dass die Apostel den erwählten Armenpflegern die Hände auslegten, war nur eine äusserliche Ceremonie, durch welche der Beruf der Gemeinde öffentlich bestätigt wurde.”

<sup>143</sup> Stoeckhardt, *Die biblische Geschichte des Alten Testaments*, 9: “In diesem Geschlecht kam die öffentliche Predigt auf. Man predigte von dem Namen des Herrn, von dem Mann, dem Herrn, auf den Eva schon gehofft hatte, von dem zukünftigen Erlöser.”

doctrine was Christ's doctrine. They taught what they had received from Christ. Their Word was God's Word."<sup>144</sup> Stoeckhardt regarded the contemporary ministry of the Word as the true successor of the office of the ministry in the New Testament, beginning with the apostles.

In addition to his brief commentary on Isaiah 1–12, Stoeckhardt was able to complete three full-length commentaries on the epistles of Romans, Ephesians and 1 Peter. What Stoeckhardt had to write about the ministry in these commentaries has already been partially addressed. He published his Romans commentary in 1907 and his Ephesians commentary in 1910. The last publication Stoeckhardt produced before he died was his commentary on 1 Peter in 1912.

By the time Stoeckhardt published his Romans commentary, he had already spent a full generation serving the Missouri Synod as a parish pastor and/or a seminary professor. In his interpretation of Romans 12:7–8, Stoeckhardt asserts from his exegesis that there is one basic office, the office or ministry of the Word, in the church:

He writes in v. 7a εἴτε διακονίαν, scil. ἔχοντες. We translate: 'Be it, that we have an office' and therefore take διακονία in the general sense 'office,' 'service,' not special as a description of the service of the alms distributors. The alternative of the construction, that Paul in verses 7b-8a continues, εἴτε ὁ διδάσκων, εἴτε ὁ παρακαλῶν, 'be it teaching,' 'be it exhorting,' explains it the best, if one subsumes the two latter concepts under the διακονία and whether one perceives the two as species of ecclesiastical offices. Basically it is one office, which God has instituted in the church for all times, the office of the Word; and its chief functions are public instruction and exhortation, which is also shared in private with individual and Christian families in their homes.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Stoeckhardt, *Die biblische Geschichte des Neuen Testaments*, 337: "Die Apostel, die von Gott verordneten Lehrer der ganzen Christenheit, waren zuerst die Lehrer der ersten Christengemeinde, in Jerusalem. Und ihre Lehre war Christi Lehre. Sie lehrten, was sie vom Herrn empfangen hatten. Ihr Wort war Gottes Wort."

<sup>145</sup> Stoeckhardt, *Römer*, 570: "Er schreibt V. 7 a εἴτε διακονίαν, scil. ἔχοντες. Wir übersetzen: 'sei es, dass wir ein Amt haben' und nehmen also διακονία in dem allgemeinen Sinn 'Amt,' 'Dienst,' nicht speciell als Bezeichnung des Dienstes der Almosenpfleger. Der Wechsel der Construction, dass Paulus V. 7b, 8a fortfährt, εἴτε ὁ διδάσκων, εἴτε ὁ παρακαλῶν, 'ist es der Lehrende,' 'ist es der Ermahnende,' erklärt sich am besten, wenn man die beiden letzteren Begriffe unter die διακονία subsumirt und als die beiden *species* des kirchlichen Amts auffasst. Es ist im Grunde Ein Amt, welches Gott der Kirche aller Zeiten eingestiftet hat, das Amt des Worts, und dessen Hauptfunctionen sind die öffentliche Lehre und die Ermahnung, die auch privatim den einzelnen Christen und christlichen Familien in ihren Häusern zu Theil wird."

Here Stoeckhardt concludes that when it comes to the function of publicly proclaiming the Word of God, there are not many offices but only one office, which God instituted when the church was founded to serve the church throughout its existence. As he neared the end of his ministry, Stoeckhardt's basic understanding of this office was the pastoral office in a local congregation, yet he also regarded the office of the parochial school teacher, to some degree, to be part of the ministry of the Word.

Three years after his Romans commentary was published, Stoeckhardt published his commentary on Ephesians. Commenting on Ephesians 4:11, he reiterates a basic theme, that when the apostle Paul describes the office of pastor-teacher, this is the pastoral office of today: "Paul describes with 'shepherds and teachers' the regular *ministerium verbi* (ministers of the Word), which in all times of the church has been and has remained, the public ministry of the Word."<sup>146</sup> He also reiterates that like the apostles and prophets, who were blessed with inspiration and direct revelation, God's ministers today are also to be viewed as gifts which Christ gave to his church.<sup>147</sup>

In his 1 Peter commentary, Stoeckhardt, in his exegesis and application of 1 Peter 5, reiterates another basic theme, a theme which is found throughout his convention essays, that the office of the church is not an office of lordship over God's flock, but one which requires fulfillment of duty, namely the faithful use of God's Word: "The office of the church is not domination, but on the contrary, service, performance of one's duty. God's Word alone, which preachers have to interpret and to apply, should govern the Christian congregation."<sup>148</sup> He

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<sup>146</sup> Stoeckhardt, *Epheser*, 198: "Mit 'Hirten und Lehrern' beschreibt Paulus das reguläre *ministerium verbi*, das zu allen Zeiten der Kirche dasselbe gewesen und geblieben ist, das öffentliche Predigtamt."

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

<sup>148</sup> Stoeckhardt, *1 Petri*, 221: "Das Amt der Kirche ist nicht Herrschaft, sondern Dienst, Pflichterfüllung. Gottes Wort allein, das die Prediger auszulegen und anzuwenden haben, soll in der christlichen Gemeinde das Regiment führen."



finishes his exegesis of the first portion of 1 Peter 5 with this conclusion about the responsibilities of both shepherds and congregational members: “So the apostle therefore exhorts the elders in this section toward true service, likewise also the congregation to willing obedience.”<sup>149</sup>

Although George Stoeckhardt wrote a relatively slim number of periodical articles on the ministry, those he wrote were strong. He served as a convention essayist for Missouri Synod districts over a half a dozen times and virtually every essay focused on practical issues, addressed specifically to the lay delegates at these conventions. The center of Stoeckhardt’s doctrine of the ministry was the priesthood of all believers. Clearly Stoeckhardt maintained that while the ministry is divinely instituted by Christ himself, it is also an institution which is derived from the spiritual priesthood of all believers. He further maintained that a Christian congregation proceeds to institute the public ministry in its midst by the issuance of a divine call to a qualified, capable and willing individual. Such an individual then accepts this call and by transference from the congregation initiates the public preaching of the Gospel and the proper administration of the Sacraments on behalf of and in the name of the congregation.

In concluding this chapter which further articulated Stoeckhardt’s understanding of the ministry, what must be observed and commented on is his perception of the ministry as being an office of *service* to God and his people, the church. This can be attributed to his exegetical method, which Stoeckhardt used to delineate from Scripture that the public ministry was instituted by Christ to communicate the message of the Gospel, by *servicing* people with Word and Sacrament. Since Jesus Christ had announced that he had come into the world to serve and give his life as ransom for many (Mark 10:45), at the end of his earthly ministry, Christ instituted an

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 222: “So ermahnt also der Apostel in diesem Abschnitt die Ältesten zu treuem Dienst, wie auch die Gemeinden zu willigem Gehorsam.”

office for the church which would continue this ministry of service. This public ministry was conducted not only in response to the completed ministry and work of Christ but also received its empowerment from it.

## CHAPTER 5

### A COMPARISON BETWEEN STOECKHARDT AND WALTHER ON THE DOCTRINE OF THE MINISTRY

“The voice of Dr. Walther has been a beacon of light in Lutheranism, because of his faith in Christ, his allegiance to God’s Word of Law and Gospel, and his adherence to the Lutheran Confessions.”<sup>1</sup> So goes a portion of the first paragraph in the Foreword of *C. F. W. Walther: The American Luther*, a compilation of essays written in commemoration of the centennial of Walther’s death. At the beginning of one of these essays, John M. Drickamer writes: “The doctrines of church and ministry were prominent in the life and career of Dr. C. F. W. Walther (1811–1887).”<sup>2</sup> Drickamer then proceeds to describe how Walther came to understand the doctrines of church and ministry during his lengthy tenure as pastor, seminary professor and synod president. What C. F. W. Walther believed, taught and confessed about the doctrine of the ministry is a story that is aptly told through multifarious writings. At the doctoral dissertation level, two major works deserve special attention. John M. Drickamer’s 1978 dissertation “The Doctrine of the Church in the Writings of Dr. C. F. W. Walther” devotes an entire chapter to how Walther understood the ministry, especially how members of a local congregation relate to their called pastor.<sup>3</sup> The dissertation that devotes the most attention to the ministerial views of Walther

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<sup>1</sup> Armand J. Boehme and Theodore F. Nickel, Foreword: “Walther’s Lasting Legacy,” *C. F. W. Walther: The American Luther*, eds. Arthur H. Drevlow, John M. Drickamer and Glenn E. Reichwald (Mankato, Minnesota: Walther Press, 1987), vii.

<sup>2</sup> John M. Drickamer, “Walther on Church and Ministry,” In *C. F. W. Walther: The American Luther*, 69.

<sup>3</sup> John M. Drickamer, “The Doctrine of the Church in the Writings of C. F. W. Walther” (Th.D. diss., Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1978): 244–305.

is John Wohlrabe Jr.'s 1987 dissertation "An Historical Analysis of the Doctrine of the Ministry in the LCMS Until 1962." Wohlrabe's entire first chapter of seventy-one pages deals with how the doctrine of the ministry developed in the Missouri Synod's formative years. The role of Walther and his understanding of the ministry is thoroughly covered, as Wohlrabe at the beginning of this chapter asserts: "During this early period, one man came to the fore as the Synod's theological leader—Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther. His theological analysis and expression on the doctrine of the ministry became the model for the Missouri Synod."<sup>4</sup> A condensed version of Wohlrabe's dissertation ultimately was published in book format in 1992 with the short title of *Ministry in Missouri Until 1962*.<sup>5</sup>

Three other major writings on Walther's doctrine of the ministry also deserve some attention. Nearly seventy years ago, Waldemar Streufert wrote a S.T.M. thesis entitled "The Doctrine of the Church and Ministry According to Dr. Walther, In Relation to the Romanizing Tendencies within the Lutheran Church, (1840–1860)." In nearly two hundred pages of typewritten text, Streufert reviews both Walther's understanding of the church and the office which serves the church, the ministry. Streufert's special focus in his thesis is how Walther—with his middle view of the ministry—countered the Romanizing tendencies of both J. A. A. Grabau of the Buffalo Synod and Wilhelm Loehe and the Iowa Synod, regarding how they understood the ministry. In his introduction, Streufert makes this observation about what he perceives to be the key difference between Walther and his ecclesiastical adversaries: "Walther's peculiarity consists in strict adherence to the Scriptures in matters of doctrine and life. Also in

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<sup>4</sup> John C. Wohlrabe Jr., "An Historical Analysis of the Doctrine of the Ministry in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Until 1962" (Th.D. diss., Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1987), 16.

<sup>5</sup> John C. Wohlrabe Jr., *Ministry in Missouri Until 1962: An Historical Analysis of the Doctrine of the Ministry in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*, (by the author, 1992): 1–92.

this doctrine concerning the Church and the Ministry, Walther displays this particular characteristic.”<sup>6</sup>

Karl Wyneken wrote a major paper, “Selected Aspects of C. F. W. Walther’s Doctrine of the Ministry” in 1963. It focuses on a historical and chronological approach to how Walther ultimately came to understand the ministry and maintains that Walther’s position on the ministry was truly a mediating position (*via media*) between two extremes, Romanizing vs. Höfling.<sup>7</sup> Among his other conclusions, Wyneken asserts: “Walther’s formulations—for instance, as epitomized in the theses of *Kirche und Amt*—can adequately be understood only in the light of the broad context; what he wrote must be read in terms of both of the two main alternatives he faced.”<sup>8</sup> That same year Wyneken completed his S.T.M. thesis on a topic which was a serious point of discussion in the Missouri Synod during its formative years: “The Development of the Itinerant Ministries in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod—1847–1865.” Another major paper written on Walther’s doctrine of the ministry is Todd Peperkorn’s S.T.M. thesis “The Use of C. F. W. Walther’s *Kirche und Amt* in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to 1947.” In this thesis, Peperkorn traces how *Kirche und Amt* was variously used and interpreted in the Missouri Synod’s first century.<sup>9</sup>

The number of essays and theological journal articles on C. F. W. Walther’s understanding of the ministry are so numerous that only a few can be honorably mentioned. In a 1961

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<sup>6</sup> Waldemar B. Streufert, “The Doctrine of the Church and Ministry According to Dr. Walther, in Relation to the Romanizing Tendencies within the Lutheran Church, 1840–1860” (S.T.M. thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1942), 1.

<sup>7</sup> Karl H. Wyneken, “Selected Aspects of C. F. W. Walther’s Doctrine of the Ministry” unpublished term paper, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1963, in *Studies in Church and Ministry*, vol. 3: *Studies in Church and Ministry by Students of Concordia Seminary*, ed. Erwin L. Lueker (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary Print Shop, 1967), 53.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Todd A. Peperkorn, “The Use of C. F. W. Walther’s *Kirche und Amt* in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to 1947” (S.T.M. thesis, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, 1999), 1–158.

commemoration of the sesquicentennial of Walther's birth, Gerhard Michael presented to the Missouri Synod's Minnesota District the convention essay "Walther and the Ministry of the Church."<sup>10</sup> More recent is "An Evaluation of Walther's Theses on the Church and Its Ministry" by Carl J. Lawrenz, published in 1982 in the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*.<sup>11</sup> Norman Nagel of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis contributed in 1989 a study for the *Concordia Journal* entitled "The Doctrine of the Office of the Holy Ministry in the Confessions and Walther's *Kirche und Amt*."<sup>12</sup>

Career LCMS archivist August R. Suelflow, at the first of the annual Pieper Lectures (1996), presented the paper: "C. F. W. Walther on the Office of the Ministry."<sup>13</sup> That same year Cameron A. MacKenzie of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, presented the paper "Contemporary Reflections on Church and Ministry in C. F. W. Walther" to the LCMS Indiana District Pastors' Conference.<sup>14</sup> Finally, Wohlrabe's essay "Walther's Doctrine of the Ministry: A Distinctly Mediating Position," written for *Soli Deo Gloria: Essays on C. F. W. Walther. In Memory of August R. Suelflow*, is a condensation of a portion of his dissertation. In his conclusion, Wohlrabe observed that part of the genius of Walther's doctrine of the ministry is that he understood the need for a healthy theological tension in grasping biblical ecclesiology:

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<sup>10</sup> Gerhard Michael, "Walther and the Ministry of the Church," *Proceedings of the Fifty-Fourth Convention of the Minnesota District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod held at Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1961*, 12–23.

<sup>11</sup> Carl J. Lawrenz, "An Evaluation of Walther's Theses on the Church and Its Ministry," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 79 (Spring 1982): 85–139.

<sup>12</sup> Norman E. Nagel, "The Doctrine of the Office of the Holy Ministry in the Confessions and in Walther's *Kirche und Amt*," *Concordia Journal* 15: 423–46.

<sup>13</sup> August R. Suelflow, "C. F. W. Walther on the Office of the Ministry," *The Pieper Lectures, Vol. I: The Office of the Ministry*, ed. Chris Christophersen Boshoven (St. Louis: Concordia Historical Institute and the Luther Academy, 1997), 42–59.

<sup>14</sup> Cameron A. MacKenzie, "Contemporary Reflections on Church and Ministry in C. F. W. Walther," presented at the LCMS Indiana District Pastors' Conference, 1996, 1–35.

“Walther’s position on the doctrine of the ministry maintained an equilibrium and tension between the doctrine of the church and the doctrine of the ministry.”<sup>15</sup>

The purpose of this fifth chapter of the doctoral dissertation, “In the Footsteps of Walther: The Doctrine of the Ministry in the Writings of George Stoeckhardt,” is to compare what Stoeckhardt wrote about the ministry to what his seminary colleague C. F. W. Walther wrote about this doctrine. This is an important issue, for Walther’s theses in *Kirche und Amt* were accepted as the public doctrine and confession of the Missouri Synod in 1851. For Stoeckhardt to write and teach at variance with what Walther taught on the ministry would mean that the Missouri Synod had a professor—for a generation—teaching at its theological seminary who did not agree with the public doctrine of the Missouri Synod.

This remarkable assertion is the conclusion Dr. Jeffrey Young of the Lutheran Churches of the Reformation has reached through his extensive comparisons of what Stoeckhardt and Walther both wrote on the ministry. The methodology followed in this dissertation for comparing Stoeckhardt and Walther’s views on the ministry is to first adequately present the historical background of Walther’s views on ecclesiology, followed by a study of what Walther wrote on the ministry. Then a list of statements will be presented which summarize the areas of agreement between Stoeckhardt and Walther on the ministry, supported by references to primary sources, most of them in English translation, of the pertinent works of Stoeckhardt and Walther that support these conclusions. Dr. Young’s arguments are addressed separately in Appendix One.

As one seeks to grasp the essence of C. F. W. Walther’s ecclesiology—especially his view of the ministry—one is consistently confronted with the reality that Walther’s views on church and ministry were forged on a theological anvil of controversy and expediency. Events, most of

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<sup>15</sup> John C. Wohlrabe Jr., “Walther’s Doctrine of the Ministry: A Distinctly Mediating Position,” In *Soli Deo Gloria: Essays on C. F. W. Walther. In Memory of August R. Suelflow*, eds. Robert A. Kolb and Thomas E. Manteufel (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 2000), 220.

them outside of his immediate control, compelled Walther to emerge as the unchallenged leader of the Saxon immigrant community after the downfall and deposing of the Saxons' bishop, Martin Stephan. The secondary literature which describes this troubled early history of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod also consistently describes the various theological battles Walther had to wage in formulating and then implementing the biblical doctrine of church and ministry. Karl Wyneken highlights four factors in the development of Walther's ecclesiology: (1) the Saxon settlement in Missouri of 1839 and the aftermath of the expulsion of Bishop Martin Stephan; (2) the organization of the Missouri Synod and the formation of its polity; (3) the controversy with Pastor J. A. A. Grabau and the Buffalo Synod from the early 1840s to 1866; and (4) the corresponding controversy on church and ministry in the German homeland following about 1848.<sup>16</sup>

Other commentators have observed that what Walther and the nascent Missouri Synod experienced on American soil was a continuation of the intense debate and discussion on church and ministry that was occurring at the same time among European Lutherans, especially in Germany. Church and ministry issues were forced to the forefront for several reasons, among them the Prussian Union of 1817, conflicts between the *Landeskirche* and the various *Freikirche*, the 1848 Revolution, the founding of mission societies directed toward North America, and the growing confessional awakening.

The analogy of a prize fighter engaged in several boxing rounds can be used to describe the historical context which gave rise to C. F. W. Walther's doctrine of church and ministry. The opening bell of Round #1 witnesses the events that surrounded Walther and the Saxons as a result of the bitter experiences of Stephanism, a hierarchical view of the ministry, espoused by

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<sup>16</sup> Wyneken, "Selected Aspects of C. F. W. Walther's Doctrine of the Ministry," 18.



Pastor Martin Stephan. Round #2 of this ecclesiastical boxing match would be the generation-long theological slugfest Walther and the Missouri Synod fought with Pastor J. A. A. Grabau of the Buffalo Synod, who also espoused a hierarchal, Romanist view of the ministry—although not as extreme as Stephanism. Round #3 would be the somewhat less acrimonious but still disappointing debate Walther had with the Missouri Synod’s patron in Neuendettelsau, Bavaria, Pastor Wilhelm Loehe, whose view of the ministry tended toward a hierarchal understanding—although less extreme than Grabau’s doctrine and practice.

Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther’s ecclesiology began to emerge as the young Saxon clergyman rose to the occasion after the Martin Stephan debacle. After Stephan’s expulsion in May 1839, confusion and despair reigned among the Saxon immigrants until the Altenburg Debates. Two debates were conducted on April 15 and 21, 1841, in the settlement of Altenburg, Perry County, Missouri. The location was the original log cabin school that would one day become Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.<sup>17</sup> It was here that Walther conducted a civil, theological debate with his opponent, lawyer Franz Adolf Marbach. Marbach argued that since the Saxon immigrants had separated themselves from the Saxon *Landeskirche*, they no longer had the ministry of the keys, they were not part of the true church, but only a sect, and the only God-pleasing course of action was for the entire emigration to repent of their sins and return to Germany.

Walther knew better. In front of a packed crowd, his arguments won over virtually all the colonists and at least silenced Marbach.<sup>18</sup> Walther took a page from his past. As a young man, confined to home with a lung ailment (tuberculosis?), he had devoted himself to reading Luther in his father’s study. Now Walther prepared for the Altenburg Debate by making an intensive

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<sup>17</sup> Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi: The Settlement of the Saxon Lutherans in Missouri 1839–1841*, 523.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 525.

study of the doctrines of church and ministry on the basis of Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions and Luther's writings. Walther argued that the Saxon immigrants were still part of Christ's church on earth, that although they had been misled—they were still believers who still possessed the Office of the Keys—and their pastors still held divine calls and their pastoral ministrations were valid. The Altenburg Debate proved to be one of the most defining moments in the life of C. F. W. Walther. "It was definitely the making of C. F. W. Walther" concludes Carl Mundinger.<sup>19</sup> Walter Forster, a historian of the Saxon emigration, concludes:

If there was any single factor which saved the colonies from complete dissolution and from the corrosive forces of further internal controversy, it was the Altenburg Debate. The principles laid down by Walther on this occasion were basically those which he later developed in his famous writings: *Die rechte Gestalt einer vom Staate unabhängigen evangelisch-lutherischen Ortsgemeinde*, and *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt* (*The Proper Form of a Local Congregation of the Ev. Lutheran Church Independent of the State* and *The Voice of Our Church on the Question of Church and Ministry*). Furthermore, these same principles constituted the broad outlines upon which the majority of the colonists now reached agreement and upon which they built their congregations and the larger synodical organization that claims them as their nucleus. The victory in the Altenburg Debate laid the foundation for the ecclesiastical edifice which Walther was to spend his life in building. And while superlatives must be used with caution in the life of the man who has been called the 'the outstanding figure in the history of American Lutheranism,' this contribution may well be called his greatest, insofar as it was *sine qua non* of all that was to follow in his eventful life as leader of the Saxons and the Missouri Synod. For this was what he now became, the leader of the clergy and of the colonists in their subsequent development.<sup>20</sup>

It was in the log cabin at Altenburg that C. F. W. Walther began a method of doing theology that continued for the rest of this life. He made his theological points by presenting theses and then supporting these theses with pertinent quotations from Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions and various Lutheran theologians of the past. At Altenburg, the focus was on the doctrine of the church—not on the ministry. Walther presented eight theses on the church which

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<sup>19</sup> Carl S. Mundinger, *Government in the Missouri Synod: The Genesis of Decentralized Government in the Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), 112.

<sup>20</sup> Forster, 529.

won the day. Even his debating opponent, Franz Adolf Marbach, acknowledged Walther's theological superiority.<sup>21</sup>

Only one of the Altenburg Theses, Thesis VI, mentioned the doctrine of the ministry: "Even heterodox groups have church power; even among them the goods of the church may be validly administered, the ministry established, the Sacraments validly administered, and the keys of the kingdom of heaven exercised."<sup>22</sup> Walther's first task was to get the Saxon settlers to see themselves as part of the Christian church on earth with a valid ministry. The Altenburg Debate accomplished this. "The conviction grew generally that they were a part of the invisible Christian Church (*una sancta ecclesia*), that as such they had the power to call ministers, and that ministerial acts of such properly called ministers were valid also in the sight of God."<sup>23</sup>

In presenting C. F. W. Walther's understanding of the ministry—and comparing his view with that of George Stoeckhardt's understanding of the ministry—a solid understanding of Walther's doctrine of the church is essential. What was his underlying principle, his meta-narrative, in defining the church and its office, the ministry? It was the doctrine of justification by grace through faith: "Walther endeavored to structure his doctrine of the church from the vantage point of the doctrine of justification."<sup>24</sup> In summarizing Walther's doctrine of justification, Erwin Lueker concludes:

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<sup>21</sup> August R. Suelflow, *Servant of the Word: The Life and Ministry of C. F. W. Walther* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2000), 38.

<sup>22</sup> J. F. Köstering, *Auswanderung der sächsischen Lutheraner im Jahre 1838, ihre Niederlassung in Perry-Co., Mo., und damit zusammenhängende interessante Nachrichten, nebst einem wahrheitsgetreuen Bericht von dem in den Gemeinden zu Altenburg und Frohna vorgefallenen sog. Chiliastenstreit in den Jahren 1856 und 1857*, Zweite Auflage (St. Louis: A. Wiebusch u. Sohn, 1867), 57: "Auch irrgläubige Haufen haben die Kirchengewalt, auch unter ihnen können die Güter der Kirche gültig verwaltet, das Predigtamt aufgerichtet, die Sacramente gültig administriert und die Schlüssel des Himmelreiches gehandhabt werden."

<sup>23</sup> Munding, 125.

<sup>24</sup> Erwin L. Lueker, "Church and Ministry in the Thought and Policies of Lutherans in America," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 42 (August 1969): 104.

Walther is especially remembered for his doctrine of the church. It has often been held that his structure of the church was made to conform to democratic American principles. This, however, is not the case. The basic factors in his conception of the church were formulated before he had had time to become well acquainted with the American structure of society. It was, according to his own assertion, the article on justification which guided him in the formulation of the teaching on the church.<sup>25</sup>

In his dissertation, John Drickamer presents a comprehensive view of Walther's doctrine of the church. Drickamer concludes that Walther saw the church as being invisible—yet there are also visible churches. The evangelical Lutheran Church is the true visible church on earth, but there are also false churches.<sup>26</sup> Walther also confessed the importance of a separation of the church and the state.<sup>27</sup> He regarded the local congregation as the most basic practical application of the doctrine of the church. Walther placed a great deal of stress on the fact that both the laity and the clergy were part of the spiritual priesthood of all believers. Finally, although Walther considered a synod to be a human and not a divine institution, he valued it highly since congregations banding together as a synod could accomplish what it would be difficult if not impossible for them to do singularly.<sup>28</sup>

William Schmelder, who wrote his S.T.M. thesis on the 1841 Altenburg Debate, regarded the Altenburg Theses as containing all of the essential features of C. F. W. Walther's doctrine of the church.<sup>29</sup> A fitting summary of Walther's doctrine of the church and a fitting lead introduction into his understanding of the ministry are Schmelder's concluding paragraphs in his *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* article, "Walther at Altenburg." Schmelder concludes

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<sup>25</sup> Erwin L. Lueker, "Justification in the Theology of Walther," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 32 (October 1961): 605.

<sup>26</sup> Drickamer, "The Doctrine of the Church in the Writings of Dr. C. F. W. Walther," iii.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 306.

<sup>29</sup> William J. Schmelder, "The Altenburg Debate" (S.T.M. thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1960), 6.

that Walther's Altenburg Theses and his subsequent theses on the church published in *Kirche und Amt* are basically the same position.<sup>30</sup> In a similar vein to Lueker, Schmelder asserts that in order to understand Walther's mindset as he articulates biblical ecclesiology for the Saxon immigrants, his soteriology and his pastoral theology must come to the forefront:

Walther's ecclesiology is based on his conception of the church as the communion of saints. The reason for the stress which this receives in his treatment is Walther's soteriological approach to ecclesiology. He cannot conceive of the church as an institutionalized force; for him the church is always the sum total of all true believers in Christ as their Savior and Redeemer.

Because the true church consists only of those who have true faith in Christ, it is invisible to the eyes of the world. Members of the visible church may be hypocrites and heretics, but they are not part of the invisible. Walther had experienced the effects of the externalization of the church under Pietism, and for this reason the distinction between the visible and the invisible was an essential feature of his ecclesiology.

The church comes into being only through the operation of the Holy Spirit in the Word. Therefore, the church exists wherever the Word is purely taught and the sacraments are administered according to the institution of Christ. There are the marks of the church. In asserting this principle, Walther is denying the necessity of a given church polity, which had been such a vital part of Stephanism, for the existence of the church.

Furthermore, Walther maintains that members of groups which have a false confession of faith are also members of the church. However, these groups must have preserved enough of the saving truth of the Gospel so that faith could be born and nurtured. A group which has denied a portion of the truth has not ceased to be a church. This point was very important to Walther, since it applied directly to the situation at hand. The colonists had been guilty of a false confession in their adherence to Stephan. However, this did not deprive them of being the church. They did not have to return to Germany in order to have membership in the church; they were the church.

In the church as it was constituted among the colonists one could be saved. Although they had separated themselves from their former congregations, they had not lapsed into heathenism. They had not separated themselves from the invisible church. Even in such a church the power which Christ has given to His church is present. For the colonists this was very important. They could establish

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<sup>30</sup> William J. Schmelder, "Walther at Altenburg," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 34 (October 1961): 80.

congregations; they could call pastors; they could administer the means of grace; they could receive absolution.

Walther maintains that heterodox churches are not to be dissolved, but reformed. This is an important principle. Reformation of the church, the purging of the false excrescences of its confession, was more important than the dissolution of the heterodox group.

Finally, Walther asserts that one is to judge the church by its public confession of faith. One does not judge it by its polity, by the piety of its members, by its influences, or by any such thing. The church is to be judged by its confession. This principle pushes personality and outward appearances aside and reveals the very heart of the church; its soteriological concern for the welfare of its members.

These essential features of Walther's ecclesiology were all contained in the crisp and lucid phrases of his theses which he presented at Altenburg. From the theological formality and precision of their formulation one receives a glimpse of the pastoral concern which dominated the thinking of Walther. He was not so much intent on proving his point as he was in bringing peace and solace to the disturbed consciences of the colonists. He did not want to merely conquer his opponents in a battle of words, but he desired to show that the doctrine of the church can never be separated from its soteriology.<sup>31</sup>

In view of Walther's conception that the doctrine of soteriology determines the doctrine of ecclesiology, how did he articulate his doctrine of the ministry and how did he explain the relationship between the church and its office, the ministry? For Walther, the starting point in conceptualizing the doctrine of the ministry is the spiritual priesthood of all believers. Drickamer in his dissertation devotes an entire chapter on describing how Walther understood the priesthood of all believers and how it related to the office of the ministry. In this chapter, Drickamer began by asserting:

The importance of the visible church in general and of the local congregation for Walther was contained in their administration of Word and sacrament to the people. But it cannot be overemphasized that for Walther this was by no means the exclusive work of the clergy. He placed tremendous stress on the conception of the priesthood of all believers. Therefore, to have a complete picture of the church and of the congregation in Walther's writings, it is necessary to explore the priesthood of all

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 80-81.

believers and its relationship to the pastoral ministry, which Walther by no means minimized.<sup>32</sup>

To C. F. W. Walther, the most important privilege of the spiritual priesthood is direct access to God, without the need for any intermediaries. In view of his and the Saxons' experiences with the bishopric of Martin Stephan, this is most understandable. In contrast to Grabau, who believed that the clergy should govern the church and the laity should have little participation in church government, Walther proclaimed in an 1850 sermon based on 1 Peter 2:8–9:

Here we see: as soon as a person through holy baptism becomes a Christian, and through this same sacrament receives the Holy Spirit, he is also with this anointing to be a spiritual priest, and so long as a person preserves the baptismal grace or if he, after he had forsaken it through unbelief, regains it through true repentance, he is and remains robed with the holy privileges of a priest of God. As a result a Christian needs no middleman, when he wants to deal with God. He has day and night a free avenue to God and his throne of grace and brings near to himself grace for grace from the fullness of Christ.<sup>33</sup>

It was from this high esteem for the spiritual priesthood of all believers that C. F. W. Walther then articulated his understanding of the doctrine of the ministry. The primary sources regarding Walther's understanding of the ministry are numerous. The chief source material must remain, however, the ten theses he wrote concerning the doctrine of the ministry, which were composed in response to Grabau's understanding of the ministry articulated in his 1840 *Hirtenbrief* and subsequent writings. These ten theses were eventually adopted as the public

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<sup>32</sup> Drickamer, "The Doctrine of the Church in the Writings of C. F. W. Walther," 244.

<sup>33</sup> C. F. W. Walther, *Amerikanisch-Lutherische Epistel Postille: Predigten über die meisten epistolischen Perikopen des Kirchenjahrs u. freie Texte* (St. Louis: Lutherischer Concordia-Verlag, 1882), 64: "Hieraus sehen wir: sobald ein Mensch durch die heilige Taufe ein Christ wird und durch dieselbe den Heiligen Geist empfängt, so wird er damit auch zu einem geistlichen Priester gesalbt, und solange ein Mensch die Taufgnade bewahrt oder wenn er, nachdem er sie durch Unglauben verloren hatte, sie durch wahre Busse wiedererlangt hat, so ist und bleibt er mit den heiligen Vorrechten eines Priesters Gottes geschmückt. Ein Christ bedarf daher keiner Mittelsperson, wenn er mit Gott handeln will; er hat Tag und Nacht einen freien Zugang zu Gott und seinem Gnadenstuhl und holt sich selbst aus Christi Fülle Gnade um Gnade."

doctrine of the Missouri Synod at its 1851 convention. This same synod convention resolved to have Walther's theses on church and ministry published in Germany.<sup>34</sup>

Walther's nine theses on the church which form the first portion of his *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt* are basically a recast of his Altenburg Theses on the church. The Altenburg Theses are printed as an appendix. The second portion of his *Kirche und Amt* feature ten theses about the ministry which were written in response to Grabau's position. In the first three theses, Walther specifically dealt with the divine origin of the ministry:

### THESIS I

The ministry of the Word or pastoral office is an office distinct from the priesthood of all believers.

### THESIS II

The ministry of the Word or the pastoral office is not a human institution but an office that God himself has established.

### THESIS III

The ministry of the Word is not an arbitrary office but one whose establishment has been commanded to the church and to which the church is ordinarily bound till the end of time.<sup>35</sup>

There was no serious disagreement between C. F. W. Walther and Grabau on the doctrinal points made in these first three theses. But veering in the opposite direction to the Romanizing Grabau were Lutheran theologians in Germany who taught a definite "low view" of the ministry.

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<sup>34</sup> *Fünfter Synodal—Bericht der deutschen Ev. Luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. Staaten vom Jahre 1851*, Zweite Auflage (St. Louis: Druckerei der Synode von Missouri, Ohio und andern Staaten, 1876), 169–172; Wohlrahe Jr., "An Historical Analysis of the Doctrine of the Ministry in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Until 1962," 43.

<sup>35</sup> C. F. W. Walther, *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt*, Jubiläums-Ausgabe (Zwickau: Schriftenvereins der sep. ev.-luth. Gemeinden in Sachsen, 1911), XV: "I. Thesis. Das heilige Predigtamt oder Pfarramt ist ein von dem Priesteramt, welches alle Gläubigen haben, verschiedenes Amt; II. Thesis. Das Predigtamt oder Pfarramt ist keine menschliche Ordnung, sondern ein von Gott selbst gestiftetes Amt; III. Thesis. Das Predigtamt ist kein willkürliches Amt, sondern ein solches Amt, dessen Aufrichtung der Kirche geboten und an das die Kirche bis an das Ende der Tage ordentlichlicherweise gebunden ist." (English translations of Walther's theses by the author).



Karl Wyneken, in his journal article, "Missouri Molds a Ministry for Mission," describes how theologians in Germany tended toward two poles in articulating an understanding of the ministry and Protestant church government. In nineteenth-century Germany, state control of the church was lessened as a result of the 1848 Revolution and the rise of the *Freikirche*. On one end of the spectrum were the high churchmen, who advocated some understanding of an apostolic succession. This was basically the view of theologians such as Friedrich Julius Stahl, August F. C. Vilmar, and Wilhelm Loche in Germany and J. A. A. Grabau of the Buffalo Synod.<sup>36</sup> The theological hue of men like Rudolph Sohm, Adolf von Harless and Johann W. F. Höfling placed them on the opposite end as low churchmen. Wyneken further explains the ecclesiology of these men:

The contrasting school of thought, represented by the German confessional theologians Rudolph Sohm, Adolf von Harless, and J. W. F. Höfling, was more congregational or—properly understood—democratic. Their ecclesiology was more charismatic and idealistic, perhaps in a sense anti-institutional. The Word was normative. Faith as its response summoned into existence the community of believers. Order and structure were of subordinate importance. The office does not exist independently of a congregation and is derived from the spiritual priesthood (empirically, the local congregation). The ministry is only relatively necessary. Extreme advocates of this view (at least according to their opponents) held that the office of the ministry was entirely a human arrangement and convention, a sociological expediency, its very existence a matter of human discretion and hence dispensable. The issue was formulated in such questions as, Does the ministry exist *iure divino* [by divine law] or *iure humano* [by human law]? Is it something that belongs to the *esse* [its being or essence] of the church or merely its *bene esse* [existing for the church's well being]?<sup>37</sup>

In contrast to the low churchmen, Wyneken describes C. F. W. Walther as an exponent of a mediating position which stressed congregational autonomy. According to Wyneken, after the

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<sup>36</sup> Karl Wyneken, "Missouri Molds a Ministry for Mission," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 45 (May 1972): 72–73.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

bitter experience with Stephan, Walther became an advocate for the autonomous local congregation, with the laity having a strong voice in its governance.<sup>38</sup>

This is what forms the historical context of Walther's first three theses on the doctrine of the ministry. In response to the low churchmen of his day, Walther resolutely maintained that the office of the ministry is of divine origin. He proves the veracity of Thesis I by citing the passages which teach the priesthood of all believers and the passages which stress that not everyone in the church is called to be a minister of the Gospel.<sup>39</sup> In providing biblical proof for Thesis II, he cites Old Testament passages which predict the coming New Testament ministry, all of the passages which pertain to Christ calling and sending out his disciples, including the seventy in Luke 10:1–22, and other passages which reveal the divine character of the office.<sup>40</sup> In providing biblical proof for Thesis III, Walther merely cites Matthew 28:18–20 and provides this commentary:

From these words it is evident that the ministry of the apostles by Christ's command is to continue till the end of time. But if this is to take place, then the church must constantly establish the true public ministry and in this establishment administer the means of grace till the end of the world.<sup>41</sup>

The message of Thesis III is clearly directed against Höfling's understanding of the ministry, that the ministry developed out of sheer necessity. Carl Lawrenz, in his evaluation of Walther's *Kirche und Amt*, concludes: "We can say that the entire thrust of Thesis III is against

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> C. F. W. Walther, *Church and Ministry: Witnesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church on the Question of the Church and the Ministry*, trans. J. T. Mueller (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987), 161; *Kirche und Amt*, 174.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 177–178; *Kirche und Amt*, 193–194.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 191; Walther, *Kirche und Amt*, 211–212: "Hieraus gehet klar hervor, dass das Predigtamt der Apostel aus Christi Befehl bis an das Ende der Tage wahren soll; soll dies aber geschehen, so muss die Kirche bis an das Ende der Tage fort und fort das ordentliche öffentliche Predigtamt aufrichten und die Gnadenmittel in dieser Ordnung unter sich handhaben."

Höfling's erroneous theory, in which he denied a divine institution of the public ministry and traced its origin to mere expediency.<sup>42</sup> Wyneken concludes:

Although in many respects Walther tended to sympathize with Höfling and his followers on the Erlangen faculty, Walther nevertheless felt constrained to take issue with Höfling because he believed that Höfling's views jeopardized the divine nature of the call and the institution of the ministry.<sup>43</sup>

Walther's next four theses antithetically refute Grabau's romanizing ideas about the ministry, Grabau taught that members of the Lutheran ministry were members of an elite rank, almost a Christian caste, a church order which perpetuated itself through the rite of ordination, which was considered a *sine qua non* for the pastoral ministry:

#### THEESIS IV

The ministry of the Word is not a special or, in opposition to that of ordinary Christians, a more holy state, as was the Levitical priesthood, but it is an office of service.

#### THEESIS V

The ministry of the Word has the power to preach the Gospel and to administer the holy Sacraments and the power of spiritual judgment.

#### THEESIS VI

The ministry of the Word is conferred by God through the congregation as the possessor of all ecclesiastical power, or the power of the keys, and through the means of its call which God himself has prescribed. The ordination of those called, with the laying on of hands, is not a divine institution, but is an apostolic ecclesiastical arrangement, and is only a solemn public confirmation of the call.

#### THEESIS VII

The holy ministry of the Word is the authority conferred by God through the congregation, as the possessor of the priesthood and all church authority, to exercise the rights of the spiritual priesthood in public office on behalf of the congregation.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Lawrenz, 131.

<sup>43</sup> Wyneken, "Selected Aspects of C. F. W. Walther's Doctrine of the Ministry," 50.

<sup>44</sup> Walther, *Kirche und Amt*, XV: "IV. Thesis. Das Predigtamt ist kein besonderer, dem gemeinen Christenstand gegenüberstehender heiliger Stand, wie das levitische Priestertum, sondern ein Amt des Dienstes; V. Thesis. Das

Without attacking persons, Walther refuted Grabau and the Buffalo Synod's understanding of the ministry by pointing out that it is not a self-perpetuating office of privilege and right, but an office of service to redeemed souls. In his 1840 *Hirtenbrief*, Grabau described his understanding of the ministry as "a special order enacted by God on earth."<sup>45</sup> To that Walther rejoined that the days of the Levitical priesthood were over and the New Testament ministry was an office whose holders were given the privilege to preach the Gospel, administer the Sacraments and perform spiritual judgments in the best interest of the kingdom of God. Walther saw in Grabau and those of his theological stripe a propensity toward establishing new legal precepts for a New Testament church which was given freedom from such concepts through the atoning work of Christ. Carl Lawrenz observes:

This romanizing position of the ministry establishes binding legal precepts for the New Testament church beyond the moral law, the immutable holy will of God for all men and for all time. . . . Walther saw very clearly in the matter of the outward abrogation of the Mosaic Law Code through Christ's finished work. He saw also very clearly in the matter of the total absence of binding ceremonial legal regulations in the New Testament church.<sup>46</sup>

There is a perceived logical order in Walther's theses. His first five deal with the biblical institution of the ministry and the nature of the office, that it is an office of service and not

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Predigtamt hat die Gewalt das Evangelium zu predigen und die heiligen Sakramente zu verwalten und die Gewalt eines geistlichen Gerichts; VI. Thesis. Das Predigtamt wird von Gott durch die Gemeinde, als Inhaberin aller Kirchengewalt oder der Schlüssel, und durch deren von Gott vorgeschriebenen Beruf übertragen. Die Ordination der Berufenen mit Handauflegung ist nicht göttlicher Einsetzung, sondern eine apostolische kirchliche Ordnung, und nur eine öffentliche feierliche Bestätigung jenes Berufes; VII. Thesis. Das heilige Predigtamt ist die von Gott durch die Gemeinde als Inhaberin des Priestertums und aller Kirchengewalt übertragene Gewalt, die Rechte des geistlichen Priestertums in öffentlichem Amte von Gemeinschafts wegen auszuüben."

<sup>45</sup> J. A. A. Grabau, *Der Hirtenbrief des Herrn Pastors Grabau zu Buffalo vom Jahre 1840, nebst den zwischen ihm und mehreren lutherischen Pastoren von Missouri gewechselten Schriften. der Öffentlichkeit übergeben als eine Protestation gegen Geltendmachung hierarchischer Grundsätze innerhalb der lutherischen Kirche* (New York: Gedruckt bei H. Ludwig & Co., 1849), 38: "ein solcher von Gott verordneter Stand auf Erd." English translation by William Schumacher, in *Soli Deo Gloria: Essays on C. F. W. Walther. In Memory of August R. Suelflow*, 141–154.

<sup>46</sup> Lawrenz, 132–133.

privilege. James Pragman in his monograph, *Traditions in the Ministry*, sums up Walther's five first theses this way:

These first five theses on the ministry demonstrate that Walther distinguished the pastors from the laity and affirmed the divine institution of the public ministry, while at the same time insisting that the clergy serve the church and live with the laity as brothers in Christ by preaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments.<sup>47</sup>

Walther's final five theses deal with how the abstract concept of the ministry becomes concrete in the body of Christ. He addresses how the ministry actually is implemented among God's people which this ministerial office was instituted by Christ to serve. Pragman: "In the remaining theses, Walther considered how one entered the public ministry and how the ministry is to be conducted and related to the life of the congregation that calls the ministry into existence."<sup>48</sup> It is in the longer Thesis VI where Walther introduces the concept, the *Übertragungslehre*, his transference or conferring doctrine, whereby a congregation, while retaining in principle the rights of the spiritual priesthood, transfers these rights to a qualified candidate for the expressed purposes of publicly preaching the Gospel and rightly administering the Sacraments, in the name of congregation which called him. Walther cited four passages which supported the transference theory: Matthew 18:15–20; 1 Peter 2:5–10; Acts 1:15–20 and Acts 6:1–6.

This again was a direct refutation of Grabau, who categorically rejected the idea of a local congregation transferring its priestly rights to an individual. Since Grabau believed that the ministry of the Word was an ecclesiastical estate which Christ himself instituted, that it was an

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<sup>47</sup> James H. Pragman, *Traditions of Ministry: A History of the Doctrine of the Ministry in Lutheran Theology* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1983), 144.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

institution that existed apart from its functions, he rejected any notion of a congregation transferring its priestly responsibilities to a qualified individual.<sup>49</sup>

Although Walther resolutely defined and defended the divine institution of the ministry, in the second part of Thesis VI he maintained that ordination, although certainly an apostolic and early church practice, was not specifically mandated in Scripture and was to be regarded as a church rite which was a public confirmation of the legitimacy and acceptance of a divine call. In contrast, Grabau regarded ordination as divinely instituted and essential for a pastor to experience if his preaching and his administration of the Sacraments be efficacious. On this position, Grabau approached the position of a Donatist in the early church.

Walther's Thesis VII is where the transference doctrine is articulated the most clearly. According to Walther, it was through a mediate call of a Christian congregation that the rights of the spiritual priesthood were transferred to a qualified individual. God was the one who gave the right of a congregation to establish the public ministry of the Word in its midst through the proper issuance of a divine call. God the Holy Spirit called qualified men into the public ministry, but the congregation was the instrument by which he did this. Grabau, on the other hand, rejected any notion that a congregation could transfer the rights of the priesthood to one individual. He did so because he understood the ministry of the Word as a separate entity and estate, able to exist outside the realm of a local congregation. Since Christ established the ministry of the Word, in Grabau's eyes, it was only the triune God who could transfer the power of the keys to an individual. To Grabau, this was done at the individual's ordination through men

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 149. cf. Grabau, *Hirtenbrief*, 39.

who were already members of the ministry, again the ministry being seen as an estate, existing separately from the church.<sup>50</sup>

In his monograph, *Government in the Missouri Synod*, Carl Munding provides some helpful explanatory comments on Walther's understanding of the transference doctrine, based upon Walther's various editions of his *Pastoraltheologie*:

The substance of this volume (*Pastoraltheologie*) appeared originally in a long series of articles in *Lehre und Wehre*, a theological monthly founded by Walther in 1855. The series was published from 1865 to 1871. In 1872 the first edition of the *Pastoraltheologie* was published. Pages 23–69 of the fifth edition are devoted to the doctrine of the call in its practical applications. Walther's basic assumption in the doctrine of the call is that the congregation is an instrument of God. When the congregation calls, God is calling. The individual layman, who is a priest in his own name, transfers his right to function publicly as a priest to the man who is chosen or called. The call makes the minister. There is no doubt that this doctrine gave dignity to the ministry in the eyes of the people, and it safeguarded the rights of the pastor.<sup>51</sup>

In his treatment of the *Übertragung* concept, Kurt Marquart regarded Walther as rightly maintaining respect for both the ministry and the priesthood of all believers, compared to two other of his contemporaries: "The Höfling-party over-emphasized the spiritual priesthood at the expense of the office. The Löhe-party did the reverse. It was the ecclesiastical greatness of Walther that he held both divine givens, without yielding or short-changing either"<sup>52</sup>

Walther's Thesis VIII has been variously interpreted in the history of American Lutheranism:

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<sup>50</sup> Pragman, 149–150.

<sup>51</sup> Munding, 213–214.

<sup>52</sup> Kurt E. Marquart, *The Church and Her Fellowship, Ministry, and Government*, Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics, vol. 9, eds. Robert D. Preus and John R. Stephenson (Fort Wayne: The International Foundation for Lutheran Confessional Research, 1990), 115.

## THESIS VIII

The ministry of the Word is the highest office in the church and from it all other offices in the church flow.<sup>53</sup>

Central to understanding Thesis VIII and really all of Walther's theses on the ministry is comprehending how Walther understood the term *Predigtamt*. William Cwirla in his journal article, "Grabau and the Saxon Pastors: The Doctrine of the Holy Ministry, 1840–1845," provides this insight into the different way Grabau and the Saxon pastors who took a leadership role after the Stephan debacle conceptualized the office of the ministry. The Saxons had no use for the term *Stand* in describing the ministry. They instead, on the basis of Articles V and XIV of the Augsburg Confession, used the terms *Predigtamt* and *in concreto* and *in abstracto* in describing the ministry:

There is no such thing as an abstract 'ministry' among the Saxons; there only was concern over the choice of titles given to the clergy as a group of which *Stand* was declined. Grabau also coined the term *Dienstmittel* or 'ministerial means' to indicate the instrumental connection between the Office of the Ministry and the means of grace. The Saxons seemed to prefer the term *Predigtamt* to show that the preached Gospel is the main thing of this Office to which Baptism and the Lord's Supper were connected.<sup>54</sup>

In what sense did Walther use *Predigtamt* in his eighth thesis about the ministry? Walther asserted that the *Predigtamt* is the highest office in the church (*das höchste Amt in der Kirche*) and from this *Predigtamt* all other church offices flow or are derived. The 1987 English translation of *Kirche und Amt* by J. T. Mueller could give the reader the impression that Walther taught that *all* helping or auxiliary church offices flow out of the *Pfarramt*, the pastoral office, but that is not what Walther wrote in *Kirche und Amt*. The fact that Mueller a number of times is imprecise in rendering Walther's German is pointed out both in Kurt Marquart's monograph on

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<sup>53</sup> Walther, *Kirche und Amt*, XV: VIII. Thesis. "Das Predigtamt ist das höchste Amt in der Kirche, aus welchem alle anderen Kirchenämter fließen."

<sup>54</sup> William M. Cwirla, "Grabau and the Saxon Pioneers: The Doctrine of the Holy Ministry, 1840–1845," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 68 (Summer 1995): 93.



ecclesiology, *The Church and Her Fellowship, Ministry and Governance*,<sup>55</sup> and in Wilbert Gawrisch's review of Mueller's translation of *Kirche und Amt* in the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*.<sup>56</sup> This information—along with a detailed discussion of how Walther understood “auxiliary offices,”—is also provided in a lengthy paper on Walther's doctrine of the church and its ministry written by Cameron MacKenzie.

In a 1996 conference paper, MacKenzie points out while discussing part of the explanation of Walther's Thesis VIII, that “Walther identifies the *Predigtamt* with the office that Christ instituted with the apostles and distinguishes between offices in the church that partake of the ministry of the Word and those that do not but rather support the ministry.”<sup>57</sup> He then provides his own emphasis of a portion of Walther's explanation for Thesis VIII from Mueller's translation:

The highest office is that of the ministry of the Word, with which all other offices are also conferred at the same time. Every other public office in the church is part of the ministry of the Word *or* an auxiliary office that supports the ministry, whether it be the elders who do not labor in Word and doctrine (1 Tim. 5:17) or the rulers (Rom. 12:8) or the deacons (the office of service in a narrow sense) or whatever other offices the church may entrust to particular persons for special administration [emphasis mine].<sup>58</sup>

Next MacKenzie quotes from *Kirche und Amt* regarding what Walther understood to mean by *Hilfsämter*, helping or supporting offices or ministries:

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<sup>55</sup> Marquart, 143.

<sup>56</sup> Wilbert R. Gawrisch, “Book review of *Church and Ministry (Kirche und Amt)*, *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 90 (Fall 1993): 313–314. In this book review, Gawrisch concludes: “The error of those who assert that Walther claimed that the pastoral office is the highest office in the church in distinction from other forms of the ministry of the Word is not supported by the text. The inaccuracies of the translator contribute to this misconception.”

<sup>57</sup> MacKenzie, 23.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*; Walther, *Kirche und Amt*, 342: “das höchste Amt ist das Predigtamt, mit welchem auch alle anderen Aemter zugleich übergeben werden; jedes andere öffentliche Amt in der Kirche ist sonach ein Teil desselben oder ein Hilfsamt, das dem Predigtamt zur Seite steht, es sei nun das Aeltestenamnt derjenigen, welche nicht im Wort und in der Lehre arbeiten (1 Tim. 5, 17), oder das Regieramt (Röm. 12, 8), oder das Diakonat (Dienstamt im engeren Sinn), oder welche Aemter nur in der Kirche besonderen Personen zu besonderer Verwaltung übergeben werden mögen.”

The offices of Christian day school teachers, almoners, sextons, precentors at public worship, and others are all to be regarded as ecclesiastical and sacred, for they take over a part of the one ministry of the Word [*Kirchenamt*] and support the pastoral office [*Predigtamt*].<sup>59</sup>

MacKenzie takes issue with the accuracy of Mueller's translation. He points out that Mueller's translation is ambiguous and obscures what Walther really taught about the *Hilfsämter*:

Unfortunately, Mueller's translation once again creates some ambiguity regarding the nature of these supporting offices, since Walther's original does not say that school teachers, almoners, and sextons take a part of the 'one ministry of the Word'—that's Mueller's formulation. Walther says that they take a part of the 'one ministry of the church [*einen Teil des Einen Kirchenamts*]'—and that ministry, 'the one ministry of the church,' is the subject of the entire thesis about which Walther writes, 'When the Lord instituted the apostolate, He instituted only one office in the church, which embraces all others.' . . . That Walther intends so to distinguish between offices of the public ministry and offices that support the public ministry is further demonstrated by his citation of the apostolic example in Acts 6. To the apostles God had transmitted the one office of the Church. Its essence was the ministry of the Word but it also included works of Christian love and service towards widows of the congregation. But when the latter became too much for the apostles, they entrusted that work to others and so established the office of deacon, not as a part of the ministry of the Word but as an office of service to the congregation and the apostles.

This is Walther's basis, therefore, for concluding that the church can create offices that assist, serve or help the office of the public ministry, so that the Word may have 'free course' throughout the church. In other words, God has established the office of the public ministry and God places men into that office through the call of the church, but the church herself may create additional offices to assist that ministry, just as the apostles did in Acts 6.<sup>60</sup>

The fact that Walther regarded *Predigtamt* as including more than the specific office of a parish pastor (*Pfarramt*) (although he often uses *Predigtamt* and *Pfarramt* interchangeably, as did Luther) is also illustrated by the much quoted 1856 sermon of Walther which he delivered at the installation of two college professors, Adolph Biewend and George Schick at the Concordia

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.; Walther, *Kirche und Amt*, 342–343: "Die Aemter der Schullehrer, welche Gottes Wort in ihren Schulen zu lehren haben, der Almosenpfleger, der Küster, der Vorsänger in den öffentlichen Gottesdiensten u.s.w. sind daher sämtlich als kirchliche heilige Aemter anzusehen, welche einen Teil des Einen Kirchenamtes tragen und dem Predigtamte zur Seite stehen."

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., Walther, *Kirche und Amt*, 342–343.

gymnasium in St. Louis. At the beginning of this sermon, Walther sought to bring comfort to the worshippers present that these two college professors had accepted divine calls into an office in which God himself had established:

And so I trust that it is not superfluous that I, for their encouragement and for ours, seek to answer on the basis of the Messiah's words the question: 'What shall be our comfort when men who have prepared themselves for the office of soul rescuing, yes, who have administered the same office with blessedness, accept the call of the church to serve as professors at our academic institution?' I answer: we should be comforted (1) because their office also is the office of our God and (2) their work also is the work of our Lord.<sup>61</sup>

In this sermon, Walther demonstrates that he regarded these men as holding divine calls and doing sacred work, for they were continuing the work of the one office of the church: "God has namely instituted only one office; namely the office to gather in his name his church on earth, to build it, to govern it, to provide for it, and to preserve it."<sup>62</sup> Then Walther goes on to explain that this one office must be divided up into various offices, so that the manifold aspects of church work might be best carried out:

Now this office accordingly has not only such a great circle of duties and tasks of various kinds, but also requires so many different, lofty gifts, that no one man is in the position, even only in a small circle, to fulfill all of its tasks alone. As the mediator's office of the Messiah is divided into three different offices, into the

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<sup>61</sup> C. F. W. Walther, "Rede bei Einführung zweier Gymnasiallehrer," in *Lutherische Brosamen. Predigten und Reden, seit 1847 theils in Pamphletform, theils in Zeitschriften bereits erschienen, in einem Sammelband aufs Neue dargeboten* (St. Louis: M. C. Barthel, General Agent der deutschen evang.-lutherischen Synode von Missouri, Ohio und anderen Staaten, 1876), 348: "So hoffe ich denn nichts Ueberflüssiges zu thun, wenn ich zu unserem und ihrem Troste auf Grund jener messianischen Rede, jetzt die Antwort auf die Frage suche: **Was soll uns trösten, wenn Männer, die sich auf das Amt der Seelenrettung vorbereiteten, ja, dasselbe schon mit Segen verwalteten, auf den Ruf der Kirche das Lehramt an unserer wissenschaftlichen Anstalt übernehmen?** Ich antworte: uns soll trösten, (1) dass auch ihr Amt das Amt unseres Gottes, und (2) dass auch ihre Sache die Sache unseres Herrn ist." English translations by John W. Klotz, published in *Lutheran Sentinel* 32 (March 28, 1949): 82–89 and in part by August C. Stellhorn, *Schools of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963), 212–213 and Carl J. Lawrenz, "An Evaluation of Walther's Theses on the Church and Its Ministry," 128–130.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 349: "Gott hat nemlich eigentlich nur Ein Amt eingesetzt; das Amt nemlich, in seinem Namen seine Kirche auf Erden zu sammeln, zu bauen, zu regieren, zu versorgen und zu erhalten."

prophetic, high priestly and kingly, so also the office of the church falls into the most diverse offices, requiring manifold gifts of the Spirit.<sup>63</sup>

Walther describes the office that these two college professors held, entrusted with training young men studying for the Lutheran ministry, as not a human arrangement, but rather: “Their office is a holy, divine office, a branch (*Zweig*) of the office, which Christ once instituted and established in presenting the keys of heaven on earth.”<sup>64</sup>

In concluding this sermon, Walther specifically addresses the students of the gymnasium, instructing them to receive these newly installed professors as God’s ambassadors, who would work to equip them to carry on the Lord’s work after Walther’s generation had passed on in death. Once again, he describes the academic setting in which these professors would serve, and reiterates that they possess an office which belongs to God:

You, however, dear pupils at this institution, contemplate, what now has been spoken. Consider this: Our school is a school of the prophets; a hall in the temple, where Jesus sits in the midst of teachers and students, yes, the proper underpinning of the church. The office of these new teachers, who have been now gifted to you, is therefore God’s office and their business is the Lord’s business. Receive them, then also, as God’s ambassadors in the place of God, and be assured, what you do to them, that you do to God. Let yourself be led by them through the courtyard of scholarship into the sanctuary of the Scriptures, so that you at one time, when we sleep in our graves, may arise in holy places as God’s heralds, and after that, what we have spoken here to you into your ears, preach on the rooftops; finally may you appear with us and with the souls that are saved through you before the Lord’s throne and with us praise him forever and ever. Amen!<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.: “Dieses Amt hat nun hiernach nicht nur einen so grossen Kreis von Pflichten und Aufgaben von so verschiedener Art, sondern erfordert auch so viele verschiedene hohe Gaben, dass kein Mensch im Stand ist, auch nur in einem kleinen Kreise alle Werke desselben allein zu vollbringen. Wie das Mittleramt des Messias in drei verschiedene Aemter, in das prophetische, hohepriesterliche und königliche, zerfällt, so zerfällt auch das Amt der Kirche in die verschiedensten, die mannigfaltigsten Gaben des Geistes erfordernden Aemter.”

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 350: “Ihr Amt ist ein heiliges, göttliches Amt, ein Zweig des Amtes, das Christus einst mit Ueberreichung der Schlüssel des Himmelreichs auf Erden stiftete und aufrichtete.”

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 352: “Ihr, aber, geliebte Zöglinge dieser Anstalt, erwäget, was jetzt ausgesprochen worden ist. Bedenket: unsere Schule ist eine Prophetenschule; eine Halle im Tempel, wo Jesus mitten unter Lehrern und Schülern sitzt; ja, der rechte Unterraum der Kirche. Das Amt dieser euch nun neu geschenkten Lehrer ist daher Gottes Amt und ihre Sache die Sache des Herrn. Nehmet sie denn auch auf als Botschafter an Gottes Statt und seid versichert, was ihr ihnen thut, das thut ihr Gott. Lasset euch von ihnen führen durch den Vorhof der Wissenschaft in das Heiligthum der Schrift, damit ihr einst, wenn wir in unseren Gräbern schlafen, auf heiliger Stätte als Gottes

In this sermon, Walther uses a rather uncommon term for the pastoral ministry. He does not use the terms *Predigtamt* or *Pfarramt* even once in this sermon to describe the pastoral ministry. Instead at the beginning, middle and end of the sermon, he describes the pastoral ministry as the office of rescuing souls (*unseres Amtes Seelen retten*).<sup>66</sup> In highlighting the ministry of the Word, regardless of the terminology he used, Walther regarded the *Predigtamt* as the highest office in the church, for the *Predigtamt in concreto*, in its various forms, implemented the means of grace which God gave to his church to rescue souls.

Walther's final two theses deal with the interactions between ministers and the flocks which they are called to serve:

#### THESIS IX

Respect and unconditional obedience are due the ministry of the Word, if the preacher conveys God's Word. But the preacher has no lordship in the church. Therefore he has no right, to make laws, to arbitrarily establish adiaphora or ceremonies, and to impose and exercise excommunication alone without preceding knowledge of the whole congregation.

#### THESIS X

The duty to judge doctrine indeed belongs to the ministry of the Word by divine right. But the laity also possess the right to do so. Therefore in the ecclesiastical courts and councils they have both seat and vote together with the preachers.<sup>67</sup>

While Walther had the highest respect for the office of the ministry, in view of his bitter experiences with both Stephan and Grabau, he was most careful never to give the ministry of the

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Herolde steht und dann das, was ihr hier von uns höret in das Ohr, prediget auf den Dächern; endlich aber mit uns und mit vielen durch euch geretteten Seelen erscheint vor des Herrn Throne und mit uns ihn lobet immer und ewiglich. Amen!"

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 351.

<sup>67</sup> Walther, *Kirche und Amt*, XVI: "IX. Thesis. Dem Predigtamt gebührt Ehrfurcht und unbedingter Gehorsam, wenn der Prediger Gottes Wort führt, doch hat der Prediger keine Herrschaft in der Kirche; er hat daher kein Recht, neue Gesetze zu machen, die Mitteldinge und Ceremonien in der Kirche willkürlich einzurichten und den Bann allein ohne vorhergehendes Erkenntnis der ganzen Gemeinde zu verhängen und auszuüben; X. Thesis. In dem Predigtamt gehört zwar nach göttlichem Rechte auch das Amt, Lehre zu urteilen, doch haben das Recht hierzu auch die Laien; daher dieselben auch in den Kirchengerichten und Konzilien mit den Predigern Sitz und Stimme haben."

Word more authority than what Scripture ascribed to it. The nascent Missouri Synod was able in several locales to establish a significant presence when dissatisfied members of Grabau's emigration appealed to Walther and the Missouri Synod for a pastor. In direct response to his experiences with Stephan and Grabau, Walther insisted there was no room in the Lutheran church for a papacy. In contrast to Grabau's insistence that the laity were obligated to obey their pastors in everything that is not contrary to the Word of God, Walther taught that a called pastor is to be a shepherd, but not a lord. A pastor could not expect his members to obey him in any matter that was not clearly taught by the Word of God. In contrast to Grabau's penchant for excommunicating church members at will, sometimes even whole congregations, Walther insisted that pastors alone cannot excommunicate anyone; church discipline must be in concert with the pastor and the congregation. In his *Kirche und Amt*, Walther points out that Christ gave the authority to excommunicate to the church and not the pastor and that the apostles in the early church never excommunicated anyone, but encouraged congregations to carry out church discipline.<sup>68</sup> A pastor cannot be arbitrary in how he conducts his ministry, but instead is to guide his people with the Word of God.

The final thesis of Walther deals with this issue: "Who has a right to distinguish between right and wrong, truth and error in a local congregation?" Once again in contrast to the experiences with Stephan and Grabau, both of whom had no ears for laymen judging their doctrine and practice, Walther's position was both biblical and pastoral. He resolutely taught that part of the job description for a pastor was to judge doctrine; yet he insisted this right belonged to the laity as well. He calls it a most sacred duty for the laity to judge doctrine (*heiligsten*

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 384. For example, Paul's counsel to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 5.

*Pflicht*).<sup>69</sup> After citing such examples of the Bereans in the New Testament, who judged the preaching of the apostle Paul on the basis of the Word of God, and the lay participation in the Jerusalem council, Walther gives support for the laity participating in the full governance of both a congregation and a synod: “therefore there can be no doubt, that in the ecclesiastical courts and synods the laity have both seat and voice with the public servants of the church.”<sup>70</sup> C. F. W. Walther produced many other writings on the doctrine of the ministry which are valuable in comprehending how he understood the ministry, but none are as important as his ten theses in *Kirche und Amt*. As stated before, Walther’s theses on church and ministry in time became the doctrinal position of not only Walther, but the entire Missouri Synod. This was the result and in reaction to the controversy with Grabau and the Buffalo Synod.

A major goal of this dissertation is to determine if George Stoeckhardt agreed with Walther and the Missouri Synod regarding the doctrine of the ministry. The writer takes the position that Stoeckhardt accurately and faithfully represented the public doctrine of the Missouri Synod and C. F. W. Walther. As stated previously, Stoeckhardt, even before his coming to America to serve in the Missouri Synod, conscientiously retracted in *Der Lutheraner* certain statements he had made in his exposition he wrote on Luther’s Small Catechism. Upon his arrival in America, Stoeckhardt became a leader for the Missouri Synod during the acrimonious Election Controversy. After the death of Walther in 1887, as also previously stated, Stoeckhardt earnestly took his role as a preserver and defender of Missouri’s doctrinal heritage which the synod had received from Walther. George Stoeckhardt demonstrated throughout his life that he took doctrine seriously. As one compares Stoeckhardt and Walther on the ministry, numerous

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 398.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 399: “daher es keinem Zweifel unterliegt, dass in den Kirchengewalten und Synoden mit den öffentlichen Kirchendienern auch die Laien Sitz und Stimme haben (Apostelgesch. 15).”

agreements have been found through research. This numbered listing is a compilation of these agreements that have been found so far: (1) Soteriology is the most important doctrine in Scripture and ecclesiology is centered in soteriology.<sup>71</sup> (2) Called ministers are servants of God who diligently labor for the salvation of souls. They are not to be lords over the flocks they serve, but shepherds. Stoeckhardt and Walther used service (*Dienst*) and office (*Amt*) interchangeably to describe the ministry.<sup>72</sup> (3) God established a public ministry in both the Old Testament and the New Testament to serve the people of God.<sup>73</sup> (4) Part of the public ministry that God established in the Old Testament was the Levitical priesthood, which was fulfilled and abolished in the New Testament through the work of Jesus Christ. In the New Testament, the Levitical priesthood has been replaced by the universal priesthood of all believers.<sup>74</sup> (5) The ministry of the Word (*Predigtamt*) in the New Testament was instituted by Jesus Christ to

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<sup>71</sup> Stoeckhardt, “The Pastoral Theology of Titus,” *Potpourri: Book 2*, 246–50; “The First Christian Congregations,” *Essays and Papers*, 17–19; “Privileges and Duties of the Spiritual Priesthood,” *Essays and Papers*, 208–11; Walther, *Church and Ministry*, “Concerning the Church—Thesis VIII,” 101–148; *The Congregation’s Right to Choose Its Pastor*, trans. Fred Kramer, ed. Wilbert H. Rosin, Concordia Seminary Publications Text Series – Number 1, gen. ed. Robert Rosin (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 1997), 111–24; “The True Visible Church,” trans. Reinhold Stallmann, in *Essays for the Church*, vol. I, 1857–1879, ed. August R. Suelflow (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), 88–103. (*Nota Bene*: Most references supporting these agreements between Stoeckhardt and Walther on the ministry will be from English translations of their works which are readily accessible to the reader).

<sup>72</sup> Stoeckhardt, “The Pastoral Theology of Titus,” *Potpourri, Book 2*, 246–287; *Exegetical Lectures on the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, 23–24; “Directions for Congregational Life as Contained in the Letters to the Corinthians,” *Essays and Papers*, 208–211; Walther, *Church and Ministry*, “Concerning the Holy Ministry—Thesis IV,” 198–212; *The Congregation’s Right to Choose its Own Pastor*, 160–181; *Walther’s Pastorale: American Lutheran Pastoral Theology*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. abridged. trans. John M. Drickamer (New Haven, Missouri: Lutheran News, 1995), 21–30.

<sup>73</sup> Stoeckhardt, “On the Establishment and Preservation of the Public Ministry,” Appendix Two, 212–221; “Privileges and Duties of the Spiritual Priesthood,” *Essays and Papers*, 117–121; *Isaiah: The First Twelve Chapters*, trans. Erwin W. Koehlinger (Fort Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 1985), 57.; Walther, *Church and Ministry*, “Concerning the Holy Ministry—Thesis II,” 177–190; C. F. W. Walther, “Sermon at the Installation of Pastor C. G. Stoeckhardt in Holy Cross Church, St. Louis, Mo.,” *Selected Sermons*, trans. Henry J. Eggold, *Selected Writings of C. F. W. Walther*, gen. ed. August R. Suelflow (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981), 164–172.

<sup>74</sup> Stoeckhardt, “Privileges and Duties of the Spiritual Priesthood,” *Essays and Papers*, 103–161; “On the Establishment and Preservation of the Public Ministry,” 212–221; Walther, *Church and Ministry*, “Concerning the Holy Ministry—Thesis IV,” 198–212; *The Congregation’s Right to Choose a Pastor*, 79–111.



continue his public ministry of proclaiming the kingdom of God.<sup>75</sup> (6) The ministry of the Word (*Predigtamt*) is perpetuated by the universal priesthood of all believers.<sup>76</sup> (7) The ministry of the Word (*Predigtamt*) is established locally by the universal priesthood through the process of conferral of this ministry upon a qualified and called individual priest, who then publicly performs the duties of the universal priesthood on behalf of the congregation.<sup>77</sup> (8) The ministry of the Word (*Predigtamt*) is often equated with the office of the parish pastor (*Pfarramt*). Christ established one office in the church and most often that is understood as the office of the parish pastor.<sup>78</sup> (9) The church may also establish helping (or auxiliary) offices which also serve to spread the kingdom of God, according to the church's needs. These auxiliary offices which use the means of grace remain part of the ministry of the Word.<sup>79</sup> (10) Ordination is not divinely

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<sup>75</sup> Stoeckhardt, "On the Establishment and Preservation of the Public Ministry," 212–221; George Stoeckhardt, *The Biblical History of the New Testament*, trans. Arthur E. Beck (Swanville, Minn: Wisdom for Today, 1966), 85–87; "The First Christian Congregations," *Essays and Papers*, 2–3; Walther, *Church and Ministry*, "Concerning the Holy Ministry—Thesis III," 191–197; Walther, *Lutherische Brosamen*, 60–61.

<sup>76</sup> Stoeckhardt, "Privileges and Duties of the Spiritual Priesthood," *Essays and Papers*, 103–121; "Directions for Congregational Life as Contained in the Letters to the Corinthians," *Essays and Papers*, 205–215; "On the Establishment and Preservation of the Public Ministry," 212–221; *Church and Ministry*, "On the Holy Ministry—Thesis I," 161–176; *The Congregation's Right to Choose Its Own Pastor*, 111–124; "The Proper Form of an Evangelical Lutheran Local Congregation Independent of the State," 135–137 in *Walther on the Church*, Selected Writings of C. F. W. Walther, trans. John M. Drickamer, gen. ed. August R. Suelflow (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981).

<sup>77</sup> Stoeckhardt, "On the Establishment and Preservation of the Public Ministry," 212–221; "The Missouri Synod: A True, Evangelical-Lutheran Fellowship," *Essays and Papers*, 309–312; "Directions for the Congregational Life as Contained in the Letters to the Corinthians," *Essays and Papers*, 208–215; Walther; *Church and Ministry*, "Concerning the Holy Ministry—Thesis VII," 268–288; *The Congregation's Right to Choose Its Own Pastor*, 136–137; "The Proper Form of an Evangelical Lutheran Local Congregation Independent of the State," 135–137.

<sup>78</sup> Stoeckhardt, "On the Establishment and Preservation of the Public Ministry," 212–221; "The Missouri Synod: A True, Evangelical-Lutheran Fellowship," *Essays and Papers*, 309–310; *Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians*, trans. Martin S. Sommer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1952), 200–201; Walther, *Church and Ministry*, "Concerning the Holy Ministry—Thesis II," 177–190; Western District Convention, 1876: "The Doctrine of the Lutheran Church Alone Gives All Glory to God, an Irrefutable Proof That Its Doctrine Alone is True." 8. The Institution, Validity, Power, and Unchangeability of the Means of Grace, 165–168 in *Convention Essays*. Selected Writings of C. F. W. Walther, trans. August R. Suelflow, gen. ed. August R. Suelflow (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981).

<sup>79</sup> Stoeckhardt, "On the Call of the Woman Teacher in Christian Parochial Schools," 1–7; "The Missouri Synod: A True, Evangelical-Lutheran Fellowship," *Essays and Papers*, 311–312; *The Biblical History of the New Testament*, 330–332; Walther, *Church and Ministry*, "Concerning the Holy Ministry—Thesis VIII," 289–302; *Walther's Pastoral: American Lutheran Pastoral Theology*, 254–256; "Sermon at the Installation of Two College Professors," 82–89.

mandated, but is an apostolic and biblical practice. Ordination is merely a public testimony that a divine call has been issued and accepted.<sup>80</sup> (11) As members of the universal priesthood, the members of the laity judge both the doctrine and practice of their called workers. The laity are given the right and the responsibility to judge both doctrine and practice by God.<sup>81</sup> (12) The office of the parochial school teacher is derived both from the office and role of parents educating their children and also to some degree from the ministry of the Word (*Predigtamt*).<sup>82</sup>

This list of the agreements between Stoeckhardt and Walther on the ministry is meant to be representative, but not exhaustive. This writer has read what George Stoeckhardt wrote on the ministry and much of C. F. W. Walther wrote on the ministry. He has honestly looked for substantive differences in doctrine between Stoeckhardt and Walther on the ministry; he has not found any. That of course does not necessarily mean there were no differences, what it means is that after a careful search, he has not found any. Walther and Stoeckhardt were St. Louis seminary colleagues for nearly a decade. Given the spirit of the times in which they lived and the theological controversies they had to fight together, it would have been unusual to say the least if Walther taught one doctrine of the ministry in his classroom, while at the same time, Stoeckhardt a classroom or two away, taught a doctrine that was at variance with what Walther taught. If that ever happened, the evidence gathered by this writer so far does not support it.

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<sup>80</sup> Stoeckhardt, *The Biblical History of the New Testament*, 330–332; “The First Christian Congregations,” *Essays and Papers*, 18–19; Walther, *Church and Ministry*, “Concerning the Holy Ministry—Thesis VI,” 219–267.

<sup>81</sup> Stoeckhardt, “The First Christian Congregations,” *Essays and Papers*, 46–47, “The Privileges and Duties of the Spiritual Priesthood,” *Essays and Papers*, 111–146; “The Missouri Synod: A True, Evangelical-Lutheran Fellowship,” *Essays and Papers*, 321–323; Walther, *Church and Ministry*, “Concerning the Holy Ministry—Thesis X,” 332–351; “The Proper Form of an Evangelical Lutheran Local Congregation Independent of the State,” 140–145; *The Congregation’s Right to Choose Its Own Pastor*, 60–176.

<sup>82</sup> Stoeckhardt, “On the Call of the Woman Parochial School Teacher,” 1–7; “The Missouri Synod: A True, Evangelical-Lutheran Fellowship,” *Essays and Papers*, 311; *Commentary on St. Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians*, 249–251; Walther, *Church and Ministry*, “Concerning the Holy Ministry—Thesis VIII,” 289–302; “Sermon at the Installation of Two College Professors,” 82–89; “The Proper Form of an Evangelical Lutheran Local Congregation Independent of the State,” 139–140; *Walther Speaks to the Church: Selected Letters*, ed. Carl S. Meyer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1973), 56.

Walther and Stoeckhardt were two very different men, both with a wide range of experiences before they met in person. Each had strong-willed personalities. Walther was a systematician. Although certainly a thorough student of Scripture, Walther approached the theological task with a historical/confessional approach, with a great emphasis on the citation of Luther, the Lutheran Confessions and the orthodox Lutheran fathers to bolster and establish his *loci*. Stoeckhardt, on the other hand, was primarily an exegete, although he often formulated the results of his exegesis in a systematic way. With Stoeckhardt there is much less subsequent reference to Luther, the Confessions and the Lutheran fathers compared to Walther. Stoeckhardt his entire career was first and foremost a scriptural theologian. Unquestionably Stoeckhardt and Walther could have their share of exegetical differences, as one might expect. But in regard to confessing the public doctrine of their church body, the evidence studied so far reveals that they confessed it together with one voice.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS ABOUT STOECKHARDT'S DOCTRINE OF THE MINISTRY

Was it necessary to write a doctoral dissertation about how George Stoeckhardt understood the ministry? It was as necessary as having a good name. Holy Scripture testifies: “A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold” (Proverbs 22:1). This chapter will explain why it was necessary for this research to be done and what was learned in the process of studying what George Stoeckhardt wrote about the ministry.

It was important to write this dissertation because for church workers, honesty is not just the best policy, it is the *only* policy. Already while he was a pastor in the Saxon *Freikirche*, Stoeckhardt declared his allegiance to the doctrinal position of the Missouri Synod. Soon after that, he himself was called to be the pastor of Holy Cross, a large Missouri Synod congregation in St. Louis. Immediately he began teaching exegesis at the synod's theological seminary. At Stoeckhardt's installation service, C. F. W. Walther preached a sermon on 1 Corinthians 4:1–5, with this theme and parts:

When is the Day of Installation of a Pastor a Day of Festive Joy for a Congregation? (1) when a pastor comes as a servant of Christ and steward of the mysteries of God; and when (2) his congregation seeks nothing else of him except that he be found faithful.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> C. F. W. Walther, “Sermon at the Installation of Pastor C. G. Stoeckhardt in Holy Cross Church, St. Louis, Mo.,” in *Selected Sermons*, 165–166. Sermon originally published in C. F. W. Walther, *Amerkanisch-Lutherische Epistel Postille: Predigten über die meisten epistolischen Perikopen des Kirchenjahrs u. freie Texte*, 19–24: “Wann ist der Tag des Amtsantritts eines Predigers für seine Gemeinde ein Tag festlicher Freude? Ich antworte aus unserem Texte: (1) wenn der Prediger kommt als ein Diener Christi und Haushalter über Gottes Geheimnisse, und wenn (2) seine Gemeinde nicht mehr an ihm sucht, als dass er treu erfunden werde.”

A servant of Christ, a steward of the mysteries of God, a pastor whose congregation held him to be a faithful shepherd. These were all of the responsibilities that Walther entrusted to Stoeckhardt as he began his ministry at Holy Cross and Concordia Seminary. Stoeckhardt went on to have a career of nearly thirty-five years as a Missouri Synod pastor and seminary professor. If the conclusions of Jeffrey Young are correct, that in time Stoeckhardt deviated from the position of Walther and the Missouri Synod on the doctrine of the ministry, and if Stoeckhardt knowingly and deliberately did this, his ministry and his writings must be regarded as acts of theological skullduggery—involving the deception of an entire church body. It was necessary to write this dissertation to protect the reputation of integrity that characterized Stoeckhardt's ministry.

It was also necessary to write this dissertation to demonstrate the professional and theological competence of George Stoeckhardt. To offer the possibility that he deviated from the doctrinal position of the Missouri Synod on the ministry without him ever really realizing it, is to suggest that the man did not really know what he was doing while he taught an entire generation of future synod pastors. Such a conclusion is basically an assertion that Stoeckhardt was incompetent and did not belong in a seminary classroom.

In view of what others have written about Stoeckhardt and his own personal reputation while living in St. Louis, this is a concern that also has to be laid to rest. Ludwig Fuerbringer, a colleague of Stoeckhardt for many years on the St. Louis faculty, wrote two books of remembrances toward the end of his life. In his first book, *Eighty Eventful Years*, Fuerbringer devotes a number of chapters to his colleagues on the seminary faculty whom he had come to know well over the years. Fuerbringer wrote an entire chapter on the life and career of Stoeckhardt which serves as a useful commentary and supplement to Otto Willkomm's

biographical work. In this chapter, Fuerbringer, who professed to know Stoeckhardt well as a colleague and friend for many years, describes him as especially having a reputation for absent-mindedness. While Fuerbringer affirms that others saw Stoeckhardt in this light, he offers a convincing explanation for this reputation since he knew the man well for several decades:

Much has been reported among the older members of our Church and especially among his students with regard to his absent-mindedness, some stories being true and quite a number being apocryphal. In fact, many stories about ‘zerstreute Professoren,’ absent-minded professors, in the old country, like those concerning Neander and others, were transferred to him. I would be able to recount a number of them, some true, some made up. There was some reason for such absent-mindedness; but one knowing Stoeckhardt well also knew the explanation. He knew the abilities and work of his students very well, but he was apt to forget the names and the faces. He was of a very active and ready mind, and if in a conference something was discussed which pertained to externals and did not interest him very much, he would think of other things; and when suddenly he heard something that interested him, he did not know the exact connection and perhaps raised a question indicating absent-mindedness. I could easily show, however, that in all important matters he was a very careful listener and observer of men and things. But I always admired especially his childlike piety. And if I were to characterize Stoeckhardt with a Bible passage, I would use John 1:47, ‘Behold an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile,’ and apply to him the words in Is. 66:2: ‘To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at My Word.’<sup>2</sup>

Fuerbringer’s reminiscences are insightful for two reasons. They help explain how Stoeckhardt acquired a reputation for absent-mindedness and they demonstrate that Stoeckhardt was a man who exhibited a combination of sincerity and piety in his dealings with others, characteristics that hardly mark him as dishonest or hypocritical.

Two other factors can briefly be mentioned regarding Stoeckhardt’s ability to get his point across. More than one comment has been made about his heavy Saxon accent or brogue, noticed even among the German-speaking St. Louis populace. In his reminiscences, former student William Dallmann remarks: “It took a long time to get used to Stoeckhardt’s broad Saxon in

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<sup>2</sup> Fuerbringer, *Eighty Eventful Years*, 113–114.

preaching and lecturing.”<sup>3</sup> Yet this also can be seen as a mark of Stoeckhardt’s genuineness. He spoke the same way in America as he did in Saxony, Germany. He altered his speaking style for no one in either country; what one saw and heard was the true Stoeckhardt; there was nothing artificial or pretentious about him.

The other factor involves Stoeckhardt’s debilitating nervous condition at the turn of the century, brought on in part from the sudden death of his wife. Relatively few people today know the story of this severe nervous disorder, which resulted in his confinement for a time to a St. Louis mental facility. In time Stoeckhardt recovered from this disorder and later remarried. His exegetical commentaries—all published after his confinement to a sanitarium—reveal that he fully recovered his mental faculties and exegetical skills. This medical setback in his career reveals that Stoeckhardt, like many other believers, encountered adversity in his life but found a way to persevere and overcome it. During his tenure as a Missouri Synod pastor and seminary professor, one could consistently call Stoeckhardt’s personal demeanor bluff and blunt, with a heavily-accented speaking style; one could accuse him, perhaps at times, of being absent-minded; one could definitely for a time call him ill and hospitalized; but one searches in vain for a single instance to justify calling George Stoeckhardt dishonest or hypocritical in any aspect of his life or ministry.

This dissertation began by addressing a specific problem with this question: “Was George Stoeckhardt’s understanding of the ministry different from C. F. W. Walther’s understanding of the ministry?” Once again it must be reiterated that this is an important matter, for Walther’s position on the ministry in time became the official doctrinal position of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. For Stoeckhardt to educate future Missouri Synod pastors while teaching at

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<sup>3</sup> William Dallmann, *My Life: Personal Recollections of a Lutheran Missionary, Pastor, Churchman, Lecturer, Author* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1945), 24.

variance with seminary president Walther and the public doctrine of his own church body would be as untenable as it would be dishonest. This writer ends his study on how George Stoeckhardt understood the ministry by concluding that no disagreements in doctrine have been found between Stoeckhardt and Walther on the ministry.

This dissertation began by studying Stoeckhardt's formative years, how his ideas about the ministry were shaped by his family background, education and life experiences. What was learned through this study was that Stoeckhardt's long family history of serving in the ministry contributed to his high regard for it ; Stoeckhardt having Johann von Hofmann as a teacher and serving as a military hospital chaplain were also significant formative influences. His exegetical methodology was studied next. What was observed here was that as he followed the same hermeneutical principles as contained in the Lutheran Confessions, Stoeckhardt's overriding methodology for understanding the ministry was to "take the text as it literally reads," unless there is a compelling reason not to do so (such as the use of figurative language), and to derive both meaning and application from the scriptural text. The conclusion was reached in chapter 2 that Stoeckhardt's exegetical methodology, learned at least in part from Hofmann, is what shaped his description of the doctrine of the ministry. Chapter 3 presented his understanding of the ministry by delineating his three main *loci*: (1) called ministers are servants of Christ; (2) the ministry is perpetuated by the universal priesthood; and (3) the ministry is instituted by God. A recurring theme was seen as these three *loci* were compiled. Stoeckhardt's approach to Scripture, to study it as a cohesive unit—focusing on the particular while keeping an eye on the whole—is what caused him to focus on these three main doctrinal points. This at least in part can be attributed back to Johann von Hofmann's influence.



Chapter 4 presented numerous excerpts about how Stoeckhardt further articulated his understanding of the ministry in his various writings. What was concluded in this chapter was that Stoeckhardt's starting point for understanding the ministry was the priesthood of all believers. The ministry is perpetuated and derived from the universal priesthood through the transference of the rights of the priesthood to a called and qualified individual, who then publicly administers the functions of the universal priesthood in behalf and in the name of the congregation. Chapter 5 presented a treatment of C. F. W. Walther's ecclesiology and especially how he understood and described the ministry. This chapter also presented a list of the agreements found between Stoeckhardt and Walther on the doctrine of the ministry. This fifth chapter found that Stoeckhardt's conclusions about the ministry squared with Walther and the Missouri Synod's conclusions on the ministry.

The following is a summary of the findings of this dissertation. George Stoeckhardt came from a long line of Lutheran pastors and never wanted to be anything else but a confessional Lutheran pastor and theologian. He grew up in an affluent home as an only son and received a solid education in the German university system, which served him well in his future ministry. His ministerial experiences in the Franco-Prussian War, the Saxon *Landeskirche* and the Saxon *Freikirche* honed him until he was ready to embark on a new life and career on a new continent. Once he arrived in America, at his installation service, he heard from Walther himself about what his ministry at Holy Cross should be like. He was to conduct himself as a servant of Christ, as a conscientious steward of God's mysteries, and as a faithful shepherd of souls. While it is certain Stoeckhardt appreciated Walther's words about the ministry at his installation, it must be remembered that Stoeckhardt was a seasoned pastor already in Germany before his immigration to America. Although he was resolutely committed to the doctrinal position of the Missouri

Synod and said and wrote as much on two continents, this did not prevent Stoeckhardt from being an independent thinker and exegete. Although it is debatable whether he was the first true exegete in the history of the Missouri Synod, what is not debatable is that Stoeckhardt effectively used his exegetical skills to deal with pertinent issues in the Missouri Synod and in nineteenth-century Lutheranism in general. The doctrine of election and not the doctrine of the ministry was the issue of the day when he arrived in America.

Stoeckhardt's exegetical skills contributed significantly in helping solidify the Missouri Synod's position in this controversy. Although the doctrine of the ministry was not a major point of doctrinal contention during the years of Stoeckhardt's ministry in America, he made several solid contributions to writing on the ministry through his periodical articles and convention essays. When the issue of the call of the woman parochial school teacher arose, Stoeckhardt responded with a thorough exegesis of the pertinent scriptural passages and then came to the firm conclusion that women can hold a divine call to serve the church by being teachers of children. Stoeckhardt's *Lehre und Wehre* article was a major step in convincing minds throughout the Missouri Synod that properly trained and qualified women could be part of the public ministry. At the time that Stoeckhardt wrote his article there were fewer than two hundred women teachers in the Missouri Synod, but only a generation later, the number hovered around 500.<sup>4</sup> Sound biblical exegesis can produce sound results for the life of the church. In delineating his ideas about what Scripture taught about the ministry, how would Stoeckhardt want to be remembered? Stoeckhardt first and foremost saw the ministry as an office that was characterized by service—service to God and his people. His favorite term for the ministry was not the word *Amt* (office) but *Dienst* (service), although admittedly both Stoeckhardt and Walther tended to use the two

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<sup>4</sup> Selle, 429.

terms interchangeably. Secondly, Stoeckhardt, like Walther, had great respect for the universal priesthood and the local congregation. He understood that the universal priesthood perpetuated the ministry by first establishing the ministry in its midst through the process of a divine call to a qualified member of the universal priesthood. This individual then was commissioned to publicly exercise the spiritual duties of the universal priesthood on behalf of the calling body, the local congregation. The universal priesthood also perpetuated the ministry of the Word by providing candidates for the ministry. The ministry of the Word to Stoeckhardt was not a divinely instituted spiritual caste or estate, but it was where members of the laity entered into an office to become called workers and shepherds of God's people. Stoeckhardt's final *locus* on the ministry is that the ministry of the Word is a divinely instituted office. It was established by Christ during his public ministry and is meant to be perpetuated by the universal priesthood until the end of time.

Did Stoeckhardt merely parrot Walther on the ministry or did Stoeckhardt come to his own conclusions that agreed with Walther and the Missouri Synod? This question is answered in Stoeckhardt's 1878 letter to the members of the Missouri Synod in *Der Lutheraner*. Here Stoeckhardt makes it very clear that he came to the conviction that the Missouri Synod taught nothing more and nothing less than the pure Lutheran faith through his own personal study, and he wanted to be publicly identified with such a church body. Unquestionably Stoeckhardt greatly admired Walther and was proud to be on the same theological page that he was, yet Stoeckhardt's own ministerial experience in Europe thoroughly demonstrates that long before he met C. F. W. Walther, he had established himself as an independent thinker and theologian. Hereto one must also seriously regard the testimony of a generation of seminary students who learned how to do exegesis from Stoeckhardt at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. The available testimony to a man suggests that Stoeckhardt was indeed a master of exegesis who did original

work and came to original conclusions from it. Yet when the occasion called for it, Stoeckhardt was not above directly taking a stand where Walther and the Missouri Synod stood on the ministry. The most pertinent example of this was the time he delivered a district essay and proceeded to quote verbatim from *Kirche und Amt*.<sup>5</sup> Noteworthy is the observation of Stoeckhardt's high esteem among pastors and theologians in the other Lutheran synods that made up the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference. This is due in part to his role in educating pastors from other synods, including the Norwegian Synod and the Wisconsin Synod. In this vein of thought, Stoeckhardt can legitimately be seen as the first of a small group of Missouri Synod men who enjoyed broad appeal across synodical lines, especially between the Missouri and Wisconsin Synods, with Carl Manthey-Zorn, William (Billy) Dallmann and Martin Franzmann serving the same role in subsequent generations.<sup>6</sup> Stoeckhardt's appeal across synodical lines can be attributed to his scriptural method of doing theology.

Do the results of this dissertation speak to Christians outside the Lutheran synods which formerly made up the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference? The writer of this dissertation believes that it does. It is worth noting that in the nineteenth century, the twentieth century and now in the twenty-first century, one issue in all of American Lutheranism that simply will not go away is the doctrine and praxis of the ministry. Let this dissertation be a timely reminder that Stoeckhardt regarded the ministry of the Word as an office marked not by privilege but by service to Christ and his church. This could help restore an element of civility to an otherwise often acrimonious exchange of ideas about the church and its ministry.

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<sup>5</sup> Stoeckhardt, "Unsere Missourisynode ist eine wahrhaft evangelisch-lutherische Gemeinschaft," 30–31.

<sup>6</sup> Carl Manthey-Zorn (1846–1928) served as a missionary in India and as a Missouri Synod pastor; William Dallmann (1862–1952) was one of Walther's last students and served as a Missouri Synod pastor, synod vice-president and editor of *The Lutheran Witness*. He was a strong advocate of English work within the Missouri Synod; Martin Franzmann (1907–1976) served as a Wisconsin Synod college professor and a Missouri Synod seminary professor. He was a renowned exegete, author and hymn writer.

When the Lord of the church calls men into the public ministry, he never promises it will be an easy life, but he does promise it will be a blessed life. This study of the ministry, as George Stoeckhardt understood it, can provide spiritual incentive to gauge one's attitude about his/her public service in the kingdom of God. What are one's motivations for entering into the ministry? What are one's motivations for remaining in the ministry? From this detailed study of his writings, it is evident that Stoeckhardt saw the ministry as a blessed life of service, dutifully performed out of gratitude for what God had done for mankind. Acrimonious discussions about who is right and who is wrong about various aspects of the ministry can become a thing of the past if the church of the twenty-first century would hear a voice that was stilled at the beginning of the twentieth century, but whose voice can still be heard through his many writings, George Stoeckhardt. If he were alive today, whatever the church and ministry issue, Stoeckhardt would begin to address it by emphasizing that one functions in the public ministry as a *servant* of the Servant, Jesus Christ.

Moreover, if Stoeckhardt was alive today and allowed to comment on the future of the public ministry, he undoubtedly would have little use for much of the current talk about what makes an effective pastor today. Today many in Christ's church, it seems, believe that a pastor needs certain leadership and management skills found more in the business world than in the life of the church: a man who has a good handle on public image and public relations, a man who has read the latest books on pastoral and congregational leadership. This study of the ministry reveals that Stoeckhardt believed a called servant in the kingdom of God essentially only needed one book to function in the public ministry—and that was the sacred Scriptures. He truly was a man of one book—he taught it and he lived it. Stoeckhardt would want to see called workers engage in serious, daily Bible study as their chief preparation and power source for serving in

Christ's church. For Stoeckhardt, one could serve in the public ministry because the Bible revealed that one has a Savior from sin. This fact animated Stoeckhardt to conduct public ministry and his intensive study and knowledge of Scripture continually strengthened him for this task.

George Stoeckhardt would have at least one other piece of godly wisdom to say to the church of the twenty-first century. Nearly 170 years have gone by since the Saxon immigration arrived in America. This erstwhile band of believers formed the nucleus of what would one day become The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. From their very beginnings in this country, the Saxon immigrants emphasized the importance of Christian education at all levels. Less than a year after they arrived in America, Walther and others founded a Christian school which would become Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. In a day and age in which Christian education at all levels is threatened on all sides by various dynamics, some more benign, some very sinister, Stoeckhardt would want today's church to recommit itself to preserving Christian educational institutions at every age level. His love for souls would compel him to take this stand, but Stoeckhardt would want Christian education to continue to exist and thrive for another reason. He knew full well that Christian schools were where future pastors and teachers are produced. Throughout his life Stoeckhardt resolutely taught that if a Lutheran church body wanted to preserve its orthodoxy, it had to have in place a system of Christian education in which faithfulness to God's Word could be dutifully transmitted to the next generation.

A pastor is to be a servant of Christ, a conscientious steward of the mysteries of God and a faithful shepherd of the flock entrusted to him. These sentiments were expressed by Walther to Stoeckhardt as Stoeckhardt began his ministry in America. Stoeckhardt rose to the challenge and began a generation-long ministry to his adopted church body in his adopted country. The

findings of this doctoral dissertation reveal that in the nineteenth century, the Missouri Synod was blessed with many confessors of the truth, two of which were George Stoeckhardt and C. F. W. Walther. On the subject of the ministry and on all other points of doctrine, the empirical evidence shows that Stoeckhardt and Walther jointly confessed the truth of God's Word and the historical Lutheran faith. Nothing more and nothing less.

## APPENDIX ONE

### JEFFREY YOUNG'S STOECKHARDT RESEARCH: AN ACADEMIC REPLY

Until the most recent decade about the only scholar to do any serious research into how George Stoeckhardt understood the ministry was John Wohlrabe Jr., who briefly addressed Stoeckhardt's position in his 1987 dissertation. Wohlrabe benignly observed: "Although his specialty was exegetical theology, George Stoeckhardt wrote several essays on the doctrine of the ministry utilizing a format more typical of systematic theology."<sup>1</sup> As noted in the preface, Dr. Jeffrey Young within the past decade has now also done some extensive research in three writings of Stoeckhardt in particular, Stoeckhardt's commentaries on Romans and Ephesians and his 1897 article regarding the call of women parochial school teachers. On the basis of his research, Young has concluded that Stoeckhardt disagreed with Walther and the Missouri Synod on the doctrines of church and ministry and was guilty of teaching false doctrine during his tenure as a St. Louis seminary professor. This appendix will check some of the results of the dissertation by examining the research and conclusions of Young.

This academic response will specifically address Young's conclusions about what Stoeckhardt wrote about the ministry in the two aforementioned commentaries and the 1897 *Lehre und Wehre* article. Young's conclusions can be found in a forty-nine page paper he wrote in 2000–2001 entitled "Evaluation of George Stoeckhardt on the subject of the Ministry." In the introduction to his paper, Young concedes that he is breaking new ground when he, as a

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<sup>1</sup> Wohlrabe Jr., "An Historical Analysis of the Doctrine of the Ministry in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Until 1962," 93–94.



Lutheran Churches of the Reformation (LCR) pastor, accuses Stoeckhardt of teaching false doctrine. He proceeds to acknowledge that Stoeckhardt has been well-regarded in his church body over the years and some of his books are still used in the LCR today.<sup>2</sup>

Young is completely correct on this point. An examination of the theological journal of the LCR, *The Faithful Word*—over its near fifty years of publication—will show that Stoeckhardt is quoted in journal articles numerous times as a recognized orthodox Lutheran authority. In 1985 Stoeckhardt’s *Lehre und Wehre* article on Law and Gospel was reprinted in *The Faithful Word*, accompanied by this comment from the editor: “We offer our readers a reprint of this valuable treatise in this issue of *The Faithful Word*.”<sup>3</sup> In 1999 Stoeckhardt again is quoted in *The Faithful Word* as an authority on the subject of head coverings for women according to 1 Corinthians 14.<sup>4</sup> In the near half-century that the Lutheran Churches of the Reformation has been in existence, Stoeckhardt has been consistently regarded by the LCR as a quintessential example of Missouri Synod orthodoxy of a bygone era.

Young begins his evaluation of what George Stoeckhardt wrote on the ministry by describing the various events which led up to his study. On the first page of his paper, he makes this conclusion:

I discovered the following false teaching evident in the commentary on Romans 12. p. 170ff: Stoeckhardt fails to distinguish between the public and private offices that are found in Christendom, namely the pastoral office and the universal priesthood. He bases the call not on the external request of the congregation to serve, but rather on an inward gift (grace or charism). This leads him to err against the necessity of the call to teach publicly. He says that congregational members who judge themselves apt to teach should teach one another in open gatherings, without

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<sup>2</sup> Jeffrey A. Young, “Evaluation of George Stoeckhardt on the subject of the Ministry,” unpublished paper, October 13, 2001, 3.

<sup>3</sup> Paul G. Koch, ed., “Editor’s Note,” *The Faithful Word* 22, no. 2 (Summer 1985): 3.

<sup>4</sup> Kenneth K. Miller, “George Stoeckhardt on Head Coverings,” *The Faithful Word* 36, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 17–23.

being requested by the whole congregation to do so.<sup>5</sup>

From Young's first page of his evaluation of Stoeckhardt's writings on the ministry, a shortcoming of his scholarship is already evident. When he refers to Stoeckhardt's commentary on Romans 12, he makes reference to p. 170ff. This indicates that Young is basing his research not on Stoeckhardt's 649-page Romans commentary—published in German in 1907—but on the 211-page English abridgment of his commentary, condensed and translated by Erwin Koehlinger, and published by Concordia Theological Seminary Press in 1980. Young admits in the sixth sentence of his evaluation of Stoeckhardt, "Not being fluent in German it is very difficult for me to form a well-rounded view of his works."<sup>6</sup>

As one examines Young's bibliography, it becomes clear that his conclusions about Stoeckhardt teaching false doctrine—at least in his Romans commentary—are based not on the original words of Stoeckhardt studied in their context, but on a very condensed English translation of Stoeckhardt's Romans commentary. Stoeckhardt had no hand or say in the production of this English abridgment. It was published two generations after his death. In conclusion, the writer of this dissertation believes it is unfair—even a bit rash—to accuse a man of false doctrine on the basis of a translated work that is clearly a significant abridgment of a work originally written by the author in another language. Violence to the original context of the author is a pitfall that is almost unavoidable to make when an abridgment like Koehlinger's is used to draw conclusions about a writer's doctrinal orthodoxy.

Young, despite his questionable use of the highly condensed Romans commentary, forges on and cites fifteen paragraphs in his evaluation from Stoeckhardt's commentary from Romans 12, which he believes contain false doctrine. Young condenses his assertions against

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<sup>5</sup> Young, 3.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

Stoeckhardt's orthodoxy into eight summary statements on the basis of his Romans commentary, two more on the basis of the 1910 Ephesians commentary, and finally three based on Stoeckhardt's 1897 *Lehre und Wehre* article.<sup>7</sup>

The chief purpose of this dissertation was to present what George Stoeckhardt taught on the ministry and what exegetical methodology he used to come to his conclusions on the ministry. But since Stoeckhardt was a Missouri Synod seminary professor—and since the Missouri Synod adopted Walther's theses on church and ministry as its public doctrine—it is important that it be shown whether Stoeckhardt deviated from the doctrinal position he claimed to represent. The competence and integrity of Stoeckhardt's scholarship and churchmanship are involved. Basically what must be definitively answered is whether Stoeckhardt was incompetent, dishonest, or both.

In examining Young's assertions of false doctrine against Stoeckhardt, one is struck by a recurring procedure. As Stoeckhardt writes on various doctrinal points relating to the ministry, Young sometimes negatively interprets one of Stoeckhardt's statements and often comes to the conclusion that Stoeckhardt is teaching false doctrine, while another individual, reading the same statement of Stoeckhardt's, may well have the opposite reaction—Stoeckhardt is stating accepted truth. Some of Young's conclusions on what Stoeckhardt wrote do not seem to reflect the sentiment of Luther's meaning of the Eighth Commandment, namely, to take one's neighbor's words and actions in the kindest possible way. Sometimes when Stoeckhardt makes an assertion about a point of doctrine and omits mentioning one aspect of this doctrinal point, Young is then convinced that Stoeckhardt denies this aspect of the doctrine. In other words, there seems to be an element of *eisegesis* (bringing thoughts into a text) in Young's treatment of Stoeckhardt,

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 19–20, 23, 29, 34.

while not considering the full range of possibilities.

Despite Young's charges against Stoeckhardt, it must be pointed out that he does not accuse Stoeckhardt of teaching false doctrine about the nature of the ministry, its divine institution, its basic functions, its relationship to the universal priesthood, or the ultimate goal of the ministry, the eternal salvation of souls. Some of Young's charges against Stoeckhardt—such as comments related to the activity of the prophets of the New Testament—are beyond the scope of this dissertation, which has the doctrine of the ministry as understood by Stoeckhardt and Walther as its basic focus. Young, in his comments on the work of the prophets according to Romans 12, asserts that Stoeckhardt has an incorrect understanding of the Greek words ἀναλογία and πίστις in verse 6. This also is well beyond the scope of this dissertation. The subject deserves its own doctoral dissertation. It can be conceded to Young that there appears to be an honest exegetical difference of opinion between Stoeckhardt and Walther on the interpretation of this passage.<sup>8</sup> But this in no way represents a difference in the doctrine of the ministry or any other doctrine. This topic has been previously addressed in chapter 5.

While it is far beyond the scope of this dissertation to respond to all of Young's objections to Stoeckhardt, three specific and pertinent issues will be addressed: (1) the doctrine of the call; (2) the nature of the office of the parish pastor; and (3) the role of the woman parochial school teacher. Clearly Young has some major issues with some of what Stoeckhardt has written about the call one receives to conduct a public ministry. In response to Young's conclusions about the

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<sup>8</sup> Stoeckhardt maintained that the faith (πίστις) to which Paul wants prophecy to be related is faith in the subjective sense, *fides qua*, the act of faith by which one believes, while Walther held with the orthodox Lutheran dogmatists that it is faith in the objective sense, *fides quae*, the faith which is believed. For more details, see Stoeckhardt, *Römer*, 568–570; C. F. W., Walther, “Why Should Our Pastors, Teachers and Professors Subscribe Unconditionally to the Symbolical Writings of our Church” translated and condensed by Alex. Wm. C. Guebert *Concordia Theological Monthly* 18 (April 1947): 241–53. Also available in *Lutheran Confessional Theology in America 1840–1880*, translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 55–77. This same essay is published under the title “Confessional Subscription,” in *Essays for the Church*, vol. I, 1857–1879, trans. Theodore G. Tappert, ed. August R. Suelflow (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), 19–29.

quality of Stoeckhardt's comments, it must be pointed out that the call into the public ministry is not even what is being discussed by the apostle Paul or Stoeckhardt in Romans 12. What is being discussed is how individual Christians are to properly use their spiritual gifts for the good of the body of Christ and their fellow church members. Young quotes extensively from Walther's *Kirche und Amt*, but it is important to note that in the scriptural proofs which Walther cites to support his theses on the ministry, Romans 12 is not quoted in a single instance. Walther did not regard the content of Romans 12 as pertaining to the public ministry either. When Stoeckhardt comments on Romans 12 about a Christian using his gifts for teaching others without the benefit of a divine call, he is not speaking about the public ministry as Walther addressed it in *Kirche und Amt*, but on the proper use of one's spiritual gifts which a Christian employs as part of his duties as a member of the universal priesthood.

Young appears convinced that at times Stoeckhardt maintained that it was possible to serve in the public ministry without the benefit of a divine call. If he would read Stoeckhardt's 1895 *Der Lutheraner* article, he would clearly see that Stoeckhardt describes in serious detail the calling process that must take place in order for an individual to publicly serve in behalf of others in a Christian congregation. In this article, Stoeckhardt explains that this calling process is to be regarded as a noble, godly work:

Yes, Christians exercise a high, godly right and fulfill a high, godly duty, when they establish the public ministry of the Word. That all these Christian congregations do well to consider this, in particular, when they are in the position and are at the point of choosing and calling for themselves preachers. When in such cases a congregation realizes, that it is doing a noble, godly work, it will then undertake this work in the fear of the Lord and with prayer to him, and it will intent on doing everything honestly and orderly.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Stoeckhardt, "Von der Aufrichtung und Erhaltung des öffentlichen Predigtamt," 17: "Ja, die Christen üben ein hohes, göttliches Recht aus und erfüllen eine hohe, göttliche Pflicht, wenn sie das öffentliche Predigtamt aufrichten. Dass die alle christlichen Gemeinden recht denken möchten, sonderlich dann, wenn sie in der Lage sind und in Begriff stehen, sich Prediger zu wählen und zu berufen. Wenn eine Gemeinde in diesem Fall sich dessen  
(continued next page)

In numerous places in his convention essays, as has already been demonstrated, Stoeckhardt also describes the calling process, in which those who seek to serve in the public ministry of the Word must be qualified and called to do so. Young in his paper concludes that Stoeckhardt taught various false ideas about the office of the parish pastor: that the call of the pastor has changed since apostolic times, that the duties of the pastor's office are adapted and determined by the congregation, and that the call of the pastor also stems from internal ability.<sup>10</sup> The first two ideas hardly seem like false doctrine to this writer. While the basic call of a pastor to prepare his flock for Judgment Day by being a conscientious *Seelsorger* has not changed at all since New Testament times—there are many things about the pastor's office and work that have changed. But these changes, often having to do with technology and time, do not violate the doctrinal requirements for the public ministry, in the writer's opinion. Here again may be an example of Young reading something into Stoeckhardt's Ephesians commentary that simply is not there.

Is it a departure from Walther's doctrine to teach that "the duties of the pastor's office are adapted determined by the congregation"? The pastoral practice of C. F. W. Walther himself would indicate that he would agree in principle with this sentiment. August Suelflow in his biography of Walther writes at length about the *Gesamtgemeinde* (joint congregation) which Walther founded in St. Louis in 1848. This was the arrangement where St. Louis was divided into various geographical districts, with a Missouri Synod congregation serving each district. Eventually four *Gesamtgemeinde* churches were formed. Walther remained as pastor at Trinity, while assistant pastors or "vicars" served Holy Cross, Immanuel and Zion. The *Gesamtgemeinde*

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recht bewusst ist, dass sie ein vornehmes, göttliches Werk vorhat, so wird sie dann auch dieses Werk in der Furcht des Herrn und mit Anrufung Gottes in Angriff nehmen und darauf bedacht sein, dass dabei Alles ehrlich und ordentlich zugebe."

<sup>10</sup> Young, 52.

remained in existence for the remainder of Walther's life but was dissolved shortly after his death in 1889.<sup>11</sup>

The existence of the *Gesamtgemeinde* and Walther's steadfast support for it is convincing proof that he believed that congregations have a significant say in the duties their pastors conduct in their midst. While the evidence is overwhelming and convincing that Walther had a high regard for the public ministry, he also resolutely supported congregational autonomy and the right for each congregation to call its own pastor and—under the guidance of God's Word—to determine the proper scope of the call so that the kingdom of God in that particular locality might best be served. The functioning of the *Gesamtgemeinde* arrangement required a significant amount of adapting for the pastors who served congregations in this arrangement and a significant amount of congregational input in their operation. One is hard pressed to believe that Walther would agree with Young's sentiments that it is wrong to teach that the duties of a pastor's call cannot at least in part be adapted and determined by the congregation. Since both Walther and Stoeckhardt served *Gesamtgemeinde* congregations for many years, one could make a convincing argument that they experienced first-hand, at least in part, that a pastor's call is adapted and determined by the congregation, the calling body.

When Young concludes that Stoeckhardt taught that a pastor's call stems from internal ability, he seems to imply that Stoeckhardt, at least at times, taught that a man on his own can decide if he wants to be a pastor, if he feels he has the particular gifts. Once again, what Stoeckhardt wrote in one of his convention essays contradicts Young's assertion. In describing how his synod secures faithful pastors for its pulpits, Stoeckhardt first describes the education a young man receives in Missouri Synod educational institutions. Then he gives full credit to the Lord of the church for instilling in a man the desire to be a *Seelsorger*: "And now the called

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<sup>11</sup> Suelflow, *Servant of the Word*, 64–66.

candidate accepts this commission; the Lord puts assent into his heart, and so the candidate enters into the service of the congregation.”<sup>12</sup>

Finally, Stoeckhardt’s 1897 article concerning the call of women parochial school teachers received much criticism from Young. Young’s comments reveal that he does not regard it as wrong for women to privately teach children, but he takes issue with Stoeckhardt’s position that a woman parochial school teacher exercises a public and divine call in behalf of the congregation. He also takes issue with Stoeckhardt’s position that a congregation may properly accept the services of a woman teacher who offers them to the congregation.<sup>13</sup>

Women parochial school teachers were not common in the Missouri Synod during the synod’s first generation. Walther Wolbrecht reported in 1947 that while many in the early Missouri Synod did not think that women had any place serving in the ministry as parochial school teachers, an early start was already made in Walther’s own *Gesamtgemeinde*:

A considerable number of people in the Church at the time felt that there was absolutely no place for women in this kind of congregational activity. Over against this attitude it is interesting to note that already in 1868 four ladies were employed by the St. Louis congregation to teach in its schools at a time when Dr. C. F. W. Walther was still pastor of the *Gesamtgemeinde*.<sup>14</sup>

It is uncertain whether these four women held divine calls or if they were more or less hired to teach school at the *Gesamtgemeinde*. This occurred at least ten full years before Stoeckhardt even arrived in America. August Stellhorn in his historical account of Missouri Synod schools reported that in 1884, there were thirteen women teachers serving in synod

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<sup>12</sup> Stoeckhardt, “Unsere Missourisynode ist eine wahrhaft evangelisch-lutherische Gemeinschaft,” 42: “Und nun nimmt der berufene Candidat diesen Auftrag an, der Herr selbst gibt ihm das Jawort ins Herz, und so tritt er in den Dienst der Gemeinde.”

<sup>13</sup> Young, 37.

<sup>14</sup> Walther F. Wolbrecht, “The Period of Expansion,” *100 Years of Christian Education*, 1947 Fourth Yearbook, ed. Arthur C. Repp (River Forest, Illinois: Lutheran Education Association, 1947), 91.



elementary schools, but by 1897, there were 115.<sup>15</sup> Since women teachers were becoming increasingly common in Missouri—despite strong objections by some—Stoeckhardt was prompted to address the issue in the pages of *Lehre und Wehre*. Stellohorn labels Stoeckhardt’s article “exhaustive.”<sup>16</sup> After giving a thorough exegesis of the pertinent passages in 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy, Stoeckhardt came to the conclusion that women can be profitably called by the congregation to serve as school teachers for the congregation’s Christian day school. He was very careful to maintain in this article that this should be done properly, in such a way that it does not violate the headship principle, established by the order of creation. After restating some basic principles about God’s will and order for proper congregational life, Stoeckhardt concludes that it is a matter of Christian freedom whether an individual congregation calls teachers to assist parents in providing their children a Christian education and that a congregation has the right to assign some of the spiritual care to women teachers.<sup>17</sup>

In concluding this academic reply to the scholarship of Jeffrey Young, this writer freely recognizes the time and effort Young has put into studying the writings of George Stoeckhardt and C. F. W. Walther. The writer does not take issue with Jeffrey Young’s scholarship in general, but he does not agree *in this instance* with Young’s methodology or his conclusions. During his ministry of the Word, the apostle Paul was concerned to speak the whole will of God to the people whom he served (Acts 20:27). Using this same principle, this writer is convinced that “the whole will of Stoeckhardt” must be studied to get a well-rounded view of the man. This dissertation has made an honest attempt to present all what Stoeckhardt had to write on the ministry, and on this basis, concludes that there was no appreciable difference between

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<sup>15</sup> Stellohorn, 232.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 233.

<sup>17</sup> Stoeckhardt, “Vom dem Beruf der Lehrerinnen an christlichen Gemeindeschulen,” 72–73.

Stoekhardt and Walther on the doctrine of the ministry.

## APPENDIX TWO

### ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF STOECKHARDT'S "ON THE ESTABLISHMENT AND PRESERVATION OF THE PUBLIC MINISTRY"

*Der Lutheraner* 51 (January 29, 1895): 17–19

The church is the congregation of believers. The marks of the church are Word and Sacrament. Wherever God's Word is preached and the Sacraments are administered according to Christ's institution, there one is certain to find a greater or a lesser band of believing Christians. For God's Word can and shall not return empty (Isaiah 55:11). Therefore Luther writes: "God's Word cannot be without God's people." And he continues on: "On the other hand God's people cannot be without God's Word." Christ says: "My sheep hear my voice" (John 10:27). St. Paul exhorts the Christians: "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Col. 3:16). And true Christians come to him. God's people cannot live without God's Word. Just as faith is kindled through the Word, in the same way it is preserved and strengthened through the Word. Therefore wherever a small band of Christians is gathering together, there God's Word is working, there the Word is preached, heard, learned, there is also the visible Word, the Sacrament, in custom and practice.

But to whom did the Lord give the command to preach the Word and to administer the Sacraments? Before Christ ascended to heaven, he spoke to his disciples: "Go and teach all nations, and baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teach them to obey everything what I have commanded you" (Mt. 28:19–20). And he added: "And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the world." He gave this command to these to whom the following promise has been given: "I am with you all always, until the end of the

world,” that is, the disciples of all ages until the end of the world, all believing Christians have the command of Christ to teach and to baptize. The Lord has entrusted to his disciples, to his believers the power of the keys, which is the right to forgive and to retain sins, and with that all ecclesiastical authority (Mt. 16:16–19; Mt. 18:17–19; John 20:21–23). All believing Christians are priests before God and are called to proclaim the virtues of God (1 Pt. 2:9). Now to be sure from the beginning of Christendom, there has been the custom and arrangement of appointing for the public service in Word and Sacrament particular individuals who were especially qualified and adept. In the ancient church those were the bishops, the elders and the deacons. Now they are the preachers or pastors. But when a band of Christians is calling one or more preachers, in this way to speak with Luther, “only some are pulled out from the band, so that they instead of the congregation will fulfill the ecclesiastical duty, which is the duty of all believers.”

Christians, who are all spiritual priests and who all are called, to preach, baptize, absolve and so forth, transfer their priestly rights to those select men, so that they in the name and commission of all, preach the Gospel and administer the Sacrament for the sake of the community, and in this way, the public ministry is established in the local community. And indeed the congregation of every locality has the power and authority to appoint for themselves preachers. In the Smalcald Articles it states: “Therefore it follows, where there is the true church, there is also the power to choose and ordain servants of the church. Christ says: ‘Truly, I say to you, what you will bind on earth, shall also be bound in heaven; what you will loosen on earth, shall also be loosed in heaven.’ Again I say to you: ‘Where two among you on earth become one, whatever it is, that they wish to ask, that shall be given to them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the middle among them’” (Mt 18:18, 20). That means at every locality, where a band of Christians finds itself gathered together, and where only two or three are there, there is Christ with all his grace, gifts and

privileges, there are the keys of the kingdom of heaven, there is also the power to choose and to appoint servants of the church.

The church has, nevertheless, not only the power and right, but has also, as our Confessions say, “God’s mandate, that they shall appoint preachers and deacons.” The matter does not rest solely in their free judgment or discretion, whether it wants to administer its entrusted gifts, that is Word and Sacrament, in this way or in some other way. For the public ministry of the Word is itself ordained and established by God. The apostle Paul reminds the elders from Ephesus of the fact, and that holds true for all preachers, that they “have been placed as bishops by the Holy Spirit, in order to tend the congregation of God” (Acts 20:28). And in Eph. 4:11 he testifies about the exalted Christ: “and he appointed some to be apostles, but some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, some to be shepherds and teachers.” According to the Greek text, it actually declares, “And he has given some to be apostles, some to be shepherds and teachers.” Therein lies to be sure, that the named offices are desired, established and ordained by Christ. But the words signify still more and they conclude in this also, that Christ provides qualified people for these offices in his church. Shepherds and teachers are gifts, which the Lord bestows to his congregation. The rule of Christ in his church on earth shows itself in that Christ himself, at all times, awakens men among Christians, who are willing to serve in his kingdom, whom he equips with the Holy Spirit and the gift of study, whose training he blesses and prospers, so that they can carry on the ministry of the New Testament.

For that reason the congregation should accept these gifts thankfully from the hand of the Lord and they should employ them for their good and benefit. Christians should, as Luther writes, “recognize this kindness and give thanks for it, that God has directed the church, that it should choose for itself individuals for the ministry of the Word and service of the Sacrament, and he promises to show them these individuals who were chosen by the church; he will awaken

many among the same and provide them with special gifts, for the betterment of the church (Hallische Ausg. XVII, 1442, 1443).

Yes, Christians exercise a high godly right and fulfill a high godly duty, when they establish the public ministry of the Word. All these Christian congregations do well to consider this, in particular, when they are in the position and are at the point of choosing and calling for themselves preachers. When in such cases a congregation realizes, that it is doing a noble, godly work, it will then undertake this work in the fear of the Lord and with prayer to him and it will be inherent on doing everything honestly and orderly. They will see to it, that they will obtain a preacher who is qualified and skilled, with the treasures of the kingdom of heaven, which are known to the congregation, who is economical with the divine mysteries, who is instructive, who adorns the wholesome teachings with a pious way of life, so that the bad example of the teacher does not hold up the effect of the teaching (1 Tim. 3:1ff.). And a Lutheran congregation, which is in the possession of the pure Word of God and the unadulterated Sacraments, will want to make certain that the man who will become their preacher, may believe and teach properly, so that he may preach the gospel in their midst, as Christ had proclaimed and delivered it to his apostles, as Christ wants it to be preached and taught to his congregation and the Sacrament administered according to the institution and in accordance with the will of Christ. Christ himself gives to his church shepherds and teachers according to his pleasure. But even though it is one Spirit, yet there are various gifts, and these different gifts should be employed according to the Lord's will for the general benefit (1 Cor. 12:7). If a congregation recognizes that correctly, they will want to investigate which shepherd and teacher the Lord has intended and prepared exactly for it, which man corresponds the best with its requirements, and will accordingly accept worthwhile good counsel and will ask advice from such men, who possess extensive awareness of people, the officers of the synod. The congregation puts aside all external, carnal considerations and

motives. And when they have to choose between several suitable candidates, in which all members have good confidence, all the members will gladly give their voice to that candidate, which the majority chooses as the most suitable.

Yes, the appointment of the ministry of the Word is the business, right and obligation of all the members of the congregation. Christ gives this mandate to the entire congregation, he has given to all believers the service of Word and Sacrament. The congregational members who are entitled to vote and who carry out the vote are simply the natural representatives of the whole congregation. Therefore not only the voting members should be and become one in this business, but also the other members, the women, and the minors should say a heartfelt “Yes” and “Amen” to the unanimous congregational decision in their hearts. To be sure, it is always only the believers who call the pastor. For Christ has handed over the keys and all ecclesiastical authority only to believing Christians. The hypocrites, who are perhaps joined outwardly to the congregation, do not really belong to the church, in truth, before God they are by no means members of the congregation. And if they choose along with the members, vote along with the members, that is no call, they are only doing in pretense what the believers do in reality, and what they in fact do in this business, is before God null and void, but they are not hindering the work of God, which the congregation of God here accomplishes.

After the selection takes place, the congregation sends out the call to the chosen preacher the request: “Come, you are supposed to be our pastor,” and lets him know at the same time, what it expects and requests from him and promises to him what it owes to him according to God’s Word, and it is a commendable ecclesiastical custom, that it issues to him a formal document of vocation. And if then the one chosen, in the name of God, and after deliberating thoroughly has accepted the call and together with it the issued responsibilities in it, and after that he has been introduced to the congregation according to good ecclesiastical custom in the

public ordination or installation celebration, then all the members of the congregation should receive him like the Galatian Christians received the apostle Paul, as a messenger of God, should look upon him from now on as a servant of the church and a servant of Christ and thank God, that he has given to them again a suitable teacher and shepherd.

It is a sacred duty of a Christian congregation to establish the public ministry of the Word in its midst and then also to preserve it. For the preservation of ministry of the Word serves everything that a congregation according to God's Word owes to the chosen preacher and to which the congregation obligates itself through the calling.

To begin with the congregation should bear in mind, that by charging the called preacher with the public service in Word and Sacrament, it does not relinquish its priestly right and duty. Surely no one should be allowed to teach publicly in the Christian congregation without a call, other than the called preacher. Nevertheless the congregation is and remains the proper possessor of the power of the keys and of all church authority. The congregation is the mistress, the preachers are the servants of the church. St. Paul writes: "Who is now Paul? Who is Apollos? Servants they are, through whom you have come to believe" (1 Cor. 3:5). And "Whether it be Paul or Apollos, Cephas or the world, whether it be life or death, be the present or the future; All is yours; but you are of Christ, but Christ is of God" (1 Cor. 3:22–23). And thus in return for it the congregation is accountable to its Lord Jesus Christ, how its servants are administering Word and Sacrament. It is a sacred right and a sacred duty of the congregation, that it looks to watch that its called preacher proclaim the Word of God loudly and clearly and that he administer the Sacrament according to Christ's will. And all Christians should watch over and be a warden over it.

All believing Christians are given by God the right to be judges over doctrine. Christ has entrusted the highest judgment to the congregation, when he said: "Tell it to the congregation,"



which includes the judgment over doctrine and practice of the pastor. Christ exhorts his disciples: “Watch out for false prophets” (Mt. 7:15). And the apostle exhorts all Christians: “Test the spirits, whether they are from God” (1 John 4:1). All Christians should avoid false doctrine and false teachers, and therefore they must test the doctrine which they hear, and they must test and judge the teachers, who preach it to them. For that reason our Lutheran Confessions in the Smalcald Articles: “As soon as the proper judgment is taken away from the church, it would make it impossible for the church to restrain false doctrine or improper divine worship, and therefore many souls would be lost.” And Luther testifies in his writing against King Henry of England: “To recognize and to judge doctrine, above all belongs to all Christians. And you can be sure the one who takes even one iota of such a right is cured. The commanded office, guardian and judge which has been given to the congregation, does not give the members of the congregation the right to perceive and to find fault with everything that he says and does. The members should rather be satisfied when the manager over the secret things of God is found to be faithful. When a preacher administers his office faithfully, then the opinion and judgment of those who hear him, as long as everything is in order in the congregation, is expressed through acclamation, agreement and appreciation. And the good testimonial, that his congregation gives to him, encourages the preacher in his difficult and responsible task. This also serves and helps the preservation of the public ministry of the Word.

The believing Christians are watchmen and judges of doctrine, but at the same time they should be and remain students of the Word. And since it has pleased God to preach his Word through men, not through angels, Christians are obligated, to believe and follow everything, what the called servants in the Word present to them from God’s Word as God’s counsel and will. It is directed in Scripture: “Obey your teachers and follow them” (Hebrews 13:17). Naturally this obedience only goes so far, as the ministry of the preacher extends, and that extends so far as

God's Word extends. As often as a Christian hears the preaching of the Word, as often as his pastor in the pastoral care personally brings him God's Word, as often as he teaches him from God's Word, as he exhorts, rebukes, consoles and comforts, the Christian should say to himself: "Thus says my God to me," and that, "what God tells me, I must after all obey, I want to follow it with joy." When Christians gladly hear the sermon and God's Word and learn to follow it, then they advance the ministry of the Word, and the same brings within themselves the desired fruit and those outside of Christendom receive the impression, that the gospel of Christ is a power of God for salvation, and out of that more and more are added to the congregation. The preacher however will experience greater the joy to do his work when he sees that labor in the Lord is not fruitless.

The apostle Paul writes: "The elders, who do their work well, hold them in double honor, especially those who labor there in Word and in teaching" (1 Tim. 5:17). A Christian congregation owes therefore its preacher esteem and respect. The preacher himself has quite a high divine office, he is God's servant, an ambassador for Christ, he stands in God's place, in Christ's place. And the congregation itself has placed him in this office. That he is also a weak, sinful man does his office no detriment. For God has ordained weak, sinful men to be his preachers. As long as a preacher is faithful in ministry, the congregation should hold him in high esteem. It would be an evil thing to do, if members of the congregation would treat a faithful pastor despicably according to his personal flaws. And it would be a sin and a disgrace, if a congregation, which is composed of poor and miserable sinners, would consider their preacher unworthy or unqualified for the ministry, solely because he possesses certain disagreeable qualities, since one can recognize in him the vices of the old Adam. If congregations honor their preachers, then they honor also the ministry of the Word.

To the preservation of the ministry of the Word belongs ultimately also still, what St. Paul

impresses upon the Christians in Galatians 6:6: “The one however who is instructed with the Word, let that one share all good things with him, who instructs him.” Christians receive from their preachers spiritual and heavenly goods, nourishment, which feeds and preserves their souls toward eternal life. And this service in the congregation takes up all the time and strength of the preacher. Therefore the congregation is obligated to provide them with the nourishment of the body and the necessities of life. A conscientious pastor, who carries in his heart the welfare of all lambs charged to him, has also many concerns of the office on his heart, and he will have to carry many a cross of the ministry. So the congregation should spare at the very least the cares of life for him. The apostle attaches to that reminder an earnest warning: “Do not be deceived, God cannot be mocked” (Gal. 6:7). When a congregation allows its preacher to suffer want or do not give him enough or it is insufficient, then the congregation mocks the ministry of the Word and it mocks God himself, whose office it is. But God himself will not be mocked. Oh! May all Christian congregations well take to heart, what Luther writes about this in his Large Catechism: “One thing is needed, to impress in the common people, that those who wish to be called Christians owe it to God to give double honor to those who watch over their souls, that they do good to them and they take care of them, then God will also give to you adequately and will not allow deficiency. But everyman himself struggles against and offers resistance against that. All are worried that their stomachs languish away, and that right now they cannot support an honorable preacher, since we have beforehand filled ten harlot stomachs. We therefore also deserve, that God deprive us of his Word and blessings, and allow again preachers of lies to arise, who lead us to the devil, and who suck out our sweat and blood.

Those however who hold God’s will and command before their eyes, have the promise, that they should be richly rewarded, what they both expend on their earthly and spiritual fathers and what they do to honor them. Not that they only will receive a year or two of loaves of bread,

clothing and money, they shall have a long life, nourishment and peace and they shall be eternally rich and blessed. Therefore do what you owe to do, and let God see to it how he will nourish and provide for you; he has promised it and has never before lied, and he will not lie to you now.”

May God help all our congregations, to give to the holy ministry of the Word, through which God builds his church on earth, through which he preserves and guides it toward the heavenly goal, and which has been commanded by God, the honor and respect it is due.

## APPENDIX THREE

### THE ALTENBURG THESES OF C. F. W. WALTHER – APRIL 1841<sup>1</sup>

#### I.

Die wahre Kirche im eigentlichsten und vollkommensten Sinne ist die Gesamtheit aller wahrhaft Gläubigen, welche von Anfang der Welt bis ans Ende aus allen Völkern und Sprachen vom heiligen Geiste durch das Wort berufen und geheiligt worden [sind]. Und weil diese wahrhaft Gläubigen nur Gott kennt (2 Tim. 2, 19), so wird sie auch die unsichtbare Kirche genannt. Zu dieser wahren Kirche gehört niemand, der nicht mit Christo geistlich vereinigt ist, denn sie ist der geistliche Leib Jesu Christi.

The true church, in the most proper and most perfect sense, is the totality of all true believers, who from the beginning to the end of the world from among all peoples and tongues have been called and sanctified by the Holy Spirit through the Word. And since God alone knows these true believers (2 Tm. 2:19), the church is also called invisible. No one belongs to this true church who is not spiritually united with Christ, for it is the spiritual body of Jesus Christ.

#### II.

Der Name der wahren Kirche gehört auch allen den sichtbaren Haufen von Menschen, bei welchen Gottes Wort rein gelehrt und die heiligen Sacramente nach Christi Einsetzung verwaltet werden. In dieser Kirche sind zwar auch Gottlose, Heuchler und Ketzer, aber sie sind keine wahren Glieder derselben und machen die Kirche nicht aus.

The name of the true church belongs to that visible group of people among whom God's Word is purely taught and the holy Sacraments administered according to Christ's institution. In this church are to be sure also godless people, hypocrites and heretics, but they are not true members of it and do not constitute the church.

#### III.

Der Name der Kirche und in einem gewissen Sinn auch der Name der wahren Kirche gebührt auch solchen sichtbaren Haufen von Menschen, die sich unter dem Bekenntnisse eines

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<sup>1</sup> Original German published in J. F. Köstering, *Auswanderung der sächsischen Lutheraner im Jahre 1838* (St. Louis: Wiebusch u. Sohn, 1867), 51–52; English translations available in Dau, ed., *Ebenezer*, 144–145; Theodore Engelder, Ludwig E. Fuerbringer and Paul E. Kretzmann, eds., *The Concordia Cyclopedia* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1927), 15; W. G. Polack, *The Story of C. F. W. Walther* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1935), 49–50; Forster, 523–524; Lewis W. Spitz Sr., *The Life of Dr. C. F. W. Walther* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1961), 56–57; and August R. Suelflow, *Servant of the Word: The Life and Ministry of C. F. W. Walther*, 59–60. For background information on the Altenburg Theses and Walther's doctrine of the church, see William J. Schmelder, "Walther at Altenburg," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 34 (October 1961): 65–81; John M. Drickamer and C. George Fry, "Walther's Ecclesiology," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 42 (April 1978): 130–138 and John C. Wohlrabe Jr., "The Americanization of Walther's Doctrine of the Church," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 52 (January 1988): 1–27.

verfälschten Glaubens vereinigt haben und sich darum eines theilweisen Abfalls von der Wahrheit schuldig machen; wenn sie nur so viel von Gottes Wort und den heiligen Sacramenten rein haben, dass dadurch Kinder Gottes geboren werden können. Werden solche Haufen wahre Kirchen genannt, so soll damit nicht ausgedrückt sein, dass sie rechtgläubige, sondern nur, dass sie wirkliche Kirchen seien, im Gegensatz zu allen weltlichen Gemeinschaften.

The name church, and, in a certain sense, the name true church, belongs also to those visible groups of people who have united under the confession of a falsified faith and therefore have incurred the guilt of the partial departure from the truth; provided that they possess so much of God's Word and the holy Sacraments in purity that children of God may thereby be born. When such groups are called true churches, it is not the intention to state that they are faithful, but only that they are real churches as opposed to all worldly organizations.

#### IV.

Irrgläubigen Haufen wird der Name Kirche nicht missbräuchlich beigelegt, sondern nach der Redeweise des Wortes Gottes selbst. Es ist auch nicht gleichgültig, dass solchen Gemeinschaften dieser hohe Name vergönnt wird, denn daraus folgt:

- (1) Dass Glieder auch solcher Haufen selig werden können, denn ausser der Kirche ist kein Heil.

The name church is not improperly applied to heterodox groups, but according to the manner of speech of the Word of God itself. It is also not immaterial that this high name is allowed to such communions, for out of this follows:

- (1) That members also of such groups may be saved; for without the church there is no salvation.

#### V.

- (2) Die äusserliche Trennung eines irrgläubigen Haufens von einer rechtgläubigen Kirche ist nicht eine nothwendige Trennung von der allgemeinen christlichen Kirche, kein Abfall zum Heidenthum, und nimmt jenem Haufen noch nicht den Namen der Kirche.

- (2) The outward separation of a heterodox group from an orthodox church is not necessarily a separation from the universal Christian church nor a lapse into heathenism and does not yet deprive that group of the name church.

#### VI.

- (3) Auch irrgläubige Haufen haben die Kirchengewalt, auch unter ihnen können die Güter der Kirche gültig verwaltet, das Predigtamt aufgerichtet, die Sacramente gültig administirt und die Schlüssel des Himmelreichs gehandhabt werden.

- (3) Even heterodox groups have church power; even among them the goods of the church may be validly administered, the ministry established, the Sacraments validly

administered, and the keys of the kingdom of heaven exercised.

#### **VII.**

(4) Auch irrgläubige Haufen sind nicht aufzulösen sondern nur zu reformiren.

(4) Even heterodox groups are not to be dissolved, but only to be reformed.

#### **VIII.**

Die rechtgläubige Kirche ist hauptsächlich nach dem gemeinsamen, rechtgläubigen, öffentlichen Bekenntnisse zu beurtheilen, wozu sich die Glieder derselben verbunden erkennen und bekennen.

The orthodox church is chiefly to be judged by the common, orthodox, public confession to which its members acknowledge and confess themselves to be pledged.

## APPENDIX FOUR

### CLARIFICATION

*Der Lutheraner* 34 (July 15, 1878): 110.

In the last February issue of *Lehre und Wehre* the booklet of the undersigned, *The Saving Doctrine*, is advertised. The same contains part misleading, part downright false statements about church and ministry, about justification, about the doctrine of Sunday, concerning marriage and several other points, which the dear brothers in America, like generally every orthodox Lutheran, must rightly take offense. As I wrote in this book (Winter 1874), I was still a minister in the State Church and entirely aloof from the Saxon separation. Not until about a year later began for me a time of heavy struggle, which, under God's gracious guidance, ended with resignation from my State Church ministry and alignment with the Saxon separation. During this time of transition, I studied and I examined thoroughly for the first time the public testimony of the Missouri Synod, compared it with the writings of the opponents, and gained the conviction, which I already announced in the first issue of our *Freikirche*, that Missouri nothing more and nothing less confesses and represents pure Lutheran doctrine. At the same time I found and discerned a number of blunders in my theology and I acknowledged public errors already before my separation in local circles on multiple occasions in my said catechism clarification and several smaller brochures, about which several of my current brothers in the ministry had called attention to.

I also immediately initiated at that time a settlement with the publisher, forgoing on my part additional circulation and advertisement of that booklet and I considered the matter taken care of. Without my knowledge and cooperation, now recently several copies migrated to America, without my knowledge and cooperation, the very same were advertised in *Lehre und Wehre*. Because I believed, that through my entire ecclesiastical position, which I have occupied for two years in particular through my articles in the *Freikirche*, in which I, the same as Missouri, especially in the contestable points, declare my allegiance to the old Lutheran doctrine, my previous errors have been effectively corrected, I unfortunately neglected formal verification of this, my changed conviction in the pertaining points and formal downright retraction of the contained errors in my *The Saving Doctrine*. And nobody reminded me that I should do this. However I readily admit, that it would have been the right thing to do, to have already clarified this publicly. But I am doing it with this letter now and I assure all my dear brothers in the faith in America, that truly in everything, on both sides, prevails One Faith, One Confession. May God preserve among us this unity in the Spirit!

Planitz in Saxony, 23. June 1878.

G. Stoeckhardt, P.



## ERKLÄRUNG

*Der Lutheraner* 34 (July 15, 1878): 110

In der letzten Februar-Nummer von "Lehre und Wehre" ist das Büchlein des Unterzeichneten "Die heilsame Lehre" angezeigt. Dasselbe enthält über Kirche und Amt, über Rechtfertigung, über die Lehre vom Sonntag, von der Ehe und noch mehrere andere Punkte theils missverständliche, theils geradezu falsche Sätze, an welchen die lieben Brüder in Amerika, wie überhaupt jeder rechthgläubige Lutheraner, mit Recht Anstoss nehmen mussten. Als ich jenes Büchlein schrieb (Winter 1874), stand ich noch im landeskirchlichen Amt und der sächsischen Separation ganz fern. Erst ein Jahr später etwa begann für mich eine Zeit schweren Kampfes, welche unter Gottes gnädiger Leitung mit Niederlegung meines landeskirchlichen Amtes und Anschluss an die sächsische Separation endete. In dieser Uebergangsperiode studirte und prüfte ich zum ersten Mal eingehend die von der Missourisynode ausgegangenen Zeugnisse, verglich sie mit den Schriften der Gegner und gewann die Ueberzeugung, die ich schon in der ersten Nummer unserer "Freikirche" aussprach, dass Missouri nichts mehr und nichts weniger, als die reine lutherische Lehre bekenne und vertrete. Zugleich erkannte und fand ich in meiner Theologie noch manche Schlacken und bekannte schon vor meiner Separation in hiesigen Kreisen bei mannigfacher Gelegenheit meine in besagter Catechismuserklärung und etlichen kleineren Broschüren publicirten Irrthümer, auf welche mich auch mehrere meiner jetzigen Amtsbrüder aufmerksam gemacht hatten.

Auch leitete ich gleich damals Abrechnung mit der Verlagsbuchhandlung ein, unterliess meinerseits weitere Verbreitung und Annoncirung jenes Büchleins und legte es somit ad acta. Ohne mein Wissen und Zuthun sind nun neuerdings etliche Exemplare desselben nach Amerika gewandert, ohne mein Wissen und Zuthun ist dasselbe in "Lehre und Wehre" angezeigt. Weil ich glaubte, dass durch meine ganze kirchliche Stellung, die ich seit zwei Jahren einnehme, insonderheit durch meine Artikel in der "Freikirche," in welchen ich mich mit Missouri gerade auch in den streitigen Punkten zu der alten lutherischen Lehre bekenne, meine früheren Irrungen thatsächlich corrigirt seien, versäumte ich leider formelle Constatirung dieser meiner veränderten Ueberzeugung in den betreffenden Punkten und formelle Zurücknahme gerade auch der in meiner "heilsamen Lehre" enthaltenen Irrthümer. Dieser Gedanke wurde mir auch von keiner Seite nahegelegt. Aber ich gestehe gern zu, dass es das Richtige gewesen wäre, Solches gleich vor zwei Jahren öffentlich zu erklären, und hole hiermit das Versäumte nach, versichere auch den lieben Glaubensbrüdern in Amerika, dass wirklich in allen Stücken hüben und drüben Ein Glaube, Ein Bekenntniss waltet. Gott erhalte uns diese Einigkeit im Geist!

Planitz in Sachsen, 23. Juni 1878.

G. Stöckhardt, P.

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#### 4. Websites

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